MEETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS IN THE

MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM: A DISCOVERY OF PRACTICES OF

EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

by

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Abstract

Current population trends have revealed a huge influx of non-native English speaking students in the mainstream classroom across the United States. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore what mainstream teachers are doing to meet the academic needs of English Learners (ELs) in their classrooms on a daily basis. The researcher used semi-structured open-ended interview questions in order to gather data to answer five research questions; 1) How do teachers use data to plan for differentiated instruction? 2) How do teachers describe their experiences with differentiated instruction methods in planning reading lessons? 3) What processes do teachers go through when differentiating process, content and product during differentiated instruction? 4) What training do teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching EL students? 5) What challenges do teachers have when using differentiated instruction? Participants of the study were purposefully selected from a title one school in the Southeastern, United States with a high population of ELs. In order to be eligible to participate within the study teachers were required to teach either the third, fourth or fifth grade and have had at least 80% of their EL students meet expectations on the state mandated test in reading. The data analysis revealed six themes; 1) Collaboration 2) A huge inventory of research bases instructional strategies 3) Data-driven instruction 4) Well trained 5) Rigor 6) Learning community (7) Courage and Resilience Findings also suggested that differentiation of choice as well as interest is essential for creating an environment to meet the academic needs of ELs. Further perceptions included; using differentiation in the mainstream classroom was time- consuming, difficult to plan for, and often was met with a lack of resources. Even though, participants identified these challenges they felt that

differentiated instruction was the only way to meet the academic needs of ELs. Recommendations for further study included broadening the research study to include classroom observations as well as teachers who are new to teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom setting. Further recommendations for qualitative studies included EL student perceptions of their successes and failures when participating differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. Without them, this would not have been possible.

To my husband, who 17 years ago ignited my passion for knowledge by saying four words, "Well, go to college." There is no way I could have done this without you. Your support, your encouragement, your help and your love helped me realize my dreams.

To my daughter, you have always been a bright spot in my life. Thank you for always listening to me and providing support around the house when needed.

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Always remember Knowledge is power! The power to change your world!

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

In order to discover what process, strategies, practices and theories effective mainstream teachers use during reading instruction to meet the needs of English learners. Data was collected and analyzed from teachers who teach at an elementary school in the South Eastern, United States with a high population of English learners (EL). Within the United States, the population of Hispanic children has continued to grow over the past 40 years. The percent of fourth-grade Hispanic students has risen from less than 2% to over 21% (Aud et al., 2013). Further, in 2009 the U.S. Census Bureau reported the Hispanic population had increased by16% and is projected to increase 30% by 2050 (National Center for Educational Stastics, 2011). The NCES (2011) also reported that there are approximately four million EL students in the U.S. public school system. Calderon, Slavin and Sanchez (2011) reported that many states have had a 200% increase in EL population growth. NCELA (2010) reported that in the 2007-2008 school year Georgia's school housed more than 72,000 English speakers of other languages. This was a 406% increase in EL students in the Georgia school systems in just ten years.

The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) issued a report that the achievement gap in reading between Hispanic students and their native English speaking peers is increasing (Aud et al.,2013). The NCES report (2013) provided evidence for the need for this research study by stating that even though

performance has increased for both white and Hispanic students, Hispanic students still fall behind their native English speaking peers, just as they did in 1990. According to NCES, this statement provides information that the achievement gap between Hispanic students and their native English speaking peers has been stagnant for the last two decades. The report continued on to reveal that a problem exists for EL student achievement. Improvement is needed to increase EL student achievement in order for school systems to show the measured achievement gains as mandated by the NCLB Act (2001).

NCES (2013) announced in their report that a continuous achievement gap exists because of students who are classified as being Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and their peers who are EL, but have increased language skills. Therefore, an even larger gap exists between students known as ELs and their native English speaking peers. Kim & Herman (2009) further agreed with NCES' findings related to the achievement gap between ELs and their native English speaking peers. English learner classification refers to a student who is Limited English proficient (LEP). Students are classified as English learner receive classification changes as the student improves in English proficiency creating a subgroup that consists of a revolving door of names. When higher achieving students move out of one category, new students move into the same category making it difficult to show achievement gains (Kim & Herman, 2009). Heacox (2002) pointed out that the achievement gap that exists between EL's and their native speaking peers is not declining, but is widening. This gap has produced a need for the educational community to determine what processes, strategies, practices and theories to implement on a daily basis, in the mainstream classroom, to meet the diverse needs of all students.

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According to Reeves (2006) due to mandates from the NCLB the increased demands for educational accountability in mainstream classrooms across the country teachers need to leave or abandon their traditional thoughts of teaching to the middle and begin teaching for all students. Commins and Miramontes (2006) also found out that mainstream teachers are experiencing difficulties teaching English Learners in the mainstream classroom. These difficulties are due to the need for ELs to not only learn the state mandated standards but to increase English proficiency as well. Davidson (2006) mentioned that in spite of the students' level of English proficiency they are being put into mainstream classrooms for the entire educational day. The Center for Educational Policy (2005) reported that approximately half of the ELs in U.S. classrooms receive minimal language instruction. According to deJong and Harper (2005), English Immersion programs have emerged from educational trends that place EL students into mainstream classrooms. Recent EL educational trends have begun to move toward keeping ELs in mainstream classrooms as the best Educational setting for these students (Samway & McKeon, 2007). Creese (2006) interjected that when teachers have EL students in the mainstream classroom they should work collaboratively with English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support teachers. This collaboration can provide assistance when the mainstream teacher is faced with challenges while teaching educational content and language instruction for ELs. Calderon, Slavin & Sanchez (2011) further advised that mainstream classroom teachers need to be trained to educate this demographic effectively. When EL students do not have an effective learning environment they are less likely to interact with peers, participate in classroom discussion or be provided with other opportunities for language development. The ESOL teacher can

be a good resource to provide information in regards to the EL students. The English proficiency level can provide information about what the student should be able to do in the classroom based on that level (Verplaetse, 2008).

The process by which second language learners, coming into Georgia schools, are classified as LEP begins with what is called the PHLOTE or Primary Home Language Other Than English form. This form identifies what the language most spoken at home is and what the students' first language was (Georgia Department of Education, GaDoe 2012). When the PHLOTE is returned stating the students speaks a language other than English at home or spoke a language other than English, the student is given the W-APT or World-Class Instructional Design Assessment or WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test in order to discover the student's language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Once a student qualifies as Limited English Proficient the student is then placed in ESOL support classes (GaDoe, 2012). The ACCESS test is given every year to all ELs in the state of Georgia. According to GaDoe (2012), the ACCESS test is a standards-based criterion referenced English language proficiency assessment. The ACCESS measures the proficiency level of the students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The ACCESS test is administered as part of the requirements for the NCLB Act of 2001, which requires states to assess ELs progress yearly for language acquisition growth.

Terry and Conner (2012) noted that mainstream teachers seek to incorporate new and contemporary educational practices. They incorporate these practices to meet the needs of their widely diverse classrooms yet many teachers have found it difficult to move beyond theory to practice when implementing new strategies and processes into the

mainstream classroom. Cartiera (2006) surmised when it comes to knowledge about teaching ELs effectively, many teachers do not know how to teach ELs or what processes, strategies and practices surmise effective teaching of this subgroup. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) divulged that in order for a teacher of ELs to be effective they need to pull from researched principals of English language acquisition. For teachers to be effective they need a strong knowledge of strategies, processes and practices that increase EL student achievement. Darling-Hammond and Bradsford (2004) insisted that creating a classroom environment that is supportive of language acquisition and provides varying types of assessment and teaches skills to reflect on learning, promotes an environment that is effective for EL student achievement. Samway and McKeon (2007) agreed with Darling-Hammond and Bradsford (2004) but added, in order for mainstream teachers to effectively teach ELs they need to have knowledge about the basic principles for second language acquisition. For ELs to be successful in school, they need to be able to read academic texts and write proficiently in English. They also need to process the English language from peers and teachers in order to communicate during classroom instruction (Samway & McKeon, 2007).

Within the educational community, differentiated instruction is acknowledged to be a collection of strategies, processes, practices and theories associated to teach a diverse student population effectively in the mainstream classroom (Tomlinson, 2002). Tomlinson (2005) reassured readers that teaching ELs using differentiated instruction provides the most effective strategies, processes, and practices for increasing achievement. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008) informed the educational community that an effective EL program has three basic requirements; direct language instruction,

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creating a classroom community and differentiated curriculum. Tomlinson (2005) agreed, but stated that curriculum should be differentiated based on product, process and content. Content refers to what the student needs to know, the learning target or standards that are being learned. Boyd-Batstone, (2006) went on to say that content is often differentiated through providing different levels of material for the different levels of learner academic ability within the classroom. While reading the most common way to do this is to provide reading comprehension materials that are above, below and at grade level and delivering content through flexible small group instruction. Gregory, and Chapman (2002) further added that providing differentiation for content proceeds the opportunity for students to learn the same curriculum as their peers, but on a level that offers them success and at a pace they can produce success. Tomlinson (2005) stated that differentiating for process includes the learning strategies and activities which will be used to teach the student the learning target or standard. Gregory and Chapman (2002) stated that the differentiation for process allows for multiple ways to learn the curriculum or for the student to make sense of what they are learning. Boyd-Batstone, (2006) mentioned that the most common way to differentiate for process is to include Multiple Intelligence Theory and to allow for student interest and preferences of learning modality. Finally, product refers to the learning tasks which provide opportunities for the student to apply knowledge learned, practice learning targets, extend information learned from the learning target to prove mastery (Tomlinson, 2005). Gusman (2004) stated that differentiating for product allows the student to have a choice of how they demonstrate mastery of the learning target. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) stated that the key to successful differentiation of product provides assessment and performance tasks that are authentic and incorporate all

of the Blooms levels of learning. Anderson (2007) mentioned that when differentiating for product, teachers are providing the students with the ability to demonstrate learning target mastery. Anderson (2007) continued by saying, differentiation of product is commonly accomplished through using choice boards and menu sheets which allow the student to have a choice over how they demonstrate mastery of the learning target through their interests, strengths and learning preferences.

This basic qualitative study was completed through collecting data using the Long Interview process in a Title I elementary school with a high population of English learners. Within this qualitative study, the researcher was able to discover the practices, strategies, processes and theories effective mainstream teachers use on a daily basis to meet the educational needs of their EL students. The study was also able to explore these teachers perceptions of teaching EL students in the mainstream classroom. The data analysis revealed that differentiated instruction is the basis for daily instruction, but, many other processes, strategies; theories and practices are used on a daily basis under the umbrella of differentiated instruction.

Background, Context, and Theoretical Framework

Teachers face many challenges especially when trying to divide their time among a classroom full of students with diverse learning needs. Some of these challenges include a lack of adequate training in differentiated instruction or in providing EL supports, lack of administrative support, and excessive planning which becomes a huge time constraint (Samway & McKeon, 2007). A mainstream class, in the context of education, is the practice of educating students with special needs in regular classes. Tomlinson and Edison (2003) recognized that classrooms in the

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United States are rich with diversity. Therefore, creating academically challenging environments for all students within this vast diversity is a problem for many teachers. Many of the students have different learning styles and levels of academic ability which further creates a challenge for classroom teachers (Tomlinson, 2003). One of the biggest obstacles facing mainstream teachers is the increase in population of English Learners and not knowing how to meet their academic needs within the mainstream classroom (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Gregory and Kuzimich (2004) suggested that the current challenge is to provide a way not to lower standards but to raise academic growth for all students while providing teachers and administrators with information to meet the needs of ELs from the viewpoint of teachers who effectively implement differentiated instruction. According to Tomlinson (2004) differentiated instruction, provides one method of meeting the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom. Differentiated instruction according to Imbeau andTomlinson (2010) provides students with options for processing information, making sense of the learning targets and proving mastery. Lucas, Villegas and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) stressed that in order to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom teachers need to be knowledgeable about an assortment of processes, techniques, strategies, practices and theories. Teachers also need to create an environment that fosters a learning community of support and fosters an environment of academic risk taking. Lucas, Villegas and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) continued by advising that for teachers to be successful in increasing EL student achievement in the mainstream classroom they need the ability and tools to take theory and turn it into practice. According to Merriam (2009), a basic

qualitative research study has the potential to allow the researcher to fill gaps in

current literature by providing knowledge about what differentiated instructional

strategies, techniques, and practices are being used by mainstream teachers who are

highly skilled at teaching reading comprehension to ELs. As well as outlining the

challenges of using differentiated instruction and professional development needed to

teach ELs on a daily basis. The implications of the findings from this research will

allow the researcher to contribute to an understanding of what effective teachers who

use differentiated instruction to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom

do. The implication of the findings from this research study will increase the

understanding of what differentiated instructional processes, strategies, techniques

and practices are being used by effective mainstream teachers, when teaching reading

to English Learners. This study will also include a description of what these teachers

do to plan for differentiated instruction and what data they collect to drive their lesson

plans for differentiation. The information provided by the researcher will provide

administrators and teachers with information needed to move instruction from theory

to practice.

Statement of the Problem

It is unknown how mainstream teachers effectively use differentiated instruction

to teach English Learners (Heacox, 2002). There is also a need for quality studies on how

mainstream teachers can best meet the needs of ELs in order to close the achievement

gap (Samson & Collins, 2012). The achievement gap can include students with special

needs, gifted students and students with limited English proficiency. The Center for

American Progress stated in a report, "In the various stages of teacher preparation,

certification, and evaluation, there is insufficient information on what teachers should know about teaching English language learners (Samson & Collins, 2012)." Gándara, Jolly and Maxwell (2005) found that teacher preparation equals increased teacher preparedness and confidence in their teaching ability which creates effective teachers. Mueller, Singer and Carranza (2006) agreed and stated that many other studies reiterate that there is a need for highly qualified teachers and teachers who are prepared to teach ELs. However, these studies tend to focus on teachers are qualified as TESOL and teach classes such as English as a second language (ESOL), pull-out, immersion, and sheltered instruction. Gándara, Jolly and Maxwell (2005) disclosed that there is a need to research preparation of mainstream teachers who have not chosen to be ESOL teachers but regular classroom teachers.

The number of linguistically diverse students within today's classrooms has drastically increased (de Chohen, Deterding & Clewell, 2005). As the number of English Learners in mainstream classrooms across the county has increased, mainstream teachers knowledge of how to effectively teach this population of students has not (Lucas, 2011).

Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Rumberger, (2005), informed readers that if a teacher uses effective practices in the mainstream classroom, then that a high-quality teacher can have a significant effect on EL achievement. In a time of increased accountability, teachers need the information to meet the diverse needs of their classroom. Which, can be challenging since classrooms are full of students with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, personal experiences, aptitudes, interests, learning styles, as well as linguistically diverse (Tomlinson, 2004).

With the introduction of the NCLB the need for teachers to demonstrate measured improvement in each ethnic subgroup has sparked panic in the educational community (Dee, 2010). With the implementation of NCLB, educators have been put under a microscope and were being held accountable for the outcomes of their classroom instruction. Batt (2008) stated that teachers face extraordinary pressure to ensure that all students demonstrate high academic achievement due to the implementation of the NCLB Act in 2001. The NCLB set into place increased teacher accountability (Batt, 2008). Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) noted that with the continued increasing number of ELs in classrooms across the nation, and lack of achievement gains, questions have been raised by not only the government but the general public as well. How are mainstream teachers using differentiated instruction to meet needs of ELs in the classroom? What processes do teachers go through to plan for instruction? The following research study allowed the researcher to explore what differentiated instructional strategies teachers use to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom on a daily basis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore what effective mainstream teachers, who use differentiated instruction, do during reading instruction through interviews to determine what processes, strategies and techniques they use when teaching EL students. What is an effective teacher? Current literature has many different descriptions of what an effective teacher is or does. One definition of an effective teacher describes an effective teacher as a teacher whose students achieve at an acceptable rate. By their definition this is at least one academic year of growth (Bryk, Harding, &

Greenberg, 2012). Gregory and Kuzmich, (2004) relates effective teaching to the ability to provide instruction that meets the needs of diverse groups while incorporating instructional activities to meet the need of different students with different abilities. While doing this, they can incorporate standards-based instruction and assess for mastery. They also associated an effective teacher as a collector of data to inform instruction. Including data that measures student growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2004). Goe, Bell, and Little (2008), stated that effective teachers do five things. They have high expectations for all, contribute to a positive academic behavior including attitudes, social outcomes and promotion, use a multitude of researched strategies for planning and implementing into instruction, contribute to classroom development and use effective teaching strategies.

Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010) stated that an effective mainstream teacher is a teacher that gets to know the student, has high expectations, uses an array of research-based strategies, uses a variety of formative and summative assessments, collaborates with peers, uses flexible small grouping. An effective mainstream teacher also differentiates for product, process and content. For the purpose of this study, an effective teacher was defined as a teacher who incorporates all of these things and had at least 80% of students passing the state-mandated test in reading. The researcher sought to explore the instructional strategies, approaches, supports and interventions used daily in the classroom by effective teachers to increase EL academic achievement. This basic qualitative study will focus on educators at one elementary school in the Southeastern U.S. that are meeting this challenge. The school where the study took place had a population of 975 students. The language breakdown consisted of 81% of the students

speaking English as a second language and consisted of 59% population of students considered EL students (Power School, 2012). Hill and Flynn (2006) mentioned that in there is a lack of research on differentiated instruction, as it applies to ELs in the mainstream classroom. Within this study the researcher discovered how the mainstream teachers in grades 3 through 5 effectively planned for differentiated instruction, what they perceived as effective data collection, content instruction, research-based instructional strategies and assessment for ELs. Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010), also discovered how these teachers keep the educational content relevant, rigorous and engaging, which is important in creating educational achievement. Which included, how effective teachers differentiated content of instruction, the processes and techniques used to help make sense of a topic and the products produced by the students that demonstrate their learning to increase EL student achievement (Imbeau & Tomlinson 2010).

Research Questions

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore what effective mainstream teachers do on a daily basis to meet the academic needs of English learners in their classrooms. Specifically the research targeted what differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices were used to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom.

CQ: What differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices are used by mainstream teachers who have obtained at least 80% reading comprehension performance with English Learners?

R1: How do teachers use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

R2: How do teachers describe their experiences with differentiated instruction methods in planning reading lessons?

R3: What processes do teachers go through when differentiating process, content and product during differentiated instruction?

R4: What training do teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching EL students?

R5: What challenges do teachers have when using differentiated instruction?

The central research question was written to provide a basis for teachers who are considered effective at teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. There was the assumption that if the teacher has a high percentage of EL students meeting standards on the reading state-mandated test, then they are an effective teacher. Research question number one was designed to discover the steps a mainstream teacher takes when collecting and using data to drive differentiated instruction with ELs. The second research question created opportunities for the researcher to learn what strategies, techniques and practices are used by mainstream teachers as they plan for differentiated instruction for ELs. It also provided opportunities to discover teacher's perceptions of using differentiated instruction with ELs. The third question was created to find out the amount of training and staff development effective mainstream teachers have participated in to prepare for teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. The final question further promoted the discovery of teachers' perceptions when using differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom.

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of Study

The changing demographics of mainstream classrooms across the nation have created a need for comprehensive understanding of how to meet the needs of EL students (Cartiera, 2006). Never before has the need to build teachers knowledge and expertise in addressing the needs of students with limited English proficiency been more important (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). Providing a way not to lower instructional standards but to raise the level of success and increase academic growth for all students (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2004). As well as providing teachers and administrators a way to meet the needs of the increasing population of limited English proficient students. The information will fill a need in the literature to provide effective instructional strategies (Genese, Lindhol-Leary, Saunders & Christine, 2006).

The researcher conducted the research with teachers at one school in the Southeastern United States who effectively plan for and use differentiated instruction with ELs on a daily basis. The following study is important due to the increasing population of ELs in classrooms across the nation. Teachers need to have the tools to help all students reach their full potential. Johnsen (2003) mentioned that most classrooms are diverse by gender, academics, and culture that include students who do not speak English fluently. Johnsen (2003) also pointed out that teachers have a responsibility to make the classroom a place where all students can benefit. Johnsen continued to argue that incorporating differentiated instruction is the way for all students to benefit.

Differentiated instruction is known to be a compelling and effectual means of meeting the needs of students in the traditional classroom.With a definite gap in the literature regarding the effective use of differentiated instruction in practice with ELs

(Genese, Lindhol-Leary, Saunders & Christine, 2006). However, the instructional model does get a great deal of support from the educational community. This support was made apparent through the multitude of websites, books, articles, testimonials and classroom examples available dealing with differentiated instruction and ELs. Little is known about how effective teachers use and implement the instructional practice or what training teachers need to become effective at using differentiated instruction with ELs (Goldenburg, 2008). Through data collection and analysis processes the researcher discovered how teachers perceive the use of differentiated instruction to increase EL student achievement and how teachers effectively planned for and implemented differentiated instruction into the classroom. Goldenberg (2008) pointed out that teachers have difficulty taking research to practice since research tends to tell how to do it and does not look at the reality of using differentiated instruction in today's classrooms. The researcher used a qualitative research study to provide beneficial information to educators, school districts and administrators by providing them with an understanding of differentiated instruction and the various challenges of using differentiated instruction in meeting the academic needs of English learners (ELs). In order to prepare educators for the increased population of ELs, connect theory to practice, and make improvements in practice this basic qualitative study seeks to explore what effective teachers use to meet the needs of ELs. The researcher used a basic qualitative study to discover strategies, processes and practices that will help mainstream teachers take theory to practice through experiences of teachers who are effective at teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. In the setting of education, a mainstream classroom is the practice of educating students

with special needs in regular classes. These needs can include students with special education needs, gifted students and students with limited English proficiency.

Through the proposed basic qualitative research study, the researcher seeks to provide contributions to the field of education through providing teachers with an understanding of the process effective teachers use to plan for and use differentiated instruction with ELs. This information will allow teachers to take theory into practice with the assistance of the effective teachers lived experiences.

Differentiated instruction is not a new concept or buzzword in education. The one room schoolhouses of the past found a way to meet the needs of students working with a wide range of abilities. This type of instruction is what is needed today to meet the needs of a diverse student population within mainstream classrooms (Tomlinson, 2004). This study will increase awareness of the need for differentiated instructional practices with ELs in the mainstream classroom. Since the study sought to discover the perceptions, processes and instructional strategies of teachers who effectively teach ELs in the mainstream classroom the results can be helpful. The results will contribute to the current knowledge regarding differentiated instruction in an elementary education classroom through providing thick and rich descriptions of lived experiences to assist other teachers in moving from theory to practice using differentiated instruction. Administrators may also benefit from the study to further plan for staff development to meet the needs of ELs in their school.

According to O'Neal (2008), teachers with a large population of ELs in the classroom often feel they are inadequately prepared to be responsible for teaching differentiated instruction that encompasses different learning modalities, as well as taking

into account the students individual abilities, interests, language and background knowledge. Tomlinson (2005) states that many teachers today are not professionally trained to work with ELs and do not have the skills to increase academic language or language proficiency. The proposed research study seeks to discover and explore what processes, strategies and instructional techniques effective teachers use in the mainstream classroom to meet EL student's needs which may in turn impact teacher practices when implementing differentiated instruction with ELs (Echevarria & Short, 2004).

The significance of this study is to bring attention to the instructional processes that are being used at a school in Southeastern United States to increase EL student achievement effectively in the mainstream education classroom in grades 3-5. The information provided from this qualitative study using 14 teachers from the school will be helpful for other teachers to implement into their classrooms for increased student achievement. The information the researcher will discover within the proposed study has the potential to provide additional knowledge to several stakeholders, including teachers and administrators. This qualitative study may be beneficial to these stakeholders by providing them with an understanding of the processes and strategies effective teachers use to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom. It may also be beneficial to educators, administrators and school districts by providing these stakeholders with an understanding of various strategies and processes effective teachers use to meet the academic needs of language minority students within the mainstream classroom on a daily basis. With the hope, they will use this information to reexamine and change how they currently teach English Language Learners. Teachers today face enormous challenges including increased accountability set in place by the NCLB act (Echevarria,

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Voght & Short, 2004). To add to that many classrooms across the country have had in an enrollment boom of English learners. These students spend a small portion of the day receiving support services outside the classroom with the rest of their time spent within the mainstream classroom. Echevarria, Short and Powers (2006) noted that even though these students have limited English proficiency they still are required to take the state-mandated high stakes test. Therefore, according to Garcia and Jensen (2007) teachers are held accountable for increased student achievement with these students. Mainstream teachers are seeking ways to meet the needs of all students as they teach a diverse population of students and increase achievement for all (Fairbain & Jones-Vo, 2010).

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to discover what effective teachers do to meet the academic needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom. The study focused on the use of differentiated instruction and the processes, strategies and supports used within the learning theory. These topics include; data-driven instruction, scaffolding, formative assessment, instructional conversations, word study and other research-based best practices. The study was designed around teachers who are teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom who have had 80% or more of their students meet or exceed in reading on the state mandated test. The information and data collected were gathered through tape recorded interviews using the Long Interview process at a Georgia, Title I elementary school with a high population (82%) of students who speak English as a second language (Power School, 2014).

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was a basic qualitative research approach using semiformal interviews for gathering the data. These interviews provided the researcher

with the information to discover what effective teachers of ELs do in a daily basis to meet their educational needs. The researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing qualitative research (Merriam & Associates, 2002). The goal of qualitative research is to determine the meanings that participants have attached to their lived experiences. Merriam (2009) pointed out that researchers interested in conducting qualitative research would be interested in how the participants interpret their lived experiences, and how those experiences were designed around the phenomena being studied. When a researcher conducts qualitative research, they want to give power to the participants within the study in order to get them to share their lived experiences freely. They want to listen to their voices and opinions in order to fully understand the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2012). Using basic qualitative approach provided the researcher with rich and thick data in order to conduct a descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2005). Purposeful sampling with a group of teachers at a Title One school in the South Eastern; United States who have a large population of ELs in their mainstream classrooms provided the sample population for data collection. Teachers were selected based on the percentage of their EL students meeting or exceeding on the mandatory state standardized test. For teachers to qualify to be part of the study, they needed to have at least 80% of their ELs in their mainstream classroom meeting or exceeding in reading on the state mandated standardized test. As the method of data collection, personal one-on-one interviews were conducted. Open-ended interviews were used to, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Finally, the interview data was put into a CAQDAS or Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software. According to Merriam (2009) using a CAQDAS, provides an opportunity for the researcher to be more creative when

coding and analyzing data. Coding according to Lewin and Silver (2007) is the process of breaking down the data into segments to determine themes or categories in the research. According to Lewin and Silver (2007) coding is essential to qualitative research as it provides management, connects similarities, identifies differences, finds patterns and relationships within the data.

Definition of Terms

Assessment. An instructional instrument which provides information that the teacher can use to modify instruction in order to meet the educational needs of the learner (Gregory & Kuzmich 2004). Assessments are both formative and summative in nature.

Best Practices. Research-based teaching practices which have been accepted in the educational community as being effective for increased academic achievement (Dean, Stone, Hubbell, & Pitler, 2012).

Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). The state mandated high stakes test for the state of Georgia.

Data-driven Instruction (DDI). Will be defined as data that is gathered from quarterly benchmark assessments, quizzes, and performance tasks to drive whole-group, small-group and individual instruction or provide acceleration or remediation of the standards taught. Data-driven Instruction can also be explained as information gathered to learn about the student such as, Interest Inventories and Learning Style Inventories. These forms of data drive the decisions to inform the teacher what the next step is in making decisions about student learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Differentiated Instruction. A philosophy of instruction and assessment for effective teaching which includes different ways to learn academic content.

Differentiated instruction often includes differentiating content, process and product to provide individual learning plans (Tomlinson, 2001).

English Learners (ELs). Students within the school community who do not speak English as their first language (WIDA, 2012).

Effective Teacher. For the purpose of this study, an effective teacher will be defined as a teacher who incorporates differentiated instruction on a daily basis and provides differentiated instructional activities that keep all students actively engaged (Tomlinson, 2005). Effective teachers in this study have had at least 80% of their EL students meeting or exceeding on the state mandated high stakes test.

ESOL or TESOL. Acronym for the teaching of English speakers of other languages.

Formative assessment. An assessment that provides instant constructive feedback to find out if the student has learned the standard being taught. Formative assessment can be as simple as a ticket out the door or a short quiz.

Learning Target. The essential concepts and skills students learn during instruction (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2006).

Limited English Proficient. Students who have limited English speaking skills because their primary language is not English (WIDA, 2012)

Mainstream Classroom. When a regular education classroom is combined with other support classes such as special education, gifted education or ESOL education (Haynes, & Zacarian, 2010).

Summative assessment. A cumulative assessment that determines if the student has mastered all the information learned in a unit or course. Performance Tasks, as well as, unit tests are generally considered Summative Assessments (Tileston, 2004).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The following were assumptions made when discovering what mainstream teachers do to meet the needs of English learners in the classroom.

1. Participants selected through the purposeful sampling process use differentiated instruction on a daily basis.

2. Participants will provide clear, concise, honest descriptions about their experiences using differentiated instruction with English learners in the mainstream classroom.

3. Allowing participants to choose the location of their interview will increase comfort during the interview process, will in turn create an environment of trust between the researcher and participant to promote open, honest answers to research questions.

4. Participants will have first-hand knowledge and experience using differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom with English learners.

5. The participants are effective at teaching English learners in the mainstream classroom.

The following limitations existed during this study when discovering what mainstream teachers do to meet the needs of English learning.

1. The qualitative study was to discover mainstream teachers process, strategies and practices when using differentiated instruction with English

learners. Therefore, the results of the study may not include information

for teachers who do not teach English learners or teachers who do not

teach English learners in a mainstream setting.

2. Participants within the study are from an elementary setting, specifically

grades 3-5. The information learned may not be relevant for teachers who

teach above or below these grade levels.

Delimitations for this study included the following:

1. Teachers who did not meet the purposeful sampling criteria such as

teachers who did not have 80% or more of their EL students meeting or

exceeding on the state-mandated test were excluded from the study. Their

perceptions, experiences and challenges with teaching ELs in the

mainstream classroom will also not be included within the study.

2. Students will not be included within the study eliminating their

perceptions of being taught within the mainstream classroom.

3. Teachers who are new to teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom will

not be included eliminating the challenges, perceptions and experiences

they have teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom for the first time.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The following study was separated into a total of five chapters. As part of Chapter

1 of this study, the research topic was outlined providing information concerning the use

of differentiated instruction within the mainstream classroom with English learners. The

purpose for conducting the study was discussed as well as the rationale behind the study

and the theoretical framework. The research questions that support this basic qualitative

study were included. Definitions were provided to better understanding of the important terms. Within this chapter, the assumptions and limitations during the research process were also discussed. Chapter 2 will provide a review of the literature which will define differentiated instruction, clarify the theoretical background of differentiated instruction, explain English language development and give details about numerous best practices for using differentiated instruction. Chapter 3 will describe the research methodology which were used for this study. It will provide an introduction to the research design, purposeful sampling procedures, and a long interview process as well as data sources. Chapter 3 will also acquaint the reader with validity, reliability and data collections procedures used during the research process. Research data analysis will be the basis of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 which will dissertate the results and conclusions of the research and provide recommendations for future research on this topic.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the Literature Review

The demographics in American classrooms are changing. The need to understand the commonalities, individual differences, and how to address the diverse needs of these students is a priority on educators' minds across the country (Rothstein-Fish & Trumbull, 2008). The 2010 U.S. Census provided information that the Latino population in the U.S. has risen to 16%.It is projected to grow to 30% by 2050 (Aud et al., 2013). In mainstream classrooms in U.S. public schools there are over four million students who use English as a second language. The National Center of Educational Statistics released a report in 2011 that suggests that a continual gap exists between students known as English Learners (ELs) and their native English speaking peers (Aud et al., 2013). Within this increasing population of students, is a culture that focuses on standards-based teaching with an emphasis on teacher accountability. The educational community is in search of an effective way to meet the needs of the increasing diversity of the student population (Hall, 2002). With the increase in EL population across the country, teachers are in search of new strategies, processes and techniques to meet the academic needs of all learners (Putnam, 2009). Moving from theory to practice is difficult for many teachers. Using differentiated instruction can provide multiple teaching strategies and techniques to meet all student's needs (Putnam, 2009).

The literature review that follows provides a review of the literature including an explanation of differentiated instruction; differentiated instructional strategies, approaches, supports and interventions used to meet EL needs and the theoretical background of differentiated instruction.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of differentiated instruction has a background in constructivist learning theory as well as cognitive psychology (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Philosophers such as Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky each defined constructivism in their way. As Wood, Smith and Grossniklaus (2010) disclosed that Piaget's research provided four stages of child development: (1) sensory-motor stage, ages 0-2 years; (2) pre-operational stage, ages 2-7: (3) concrete operational stage, ages 7-11; (4) formal operational stage, ages 11 and older. However, Darling-Hammond and Bradsford (2004) noted that the philosophy behind these developmental stages was to not require students to demonstrate abilities above their cognitive capabilities.

In addition, Dewey (1933) believed that by offering hands-on experience's schools will provide a rich learning environment. He also described effective learning as having conceptual challenges motivated by student interest and empowered by knowledge. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) defined constructivist theory as it applies to cognition and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). He defined the ZPD as the distance between what the student can do and what the student could be doing at their current stage of development. However, Hartman (2002) added that the zone of proximity is defined by the gap of what the student can do alone, and the student can do with assistance. In order to reduce the gap tutorial help is provided giving more responsibility to students and improving the skills by correcting the mistakes. The term ZPD has been used interchangeably with the term scaffolding. In addition, Sawyer (2006) described scaffolding as a common process for accommodating a student based on academic need and compared it to construction scaffolding that is progressively built and used to build,

repair of paint a building. Once the repairs to the space are finished the scaffolding is then taken down. Further, Hartman (2002) encourages the use of scaffolding to provide an environment that provides accommodations by gradually giving more responsibility of learning back to the student in order to shorten the achievement gap. Scaffolding, according to Sawyer (2006), comes from Vygotsky's idea of the expert providing assistance to the beginner. Vygotsky (1978) also believed through social constructivism, peer interaction during learning was an effective strategy for developing skills. He suggested that effective teachers implement cooperative learning that provides students who are less skilled with the assistance of students who are more skillful. In addition, Sawyer (2006) went on to say scaffolding in education means about the same thing. It is the building of assistance to support student success with academic skills through modeling, formative feedback and gradual development of educational skill to prove mastery of the learning target. In other words, Hartman (2002) explained that the process of scaffolding begins with the teacher providing maximum assistance. The student then completes a similar task independently. The teacher then collects data by assessing the task and providing effective feedback in order to guide the student to understand mistakes made. Based on the assessment data, students can be either given more or less skill reinforcement to ensure academic success in the mainstream classroom.

The methods defined by Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey provide the foundation for the success of all learners through constructivism. Additionally, according to Brooks and Brooks (2001) constructivists believe that when students participate in hands-on-learning they are being provided opportunities to challenge themselves or enable them to change their ideas. Hence, deeper learning takes place.

Moreover, Fosnot (2005) explained constructivism as a philosophy that builds on the background experiences the student brings to the classroom. In addition, Harlow, Cummings and Aberasturi (2006) suggested that when teachers defined constructivism they defined it as a way for students to construct their learning. In addition, Simpson (2002) confided that constructivism does not include teacher instruction. Students create their learning but, some instructional strategies are within the realm of the definition of constructivism: cooperative learning, hands-on-learning, performance tasks and project based tasks and project based assessments.

According to Darling-Hammond and Bradsford (2004), when using constructivism for student learning, students learn through activities that have a real-world connection. These connections allow the student to remember and apply new concepts. These real-world activities allow students to question and form opinions and have original thoughts (Simpson, 2002).

However, Darling-Hammond and Bradsford (2004) pointed out that critiques of constructivism and differentiated instruction express concern that students with instructional needs do not receive needed instruction even though teachers who use differentiated instruction determine student learning preferences and learning modalities. Critiques believe that these practices lack rigor and fail to teach skills needed to be successful.

With classrooms changing across the country and the need to meet the requirements of education reform, many school administrators and teachers are turning to differentiated instruction to provide and environment conducive to academic success for their increasing diverse classrooms. Research supports using differentiated instruction to

meet those needs. Differentiated instruction is a collection of research-based educational theories including; brain-based learning, multiple intelligence, learning styles and constructivism.

Review of the Research Literature and Methodological Literature

The main purpose of educational research is the acquisition of new knowledge (Merriam, 2009). The majority of educational research is based on a quantitative approach (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2003). According to Merriam (1998), in qualitative studies the researcher is the primary instrument used to gather and analyze data to generate an understanding about the problem being studied. Creswell (2005) stated by using a qualitative study there is the potential to provide "rich" and "thick" descriptions of the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative research is suggested for this study in order to explore the experiences and perceptions of elementary teachers and their experiences when using differentiated instruction to educate ELs in the mainstream classroom. The main distinguishing factor of basic qualitative research is that it allows individuals to create a reality in their community (Merriam, 2009). Merriam describes a basic qualitative study as "constructivism" (Merriam, 2009, p.22) which means the researcher is seeking to not discover, but construct the meaning of the phenomena for those involved within it. Merriam also suggests that a person conducting a basic qualitative research study would be interested in what people deduce from their experiences. What meaning they take from their experiences and states that the overall purpose of a basic qualitative study is to be aware of how people logically analyze their lives and their experiences.

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study is to contribute to the educational knowledge base by providing a descriptive picture of educational practices

and instructional decisions effective third through fifth-grade teachers use and plan for differentiated instruction in reading for EL student achievement. Qualitative research is being used in order to understand the processes in which effective teachers plan for and implement instructional strategies using differentiated instruction. According to Merriam (2002), qualitative research is appropriate if the researcher is trying to understand processes and discover how things happen. Creswell (2009), shared that within qualitative research processes the researcher focuses on, learning and the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue (pg.175), therefore providing the researcher the ability to collect data in a natural setting. Merriam (2009) described qualitative research as a form of inquiry that analyzes information conveyed through dialogue and actions in natural settings. It is used to uncover significant information not communicated in quantitative data about beliefs, values, feelings, and motivations that motivate the behaviors the researcher is interested in understanding.

Purposeful sampling is used when a researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight from a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, the researcher must select the sample which can provide the most information about the phenomenon being studied (Merriam, 2009).

Analyzing qualitative data using qualitative analysis software will help to determine reoccurring themes and data saturation (Creswell, 2009). According to Lewins and Silver (2007), CAQDAS or Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis programs are used to make sense of the plethora of qualitative data by providing assistance with developing a coding system, coding, organizing data.

Review of Research Regarding English Learners and Differentiated Instruction

　　　　With intense pressure for accountability at the classroom level, it is imperative for teachers to find ways to increase achievement for all students. Differentiated instruction has emerged as a highly effective teaching tool to meet the diverse needs of all students (, Deniz, & Tortora, 2005). Previous studies explored different aspects including student diversity, brain based research, multiple intelligences and learning styles as reasons for the push for differentiated instruction in the classroom. McCoy and Ketterlin-Geller (2004) mentioned with the rapid increase in student diversity in the mainstream classroom teachers need to know how to meet the needs of these students. Tomlinson (2004) expressed that one size fits all curriculums no longer provides what of the majority of learners need to be successful in the classroom. Gregory and Kuzmich, (2004) articulated that whole group single level instruction delivered through one method does not take into account the diverse student learning styles and interests.

　　Reyes and Vallone (2008) mentioned planning for instruction as a major element in creating student success. Many teachers resort to the traditional direct instruction approach that is designed for the native English speaker which creates an environment for failure for EL's. When planning for effective instruction for EL success teachers need to use cogitative terminology such as create, predict, analyze and classify (Reyes & Vallone, 2008). Richardson (2003) commented that planning using these terms creates a learning environment which fosters a construction of new understandings and is based on the constructivist theory of educating students. Richardson (2003) also commented that continuing to plan with the constructivist theory in mind also creates real world, meaningful, engaging instruction. Hensen (2010) suggested that constructivist teachers

use data and a variety of hands-on and interactive resources. Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012) interjected that these strategies and techniques may not be effective for all students. However, using a constructivist approach and pedagogy may be a way to make material relevant for students who are culturally and linguistically different. Constructivism allows teachers to encourage students to engage in meaningful conversations with the teacher and peers (Reyes & Vallone, 2008). Reyes and Vallone went on to say inquiry is encouraged as well as higher order thinking skills. Higher order questions which are planned though asking thoughtful opened ended questions and providing the opportunities for students to question each other. Mvududu and Thiel Burgess, (2012) mentioned that student responses drive constructivist lessons, alter the content and shift the instructional strategies which allow for teachable moments and encourage continued building of background information for EL's. The constructivist teacher plans lessons that include differentiated and authentic tasks with real world connections. These authentic tasks not only challenge the student, but provide opportunities to experiment, explore, and take educational risks (Heacox, 2002).

Garcia and Jensen (2007) pointed out that mainstream classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse. Educators in every aspect of the school community are seeking strategies that provide for academic achievement for a number of diverse learning profiles. For academic achievement to be possible it is critical to embrace diversity and create learning environments which are caring, challenging and enjoyable for all.

ELs and NCLB

Echevarria, Voght and Short (2004) divulged that with the increase in English Learner population in American classrooms there is a push for highly qualified teachers

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and an increased need to meet the demands of high stakes testing. Schools and teachers need to have the knowledge to reach and teach this diverse population.

One requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was to require schools to analyze test scores by subgroups such as socio-economic status, language, race and gender as part of the accountability measure (Aud et al., 2013). Lee (2005) reported that the main goal of NCLB is to close the achievement gap and meet the needs of low-achieving and at-risk students. It takes 5-7 years for an English learner to become proficient in the English language (Batt, 2008). Echevarria, Short and Powers (2006) made it known that in spite of being in the U.S. for only a year, ELs are still required to take the state-mandated tests in English. In addition, during a newcomers first year in Georgia classrooms, EL students are required to take the Math, and Science portion of the Georgia CRCT (GADOE, 2012).

English Learners

Every classroom is already diverse. It is made up of individuals with diverse learning styles, strengths, different learning interests and in today's classroom different language abilities as well. Chang and Center for American Progress (2012), reported that the several government entities are responsible for providing recommendations that addresses seven critical areas of No Child Left Behind with one of those areas being recommendations for English Language Learners. These entities agree that ELs should be exempt from state mandated assessments during the first three years of residency or until they have reached language proficiency whichever comes first. In Georgia, EL's are required to take the state-mandated math and science assessment the first year of residency, but are exempt from the Reading and Language Arts portion until their second

year of residency (GADOE, 2012). EL students who qualify as Limited English Proficient or who have EL-monitored status are allowed to have accommodations.

Accommodations are practices and procedures that provide the student with differentiated presentation, response, setting and scheduling of the state mandated test (GADOE, 2012). When students are identified as Limited English Proficient using the W-APT or WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test, they are then placed into the ESOL or English Speakers of Other Languages Program. According to WIDA (2014), the W-APT is given to students whose primary language is other than English. The W-APT results are then used as a placement test to provide EL students with extra support in an English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. The W-APT is one of the components of the WIDA assessment system (WIDA, 2014). Once a student qualifies for the ESOL program they qualify for testing accommodations. Testing accommodations are determined collaboratively by the classroom teacher and the ESOL teacher. The students ACCESS Tier level, language proficiency level and academic performance are considered when determining testing accommodations (GADOE, 2012).

In their report, Hamilton, Stecher, Vernez and Zimmer (2012) agreed that the accountability system does not allow enough time to meet the needs of students with limited English proficiency. As an answer to the increase in LEP students in the mainstream classrooms and accountability demands, WIDA has set into place a set of English language proficiency standards that address the need for ELs to become proficient in both academic as well as social language (Gottlieb, Craneley, & Cammilleri, 2007).

The WIDA standards are based on best practices for students who use English as a second language. The standards focus on language acquisition, combined with individual characteristics of the EL students such as age, grade, special education diagnosis, cultural and socioeconomic background as well as educational background (Gottlieb, Craneley, & Cammilleri, 2007).

Language development according to the World Class Instructional Design Assessments or WIDA is broken down into six stages of development.

1. Entering-mostly pictures and graphic representations.

2. Emerging-Phrases or short sentences.

3. Developing-Expanding sentence lengths, specific content area technical language.

4. Expanding-Varying sentence lengths, specific content area technical language.

5. Bridging-Varying sentence length and linguistic complexity with specialized content area technical language.

6. Reaching-Above and beyond Bridging level (WIDA, 2012).

The proficiency levels are determined by the ACCESS test or Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Learners assessment. The ACCESS test is given to K-12 students who are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Many English Learners continue to be considered limited English proficient or LEP until they reach Level 5-Bridging. According to Cook and Zhao (2011), it can take 5-7 to achieve this level of language proficiency.

Within any classroom, teachers could have several students of varying language proficiency levels. Being able to provide differentiated lessons for these students

adequately is a challenge. Based on language proficiency level teachers can use the "can do descriptors" (WIDA, 2013) to provide differentiated instruction activities based on the student's language proficiency level.

Fairbain and Jones-Vo (2010) pointed out that one major issue being discussed is providing quality education for ELs in the mainstream classroom. What constitutes appropriate instruction, assessment and content for ELs? They went on to mention that the best way to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom is differentiated instruction which considers EL language proficiency, cultural background, learning experiences, learning styles and modalities of learning as well as individual learning needs support. Tomlinson (2009) agreed that differentiated instruction is designed to support individual learning needs in a classroom of students with varied learning styles, learning abilities and varied backgrounds.

Several studies have recently shown the positive effects of using differentiated instruction. One such study conducted by Johnsen (2003) had student teachers who used learning centers to differentiate content and process by differing reading materials and reading strategies. The study discovered that students possessed higher engagement, motivation, excitement and satisfaction from the learning process as a result of implementing differentiated instruction. Similarly, Rock, Gregg, Ellis and Gable (2010) found that differentiated instruction consistently provided a positive increase in academic achievement across a wide range of targeted subgroups. Lawrence-Brown (2004) agreed that using differentiated instruction provides an environment in which a diverse group of students can receive appropriate instruction that increases academic achievement. Anderson (2007) further agreed, divulging that although research about differentiated

instruction as a specific practice is limited, there is concrete research confirmation that a number of the practices, strategies and processes found to be used within differentiated instruction increases academic achievement for all students.

<div align="center">**What is differentiated instructio**n?</div>

Tomlinson (2009) mentioned that when using differentiated instruction there should be four basic guiding principles; no two students learn at the same time or the same way. Teachers need to know their students, high expectations are needed, and teachers must consider student learning styles, interest, and readiness when planning for instruction. Tomlinson went on to encourage the use of differentiated instruction by stating that it is what is needed for students to have opportunities to use higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and reach a basic level of knowledge of the learning targets and also to gain a deeper understanding of the standards being learned. According to Tomlinson (2009) using differentiated instruction should involve making changes that promote student achievement in order to enable diverse ability students to learn with their peers. Heacox (2002) added that when using differentiated instruction correctly it is often the pairing of instruction with students of differing learning or proficiency levels which requires the standards to be delivered in a variety of ways.

Irujo (2004) mentioned that, when using differentiated instruction, it is not one-on-one instruction. Irujo went on to advise that when differentiated instruction is done correctly students are all working on the same learning target but learning is geared toward individual learning styles, modalities and interests. Tomlinson (2004) pointed out that when differentiating instruction the goal is to make allowances for each student's individual learning interests, learning style, modality of learning and other student

diversity and create a learning environment where all students master the same learning target in a different way.

Furthermore, Gregory and Kuzumich (2004) suggested that when using differentiated instruction should be driven by student data from formative and summative assessments to gain information about the student. This information is used to inform the teacher of individual learning needs. Heacox (2002) agreed, and further mentioned that the use of differentiation is a multi-step process that uses data to analyze student's needs in order to modify and adapt instruction to meet the needs, interests, and learning preferences. Similarly, Walpole and McKenna (2004) mentioned that continuous modifications of content, process, and products provide tiered instruction which includes whole group instruction, small group instruction and remediation, when needed is good practice when differentiating instruction. In addition, Bush (2006) expressed that differentiated instruction should be a learner-centered instructional model that focuses on the idea that acknowledges that each student has different motivation, abilities and learning styles. Similarly, Teele (2004) stated that teachers who differentiate instruction use data to build instruction based on intelligence and learning preference, rate of instruction and complexity of standards.

Tomlinson (2004) further added that differentiated instruction requires teachers to study their students systematically in order to match instructional approaches with learning needs. However, Levy (2008) advised that one way to meet this need is to collect ongoing data through formative and summative assessments such as; mini-assessments, end of unit assessments, performance tasks, exit slips and question answer techniques. The data collected provides the teacher with information to choose the

strategies needed to meet students where they are developmentally and provide support in order to increase student achievement.

Anderson (2007) stated that the use of differentiated instruction is a philosophy that provides curriculum and instruction of high quality that is relevant and engaging to the student's needs. When using differentiated instruction teachers need to implement a variety of instructional strategies and techniques. Differentiated classrooms should also use the time flexibly. Moreover, Anderson (2007) expressed they should create a learning environment in which students take responsibility of their learning creating a learning partnership rather than a teacher-led, lecture-style delivery.

Another study conducted by Luster (2008) compared student achievement of students being instructed using traditional whole group instruction to students from classrooms where differentiated instruction was being used. Moreover, Luster further found a correlation between the achievement of students who are instructed using whole group instruction and students in the differentiated classroom; with students in the differentiated classroom making higher achievement gains. This study further supported previous theorist's who believe that differentiated instruction meets the needs of students possessing a wide variety of learning needs. In addition, D'Angelo (2006) found that research described differentiated instruction as a teaching process which allows the teacher to meet the needs of the student in spite of their diverse background, readiness, learning style, or interest of the student. Similarly, Tomlinson (2005) mentioned that the main goal of differentiated instruction is to provide instruction that helps each learner be successful at learning.

Further, Forsten, Grant and Hollas (2003) suggested that using differentiated instruction offers the teachers the ability to consider multiple aspects of the students such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, ability levels, multiple intelligences and language proficiency. Similarly, Walpole and McKenna (2007) mentioned when using differentiating instruction; it provides an opportunity to differentiate lessons based on content, process and product. Differentiating content is determined by what the student needs to know or the standards that need to be mastered. Additionally, Walpole and McKenna disclosed that differentiating instruction for content during reading often included providing reading instruction at various reading levels, providing paired peer support, vocabulary instruction, scaffolding, and re-teaching or acceleration of learning through flexible small group instruction.

However, Walpole and McKenna (2007) also explained that differentiating instruction for process, is the tasks and activities which the students actively engage in to demonstrate learning mastery. Consequently, Johnsen (2003) agreed that when teachers differentiate for process they allow students to work independently, inflexible, cooperative learning groups, provide paired peer support and tier tasks with varying levels of support or scaffolding.

Differentiating product allows students to demonstrate how they have mastered the information being learned. Furthermore, Painter (2009) mentioned that students are given a choice as to how they will learn the information and prove their mastery of the standard being taught. Additionally, Robb (2008) suggested that in a differentiated classroom, teachers continually collect data to modify instruction to meet the students' needs. Similarly, Tomlinson (2005) agreed that the data collected by teachers drive the

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instruction. Furthermore, Robb (2008) went on to disclose that the data is then used to tailor instruction to the needs of their classroom. Even though no two classrooms are the same, effective mainstream teachers have four main driving principals; (1) high-quality curriculum; (2) data to drive instruction; (3) standards-based instruction and (4) ongoing formative and summative assessments.

Another main factor noted by D' Angelo (2006) is that within a differentiated classroom is flexible grouping. Similarly, Robb (2008) mentioned that teachers determine how content will be delivered whether in the whole group, small group or individual setting. In addition, Ankrum (2006) offered that flexible grouping allows the teacher to move students between groups, as needed, to maximize learning outcomes.

Moreover, Robb (2008) stressed that teachers in differentiated classrooms work to create a safe, supportive and respectful learning environment. Therefore, according to Gregory and Kuzimuch (2004) this environment allows the teacher to use data to discover the strengths and weaknesses of each student. Finally, according to Rice, teachers in a successful differentiated classroom have high expectations for all learners, they believe all students can learn and achieve.

Balanced Literacy

Fountas and Pinnell (2004) expressed the importance of differentiating instruction as part of a balanced literacy program. According to O'Day (2009), a balanced reading program is one that includes reading, writing, spelling, phonics and other research-based instructional practices. Balanced literacy instruction is multi-faceted and is not a one-size-fits all model of reading instruction with the goal being to move students toward reading independence.

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However, Ford (2011) pointed out that educational decisions often ignore the fact that one text, program, or set of learning materials will not meet the academic needs of the diverse mainstream classroom population. While a single program might be cost effective, it is not one-size-fits all. A single program will only prove to support some and ignore others.

Additionally, Van Staden (2011) defined balanced literacy as a set of instructional practices which provide reading instruction based on a mixture of whole group, small group and individual instruction that is driven by student data, needs and interests. Balanced literacy moves beyond just reading skills and includes writing and word study, as well to create independent lifelong readers.

According to Gibbons (2009) balanced literacy, was developed on the premises that all students can read. An effective, balanced literacy program includes all elements of literacy, as well as integrating other content areas. It provides the teacher with the resources to teach literacy skills and strategies which includes the five elements of reading. These elements include vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and comprehension. To sum it up, balanced literacy is a differentiated instructional approach to reading instruction that includes multiple strategies, programs and instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners.

Continuous Improvement Model

A continuous improvement model is a quality based approach that collects and analyzes data based on racial and socio-economic subgroups (White, 2005). Brazosport Texas was a leader in the educational community for continuous improvement models when they implemented the "Eight-Step-Process" recording measured achievement gains

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(Schmoker, 2011). Boudett, City and Murnane (2005) described a similar process with the Data-Wise Improvement process which is eight-steps to increase student achievement. Many other continuous improvement models exist, but all are based on Demings four-step quality cycle of Plan, Do, Check and Act, which was proposed in the 1950's,

- Plan: Provide for revisions to improve results

- Do: Implement the changes and collect more data

- Check: Monitor progress and re-evaluate the changes and report the results to the decision makers.

- Act: Decide if any changes need to be made.

Furthermore, Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Many (2006) indicated schools that implement a continuous improvement model create an environment conducive to a Professional Learning Community (PLC). They went on to mention that an intervention plan should be set into place to benefit all students. In order for teachers and administrators to provide support, they must engage in a process of continuous improvement that provides interventions for both teachers and students.

Effective Teachers and Differentiated Instruction

According to Wayne and Youngs (2003) studies are limited on this subject, but in the available research there is an agreement among researchers that effective teachers have a sense of self-assurance with the ability to create a learning environment which increases EL student achievement. In addition, Imbeau and Tomlinson (2010) offered that effective teachers are knowledgeable of pedagogy and implemented multiple research-based instructional strategies into the classroom and continually seek to improve

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their teaching and learning thorough scholarly journals, books and staff development. Furthermore, Tomlinson (2004), stated teachers who effectively use differentiated instruction provide a learning environment to meet the needs of diverse learners and create a connection between instruction and student abilities, background, language ability, culture, interest and socio-economic status. However, according to Bush (2006) due to this mixture of student abilities and backgrounds instruction is not always easy to differentiate and often teachers struggle with moving from theory to practice. Therefore, according to Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2008) teachers who are effective at teaching differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom do 10 things (1) They learn about the student, (2) Collect and used data to drive instruction, (3) Use a variety of research-based instructional practices, (4) Collaborate with all teachers who are involved with the education of the student, (5) Make content comprehensible for all students, (6) scaffold instruction, (7) Use flexible group instruction, (8) Have high expectation for all, (9) Have continual staff development and are lifelong learners. (10) Hold positive perceptions for teaching EL students.

Data-driven. Moore (2011) explained that data-driven instruction provides a baseline to set measurable instructional goals, provides data through frequent formative assessment and summative assessments, and promotes an environment that demands the use of best practices in teaching daily. In addition, Picciano (2006) described the components of data-driven instruction as collecting and analyzing data, measurable instructional goals, frequent assessment and progress monitoring, a supportive professional learning community and focused instructional interventions.

Moreover, McLeod (2005) explained data analysis as a form of quality control for

educational achievement. Data-driven educators use summative and formative data together. This will ensure that instruction is strategic, targeted, focused, and provides response to interventions by means of a student's greatest area of need. Further, McLeod went on to explain that data-driven educators understand the importance of utilizing multiple formative assessment measures and multiple indicators when assessing student success. Additionally, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) stated that teachers are being held accountable for all learners not only those learners who learn in spite of teachers, but those who learn because of teachers as well. Gregory and Kuzmich further disclosed that using data-driven instruction provides a baseline of student achievement. A base-line allows the teacher to know what learning targets the student has mastered, the student who has almost "got it", and know which students have not yet mastered the learning target. Moreover, Picciano (2006) mentioned that this puts the students first and provides a baseline for differentiated instruction. Once the data is pulled together acceleration, remediation or a response to intervention can be strategically planned based on the standards that students have met, are close to meeting, or need additional interventions in order to meet. Furthermore, Oberman and Symonds (2005) interjected that assessment is a key step in data-driven instruction. Ongoing formative and summative assessments provide the data to analyze the learning target being taught. Assessing before the learning targets are taught, while the standards are being taught and after the standards have been taught offers ongoing feedback as to the learning targets that each student has mastered or which standards still need further instruction for mastery.

Similarly, Moore (2011) disclosed that teachers can spot the student's strengths and weaknesses for all students, either as individuals or as a group. Teachers can then use

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data to inform and plan for instruction, which can be done in a variety of ways. Moore (2011) further stated teachers who are data-driven, are goal oriented; they identify and work toward key instructional goals. In addition, Love, Stiles, Mundry and DiRanna (2008) mentioned that data helps teachers set the right goals for action and, through constant feedback, can use data to guide changes to instruction as it happens. With data in mind, Cosemius and O'Neill (2002) pointed out that data-driven teachers should provide opportunities for SMART goals to set for themselves and their students. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-Bound. SMART goals should offer a baseline, have a measurable target and be able to be mastered in a specific time frame.

Moreover, Moore (2011) mentioned that many teachers feel powerless to impact student learning outcomes significantly. Data-driven instruction provides a way for teachers to take back the power to increase student achievement. Response to data provides an opportunity to collaborate, differentiate, individualize instruction and provide meaningful, engaging activities, which are the key to successful learning. However, White (2005) cautioned that when these strategies do not work, it is time to re-evaluate not only student achievement but the teaching strategies as well. Providing a time for reflection is essential when adjusting teaching to meet the academic needs of all students; reflecting on teaching, reflecting on goals, reflecting on data and reflecting on what you can do next to make sure every student is successful.

Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) provided information that high-stakes testing data only provides teachers with one small piece of evidence about student learning. Love, Stiles, Mundry and DiRanna (2008) interjected if teachers do not know how to interpret

data correctly this can cause flawed conclusions. Similarly, Moore (2011) agreed by stating that teachers are swamped with data. The difficulty teachers have is analyzing and making instructional decisions about the data. Many teachers collect or are provided with the data but do not how to analyze the data to inform their instruction. In addition, Moore (2011) suggested that in order to analyze data effectively, teachers need first to make sure the data they have is current. This type of data comes from ongoing formative assessments, performance tasks, and assessments of learning targets, quizzes and end of unit exams. Also, teachers need to be given the time and assistance to quickly and accurately analyzed data in order for data to inform instruction.

Finally, Love, Stiles, Mundry and DiRanna (2008) mentioned that effective teachers care about data because they care about the students learning and success. They further interjected that data provides the teacher with the opportunity for celebration as well as the opportunity for administration to celebrate a teacher's accomplishments.

Learn about the Student. Irujo (2007) surmised that teachers are not able to effectively meet the educational needs of their students if they do not fully know about the student. EL students have a variety of educational backgrounds. Much like their native English speaking peers EL students possess a wide race of academic skills. Meanwhile, according to Tomlinson (2001) creating a classroom community is an essential part of making differentiated instruction successful in the mainstream classroom for all students. Similarly, Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) believe that responsive or differentiated teaching means the teacher is more familiar with students' learning needs. In addition, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) propose that it is impossible for teachers to plan instruction unless they have collected data to know the learner. Moreover, Hambre and Pianta,

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(2005) advised that the classroom community is one of the most influential communities in a students' life. When a teacher takes the time to learn about the student; knowing the students educational background, learning style, interest, multiple intelligence preferences and home environment, it provides an opportunity for a classroom that fosters mutual respect, classroom participating and student success. According to Tomlinson (2005), when students basic needs are met then benefits include a sense of safety, belonging, increased self-esteem, increased classroom participation, and the inclusion. Similarly, Hambre and Pianta (2005) believe that a teacher should create an environment that fosters a caring, supportive community of learners, when this is achieved students tend to be more concerned about their peers, are more skilled and conflict resolution and promote an anti-bulling environment.

Moreover, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) feel that getting to know the student not only benefits the student but the teacher as well. When a teacher has data about the uniqueness of each student they can then plan student-centered lessons that provide learning tasks, which meet the needs of diverse learners. In addition, Fairbain and Jones-Vo (2010) observed that when teachers take the time to learn about the learner this in turn is creating an environment that fosters a sense of values in the student as an individual. Further, became connected to their teachers and each other, establishing a classroom learning community where all students including EL students and their English speaking peers feel safe to make mistakes and learn from them.

Student learning traits. Scigliano and Hipsky (2010) added that teachers should develop an individual learning profile for each student, which lists the students learning modality preference, as well as an assessment of the students multiple intelligence. Teachers can

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use students' modalities and multiple intelligence preferences to tailor instruction to meet their individual needs. According to Tomlinson (2003), the learning profile should not only include learning style and intelligence preference but culture as well. Similarly, Bush (2006) mentioned that knowing the students learning profile focuses on how the student learns best, providing the teacher with invaluable information to promote an environment which encourages students to take charge of their learning. In addition, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) stated that the key is to gather the data needed to learn about the student's uniqueness and then respond to that information by creating a learning environment that will promote student academic growth and self-awareness. They feel the first step in learning about the student is to discover the students learning style or modalities of learning. According to Heacox (2002), using Gardner's multiple intelligence is a way for teachers to determine students' strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, Lombardi (2008) expressed the importance of using learning styles as being only one part of effective practices. Students need choice of one learning condition over another to be successful. In addition, Celcia-Murcia (2001) defined learning styles as the strategy or the way the students master the learning target or a new language.

Furthermore, according to Bas (2008), to effectively teach any student necessitates the teacher to have at least a basic understanding of multiple intelligences that are especially important when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. Similarly, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) stressed that collecting data to know the learner such, as learning traits, can then provide the teacher with the information needed to tailor their lesson plans to accommodate all students, including the ELs, in the mainstream classroom. Moreover, according to Tomlinson (2004) when a teacher recognizes that

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learners are different in multiple ways, and need different kinds of activities and tasks to achieve, then the teacher will create a learning environment that is meaningful and enjoyable to all students.

Abdallah (2006) described Gardner's multiple intelligences and multiple ways to be smart and provided the following descriptions for each of the intelligences.

- Verbal/Linguistic: The student can use language effectively both in written and oral form.

- Visual/Spatial: The student has the skill of being able to recognize; form, space, color and shape to graphically represent ideas.

- Body/Kinesthetic: Can use the body to solve problems, and express feeling and ideas.

- Interpersonal: The student can understand others feelings, emotions and intentions and can respond to these effectively.

- Logical/Mathematical: The student uses numbers effectively and does will with reasoning and problem solving.

- Musical: The student can recognize rhythm, pitch and melody and learns best from songs, patterns and rhythm.

- Intrapersonal: The students have an acute knowledge of themselves they are reflective and set goals.

Similarly, Gregory and Chapman (2002) described the modalities of learning or learning styles as visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile.

- Visual learners learn best by observation and can recall what they have and usually love to read.

- Auditory learners learn best through taking notes and prefer to listen and can recall what they have heard and often repeat words out loud for memorization.

- Kinesthetic learners learn best by doing it. They learn from teaching others and learn through experience and physical activity.

- Tactile learners learn by touching and manipulating objects and prefer personal connections to topics.

In addition, Tomlinson (2004) mentioned that most students use a combination of the different learning styles but often prefer one learning style over the others. Further adding, it is an advantage for teachers to know the students learning styles to create lessons that provide all students with a choice of using different learning styles to master the learning target. Moreover, Hill and Flynn (2006) suggested that learning styles refer to the way a person receives stores and retrieves information. According to Gregory and Kuzmich (2004), it is important for teachers to know the students learning style. It will help the teacher understand how a student learns best, identify strategies that will help the student learn and provide information to help the student have greater academic success in the mainstream classroom.

Finally, Tomlinson (2004) stressed that when teachers do not take into account students learning styles students often become bored, inattentive or overwhelmed when trying to master the learning targets. Tomlinson (2004) continued by saying that students may lose interest in the subject, or school or become a behavior problem. Therefore having an understanding of the student's unique learning style; teachers can maximize students learning potential.

Word Study

One alternative to traditional spelling instruction is word study. Word Study is developmental and is based on learning word patterns instead of rote memorization (Bear, 2000). Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton and Johnston (2008) described word study as a phonics-based program that allows students to learn how words work in the English language. Furthermore, it allows students to look at the words and build a meaningful understanding of how words work. When using word study students are assessed and placed into one of four developmental spelling stages; (1) Letter Name (LN), (2) Within Word (WW), (3) Syllable Juncture (SJ), and Derivational Constance (DC). During the LN stage students learn beginning word sounds and blends, word families, and short vowels. This stage usually coincides with learning to read. When students are in the WW stage, they focus on short vowels and are introduced to long vowels as well as patterns in one-syllable words. Within this state, students should be able to read and spell words automatically because of their knowledge of letter-sound and short-vowel patterns. In the SJ, stage students begin to learn about the conventions of joining syllables in words. Students are also introduced to prefixes and suffixes. The final stage DC allows students to learn that the meaning of the word, as well as the sound and pattern, are important in the spelling of words.

Similarly, Williams, Phillip-Birdsong, Hufnagel, Hungler and Lundstorm (2009) defined word study as a hands-on approach to activities and leaves behind traditional memorization of spelling words. Students are working with hands-on activities and are actively engaged in a variety of hand-on activities or word work. These research-based

hands-on activities include information learned pertaining to alphabetic, patterns and meaningful layers of English orthography.

In addition, Beckham-Hungler and Williams (2003) provided research findings based on commonly misspelled words. After the students had completed the research project, they students were able to spell the words correctly the majority of the time, as well as spell words with the same spelling patterns and features correctly.

Moreover, Williams and Hufnagel (2005) found that after conducting spelling instruction using words study, all of the students within the study used some of the strategies that were taught. Other findings within this study support the use of flexible small groups during word study instruction to meet the needs of students with varying levels of literacy and language knowledge. Splitting students into homogeneous flexible small groups, based on developmental level, provides learning of spelling to be done on an instructional level rather than too high or too low.

Similarly, Williams and Lundstrom (2007) further studied word study and discovered that students' orthographic knowledge increased when linking word study with student writing. According to Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, and Association for Supervision and Curriculum, Development

(2007) EL students need to understand the relationship between letters and sounds. A phonemic understanding will enable them to use and apply their knowledge of words to not only spelling, but writing, reading and speaking. In addition, Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, and ASCD (2007) pointed out that English learners must learn letter-sound relationships between multiple speech sounds and hundreds of different spelling that are used to represent the sounds. When using word study students have to apply

strategies learned to irregular and regular words in and out of context. Therefore, word

study provides an opportunity to teach systematically teach, with active student

engagement, the relationships between letter sounds and patterns that represent the

sounds of spoken words. Students can then use these skills to recognize these patterns

quickly and apply them to not only print, but spoken language as well.

Flexible Small Group Instruction

Ford (2011) pointed out that grouping practices have always been problematic.

Grouping is not a problem, but use of a single grouping pattern is a problem. In the not so

far past students were placed into reading groups and never left that group. These

homogeneous small groups usually meant that many readers did not have access to

receive the same quality instruction as their peers. Because of this grouping style for

students, labels and stigma were attached producing negative feelings about reading and

school and producing nonreaders due to their frustration in being instructed using text

that did not match their needs. Because of this flexible grouping was implemented.

Moreover, Tomlinson (2005) advised that an effective way to differentiate

instruction is to balance instruction between whole group and flexible group instruction.

In addition, Fountas and Pinnell (2004) revealed that using flexible small groups it

provides teachers with the environment to accommodate all learners. Additionally, Diller

(2007) defined flexible small groups as student grouping that is fluid with changes taking

placing on a frequent basis. Further pointing out that teachers who use flexible grouping

realize that reading achievement is not the only a result of the text but the learning

environment as well. Moreover, Moore (2011) mentioned that when teachers plan for

flexible small groups they should use data to inform their instruction and group students

based on their strengths and weaknesses, doing this step will make the groups fluid. As the student's master learning need remediation or acceleration of learning targets. Similarly, Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2008) interjected that flexible small group instruction provides ample opportunities for EL students to have peer interaction within more than one group and make available opportunities for students to receive explicit, intensive instruction. Small group instruction provides further support for the acceleration needed for academic achievement. They further informed readers that flexible small groups provide collaborative opportunities with peers who may be more proficient than they are which provides for meaningful discussions.

The perceived goal of flexible small grouping is to provide the student with multiple opportunities to interact with peers while all working toward the same learning target. Flexible small groups are ever changing as students are assessed, and data is analyzed. Students are placed into groups that will provide them with the environment and peer interaction that is conducive to increased achievement.

Scaffold Instruction

Scaffolding instruction is another common practice used to increase EL student achievement. Scaffolding, according to Hill and Flynn (2006), is a way to nudge a student to achieve at a higher level. When scaffolding with EL students teachers should model, ask challenging questions, and provide explicit direct instruction. Moreover, Gibbons (2009) pointed out that using scaffolding with EL students will encourage them to learn new content, concepts and to develop both academic and social language. While scaffolding instruction, learners should be required to solve more demanding tasks than they would independently. Reyes and Vallone (2008) defined scaffolding as "a way to

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provide support through modeling, feedback, instruction, and questioning (p179)." The main idea of scaffolding is to provide support for all students to be successful today, and tomorrow they will be able to do the same task independently. In addition, Reyes and Vallone (2008) attest that many mainstream teachers provide scaffolding accommodation to provide EL students with the environment to be academically successful.

Furthermore, Olson and Platt (2000) discussed scaffolding as breaking the instruction up into manageable pieces and providing support for each piece. Mainstream teachers provide support for activities that are just beyond the students' academic ability to increase student achievement and achieve mastery. Once a student achieves mastery then, the support is decreased, and the students gain responsibility for their growth. Moreover, Larkin (2002) suggests that according to research on scaffolding there are eight main things effective mainstream teachers use when scaffolding instruction. These mainstream teachers: (1) focus on curriculum to plan appropriate learning targets, (2) provide clear learning targets in student friendly language, (3) continually monitor student progress based on formative and summative assessment data, (4) use data to inform the accommodations needed for students to be academically successful, (5) Provide activities that keep the student actively engaged throughout the process, (6) provide the student with ongoing effective feedback to formative and summative assessments, (7) create a safe learning environment where all students feel safe to take academic risks, and (8) promote a learning environment that encourages students to learn independently and take responsible for their own learning.

Instructional Conversations

When teachers create a safe learning environment instructional conversations can contribute to student success by encouraging students to invent, create, imagine, take risks and dig for deeper meanings (Bruss, 2009). In addition, Dalton (2007) defines Instructional Conversation as well-planned teacher-led conversation with clear instructional goals between small groups of students. This strategy focuses on the content area for EL students' academic language development through providing an environment where students are encouraged to not only participate in the conversation between peers and the teacher, but initiate academic conversations as well. Dalton (2007) went on to note that Instructional Conversation provides support for:

- direct instruction (will be embedded in the conversation)

- guided practice

- checking for understanding and correcting misconceptions

- higher-order thinking skills

- problem solving

- Risk-free learning environment

Moreover, Chapin, O'Conner and Canavan-Anderson (2009) articulated that teachers can often identify misunderstandings that surface during instructional conversations. English learners need time and practice to develop their language skills. When instructional conversation is implemented into the daily routine, putting thoughts into words encourages students to clarify their thinking. Furthermore, Chapin, O'Conner and Canavan-Anderson (2009) found that using instructional conversations may promote an increase in the ability to think logically. In addition, Williams (2001) believes that

instructional conversation includes such skills as inferring, compare and contrast, classifying, problem solving and evaluating, which often lends itself to deeper language development as higher order thinking skills are used. In typical mainstream classroom EL students sit silent, do not participate and have limited instructional interactions. In a classroom where instructional conversation is present this is not the case. Moreover, Saunders and Goldenberg (2007) interjected that in a classroom that incorporates instructional conversation EL students are given ample opportunities to practice their language skills in an authentic, interactive environment. However, this conversation does not mean that students are free to talk about whatever they want. Essentially the discussion is facilitated by the teacher using a number of discussion strategies. Similarly, Mcintyer, Kyle, and Moore (2006) believe that for instructional conversation to be effective it should be well planned with question prompts predetermined to elicit conversation about the text. In small group instructional conversation the teacher seeks to expand on students understanding of the text my incorporating questions that challenge, rationalize and seek information to further increase the use of higher order thinking skills.

Higher Order Thinking Skills

Paziotopoulous and Kroll (2004) defined higher order thinking skills (HOTS) also referred as a process of thinking critically where students actively engage in analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing information. Students think and use background knowledge, academic learning, as well as other resources to draw their conclusions. Further, Paziotopoulous and Kroll (2004) went on to disclose that one of the biggest challenges facing teachers when using HOTS is building on EL students background knowledge and vocabulary in order for them to be successful in critically thinking and critically

questioning. In addition, Schneider (2002) insisted that it is vital for teachers to furnish students with the skills to think critically. Going on to say critical thinking skills should be implemented to foster critical thinking throughout their educational career and on into adulthood. Similarly, Sternberg and Grigorenko (2007) felt that it is imperative to teach critical thinking skills which are often referred to as science process skills across the curriculum. These skills include observation, measurement, classification, communication, and prediction. Furthermore, they believe that teaching students to think critically is the basis of true learning.

In the 1950's Bloom and his colleagues developed what is called Blooms Taxonomy to identify both higher and lower thinking. This taxonomy included six levels of cognition; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Therefore, Anderson and Karthwohl (2001) revised the classification system to include creating and changed the categories from nouns to verbs. Renaming the six categories as follows; remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating expressing the idea that thinking is active and representing what a student can do. A student must remember before they understand, understand before they can apply the knowledge, apply the knowledge to learning before they can analyze it; a student must be able to use all of the previous stages in order to create.

- Remembering is the ability to recall information from previously learned material. This level of questioning is most frequently used with ELs (Haynes, 2009).
- Understanding is being able to prove mastery of the learning target and being able to interpret it (Haynes, 2009). This level of critical thinking is

best demonstrated through classroom discussions (Chapin, O'Conner and Anderson, 2009).

- Applying refers to the student being able to take the information learned and use in it a new way other than the way it was learned. This level of critical thinking can be demonstrated thorough a performance tasks (Haynes, 2009). According to Echevarria, Voght and Short (2008) during this level of critical thinking ELs may need scaffolding in the form of a word bank.

- Analyzing refers to the ability of the student to break down learning and make connections to information learned. This level often provides a challenge for ELs due to limited background knowledge and vocabulary. Therefore, scaffolding should be used to encourage students to classify, compare and contrast, sequence, and categorize material being learned (Haynes, 2007).

- Evaluating is the level of HOTS in itself that is the ability to think critically (Reyes & Vallone, 2008). Reyes and Vallone believed that this level of HOTS creates the highest level of student achievement because it contains elements of all the previous levels of critical thinking.

- Creating refers to the ability to take all previous levels of thinking and put them together to make something new (Haynes, 2007). Haynes further stated that at this level of critical thinking most ELs will need scaffolding to be successful.

Moreover, Haynes and Zacarian (2010) stressed that teachers must teach to the highest levels of Blooms and scaffold to the lowest. They continued to say that ELs should be asked questions from all levels even though some of the higher levels may be difficult due to language and vocabulary deficiencies. In addition, Hill and Flynn (2006) suggested that teachers often use questioning. This is done so that ELs can be provided with the interaction and conversation needed for them to practice the English language. Hill and Flynn cautioned that teachers need to make sure they are asking questions that are appropriate therefore questions should be carefully planned.

Furthermore, Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001) provided research that teachers are often unaware of how often they are questioning. Teachers often ask 45 to 150 questions every half hour but only at the knowledge level rather than at a higher level of questioning to require the student to think, analyze and evaluate their knowledge. Further, this happens most often with ELs because most mainstream teachers believe that they cannot understand the higher level of questioning. According to Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001) this is could not me more inaccurate. Mainstream teachers need to be mindful of the student's language proficiency and take time to plan out questions in language that ELs will understand. Even though, ELs have limited English they need to be challenged academically and with questioning that will cause them to think deeply and to increase language proficiency as well as academic achievement.

Finally, Reyes and Vallone (2008) refer to critical thinking as critical pedagogy that is a way of teaching that allows students to view the world through a "critical lens." They went on to discuss, in a critical classroom meaningful discussions are imperative and, "students are not viewed as blank slates on which the teacher prescribes knowledge

but rather a co-travelers on a journey toward personal reflection and societal

transformation (p79)." In other words within a critical thinking classroom the teacher has

created an environment that is safe to take academic risks, and the teacher becomes a

facilitator of learning not a teacher of learning.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is another important aspect of teaching that effective

teachers use on a daily basis (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2006). Stiggins,

Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis, further explained that formative assessment is a process

for learning where the students need to (1) know where they are going, (2) know where

they are, and (3) know how to close the gap. In addition, Brookhart (2008) defined

formative assessment as a means of data gathered from learning tasks and used the

development of the mastery of academic knowledge and skills. Furthermore, Popham

(2006) redefined formative assessment as a process that is used by both the teachers and

students and teachers during the instructional process to continually inform instruction

provide feedback for students and for teachers to accommodate for student needs in order

to increase academic achievement. Moreover, Burke (2010) refers to formative

assessment as "assessment for learning" as opposed to summative assessment that is

"assessment of learning." Additionally, Stiggins Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis (2006)

revealed that when using formative assessment teachers are constantly gathering data

from classroom activities and assessments. Teachers then use this evidence to make

decisions daily that drive their learning. Furthermore, Brookhart (2008) mentioned that

when teachers and students actively use the formative assessment process they

collaborate to focus on learning targets, survey where their current work is and where

their work is in relation to where they need to be to master the learning target. In addition, Popham (2006) indicated that formative assessment uses observation protocols and diagnostic measure to provide teachers with up to the minute detailed information about the students' progress in mastering the learning target.

Moreover, Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis (2006) also pointed out that found within formative assessment is continual effective feedback, as well as students taking charge of their learning. Further, Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis believed that students need to be provided with clear learning targets before beginning to teach which provides the students with clear goals. Learning targets should be worded in student-friendly language. Exemplars and examples of an anonymous work that does not meet the learning target need to be made available and strengths and weakness in the work needs to be discussed. Additionally, Brookhart (2008) divulged that quality descriptive feedback provides students with goals to improve their learning as opposed to a numerical score or letter grade. Similarly, Moss and Brookhart (2009), offered that descriptive feedback promotes the idea that learning is important. Descriptive feedback leads to improved learning in comparison to feedback implying to the student that it's important to look good or be better than others and believe effective descriptive feedback points out strengths and weaknesses. It is more effective when strengths as well as areas which are targets for needs improvement. Additionally, Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis (2006) also feel it is important to teach students to be active in their learning by self-assessing and setting goals.

High expectations/Teacher Perceptions

In the United States mainstream, classroom teachers are being faced with increased language and cultural diversity. With educational budget cuts many districts ESOL (English Speakers of Other Language) programs in public schools do not have the needed faculty to support this diverse population. Therefore, the task falls upon the mainstream classroom teacher to provide the needed support in order for these students to be successful (Howard, 2003).

Moreover, Youngs and Youngs (2001), provided research on the attitudes of mainstream teachers in regards to ELs in the classroom. Many of the teachers within the study reported they had neutral to slightly positive attitudes toward teaching ELs. Within the study, predictors included; education experience, foreign language courses, EL training, and experience with teaching EL students. They further stated for mainstream teachers to continue to have positive attitudes about teaching ELs they should have ongoing staff development such as EL related courses and multicultural education (Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Furthermore, a more recent study conducted by Reeves (2006), suggests that mainstream teachers still reported that they were slightly positive to neutral in regards to teaching EAL students. The study did uncover that mainstream teacher attitudes toward students with very limited English proficiency who speak little, or no English was slightly negative to negative (Reeves, 2006). Additionally, among the mainstream teachers surveyed, Reeves found that only about half of the teachers were interested in EL related staff development or training courses. Reeves believed the lack of interest for EL training might be from teachers' mindset which included wanting limited staff

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development, irrelevancy of differentiating instruction for ELs. Further, Reeves discovered that many of the teachers' perceptions of second language learners went against current research. These teachers believed that two years was adequate for students to be academic language proficient compared to the research-based 4-7 years for academic English proficiency (Eshevarria, Vogt and Short, 2008).

Furthermore, Jennings (2007) focused on pre-service teachers and teacher preparation programs across the United States. In addition, Jennings (2007) discovered that faculty or teacher preparation programs felt they did not have time to fit EL student preparedness into the course schedule. However, diversity issues such as socioeconomic challenges, special needs, gender, and sexual orientation were included. According to Jennings (2007), there is a lack of research to determine if there is a correlation between teacher preparedness to teach ELs in the mainstream and teacher attitudes and effectiveness of these teachers when faced with this challenge in the classroom.

Review of Methodological Issues

The main purpose of educational research is the acquisition of new knowledge (Merriam, 2009). The majority of educational research has been based on a quantitative approach (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2003). According to Merriam (1998), in qualitative studies the researcher is the primary instrument used to gather and analyze data to generate and to understand about the problem being studied. A qualitative study has the potential to provide "rich" and "thick" descriptions of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2005). By using qualitative methods, multiple inquiries and interpretations of teachers' knowledge pertaining to differentiated instruction and its role in the mainstream classroom. Qualitative research is suggested for this study in order to explore the

experiences and perceptions of elementary teachers and their experiences when using

differentiated instruction to educate ELs in the mainstream classroom. The main

distinguishing factor of basic qualitative research is that it allows individuals to create a

reality in their community (Merriam, 2009). Merriam describes a basic qualitative study

as "constructivism" (Merriam, 2009, p.22). Which means; the researcher is seeking to not

discover the meaning but construct the meaning of the phenomena for those involved

within it (Merriam, 2009). Merriam suggests that a person conducting a basic qualitative

research study would be interested in what people deduce from their experiences. Further,

they take from their experiences and states that the overall purpose of a basic qualitative

study is to be aware of how people logically analyze their lives and their experiences.

The purpose of basic qualitative research study is to contribute to the educational

knowledge base by providing a descriptive picture of educational practices and

instructional decisions effective third through fifth-grade teachers use and plan for

differentiated instruction in reading for EL student achievement. Qualitative research is

being used since in order to understand the processes in which effective teachers plan for

and implement instructional strategies using differentiated instruction. According to

Merriam (2002), qualitative research is appropriate if the researcher is trying to

understand processes and discover how things happen. Creswell (2009) states,within the

qualitative research process the researcher focuses on," learning and the meaning that the

participants hold about the problem or issue (pg.175), therefore providing the researcher

the ability to collect data in a natural setting. Marriam (2009) described qualitative

research as a form of inquiry that analyzes information conveyed through dialogue and

actions in natural settings. It is used to uncover significant information not communicated

in quantitative data about beliefs, values, feelings, and motivations that motivate the behaviors the researcher is interested in understanding.

Purposeful sampling is used when a researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight from a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, the researcher must select the sample which can provide the most information about the phenomenon being studied (Merriam, 2009).

Analyzing qualitative data using qualitative software will help to determine reoccurring themes and data saturation (Creswell, 2009). According to Lewins and Silver (2007), CAQDAS or Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis programs are used to make sense of the plethora of qualitative data by providing assistance with developing a coding system, coding, organizing data.

Synthesis of Research Findings

One important conclusion from the literature is that, within differentiated instruction there is a multitude of supplemental programs, processes and strategies. These multiple processes provide a learning environment that is conducive for not only ELs, but for native English speakers to increase reading achievement. The interesting findings from the literature reveal that using these multiple processes allows the EL student to be taught reading skills similarly to their native English speaking peers within the mainstream classroom.

Much of the literature review refers to research on differentiated instruction and its related processes, programs and strategies involved in the mainstream classroom. Much of the current research on these only mentions their use with ELs in passing. The programs and strategies and processes within the literature review showed improved

student achievement for all students including English Learners. Furthermore, the literature review provides evidence that differentiated instruction and the multiple strategies, process and strategies within work to increase EL student achievement, as well as the achievement of their native English speaking peers. Although the list of strategies, programs, processes and curricula that could be included within differentiated instruction is not exhausted scaffolding, word study, formative assessment, flexible small group instruction and instructional conversation all have shown improved academic achievement with ELs.

Critique of Previous Research

The literature explored within this literature review confirmed that the use of differentiated instruction can provide a learning environment which promotes increased academic achievement for all students within the mainstream classroom. According to Anderson (2007) differentiated instruction research is limited, but the research that has previously been done provides evidence of a number of processes and strategies which need to be present for differentiated instruction to be successful. These include but are not limited to; good classroom management, active, engaged students, student self-accountability, and flexible small grouping. Topics that have been researched in relation to differentiated instruction include; at-risk students, mixed ability groups, students categorized as special education and gifted (Tieso, 2005, McQuarrie, McRae and Stack-Cutler, 2008). Furthermore, Lawrence-Brown (2004) explained that differentiated instruction creates an environment of increased student achievement for a wide range of mixed abilities from special education to students who are considered as gifted.

Within this research, the focus has rarely been on using differentiated instruction with ELs. Research has identified the student population as diverse or mixed-ability and referred to meeting the needs of all learners. Readers were left to assume that this includes the English Learner demographic. Additionally, Wagner and King (2012) looked at educating ELs while using differentiated instruction as an ESL or bilingual teacher but not within the mainstream classroom. While the research study provided evidence of increased academic achievement for ELs, there is still a need to look at using differentiated instruction within the mainstream classroom with this demographic. Questions still arise as to how mainstream teachers differentiate instruction for ELs as well as what it is like to differentiate ELs in the mainstream classroom.

Chapter 2 Summary

Schools across the United States are changing more and more English language learners are sitting in today's classrooms. Schools and teachers are being held to higher expectations in spite of this added challenge. Therefore, this literature review was conducted in an effort to find effective differentiated instructional practices for English learners in the mainstream classroom. A plethora of studies have been done throughout the years on differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction has often been researched. Researchers have looked into its value to meet the needs of all students, but little research has been done focusing on the benefits of differentiated instruction for learners of limited English proficiency in the mainstream classroom. With the need for increased student achievement and higher accountability for mainstream teachers there is a need to research differentiation and its impact on students with limited English proficiency in the mainstream classroom.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Chapter 3

With the increase in Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in mainstream classrooms, there has been a push for more rigorous teacher accountability. Teachers with a high number of ELs in their mainstream classrooms need the tools to create an environment in which all students have the opportunity for increased achievement (Abedi, 2004). Batt (2008) voiced that the EL subgroup deserves special attention in the educational community for two reasons. The first being, that ELs are the fastest growing subgroup in the US. In Georgia alone, there has been a 650% increase in EL population since 2002 (Kim & Sauderman, 2004). The second reason was that; this subgroup is at a disadvantage on nearly every standardized test as well as academic achievement because of their classification as LEP (Abedi, 2004). The ability to provide effective mainstream instruction for English Learners that will close the achievement gap between them and their Native English speaking peer is alone a unique challenge. There is a gap in current literature available to help mainstream teachers with this challenge. The topic for this research study was chosen due to the large population of ELs in today's mainstream classrooms. As a result of, this research study was conducted with teachers who teach in a Title I school in the Southeastern United States with a large population of English learners.

This topic is important due to the implementation of the NCLB (2001) and the influx of immigrants who speak English as a second language in the American classroom. This basic qualitative study was conducted in order to contribute to the current literature by discovering what effective mainstream teachers perceptions are of teaching ELs in the

mainstream classroom. As well as, what they do on a daily basis to meet the needs of ELs within their classrooms.

According to Creswell (2005) when a researcher poses a question a research method, the researcher needs to choose a research method which will adequately answer their questions. Merriam (2002) stated that qualitative studies are often done due to a lack of theory that clearly explains the phenomenon of interest. Merriam further added that qualitative research is often used in an attempt to understand a happening. The research questions presented within this research study were through a concern of the high numbers of ELs in the mainstream classroom and how to meet their academic needs.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore what effective mainstream teachers, who use differentiated instruction, do during reading instruction through interviews to determine what processes, strategies and techniques they use when teaching EL students. What is an effective teacher? Current literature has many different descriptions of what an effective teacher is or does. One definition of an effective teacher describes an effective teacher as a teacher whose students achieve at an acceptable rate. By their definition this is at least one academic year of growth (Bryk, Harding, & Greenberg, 2012). Gregory and Kuzmich, (2004) relates effective teaching to the ability to provide instruction that meets the needs of diverse groups while incorporating instructional activities to meet the need of different students with different abilities. While doing this, they can incorporate standards-based instruction and assess for mastery. They also associated an effective teacher as a collector of data to inform instruction. Including data that measures student growth from the beginning of the year to the end of

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the year (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2004). Goe, Bell, and Little (2008), stated that effective teachers do five things. They have high expectations for all, contribute to a positive academic behavior including attitudes, social outcomes and promotion, use a multitude of researched strategies for planning and implementing into instruction, contribute to classroom development and use effective teaching strategies.

Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010) stated that an effective mainstream teacher is a teacher that gets to know the student, has high expectations, uses an array of research-based strategies, uses a variety of formative and summative assessments, collaborates with peers, uses flexible small grouping. An effective mainstream teacher also differentiates for product, process and content. For the purpose of this study, an effective teacher was defined as a teacher who incorporates all of these things and had at least 80% of students passing the state-mandated test in reading. The researcher sought to explore the instructional strategies, approaches, supports and interventions used daily in the classroom by effective teachers to increase EL academic achievement. This basic qualitative study will focus on educators at one elementary school in the Southeastern U.S. that are meeting this challenge. The school where the study took place had a population of 975 students. The language breakdown consisted of 81% of the students speaking English as a second language and consisted of 59% population of students considered EL students (Power School, 2012). Hill and Flynn (2006) mentioned that in there is a lack of research on differentiated instruction, as it applies to ELs in the mainstream classroom. Within this study the researcher discovered how the mainstream teachers in grades 3 through 5 effectively planned for differentiated instruction, what they perceived as effective data collection, content instruction, research-based instructional

strategies and assessment for ELs. The research study also discovered how these teachers keep the educational content relevant, rigorous and engaging which is important in creating educational achievement (Fairbairn and Jones-Vo, 2010). Which included, how effective teachers differentiated content of instruction, the processes and techniques used to help make sense of a topic and the products produced by the students that demonstrate their learning to increase EL student achievement (Imbeau & Tomlinson 2010).

Research Questions

The central research question within this research study was: What differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices are used by mainstream teachers who have at least 80% of their ELs meeting or exceeding in reading on the state mandated test? These questions were:

S1: How do teachers use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

S2: How do teachers describe their experiences with differentiated instruction?

S3: What processes do teachers go through when differentiating product, process and content during differentiated instruction?

S4: What training do teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching EL students?

S5: What challenges do teachers have when using differentiated instruction?

Research Design

Creswell (2005) explained that qualitative research is educational research. The main purpose of educational research is the acquisition of new knowledge (Merriam, 2009). Merriam described a basic qualitative study as "constructivism (pg, 22)." The researcher is seeking to construct the meaning of the phenomena for those involved

within it. Therefore, a researcher who is using basic qualitative research would be interested in the participants' real world experiences with the phenomena as well as how these people interpret and analyze their experiences within the phenomena (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative researchers study people by observing them in their natural settings, or by analyzing the cultural symbols they use (Merriam, 2009). The researcher is the main tool for this type of research. As the main tool for research, qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings the people bring to them (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research allows the researcher to bring together a variety of observed materials describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. The end product of qualitative research provides the researcher with a collection of narrative images, understandings, and interpretations of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2009). This collection provides a connection to the parts and stresses the meaningful relationships that operate in the environment being studied (Merriam, 2009). During qualitative research, the researcher records data fully and accurately without bias refraining from imposing their assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the emerging data (Creswell, 2009). Refraining from having bias during research can be accomplished through peer review and member checks. This peer review and member checking can help the researcher see biases they might have missed (Merriam, 2009).

Therefore, basic qualitative research was used to discover and explore what processes strategies and instructional techniques effective teachers use in the mainstream classroom to meet EL needs. Using semi-formal interviews, the researcher asked open-ended questions to discover the answer to the primary research question. The semi-

structure interviews were conducted over a four-week period at a Title I elementary school in the southeastern United States with a large population of ELs and has had national television recognition for their success with teaching ELs.

Qualitative research was used for this research study in order to find effective qualities with the real world experiences of the participants. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to see the qualities within the teaching practices of effective teachers of ELs while teaching reading within the mainstream classroom. Using qualitative research for this study created an opportunity to collect valuable information it allowed the researcher to explore the problem and gain insight into the problem (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This basic qualitative design allowed the researcher to obtain data and information that could not be collected through quantitative research since it included real world experiences (Merriam, 2009). Using a basic qualitative research study provided the researcher with the opportunity to seek the answers asked through personal stories in a natural setting (Merriam, 2009). The use of open-ended one-on-one interviews were used to gather rich narrative data describing the experiences, perceptions, instructional strategies, processes and techniques they use when instructing ELs while teaching reading in the mainstream classroom.

Target Population, Sampling Method, and Related Procedures Target Population

Target Population

Marzano (2003) believes that effective teachers use effective instructional strategies and these types of teachers are not born they are made. Since effective teachers of ELs are the foundation for this research study a definition of an effective teacher needs to be clarified. In the education sector, many different definitions of an effective teacher

are present. These definitions include many different personality traits depending on who is providing the definition. Working definitions of an effective teacher are usually summarized as a test score (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008). What data says as to the achievement of students often is at the top of the definition for an effective teacher (Popp, Grante and Stronge, 2011). With the demand for teacher accountability for student progress alternative definitions of an effective teacher are present and should be considered (Popp, Grante & Strong, 2011).

For the purpose of this study, the definition of an effective teacher will include both instructional strategies and data. Achievement data based on 80% stems from the business world based on the Pareto Principle. The Pareto Principle is based on the idea that inputs and the outputs are not equal (Conzemius, 2010). The Pareto Principle is used in a wide variety of areas to set goals. In the education sector, it sets a goal of 80% of student's meeting or exceeding a goal or objective and 20% not meeting or achieving the goal (Conzemius, 2010). Therefore, the objective of this due was to include teachers who have 80% of their students meeting or exceeding on the reading portion of the state-mandated test.

Sampling Method

Purposeful sampling was used to choose participants for a research study. The purposive sample allowed the researcher carefully to select a setting and use participants who possesses specific characteristics that were required for the research study Purposeful sampling is used when a researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight from a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, a sample must be selected which can provide the most information about the phenomenon being studied (Merriam,

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2009). Purposeful sampling was used in this study in order to provide rich descriptive data about the techniques, processes, instructional strategies effective teachers use when teaching reading comprehension to ELs in the mainstream classroom**.**

Purposeful sampling was used to choose the sample for the research study. The goal for the current study was to have at least 10 of the 17 teachers from the third through fifth-grade classrooms as participants. Purposeful sampling was done by first looking at the previous year's state mandated tests scores. If 80% or more of their students met standards or passed the test then they will be asked to participate in the study. If ten teachers did not meet the criteria for purposeful sampling of 80% of students passing the state-mandated test or did not agree to participate in the study. Then teachers would have been recruited for the study from one of the other elementary schools which implement differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom on a daily basis, within the school system. Out of the seventeen teachers who were teachers in grades three through five, fourteen of the teachers agreed to participate in the study. Even though, purposeful sampling was used to determine which teachers qualified for the research study a random selection was also used.

In order to select, the teachers to participate in the study names were randomly selected from the 17 qualifying participants. Participants were then asked to join the study. Using this blended process for sampling will help to negate charges of researcher bias in the selection of research participants. Creswell (2009) notes using random sampling helps to ensure that the unknown influences are distributed evenly within the sample. Each participant was given the opportunity to refuse to participate in the research study. A letter of confidentiality was distributed to participants along with a letter of

consent to participate. Participants were assigned an identification number for data collection; all responses were coded, eliminating all potentially identifying information. All consent forms and interview transcripts are stored in a secured, locked or password protected location at the researchers' home.

Sample Size

When choosing the sample size Creswell (2005), stressed within qualitative research, culture studies may either be broadly or narrowly defined, so long as the groups represents the larger phenomenon being studied. The proposed research study will use a narrow frame to discover the strategies, processes, and instructional techniques effective teachers will use in the mainstream classroom to meet EL student needs.

Purposeful sampling was used to determine which teachers fit the above criteria within the described setting. Once initial participation requirements of 80% of students meeting standards on the state mandated test are met. For the sample size, fourteen teachers volunteered for the study. Wanting to learn as much as possible about the phenomena all participants who qualified and agreed to participate were included within the research study.

Setting

The researcher chose this suburban school location for the research study because of the high number of EL students and the continued success it has had meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) since 2004. The school has also received national recognition for their ability to increase EL student achievement. The researcher knew that the school uses differentiated instruction. Knowledge of this information led to curiosity as what the

teachers do to have such continued success meeting the needs of ELs in their mainstream classrooms.

This study was conducted in a suburban elementary school located in southeastern United States. It included teachers in grades 3-5 who have in-depth knowledge and experience in teaching English Language Learners. The 985 students in the elementary school population consisted of 203 Native English speaking students, 742 students who have a native language as Spanish, 33 students spoke Vietnamese as their first language, 6 six students who have other Asian languages as their first language and 1 student speaks French as their first language. Within the elementary school population, 89.7% of the student population is English Learners with varying levels of English proficiency. With 55% of the student population qualifying for English Speakers of other languages classes (ESOL).

Table 1

Demographic Language Breakdown of Research Site

Native Language	Student population
English	200
Spanish	740
Vietnamese	33
Other Asian	9
Other	4
ESOL Qualified	583

Recruitment

Once the participants were determined through purposeful sampling, the perspective participants were approached by the researcher face-to-face to offer an invitation to join the research study. During this meeting, the perspective participant was given a brief overview of the research project and the privacy of participating in the research study. Each perspective participant was informed that in no way were they required to join the study. The study was completely voluntary. They were informed that there would be no compensation for participating within the study, but their participation would be greatly appreciated. Then the prospective participant was invited to join the study. If the perspective participant gave verbal interest in joining the study, a time was set for a later date to drop off the informed consent form for them to read and sign. The informed consent was left with the perspective participant to allow them to read and sign at their leisure in order to provide them with complete control over deciding whether or not to join the research study. Once the informed consent was returned to the researcher signed the research then contacted the participant and set a date, time and place to conduct the interview.

Instrumentation

A general interview guided approach was used during the interview process. The guided interview approach was used to ensure that the same general areas of information were collected from each interviewee (Seidman, 2006). Seidman added that this approach allowed for conversation and a degree of freedom. Further, providing adaptability in getting the information from the interviewee but the guiding questions provided focus This interviewing method allowed the participants to share their stories and experiences

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with using differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom with ELs. Seidman

ensures that the primary a way researcher can research an educational organization, or

process is through the individuals who make up the experiences. Seidman the continued

by saying the adequacy of the research method depends on the purpose and the questions

being asked. This basic qualitative research study sought to discover what effective

teachers do to meet the needs of EL students in the mainstream classroom.

Although in qualitative researcher the researcher is the main form of data

collection (Merriam, 2009), another form of data collection was used to glean

information from the participants. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to

obtain specific information from all participants such as teaching experience and

certification status (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Semi-structured interview techniques

allowed the researcher to guide the interview by using a list of probing questions related

to the topic being studied to clarify participants answers (Merriam, 2009). Implementing

the use of semi-structured interviews will allow the researcher to obtain the rich and thick

details needed to explore the topic (Creswell, 2009). In contrast structured interviews do

not provide this kind of flexibility due to the need to standardize the interview for

consistently similar results in order to be able to code them quickly (Merriam. 2009). In

semi-structured interviews, participants are often encouraged to ramble or go off on

tangents (Merriam, 2009). The rambles or tangents allow the researcher to get insight on

what the interviewee believe important (Seidman, 2006).

One-on-one interviews occurred at the time and place of the participants choosing

and served as the data collection for this research. Each interview lasted approximately an

hour and with permission from the participant were digitally recorded and later transcribed verbatim to allow for data analysis.

Field Test

In order to receive feedback and recommendations from the panel of experts, the interview questions were used within the field test. The field test was conducted using the same interview protocols to which were used with the participants. The panel made suggestions for improving these tools before submitting this documentation (Merriam, 2009). The field test semi-structured interview was given to two ESOL teachers, two mainstream classroom teachers, and an administrator none of whom were part of the sample group for the study. Using a field-test provided the researcher with proof that the participants of the study will be capable of comprehending and completing the interview questions of the study (Creswell, 2009). Administrating a field test allowed the questions to be rephrased and identified any questions that were obscure, and allowed for assurance that each participant will interpret the interview questions similarly (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Seidman (2006) urges all researchers who are conducting research through interviewing should conduct a pilot test to determine if the structure of the interview is appropriate for the study. Seidman advised that conducting a field test study enables the researcher to receive feedback on interview techniques and offer feedback in order to improve the techniques.

The four-person panel of experts consisted of teachers who are considered highly qualified in their field. Three of the four hold teacher of the year accommodations. The four-person panel consisted of a 28 year veteran teacher with a master's degree and holding ESOL (English Speakers of Other Language) certification and a reading

endorsement. The second teacher has 18 years of teaching experience and currently is holding an EDs in early childhood education. This teacher also holds certification in grades 7-12 English, history, economics, geography, behavioral sciences, and political science also holding TSS (Teacher Support Specialist), Gifted and ESOL endorsements with that 18 years of experience teaching not only ELs but using differentiated instruction in the classroom. The third teacher has seven years teaching experience and has a master's degree in early childhood education as well as an ESOL endorsement. The final member of the panel of experts consisted of a first-year administrator with an Education Specialist in early childhood education and 20 years teaching experience. Due to a lack of teachers in the building holding a doctorate these teachers were chosen based on their varied degree levels and their varied years of experience. After conducting field test interviews with a four-person panel of experts several suggestions were made and the questions were revised see Appendix B.

Data Collection

Data collection procedures included McCracken's Long Interview Process (1988). The first step in this process required the researcher to conduct a literature review to search out conscious and unconscious assumptions of the phenomena. This step in the process helped to define the phenomena being studied and will aid in the construction of interview questions (McCracken, 1988).
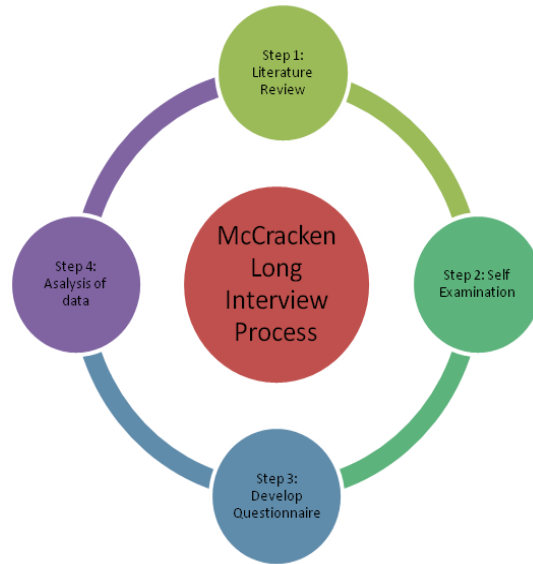
Figure 1: McCracken Long Interview Process

The second step of the data collection process included not only conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the participants but also involved self-examination of the topic. This step provided the researcher with a deeper appreciation of the topic being studied (McCracken, 1988). At this stage, the researcher took inventory and examined the associations, incidents, and assumptions that surrounded the topic of research.

The third step in the Long Interview Process required the researcher to develop the interview (McCracken, 1988). The interview included biographical questions followed by a series of questions based on the topic being studied. Participants were asked ten open-ended questions. The interviews were audio recorded for the interview questions see Appendix B. During this step all the data collected from the interviews were transcribed verbatim in order to capture the thick and rich data needed to answer the research questions (Seidman, 2006). As transcription began so did the analysis of the

data. Within qualitative research analysis is done simultaneously with data collection

(Merriam, 2009). After the interviews had been transcribed, the participants were asked

to review at their convenience their interview transcripts and provide feedback through

member checking of the analyzed data which increased internal validity. The debriefing

process included asking members to determine if the interpretations they have described

during the interview process were interpreted correctly.
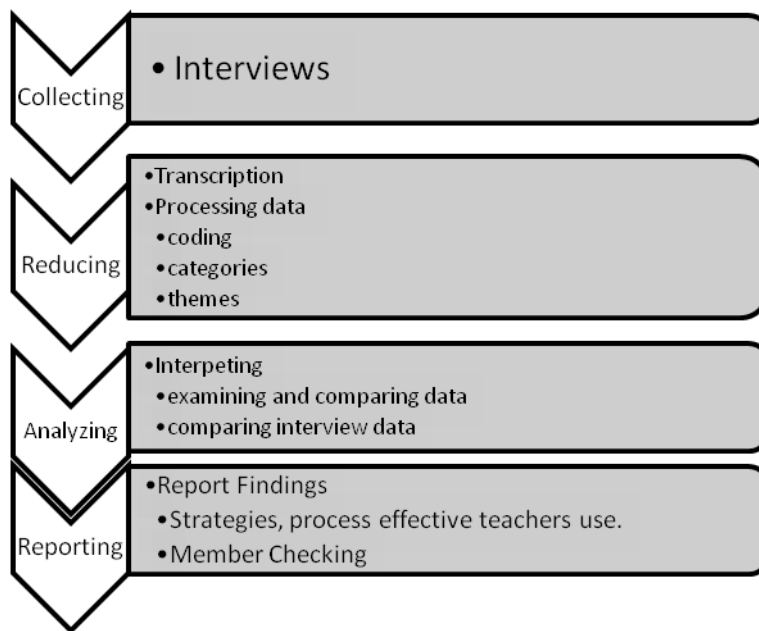
Figure 2 Interview and Data Analysis Process

The data for this research was gathered through in-depth one-on-one interviews

within the environment that the participant chose. By allowing the participants to choose

an environment for the interview of their choosing, it provided an atmosphere in which

they were more comfortable sharing information without hesitation (Siedman, 2006). The

interview setting was important in order for meaningful conversations to take place

(Boyce & Neale, 2006). Allowing the participant to choose the setting for the interview

provided them with a familiar, comfortable setting. It also ensured that they would take

their time to answer the questions completely and provided the in-depth feedback needed for rich and thick data fully to understand the process, strategies, challenges and perceptions of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom (Boyce & Neale, 2006). This type of data is needed within the qualitative process to see the quality of the information being gathered (Creswell, 2009). Creswell stated that qualitative research is a method by which the researcher seeks to inquire about, explore and investigate the phenomena. Within this qualitative research study, the researcher used interviews to collect rich and thick narrative text data. Managing interview data was done by first maintaining confidentiality by keeping all documents filed with participant forms, and audio tapes of interviews were then accurately labeled with the participants number. The use of open-ended interview questions was appropriate for the research because other techniques such as questionnaires and surveys would not have provided the opportunity for participants to provide rich narrative explanations of their personal experiences (Seidman, 2006).

To begin the research study participants were purposefully selected teachers at the research site. The purposeful sampling criteria included teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom and had at least 80% of those student's meeting or exceeding on the state mandated test. Therefore, the teacher needed to have taught in grades 3-5 at least one year prior to the study in order to have the test results. Before contact was made with teachers, a letter explaining the research study and process as well as requesting permission to conduct the study through interviews with classroom teachers was given to the administration. Once permission was obtained from the administration to continue with the research study, participants were then presented with an introductory packet for the research project. Within the introductory packet, teachers were presented with a

confidentiality agreement as well as an agreement to participate. As participants agreed to participate in the study, each interviewee was assigned an identification number. When interviewing began, the number was spoken for audio taping purposes and written on all documents related to the interviewee. The coding process ensured confidentiality and anonymity of responses to the interview questions. Even though each participant will have an identification number, during the interview process the participant will be referred to by name in order to maintain a good rapport (Seidman, 2006). When voluntary participation was obtained from all participants, interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant and conducted over a four-week period. All interviews conducted were audio recorded throughout the entire interview. At a later time the interview was transcribed verbatim into text form, creating a transcript of the interview that was later input into a CAQDAS software program that assisted with encoding the data. The CAQDAS software program used was MAXQDA Plus 11 qualitative software. It was used to provide rigor, validity and inform data saturation during the data analysis process.

Limitations of the Research Design

Limitations are found within any study. This study has limitations which include the one-on-one interviews, small sample size and the ability to generalize results. According to Creswell (2009), the main limitation of using qualitative research is the ability to repeat or generalize the research findings with a larger population. This limitation is due to the lack of quantitative data analysis. Merriam (2009) further mentioned that due to qualitative research being tailored to the population being studied it is often difficult to extrapolate the research findings to a larger population of participants. Since the current

research study is specific to the school where the study took place it cannot be assumed that all effective teachers of ELs in the mainstream classroom do the same things as the participants within this study.

Further limitations to this research study included the use of one-on-one interviews as a data collection method. According to Creswell (2009), this type of interview is the most time-consuming and limits the number of interviews that can be done. According to Atkins and Delmont (2006) qualitative research alone is more time-consuming than quantitative research due to the nature of the research.

Another limitation was the small sample size often used during qualitative research. Determining sample size in qualitative research is often left to the researcher's discretion (Creswell, 2009). Charmaz (2006) pointed out that they key to determining sample size in qualitative research is to achieve data saturation. Charmaz (2006) also suggested that in small qualitative studies data saturation is often achieved quicker than in larger studies. Saturation according to Creswell (2009) is the decision of the researcher that the data will no longer provide any new information or insights during the data analysis. Small sample size creates a limitation for transfer the research project to a larger scale (Creswell, 2009). Often, a small sample size makes it difficult to generalize and expand the research to a larger group (Creswell, 2009).

Credibility, Dependability, and Transferability

Triangulation allowed the researcher to establish credibility, dependability and transferability. Triangulation uses multiple investigators; sources of data or data collections methods to confirm emerging results and themes (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation of participant interviews provided validation to the accuracy of discoveries

through identifying the similarities and differences of the phenomena (Creswell. 2005). Member checks of the transcribed interview allowed for accuracy and ensured the intent behind the participant responses (Merriam, 2009). These steps not only enhanced the study but provided for accuracy and trustworthiness.

One way credibility was established was through transparency. The research study documentation was under inspection by not only the research participants but the researchers' committee members and mentor as well. Transparency was also achieved by using a CAQDAS software program for assistance with data analysis. Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge (2006) stated that using a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software helps the researcher achieve equality between the data analysis, research methodology and research findings. They continued by saying that it is crucial that a clear description of data handling procedures, assumptions and limitations should be present.

Seidman (2006) suggests that qualitative interviews should be audio recorded to be later transcribed and analyzed. The researcher followed this advice. Interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed and then analyzed. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) stated that due to qualitative research being based on narrative language, finding the meaning of the participants in extremely important. A term or phrase may mean one thing toe the participant and another to the researcher. Because of this it is important to have a plan set into place for member checking in order to determine the accuracy of the research findings. Validation was achieved through member checks to attest what the researcher has reported through data analysis or transcription the meaning assigned, in fact, the meaning the participant intended during the interview process (Creswell, 2009).

A Field test was used throughout the study to provide debriefing and peer scrutiny. Throughout the research study, the panel of experts had the opportunity to provide peer debriefing. Debriefing provided a fresh look at the study and provided assistance to the researcher to recognize biases the researcher may not have identified (Merriam, 2009). Dependability was established through using consistent research procedures (Seidman, 2006). Therefore, within this study detailed explanations of data collection and analysis procedures will be described (Creswell, 2009).

Ethical Issues

Conflict of Interest Assessment

My role as a researcher within this study was to collect and analyze the qualitative data. This study was dependent on the interview process. The study was conducted within the school I teach at in the Southeastern, United States due to its continued success with teaching ELs within the mainstream classroom. In 2004, President George W. Busch mentioned the school at the Republican National Convention in his acceptance speech. The school has continued to close the achievement gap. In 2012, the school received the Title I Distinguished Schools Award for making AYP for eight years in a row. This year the school has been named an award school receiving an award for school improvement.

The role the researcher played within the research setting is the schools data specialist and S.T.E.A.M. Lab teacher. The researcher specifically works with all students within the school promoting a love of math and science through technology and hands-on activities. As the data specialist, the researcher collects testing and Student Learning Objective (SLO) data which is reported to the administration, the district and

the state. Even though, the researcher is aware of the data and what it means the researcher is no way involved in the supervision or assessment of the teachers. Since the researcher is an employee at the research site epoche and bracketing of previous experiences or personal feelings were used by the researcher to achieve an unbiased attitude while interviewing and reporting findings (Bednall, 2006). The participants were presented the written transcripts for review in order to protect the validity of the responses. Participants were allowed to correct any mistakes made during the transcription of their responses. They were also allowed to add any information that they feel clarified or added to their previous response.

As the school's data specialist, the researcher has seen and compared data from state mandated scores within the same school system and the state. The researcher was aware of the teachers within the school through teaching their students in the S.T.E.A.M. Lab or working with them with the collected data from formative and summative assessments. As the school's data specialist, the researcher has been witness to the results the teachers at the school are producing. This phenomenon created the curiosity that sparked the desire for this research study as to what the teachers at the school do in the classroom to meet the needs of the ELs they teach every day. One pre-understanding of the phenomena included the knowledge that the teachers within the study use differentiated instruction in the classroom. While attending meetings and speaking to teachers in passing some information had been shared but there was never an opportunity to learn in-depth what exactly they did to meet the needs of ELs.

Due to the researcher being a member of the learning community where the study took place random sampling was paired with purposeful sampling to negate bias. Once

the initial purposeful sampling was completed the participants were selected at random from the participants that qualified. Random sampling ensured that the participants selected represented the larger group (Merriam, 2009). Even though, purposeful sampling was used to determine which teachers qualified for the proposed the research study as an effective teacher a random selection was used to assist in anonymity. All names of teacher who qualified for the study were put into a hat, and at least ten names were pulled out. As a backup, a plan was set into place for having at least 10 participants. If ten teachers did not agree to participate then a new name would be pulled from the remaining names. Using random sampling will ensure that the unknown influences are distributed evenly within the sample selected (Creswell, 2009). Since the research study will include conducting "backyard research" (Creswell, 2009). Multiple strategies will be set into place to ensure validity. "Backyard" research is done within the setting you are currently working. One of the biggest issues with doing backyard research is the ability to disclose information. In order to be able to disclose information, each participant was assigned an identification number which will only be known by the researcher.

Creswell (2009) mentioned that a good qualitative study provides feedback from the researcher about their personal bias' that they bring to the study. He continues by stating that it is important for the researcher to discuss how their interpretation of the research finding are formed by their gender, age, culture, history, background and socioeconomic status. Merriam (2009) pointed out that within qualitative study bias is always a factor since many researchers have a personal connection to the problem being studied. According to Merriam, bias is unavoidable and built into qualitative research studies. Further, bias can occur within any stage of the qualitative research process.

Creswell (2009) stated that the key to negating potential for harmful bias is by bracketing. Since qualitative research often consists of a close relationship between the researcher and the problem being researched it is important for the researcher to use bracketing (Charmaz, 2006). Creswell (2009) advised that bracketing not only offers a way to offset bias but also lessens the effects of unacknowledged preconceptions by the researcher in relation to the research topic. Charmaz (2006) stated that it is important to reflect on preconception of the research before beginning the research project and reflection should continue throughout the research process. Cutcliffe (2003) disclosed that one method of bracketing is to take notes throughout the data collection process. When the researcher takes notes about important insights pertaining to the research, they are acknowledging their preconception of their research. Continual reflection and note taking were used as bracketing during this research study to minimize bias by the researcher. Epoche and bracketing of previous experiences or personal feelings were also used by the researcher to achieve an unbiased attitude while interviewing and reporting findings (Bednall, 2006).

Researcher's Position Statement

The researcher is a teacher leader within the school being studied which provides a familiarity of the culture of the organization which will increase the credibility of the research (Merriam, 2009). My position is one of pride and curiosity. I am proud of the teachers of the school due to their continued academic teaching success. The success of the teachers in the school created a curiosity on my part that made me want to find out what they are doing to have this continued success within their classrooms. This curiosity

led to this research study and a desire to share what these teachers are doing to meet the needs ELs with other teachers in a similar situation as the teachers in this setting.

Ethical Issues in the Study

Creswell (2009) believes that ethical issues always surface during data collection and analysis. In order to provide anonymity of participant responses several steps occurred. The first step was to obtain approval of the proposal from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the study began. Written permission provided anonymity for the school district. The principal of the school in which the study was conducted was given notification of written ethical assurances as well as an overview of the nature of the study (Creswell, 2009). A signed letter of agreement to participate was collected from the 14 teachers who agreed to participate in the study. An informed consent form was written in clear easily understood language and included a brief description of the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2009).

The ethical issues within this study included protecting the identity of the participants. Participation within this study was solely on a voluntary basis. Participants need to be assured that their responses to the interview questions were confidential. In order to report the results of the study occurred within the dissertation of the topic being studied. At the request of the administration of the school where the study took place a summary of general facts gained from the study was also shared. This summary included no names or distinguishing information.

Chapter 3 Summary

Chapter 3 provided information pertaining to the methodology that guided the research study of what effective teachers do to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream

classroom. Specifically, the research explored what mainstream teachers do on a daily

basis to meet the needs of ELs, how they perceive teaching ELs in the mainstream

classroom and the challenges they face when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom.

This study has included a problem statement as well as the research design and

explanation of the methodology used within the study. This chapter also described the

data collection process including the participant selection process and the student in

conducting and analyzing the research data. Validity and reliability were key components

of the research study. Multiple strategies were used during the research study to ensure

that it was honest, reliable, and valid. This chapter also addressed the ethical issues

describing what the researcher did to ensure confidentiality as well as maintaining and

seeking informed consent.

CHAPTER 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

Within chapter four, there is a description of the participants of the research study and a detailed description of the research findings. The purpose of the qualitative research study was to explore what effective mainstream teachers do on a daily basis to meet the academic needs of English Learners. The central research which provided for this study was: What differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices are used by mainstream teachers who have obtained at least 80% reading comprehension performance with English Learners? Five research sub-questions were used to narrow the focus of the research for the data collection process.

R1: How do teachers use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

R2: How do teachers describe their experiences with differentiated instruction methods in planning reading lessons?

R3: What processes do teachers go through when differentiating process, content and product during differentiated instruction?

R4: What training do teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching EL students?

R5: What challenges do teachers have when using differentiated instruction?

Description of the Sample

The participants in this qualitative research study included 14 teachers in the third through fifth grades with varying teacher experience, from three to twenty-seven years and between three and ten years experience using differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom with ELs. The original research plan included having only ten

teachers to participate in the study. The research committee made suggestions to increase

data collection by including all participants who were willing to participatein the study.

Therefore, of the seventeen teachers who qualified for the research study, fourteen

teachers agreed to participate in the interview process.

       The teachers were chosen for the research study through Purposeful Sampling.

Included the following criteria the teacher had to have at least 80% of their EL students

meeting or exceeding on the state mandated test. Therefore, the teacher needed to be a

teacher in the third, fourth or fifth-grade classroom. They also needed to have taught at

least one prior year at one of the above-mentioned grade levels to have received the state

mandated tests scores needed for the Purposeful Sampling. The research site was an

Urban Title I elementary school for grades kindergarten through fifth grades. The school

has a student population of over 983 students with 791 of those having a language other

than English as their first language and 56% of the students qualifying for ESOL

services.

Table 1

Demographic Language Breakdown of Research Site

Native Language	Student population
English	200
Spanish	740
Vietnamese	33
Other Asian	9
Other	4
ESOL Qualified	583

The teachers who were invited to participate within this research study were approached one-on-one and informed of the nature of the study. They were each notified that participation within the research study was voluntary.

Summary of the Results

In order to gain an understanding of what effective teachers do to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom a qualitative study was conducted with an open-ended interview process as the main form of data collection. Ten open-ended interview questions were designed to provide an opportunity for rich, thick narrative dialogue. The dialogue will be used to answer the central research question of: What differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices are being used by mainstream teachers who have obtained at least 80% reading comprehension performance with English Learners? The responses from all fourteen participants were mixed but mostly positive about using differentiated instruction on a daily basis in the mainstream classroom. Although, each shared that teaching ELs is a difficult challenge, but one that they are up for meeting. They each reflected that they enjoyed teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom because of the dedication most of these students bring to the classroom environment.

The ten interview questions were designed to provide the researcher with lived experience data in order to find answers for the five research questions.

R1: How do teachers use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

Question number one was designed to assist the researcher in understanding the process behind planning for differentiated instruction. One common response among participants was that the planning process begins with gathering data. All fourteen of the

participants indicated that data is needed to know where the learning is academically, and where they need to be in relation to their native English speaking peers. Collecting data helps educators discover the learner's likes and dislikes, learning style and modality of learning. Additionally, each participant mentioned that, without data collection they would not know where to begin meeting the needs of the ELs in their mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, 86% of the participants agreed that gathering data provides a baseline to determine what background knowledge, vocabulary and reading level they are on and where they are developmentally with spelling. Once they have the data they then can begin planning flexible, differentiated, small group lessons.

R2: How do teachers describe their experiences with differentiated instruction methods in planning reading lessons?

Question number two was developed to provide an opportunity for participants to openly discuss their lived experiences when planning reading differentiated lessons for ELs in the mainstream classroom. The shared experience of 36% of the participants was the struggle with the amount of time it takes to plan for differentiated instruction for ELs in the mainstream classroom. In spite of the amount of time the teachers feel it takes to plan for differentiated instruction, they were in agreement that using differentiated instruction is the best way to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom.

R3: What processes do teachers go through when differentiating process, content, and product during differentiated instruction?

Question number three was created to explore the processes behind planning differentiated instruction for ELs in the mainstream classroom and encourage narrative dialogue about their experiences when differentiating instruction. This question provided

a plethora of information about the different instructional processes, strategies and methods used during differentiated instruction by the participants within the study. One commonality among the participants was a consensus that when differentiating instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom there needs to be high standards, as well as not looking at ELs as a label put on a student. Participants felt that viewing the students as individuals, and not putting a label on them, provided mutual respect and individuality.

R4: What training do teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching EL students?

Research question number four was included within the research study in order to determine what kind of training teachers of ELs in the mainstream classroom participated in to meet their student's needs. The question was designed to discover what staff development activities teachers participated in and what training they received in order to teach ELs effectively in the mainstream classroom.

R5: What challenges do teachers have when using differentiated instruction? Research question five was provided to explore the lived experiences of the teacher who participated within the study. It was important to add this question gain a full understanding of the experiences teachers of ELs in the mainstream classroom face on a daily basis.

Data Analysis Procedures

The main purpose for analyzing the data was to determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that surfaced during the interview process. These relationships were discovered with the assistance of MAXQDA Plus 11. MAXQDA Plus

11 is a computer assisted program that helped to organize and manage the data.

MAXQDA Plus 11 allowed the researcher to analyze data through inductive and

comparative measures involving the identification of reoccurring patterns, comparing,

grouping and reducing the data into themes or categories. The computer-based program

was used as a tool to assist the researcher through the process of analyzing the data

collected. Therefore, it is assistive technology and still needs a human element to think

about the data (Seidman, 2006).

Since the data is analyzed as it is gathered there is a systematic process to follow

(Seidman, 2006). Category construction began as the first interviews were transcribed.

Open coding was used to begin category construction. Coding was done by adding

notations within the margins of transcribed interviews next to the information gleaned

important to answering the research questions (Seidman, 2006). MAXQDA Plus 11

provided the researcher with the ability to sort the data into categories based on the

researcher's notes. The next step was to identify the patterns and commonalities within

the data. These commonalities and patterns were then be used to elaborate on

generalizations and consistencies in the data (Seidman, 2006). According to Merriam

(2009), the coding process begins with the completion of the first interview, Then the

researcher makes notes during or after the interview. The process of coding continued as

the researcher assigns a code to a word or phrase in the data that relates to the research

study. As each interview transcript is coded themes or categories begin to emerge from

the research. Merriam (2009) continues by clarifying that the process of coding and

discovering the themes within the research data is an "intuitive process (p. 183)" but is

guided by the purpose of the study. Merriam provides further information on using a

CAQDAS or Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software by suggesting that using such a program provides the researcher with the tools to investigate deeper into the data analysis. This deeper investigation is due to the software making the process less mind-numbing and time-consuming. Although the researcher is using a CAQDAS to assist in the data analysis process, it is the researcher who assigns the codes and categories during the data analysis. Merriam further discusses the advantages of using a CAQDAS to assist in data analysis. First, the CAQDAS allows for better organization since the files are organized within the program and allows the researcher to retrieve information easily. Second, using a CAQDAS often provides the ability to visualize connections within the data through a concept mapping feature within the program.

The final step in data analysis in this qualitative study was to use the generalizations and consistencies to write the data in rich narrative text. In order to report the findings, participants comments from the interview process described the themes as well as the connections between themes (Creswell, 2009). During this process it was important to be reflexive and report personal biases, values and assumptions of the topic that was being studied (Creswell, 2008).

Detailed Analysis

Through the use of a basic qualitative process, this research study was completed. The participants in the study were provided with the opportunity to share their lived experiences teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. Through the use of ten open-ended interview questions within a semi-structured interview, the researcher was able to obtain rich narrative dialogue from the participants that provided a look at what experiences, challenges and processes teachers of ELs in the mainstream classroom face

on a daily basis. Using open-ended questions allowed the participants to respond with rich narratives that provided and in-depth look at the experiences real-life teachers' experiences. The participants who were selected through purposeful sampling were voluntary respondents and provided insight into the authentic classroom experiences of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom on a daily basis. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews and open-ended interview questions allowed the participants to elaborate on the personal experience and expand on the questions as well as, add personal insights and reflections which allowed the researcher to draw information from the participants. Using a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to explore the rich narratives to determine the meanings of the experiences of the participants and to differentiate themes from the narrative data. The responses to the questions provided a corroboration of the shared experiences, and the themes that were present in the narrative dialogue even with lived experiences may not have been consistent with the varying levels of education and teaching experience.

Table 2

Profiles of Teachers of the Study

Participant #	Years of teaching experience	ESOL Certification	Years Teaching Differentiated Instruction	Years Teaching ELs
1	8	Y	8	8
2	22	Y	20+	9
3	12	N	5	10
4	4	N	4	4
5	4	Y	4	4
6	6	Y	6	6
7	21	Y	5	10+
8	4	N	4	4
9	10	Y	10	10
10	17	Y	4	4
11	4	Y	4	4
12	4	Y	4	4
13	15	Y	10	10
14	27	Y	20+	9

During the coding process, the researcher read each of the participant's interview transcripts multiple times. The researcher read each Question 1 (Q1) then each Question 2 (Q2) and continued in this manner through Question 10 (Q10). This numberization allowed the researcher the opportunity to take note of similarities and differences between the participant responses. Creswell (2013) described this step as horizontalization. The responses of each interview question were coded based on the method by Saldona (2002). Saldona defined a code as a short phrase or word that assigns

a trait to the data. During this process, multiple code words were discovered and listed in the table below. The codes that shared similar traits were placed into categories then into themes.

Table 3

Coding Categories

Code Category	Code Names
1 Relationships	**1:** Collaboration, motivation, excitement, choices, support, listen, provide feedback, no labels, not afraid to ask, high expectations
	2: Support, feedback, not afraid to ask questions, create explorers
	3: Support, collaboration, listen, build self-esteem, positive environment, environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes
	4: Take into account different learners, no labels, holding students to high standards
	5: Collaboration, high expectations
	6: Support, no labels, high expectations
	7: Collaboration, high expectations
	8: Great working relationships, support, student relationships, create a family environment, community
	9: The kids know I care, not afraid to ask questions of administration, support, feel comfortable approaching administration for help, no labels, high expectations
	10: No labels, support, collaboration, communication
	11: No labels, support, listen, collaboration
	12: Collaboration, create explorers, support, listen
	13: No labels, collaboration, high expectations
	14: support, feedback, understand needs, create safe learning environment, high expectations
2 Instructional Strategies	**1:** Modeling, flexible grouping, hands on, project-based, thumbs up, remediation, acceleration, one minute essays, ticket out the door, guided reading, turn and talk, Thinking Maps, diagrams, pictures, technology, modalities of learning, multiple intelligences, formative assessment
	2: Technology blended, developmental spelling, project based, HOTS, flexible small grouping, jigsaw, stay and stray, multiple intelligences, modalities of learning, formative assessment
	3: Technology, guided reading, modeling, Thinking Maps, flexible small grouping, choral reading, flash cards, sight words, word bank, continuous formative assessment with feedback
	4: Performance assessments, diagrams, HOTS, interest

inventories, modalities of learning, multiple intelligences, performance tasks, making real life connections, flash cards, word wall, choice boards, independent centers, computer-based projects, remediation, acceleration, small group instruction, projects

5: Guided reading, vocabulary instruction, continuous formative assessment, hands on, flexible small grouping, project-based

6: Flexible small groups, vocabulary instruction, making real world connections, background knowledge, hands on, read aloud, independent centers, choice boards

7: Flexible small grouping, independent centers, hands on, guided reading, modalities of learning, multiple intelligences, quick quizzes

8: Mini assessments, quick quizzes, ticket out the door, flexible small grouping, student choice, vocabulary, hands on, continuous formative assessment, projects

9: Guided reading, project-based, blended technology, performance assessment, vocabulary, real world connections, anchor charts, diagrams, pictures, picture walks, student choice, make connections, modeling, small group instruction

10: Flexible small grouping, guided reading, remediation, acceleration, sight words, technology blended, read aloud, hands on, continuous formative assessment, student choice

11: Modeling, project-based, hands on, remediation, accelerations, flexible small grouping, guided reading, technology, student choice, continuous formative assessment, on minute essays, dry erase boards, ticket out the door, turn and talk, Math Talk, Thinking Maps

12: Flexible small grouping, continuous formative assessments, guided reading, Multiple intelligences, modalities of learning, immediate constructive feedback, formative assessments, instructional conversation, Math Talk, modeling, choice boards, remediation, acceleration, projects

13: Guided reading, performance projects, flexible small Grouping, picture walks, student choice, hands on, modeling, connection to real life, vocabulary, quick formative assessments, Turn and Talk, Thinking Maps, remediation, acceleration, Instructional conversation, cooperative learning

14: Flexible small grouping, developmental spelling, project based, guided reading, multiple intelligences, modalities of learning, HOTS, remediation, acceleration, formative assessments

3   Data-driven   **1:** Daily formative assessments to inform groups, formative assessments, state mandated test, reading levels, flexible small groups, inform collaborative planning, reading level

2: Pretest, Rigby Benchmarks, regular test, post test, use to remediate, accelerate, determine flexible small groups, spelling analysis, response system instant data analysis

3: Pretest, posttest, interest surveys, instant data with response system, Study Island, OAS, see misconceptions, item analysis, formative assessment, use to survey background knowledge, ACCESS Tier, Rigby Benchmarks, use for flexible grouping, data about strengths and weaknesses

4: Formative, summative, student responses, independent work, online assessments, performance assessments, center work, use to determine strength and weaknesses, use to create flexible small groups, use to plan for differentiated instruction, use to remediate, accelerate, group by reading levels, create mixed ability groups

5: Rigby Benchmarks, state mandated test, use to plan flexible small groups

6: Online assessments, Rigby Benchmarks, measure growth, place students correct level, reading groups, post-test, remediate, accelerate

7: Rigby Benchmarks, provide data, quick quizzes, Study Island, OAS, mini-assessments, response system, immediate results, divide into three piles

8: Mini assessments, quick quizzes, flexible groups, formal assessments, common assessments, drive the next topic, remediate current topic, base groups off of, drive instruction, drive planning

9: Reading level, performance tasks, use to form flexible small groups, guided reading benchmarks

10: Pre and post tests, formative and summative assessments, use to provide informed feedback, use to group students, ability level, group according to remediate certain standards,

11: Use formative assessments to group students, pretest determines remediation, acceleration, determine flexible groups, based on reading level, knowing the learner

12: Formative assessments, summative assessments, common assessments, unit test, check-lists, determine next weeks flexible groups, reading level, sort into three piles, got it, simple mistakes, missed entirely, common assessments, the next group based on assessments, remediate, accelerate, know the learner, reading level

13: Rigby Benchmarks, formative and summative assessments, performance projects, spelling analysis, reach each child at their level, ACCESS Tier, flexible grouping

14: Data about strengths and weaknesses, running records, inform small flexible groups, formative and summative assessments, end of unit tests, spelling analysis, remediate, accelerate, reading learning level

4	Well Trained	**1:** ESOL Endorsement classes, experience, GAN meetings, in-house staff Development, Math Talk, Gifted endorsement classes
		2: ESOL Endorsement classes, workshops, extensive training, Experience, gifted endorsement classes
		3: On-line staff development, experience
		4: On-line staff development, experience, in-house staff development, independent research
		5: ESOL Endorsement classes, workshops, in-house staff development, GAN meetings
		6: ESOL Endorsement classes, in-house staff development, GAN Meetings
		7: ESOL Endorsement classes, experience
		8: Experience, on-line staff development, In-house staff development, GAN meetings, book studies
		9: ESOL Endorsement classes, independent research, constantly searching for new ideas, on the job training
		10: ESOL Endorsement classes, in-house staff development, experience
		11: ESOL Endorsement classes, experience, workshops, in-house staff development, GAN meetings
		12: ESOL Endorsement classes, in-house staff development, experience, workshops, online staff development
		13: ESOL Endorsement classes, in-house staff development, experience
		14: ESOL Endorsement classes, workshops
5	Rigor	**1:** High expectations, power standards, acceleration, choice, admin expectations, become explorers
		2: HOTS, push students, take ownership, engaged, challenged, rigor, achieve higher
		3: expected, high expectations, choice
		4: high expectations, hold students to high standards, expect 100% effort, choice
		6: check for growth
		7: rigor, administration expects it, don't teach differently teach same standards
		8: make them take charge, Blooms, synthesis, analysis, evaluating, creating, don't differentiate content teach same standards, make them teachers, ask questions when they want an answer
		9: Administration high expectations
		10: Make them accountable for their own learning
		11: Administration expectations, take charge of own learning
		12: Take charge of own learning, become explorers, administration high expectations
		13: Teach same standards for all, administration expectations
		14: challenge, don't dumb it down, Blooms, HOTS
6	Learning Community	**1:** Differentiation is hard, finding the right activities **:** I can

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always learn, want to go above and beyond, try new things,
willing to collaborate

2: Time consuming, tiered lessons biggest challenge,
tough with multiple levels, keep the joy in teaching and
learning, let them have fun, it's a trial and error thing, I'm
willing to make mistakes

3: Lack of background knowledge, not having enough
resources, time constraints, not enough time during the
day, don't get discouraged, willing to collaborate

4: A lot of work, more collaboration, willing to facilitate
learning

5: Not enough resources, time, so many different levels, willing
to collaborate

6: Willing to collaborate, brainstorm

7: Meet vast number of needs

8: Background knowledge, time constraints, meet all
individual needs, I'm not the only teacher, we are all going to
make mistakes, brainstorm

9: Background knowledge, not able to communicate
effectively with parents, be flexible, more creative, open-
minded

10: Willing to collaborate, differentiated instruction is
hard

11: Patience, willing to collaborate,
patience, willing to learn something new, willing to be a
facilitator

12: Adjust instructional strategies, speak Spanish at
home, patience, willing to collaborate, willing to learn
something new, make them explorers

13: Have to plan extra, can't plan glitches, stop and add
to plans, willing to collaborate, willing to stop and make
changes, willing to take the time, rework lessons

14: A lot of work, willing to move at their pace, don't try to
keep up

7   Courage

1: Hard to do, worth it, time-consuming, I want to grow, I want
to go above and beyond

2: Very time-consuming outside of the classroom, it's tough, the
best way to meet their needs

3: It's a pain, I say it's a pain in a joking way, it's harder but
worth it, don't get discouraged

4: It has been difficult, figured it out on my own

5: It's hard, time-consuming, great way to help ELs succeed

6: Willing to do it, very hard, challenging

7: Meet vast number of needs, I would do it if it wasn't
required, makes me a better teacher, hard, I hope I was using it
longer than I actually knew

8: Hard, time consuming, I get better , I got good, stressful,
overwhelming, we are all going to make mistakes, so worth
the effort

9: I hate planning for it, my mind does not stop, constantly
thinking how I can improve, open-minded, I am not afraid to
ask questions

10: Hard, I am successful at planning

11: Patience, I feel more effective, willing to be a facilitator, hard, important for students to be successful

12: patience, willing to learn, I feel I am constantly growing, lifelong learner, hard to do

13: Have to plan extra, can't plan glitches, willing to take the time, rework lessons, important to meet the needs of students

14: A lot of work, I really don't face challenges, It's the only way to meet their needs

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During this process, seven main themes were discovered in regard to what qualities effective mainstream teachers have and what they do on a daily basis to meet the needs of ELs. As a result of the study, the emergence of seven themes was discussed during the process of transcribing, coding and analyzing the interviews.

The seven themes present in the study were:

1. Effective teachers deemed collaboration important for student success

2. Effective teachers use research based instructional strategies.

3. Effective teachers use multiple sources of data collection to drive instruction.

4. Effective teachers are highly qualified.

5. Effective teachers provide rigor when teaching all students.

6. Effective teachers create a learning community among teachers, students, and administration.

7. Effective teachers display courage and resilience when faced with challenges.

The themes were discovered by clustering words and phrases with similar relevant meanings by the researcher's judgment. The researcher then explored the themes that had commonalities if the interviews. The common ideas were then clustered as general themes that emerged from the study. Then the themes were evaluated to

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determine if they were unique to the individual or only a few interviews. Groenwald (2004) stated that putting these differences into themes is an essential counterpart of the research. Additionally, according to Saldona (2002) after coding the data the researcher then summarized the data in order to understand the meanings of the participant's experiences, viewpoints and impressions if teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom on a daily basis. Information gained from each participant's responses were shared by connecting the interview questions and the corresponding responses to each theme. Within this section, gender will remain neutral in order to maintain privacy due to only having one male participant. The participants will instead be referred to as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), and continue on to Participant 14 (P14). The participants and the researcher all worked at the same school. Therefore, the participants were known to the researcher. The participants did not hesitate to discuss the research questions honestly and professionally. The researcher did not hesitate to ask leading questions, as well as express thoughts and observations to the responses made by participants. Furthermore, the researcher felt that all participants responded in a truthful, honest fashion.

Theme 1: Effective teachers deemed collaboration important for student success

Collaboration was deemed important by 79% of the participants. Collaboration mentioned in the interviews included collaboration between mainstream classroom teachers, ESOL teachers and administration. P7 stated, "Luckily, I have the ESOL teacher right next door, so we collaborate and plan reading lessons all the time. She helps greatly with the differentiation for the ESOL students. Without this collaboration, I don't know how I would do it all." P1 passionately stated, "Collaborative planning is one of the most beneficial things when planning for differentiated instruction. We sit down and

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share ideas and say this is what I try to do, try it and see if it works for you. We not only plan with the team, but we also do collaborative planning with the ESOL teacher."

Moreover, collaboration between the administration and teachers was mentioned as being helpful. P1, P3, P4, P11 and P12 shared that the administration at the research site provides adequate time for collaboration through weekly GAN, Greatest Area of Need, meetings. P3 reported, "During the weekly GAN meetings, we brainstorm ideas, and the administration gives us pointers and suggestions for differentiating instruction."

While most of the participants felt they had adequate time to collaborate with peers, P4 disagreed. P4 stressed, "If there was more collaboration, then planning for and differentiating instruction would be a lot easier."

Theme 1 evolved from the interview responses received from interview question 9: What kind of support do you receive in regards to differentiated instruction with ELs? 79% of participants felt that through collaborative planning with their grade level and ESOL teacher they were able to analyze data, plan for differentiated instruction, develop common assessments and provide collaboration and support to vent frustrations when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. They felt that this was a valuable support provided by the administration that created effective mainstream classrooms. As the participants shared personal narratives, it became evident that they were well versed in the use of research-based instructional strategies. As the narratives unfolded into personal experiences when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom, teachers shared multiple strategies that they use within their classrooms indicating that using these multiple strategies within differentiated instruction provides and environment in which all students in the classroom can achieve.

Theme 1 was supported in the literature by Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Many (2006), who believed that the purpose of collaboration is to increase student achievement but can only be accomplished if those collaborating are focused on the right things. The right things require that those collaborating focus on creating a higher level of learning. This higher level of learning is achieved by asking questions about what they want the students to learn, how the information will be assessed, how the data will be analyzed to determine mastery, what will be done if the students have not learned the information and what can be done to extend or enrich the learning for the students.

Theme 1 was further supported through the literature of O'Neill and Conzemuis (2006) who believe that having conversations as small groups or an entire staff is essential. Once the GAN or Greatest Area of Need has been identified these conversations should be about the educational outcomes you want to achieve, how progress will be measured and how the progress will be celebrated. Furthermore, O'Neill and Conzemuis believed that collaboration can effectively improve teaching and learning. Through collaboration, teachers make sense of and respond to data in a way to improve academic achievement.

Of the participants, 86% felt that using differentiated instruction provided them with collaborative opportunities and was worth it even though it is often stressful and hard. P13 stated, "Differentiated instruction takes time to plan for, but it works out in the end." P1 exclaimed, "I love it when we collaborate. I can use the ideas to help students."

Theme 2: Effective teachers use research based instructional strategies.

Mainstream classrooms are full of multiple levels of students, both EL and native English speakers. Theme 2 determined that successful teachers of ELs in the mainstream

classroom have a huge inventory of strategies, process, techniques and practices to meet those students' needs. Theme 2 evolved as a result of Interview Question 7: What differentiated instructional strategies do you currently use with ELs? Participants shared multiple strategies that they use in the classroom in order to meet the needs in the mainstream classroom.

The participants each mentioned multiple research-based instructional strategies that they used within differentiated instruction. These strategies were supported in the literature by multiple authors such as; Tomlinson (2006) differentiated instructional strategies, Echevarra, Voght and Short (2009) The SIOP model for English Language Learners, Fountas and Pinnell (2012) Guided Reading, Chapin, O'Conner and Anderson (2007) Math Talk and many more well known educational authors. When asked what made their classroom effective, P2 exclaimed:

> Wow! I don't know. I guess it varies. I have things that work. It's a trial and error thing just like anything you do. It is different for every kid, for every personality, subject, its different for every content area and student interest. You have to use whatever is needed to meet the needs of the student.

Within the research study, 64% of the participants consistently mentioned multiple intelligence theory as a strategy that was used within their classrooms. The participants are constantly searching for and brainstorming new ideas in order to meet EL students' needs within the mainstream classroom. P9 shared, "I am constantly searching for new ideas. I keep up with the latest research. My mind does not stop thinking about school just because I am not there. I am constantly thinking about how I can improve instruction."

Students in today's classrooms have diverse literacy needs. When achievable and equipped with data about the student such as learning style, habits and modalities of learning. Multiple strategies are needed to provide meaningful and engaging activities to meet those needs (Tomlinson, 2006). One lesson cannot incorporate all of the strategies that participants mentioned. Through acceleration and remediation many different strategies will be used. Moreover, Tomlinson encouraged teachers to use multiple strategies during differentiated instruction, when she disclosed that the more ways a teacher teaches what is being learned, the increased likelihood that the teacher will reach their students and increase their ability to learn.

Using research-based instructional strategies was attributed to the success in the mainstream classroom by P1, P9, P19 and P13. P1 and P13 mentioned allowing time for ELs to think before wanting them to answer the question or to allow them think time. P1 also mentioned. "When you are talking to ELs, make sure you are talking slow and give them time to process the information." P6 felt success in the mainstream classroom was "Vocabulary development, lots and lots of visuals, hands on instruction, constantly checking for understanding and connections they are making." P9 offered, "I keep up with what is going on in education. I keep up with the research. I constantly am searching for new ideas."

In addition, P13 felt that allowing the students to talk during instruction was a key element of a successful classroom stating, "You need to give them time to talk with each other during instruction using instructional conversation. Let them talk to each other about the instruction using Math Talk strategies even in reading. Conversation is important."

An overwhelming 96% of the participants shared that in order to meet the needs of the ELs in their mainstream classrooms use guided reading and differentiated instruction to meet the academic needs of the student. The general feeling among participants is that they used a number of different strategies, techniques and practices within differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom to meet the needs of the ELs and other students within the classroom. P1 mentioned, "There is so much I do it's hard to remember it all." P3 expressed that differentiated instruction, "Is really hard because the students still have to learn the standards for their grade level. It is hard but, worth it."

The use of differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom was supported in the literature by Ford (2011). Ford mentioned that effective differentiated instruction requires teachers to provide ongoing evaluation and using that information to create instructional activities and assessments to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom. Jones went on to explain, teachers who are continually successful using differentiated instruction with ELs learn about the student, have high expectations, uses a variety of research-based instructional strategies, and uses ongoing formative and summative assessments to track student progress and adjust instruction as needed. While the participants mentioned a plethora of educational strategies, thirteen strategies were common to a number of participants; guided reading, performance tasks, hands on, making connections, flexible small grouping, blended learning, student choice, acceleration/remediation, vocabulary instruction, modeling, continuous formative assessment and Thinking Maps/graphic organizers.

All of the participants concurred that using flexible small group instruction is needed to teach ELs in the mainstream classroom. P1 stated, "Using small groups allows me to provide an on level group, an above level group and a group that is below level." P2 mentioned that using flexible small groups allows for, "Tiered lessons that vary among ability level." Similarly, P3 offered that differentiating for ELs requires grouping students to create lessons based on reading levels. On the other hand, P4 felt that using ongoing formative assessments and reading levels help to:

Break it down into small groups, those who meet the standards, those who exceed and those who need remediation." P4 went on to say that grouping using mixed ability groups at first allows the students who might be struggling to learn from the other students. Once I reassess then the students who still do not have it are regrouped and remediated. I like doing mixed ability groups because they can help each other and support each other with their strengths and weaknesses. While I am teaching in a small group the other students have to do a lot of group work in learning centers. I believe that guided small group instruction is a big key factor in differentiated instruction so you can meet with those students who do need remediation. Whereas the other students might get bored just listening to a whole group. It also gives the higher students the ability to go on their own and learn on their own, taking responsibility for their learning.

P6 stated, "It is imperative to work with small groups of ELs in order to check for understanding and the connections they are making. I use as many small groups as possible including math." P6 also cautioned that it takes a lot of time to teach using small groups, especially if you need to remediate after the lesson.

However, P7 stated:

I separate them into groups according to their needs. With desks and the

grouping it is totally fluid during the day no one really has a desk that is their

permanent spot. They are with the group that is the best for them throughout the

day. I try to teach in different ways this group may need it this way and the other

group may need it taught another way.

P8 offered advice on using differentiated instruction by stating,

You need to be constantly flexible with grouping but, don't make it harder than

what it is. You constantly need to be aware of students' performance whether they

are meeting the standard or not meeting the standard. They are then put into

another group and remediated or if they understand it accelerated with a project,

but don't give more work.

P9 stated that,

When a student is at the point of more vertical learning where they have the core

knowledge they can now do a little more on their own. Whereas those students

kind of in the middle may need a little more direct instruction and more guided

reading time. The next small group does not get a lot of independent work

because they need more scaffolding of instruction. Then those who do not have a

clue you can work with one-on-one. The groups are fluid, and change as students

need change.

P10 mentioned that when beginning differentiated instruction it can be hard, "But once I

learned how to put students into flexible small groups as the student needed it. Then

planning became easier because I know what those students who need remediation or

acceleration in order to be successful." Likewise, P13 stated, "To form flexible groups, I take into consideration the students learning level, their progress in class on assignments and assignment results. I have four groups which usually consist of one low, two mid-range and one high group of students." P13 urged the importance of using flexible small groups by stating:

> ELs do not understand unless I break them into small groups and re-teach and
> remediate to teach some things especially in math and reading. It helps with
> understanding. It helps with who gets it and who doesn't. When you have a
> classroom full of students, sometimes some can get lost or missed when teaching
> using whole group instruction. But when you get them into a small group
> around a table with you, you can tell who is lost and who isn't or who
> understands and who doesn't. They can look lost in a big group but when you get
> them. Around the table in a small group, you can tell exactly who has it and who
> doesn't. I then can re-teach the material, and they can show me and tell me what
> they understand.

Guided reading was deemed important by 57% of participants. P1 and P11 stated that when planning for differentiated instruction, "We begin by choosing the standard then we choose the guided reading books on the different levels of the groups in the classroom." P5, P7 and P13 felt that guided reading and differentiated instruction were two of the same. P9 mentioned that as a teacher, "It is important to have already read and thought about the book that you are going to be teaching during guided reading time so that you are prepared to make changes as needed for differentiation."

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Acceleration and remediation were also mentioned as strategies by 57% of the participants. P1 stated when planning for differentiated instruction, "With each weekly standard we provide an on level activity, a remediation activity and an acceleration activity." P7 agreed saying:

> For differentiating product luckily, we have a lot of resources at this school for enrichment and remediation. Most of the resources at this school has offers a section for enrichment and remediation. I like to use what they suggest instead of trying to come up with something on my own. By using the enrichment and remediation within the resources I know the activities are research based.

Further, peer and teacher modeling were thought to be important by 50% of the participants. P1 remarked that modeling is not just for the students. "I think by watching other teachers present during faculty meetings and peer observations it provides modeling for us. If you don't see differentiation in action, you don't really know what it looks like. I think from other teachers modeling I have been able to better my ability to use differentiated instruction." On the other hand, P3 focused on modeling for students stating:

> Teacher modeling for the student helps guide them through reading beginning by using think alouds especially at the beginning of the year. As the year progresses I try to make them more independent. In the beginning, it's showing them how to do the activity and modeling how to do the standard.

P12 also mentioned that modeling provides assistance for the students as needed. P13 felt that, "Pairing the students with students who are stronger than they are provides peer modeling support."

When differentiating content, P2 felt this was the hardest to differentiate, while, P13 stated, "All students need the same content, I don't differentiate content because all students need to meet students on the same state mandated test." The majority of other participants began the process of differentiating instruction by pre-testing students to determine the level of background knowledge. The participants then place them into either a group for remediation, an acceleration group or on grade level group. P5 explained, "Once the students are grouped according to mixed ability groups process is differentiated thorough these small groups. According to P2, content, "Is the hardest of them all because you don't want to develop gaps in their learning. Students should have a choice in their learning which allows them the choice of multiple intelligence activities, learning modalities and the different levels of Blooms Taxonomy.

When differentiating process and product, 79% of the participants believed that allowing, student's choice was the best way to differentiate. They believed that allowing student's choice provides accommodations for student readiness, learning styles, environmental preferences, and multiple intelligences preferences. P8 stated:

> I do a lot of choice boards or Tic-Tac-Toe boards with ELs so they can choose what type of learning they prefer kinetic, tactile, auditory or visual activities. Tic-Tac-Toe boards require the students to complete three activities of their choices or however, much I decide I want them to do.

P12 stated when discussing product:

We do this through a lot of choice boards most of the time we allow them

Choice. Often I assign a couple of activities that they are required to do. We try

to provide several different ways for students to understand the standard being

taught.

For process, the participants also shared a plethora of research-based instructional

strategies that they use to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom during

differentiated small group instruction. Tomlinson (2005) stated that differentiating for

process includes the learning strategies and activities which will be used to teach the

student the learning target or standard. Tomlinson goes on to discuss differentiating

process. Process is the differentiated instructional strategies that will be used to meet the

academic needs of the students in order to create increased achievement.

According to Tomlinson (2005), the before mentioned processes contribute to

successful implementation of differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom.

When differentiating content, teachers need to look at the student's academic level. If a

student is struggling remediation is needed. On the other hand if the student has mastered

the standard then acceleration should be implemented. Basically, the teacher needs to

offer the same standards at varying levels of academic ability.

Product is differentiated through the use of different learning outcomes or

activities using varying modalities of learning, multiple intelligences as well as levels of

Blooms Taxonomy to actively engage all students. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) stated

that the key to successful differentiation of product provides assessment and performance

tasks that are authentic and incorporate all of the Blooms levels of learning.

Performance tasks or projects were another strategy that was mentioned by 64% of participants. P1 urged, "Teachers should be doing more project-based activities with ELs not just showing videos and standing in front of the room talking." Likewise, P2 described teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom as doing projects at the student's level and when a student has mastered the standard allowing students who need acceleration to:

> Do some kind of project that reinforces the skill. For example, if I am teaching drama and they have learned drama, and they have passed the pretest then they create a play by writing a script with dialogue and stage directions. The project is based on their intellectual skill.

In addition, 57% of the participants felt that using hands on activities helped to meet ELs needs in the mainstream classroom. Likewise, P4 stated, "When planning for content. I look over the content before I teach it. I feel like I always need a kinesthetic or hands on activity for those learners." P6 agreed stating, "I try to use as many hands on learning skills in small groups as possible." P6 also cautioned, "Providing hands on materials is often costly to the teacher when planning and teaching hands on lessons if the school does not have the resources needed." P7 felt hands on assignments were equally important and stated, "I try to do hands on activities with them (ELs) related to the vocabulary being taught, but these are the same strategies I do with all students." Likewise, P10 felt, "Manipulatives and other hands on activities are good with ELs where they can touch and move things to increase comprehension." P14 felt that providing hands on activities, "Helped ELs to understand the information being learned better."

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Creating connections to the real world, to other texts and to self was another instructional strategy mentioned by 43 % of participants. P1 felt that making connections was essential for ELs to be successful in the classroom. In addition, P6 felt that when teaching reading or ELs or Non-ELs, making connections provided background knowledge as well as increased comprehension. P6 further stated:

When teaching vocabulary skills, I try to create connections to words that they may not know. This increases background knowledge. I try to use as many visuals as I can find to help make these connections. Teaching inflexible, small groups helps me check for understanding and the connections they are making.

P9 mentioned, "Pictures are very important for them to make connections in order to increase comprehension." P13 agreed but added, "ELs need to make more connections to real-life to assist in building background knowledge that increases comprehension."

Of the participants, 50% felt that using blended learning was important for EL success. P1 and P11 agreed by mentioning that they use a lot of blended learning which helps keep the students attention. P2 commented, "Using computers can provide instructional videos, lessons and assessments for ELs." P3 mentioned that, "Using programs such as Lexia provides differentiated instruction for all levels of learners." P9 agreed stating, "Using blended learning for independent work provides opportunities for students to take charge of their learning. Having students create projects using the computer brings in expectations for a higher level of independent work."

Using student choice was mentioned by 50% of the participants. P1 and P11 commented that if their students make a 70% or above on the pretest, then they can use a

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choice board and create projects in the library. The choice boards are based on the topic

or standard we are teaching that provides enrichment for the students. P2 stated:

> I use Tic-Tac-Toe boards, choice boards, menus and student project contracts.
>
> They can choose to do different projects based on multiple intelligences.
>
> Likewise, product is individualized through choice. They can pretty much do
>
> anything. I don't lock them into what they want to do. They can do mobiles,
>
> dioramas, dramas or a number of other things it doesn't matter as long as it shows
>
> mastery of what they are learning.

P4 mentioned:

> While I am working with small groups, students who are not with me are working
>
> on assignments of their choice. I have tic-tac-toe boards in one of the centers, and
>
> they have to complete three of the activities off of the board. While those students
>
> are working on the tic-tac-toe board others are working on the computer
>
> researching a project. Students love choices. These choices need to include
>
> assignments for visual, kinesthetic and auditory learners, as well as the different
>
> learning styles. By giving them choice boards, I am giving them a variety of
>
> activities to choose from. The choice boards make them accountable for their own
>
> learning. They have to choose which assignment to complete and read instructions
>
> for the assignments and do what the assignment tells them to do.

P8 agreed stating:

> I do a lot of choice boards or tic-tac-toe boards with ELs so they choose what type
>
> of learning, they prefer; kinesthetic, tactile, auditory or visual as well as multiple
>
> intelligences. I use a learning contract to make these students take charge of their

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own learning and provide motivation for them to go beyond the basic knowledge
but go deeper into Blooms, synthesis, analysis and evaluating, crafting stages.
With the choice boards, the tic-tac-toe boards and giving the students the
opportunity to pick three of the choices or however many I decide. With
differentiation product, it gives those students who may not be strong in one area
the chance to show me in another way that they understand the content or what
we are talking about.

P2 cautioned that when teaching, "ELs a teacher can't just explain the project to them.
They may not understand. I use criteria cards. They lay them out and then pick what they
want to do. They follow the rubrics on the card to create their project. I have a card for
every project based activity you can think of." P4 felt that it was equally important to
include projects into the mainstream differentiated classroom. P4 mentioned using
projects as performance assessments to determine if the student has mastered the content
but forewarned that:

Some students get their feelings hurt if they do not get to do the same project that
other students are doing. They don't understand why they can't do what the other
students are doing. Just because the student is EL does not mean they aren't going
to be able to do a big project. Give them a chance to prove themselves.

In addition, P12 felt that:

When I plan, I provide multiple ways for the students to learn the standard. When
differentiating product most of the time, I allow them choices. After I assign a
couple of the activities that they are required to do on a choice board. I try to
provide several different ways for students to understand the standard being

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taught. As a result, the students are telling me they love having choices for their own learning and often bring in extra projects that they have done on their own.

The final instructional strategy that was mention in common by P1, P3, P11 and P13 was Thinking Maps or graphic organizers. P3 mentioned, "With product what I do first is a graphic organizer. Lots of times I would use the Tree Map. Where they would organize their ideas on what they are learning that week." P9 agreed mentioning, "I use a variety for research-based strategies such as graphic organizers that I learned from my ESOL endorsement classes." Likewise P11 stated, "Thinking Maps (graphic organizer program) is a great way for EL students to organize their thoughts." P1 agreed stating, "Thinking Maps allows the students to summarize, compare and contrast and break information apart in order to create a better understanding of the content being taught."

Using diagrams and pictures as a way to help ELs be successful during differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom was suggested by 43% of the participants. P4 commented, "I usually start off with diagrams and pictures to explain the skill or standard that we are working on." P6 agreed, "Using the pictures and drawing pictures to make connections and describe words." P9 explained:

Pictures are very important to ELs in order for them to make connections. When we talk about vocabulary, we talk about the pictures, and how the pictures connect with the text. When beginning a story we take picture walks through the book to further support comprehension.

Additionally, P13 felt that if the EL students do not know the words for different things you try to bring in pictures in order for them to make connections to real life. Lower

students tend to need more pictures than higher students due to a lack of background knowledge.

Vocabulary instruction was also deemed important for EL student success for 71% of participants. P3 mentioned, "EL students do not understand the vocabulary associated with reading passages. Therefore, I have to pre-teach vocabulary before I have the students read a passage or book." P4 felt that using flash cards to teach vocabulary help the students to succeed at reading:

I create my own flash cards and put them on the word wall. It helps them understand the word and where it came from. For an auditory person reading the definition aloud might be fine, but a visual learner need pictures to make connections.

Likewise, P5 felt, "Pre-teaching vocabulary at their reading level by using visuals to show unknown words, writing the vocabulary words and reading them out loud." In addition P6 stated:

We are always working on vocabulary skills using pictures and trying to create connections they may have to these words. During staff meetings, we are constantly brainstorming on ideas of how we can better serve these students using vocabulary development and visual areas. In my class, we have a vocabulary book that we add to each week where we list words, draw pictures describing the words, list a simplified definition of the words and write a sentence using the words. I am constantly looking online for resources that provide vocabulary enrichment and visual content that will reach my students. I feel like vocabulary development is one of the most important factors for EL in the classroom.

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P7 stated, "I stress vocabulary when we came across a word that they don't know. We discuss it to provide more background knowledge. We will stop a lesson and do a lot of vocabulary." Similarly, P8 mentioned:

> I build a lot of background knowledge using vocabulary picture cards. I make sure they understand the vocabulary in the story before we begin a story. Vocabulary is what I focus a lot of my attention on. We also do a lot of vocabulary where they draw a picture or write the definition.

In addition, P7 mentioned, "When discussing reading students don't know the vocabulary, so we often stop, and we discuss it to provide more background knowledge." Additionally, P9 stated:

> ELs do not have a lot of background knowledge. Most of them are starting at level zero. They have no background knowledge that those of us as fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth generation Americans take for granted. It has everything to do with reading; they are going to struggle. A lot of it is the language barrier but then this is because they don't have any background knowledge. Pre-teaching vocabulary helps to build background knowledge.

Theme 3: Effective Teachers use Multiple Sources of Data to Drive Differentiated Instruction.

Theme three was discovered through interview question number 5: What data do you collect and how do you use data to plan for differentiated instruction? All of the participants within the research study were adamant about using and collecting data to drive their classroom instruction. During the interview process participants shared valuable insight, such as using multiple forms of data to determine if students had met or

exceeded the standard being taught. Teachers within the study suggested that using the state mandated test as data to drive instruction should only be used as a starting point. By the time they receive this data, according to P7, "It is old data." According to P13, "Teachers need to establish a baseline by pre-testing students, they need to assess students frequently to determine mastery of the standard being taught and use the data to focus on instructional interventions based on the data collected." This data is used for continuous improvement to assure that all students are succeeding. From the responses to this interview question it was discovered that 85% of the participants within the research study stressed collecting data to inform differentiated instruction then using the data collected to inform flexible small group instruction. Furthermore, data to drive instruction was mentioned continuously throughout the participant interviews. In several participant responses the use of data from formative and summative assessments, ACCESS tests, and Rigby Benchmark Assessments were used to inform instruction in the mainstream classroom. Data about the learner was also mentioned as being a useful for meeting the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom such as multiple intelligence information, learning modalities, and interest inventories.

Further, 85 % of participants within the study described using data collected such as data about the student, reading level data, pre-assessments, post assessments, formative and summative assessments are used to construct and plan for flexible small groups during reading instruction. The data gathered is also used for creating plans for and grouping students for remediation and acceleration.

Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) felt that data-driven instruction provides a way for teachers to increase student achievement and using data creates opportunities to

collaborate, differentiate, individualize instruction and provide meaningful, engaging

learning activities.

Boudett, City and Murnane (2005) suggested when teachers are empowered with

data; students achieve higher academic levels and they feel that using data to inform

differentiated instruction is essential. Further, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) agreed that

data-driven instruction should include data do create a positive classroom environment,

use data to inform instruction for student learning styles and multiple intelligences and

uses data to inform instructional strategies for differentiating, product, process and

content. In addition, Brimijoin, Marquissee and Tomlinson mentioned that using data

about the learner and pre and post assessment data as well as, formative and summative

assessments provides the teacher with the information needed to target instructional

strategies for the learners needs. P8 disclosed that as a teacher, "You need to be

constantly aware if the students are meeting the standard and understand and accelerate

with a project, but don't give them extra work." P8 went on to say, "It is a really cool

thing to be up here with a small group, and I have four kids in the back helping each other

with a project because one does not understand what to do. I am not involved; they are

taking ownership of the project and their own learning." P10 mentioned, that within small

group instruction, "I know what the student needs for remediation or acceleration in order

to be successful." P11 felt that:

> Some think that differentiated instruction is simple, but it's differentiating
>
> on student's level, this includes providing lessons and assignments for
>
> remediation and acceleration. Finding alternative activities when students
>
> don't understand what's being taught, or remediation is one of my biggest

challenges.

P14 offered:

> When differentiating product you look at what reading level they are at, and then
> those who are at a higher level can do the project more independently and then
> you have a project that the students at the lower levels can do with some
> assistance. You try to have projects at each level to cover and meet the higher
> levels of Blooms Taxonomy.

All of the participants mentioned that they began planning for differentiated instruction by gathering data about the student's reading level. They do this using the Rigby Reading Assessment as a primary source of data to inform differentiated flexible small groups. The responses from 50% of the participants indicated that the Rigby Reading Assessment is a key piece of data to collect when planning for differentiated instruction. P2 used the Rigby Reading Assessment to show student growth or advancement into a new flexible small group for reading instruction. Likewise, P3 used the Rigby Reading Assessment levels to determine how to differentiate content during flexible small groups. P5 used the Rigby Reading Assessment to, "Group students according to reading and language needs." Similarly, P6 replied, "Reading benchmarks are used to measure growth in reading and to place students with the same levels of reading into flexible small groups." P7, P10 and P13 concurred with the other participants that reading benchmark data is gathered to group students by reading level for flexible small group instruction.

Additionally, P13 mentioned using the ACCESS test to assist in determining where the ELs in the classroom are academically. P13 agreed, by sharing that using both

Rigby and the ACCESS tier level will inform what the ELs in the classroom should be able to produce independently.

The responses from P7, P8, P12, and P14 indicated that using common assessments as a form of data to drive planning for differentiated instruction was essential for success. P12 felt that using summative common assessments are needed to determine the mastery of the standard. By using the data collected, the participant would then, "Sort the assessments into three piles, got it, simple mistakes and missed entirely." These were then used to set up the participants small groups for remediation and acceleration. P14 mentioned that common assessments are, "Used as a result to look at the areas where ELs are having problems, then using the data to create flexible small groups so the information being learned can be delivered in a different way."

Collecting data from pre and post tests were mentioned by P2, P3, P10 and P14. P2 stated that pretests were used to determine how much the EL student knows about the topic being studied. P2 went on to say,

> If a student has mastered the skill based on the pretest data, they are
>
> accelerated and do some kind of project related to that skill. They do a
>
> project that reinforces the skill. For example, If I am teaching drama and
>
> they have passed the pretest. They then they create a play writing a script with
>
> dialogue and stage directions. They apply the standard being taught. I take
>
> them through Blooms steps.

P3 explained that using pre and post tests informs instruction by letting the teacher find out how much of the background knowledge needs to be taught and if they have learned

it. P10 commented that the pre and post tests are used to sort the students into groups for flexible small groups. P9 pointed out:

> When a teacher pre-tests they are assessing prior knowledge to see what the student knows. This can be done during a classroom discussion on the topic to see where they are. Once this is discovered, then those students who have mastered the standard can then do independent work such as research, a work contract or a tic-tac-toe.

P13 and P14 felt that collecting the developmental spelling analysis was important when informing the teacher for placement into flexible small groups during reading differentiated instruction. P13 stated, "I incorporate spelling into reading. I create flexible small groups depending on the student's reading and spelling level. I then do mini lessons for spelling and phonics within their reading. P7 and P8 also felt that using mini assessments as a source of data to plan for differentiated instruction was helpful.

In addition to the aforementioned data that is collected, participants P1, P3 and P6 felt data gathered from online assessments such as Study Island; OAS and Classworks provides a snapshot of what the student can do independently. P6 stated that using Classworks data provides information about what the student's academic strengths and weaknesses are, this program as well as another program by Jen Jones, which, "Focuses on a specific area that the student needs to work on. The computer based program, assesses the students at the beginning of the week and then are checked for growth at the end of the week."

Collecting data about the student was also mentioned important by; P3, P6, P8, P11, P13 and P14 also felt that data about the student was important to gather to inform

planning for differentiated instruction. Using interest inventories, multiple intelligence

inventories and learning style inventories according to these participants provide

important information needed to plan for differentiated instruction. P3 stated:

> Knowing data about the student that the student is aware of provides not only the
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> teacher with information about the student's strengths and weaknesses but the
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> student also knows these things. When I know this I am able to provide
>
> constructive criticism. I think this is important to increasing self-esteem because
>
> they learn how to take constructive criticism. I am not telling them they are low, I
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> want them to be self-aware and know they need to improve in these areas.
>
> This also provides rigor.

P8 felt that gathering data about the student helps to understand the student from

the first day of school and helps to drive how to plan for differentiated instruction in the

classroom. Likewise, P11 felt that knowing your learners, "Is one of the most important

things needed for students to be successful." P13 agreed with P8 and P11 by stating that

learning about the student helps to plan for differentiating process and product.

In addition to the other forms of data collected 57% of the participants felt using

formative assessment, data was essential for student success. Formative assessment

according to P1 "Is used daily to inform flexible small groups and to inform if students

need remediation or acceleration." Using formative assessment strategies, such as ticket

out the door, thumbs up and thumbs down, paddle boards and one minute essays,

according to P1, are important for student success

P3, P4, and P8 agreed that using formative assessment to make flexible small

groups for the next day was important. Using ongoing formative assessment according to

P3 helps the teacher "keep on top" of the students who need help or those students who need acceleration. P10 commented that using formative assessment like continuous questioning allows the teacher to:

Constantly watch to see if the students are grasping a concept. When I introduce a new concept I introduce it for about ten minutes by using formative assessment such as questioning. I can tell what each student is struggling with. The next day I can then use that information to put my students into flexible small groups.

In addition, P12 mentioned that, "after using daily formative assessment, I take notes to help plan the next day's lessons. Then I adjust the instructional strategies as needed." Likewise, P14 stated:

When I teach content, at the end, I give short formative assessments. Then I use it to look at the areas where the students are having problems. Then I pull the students into flexible small groups so that I can explain the standard being taught more and in a different way.

Data according to P4, "Is used to determine which products students can complete." P8 mentioned:

You need to have data to be aware of the student's weaknesses and strengths. That way you can reach the students. You constantly need to be aware if the students are meeting the standards. If they aren't then, you need to put them into another flexible small group and remediate. If they understand it, then accelerate with a project. The teacher needs to do constant formative and summative assessments with good records.

Formative assessment according to 64% of participants needs to be ongoing and used to inform flexible small groups. P1 stated, "I use daily formative assessment to inform flexible small groups. Formative assessments include ticket out the door, thumbs up, thumbs down, paddle boards and one minute essays." P11 agreed adding, "I base small groups on formative assessments. We use formative assessments to from flexible groups with students then we differentiate based on that information." In addition, P10 stated:

> I collect pre and post tests, formative and summative assessments to form flexible groups. I use continuous questioning and constantly watch to see if students are grasping the concept. After I introduce a topic, I can tell through formative assessments what each student is struggling with. The next day, I use this information to put students into flexible small groups. The formative assessments I use consist of thumbs up, whiteboards and sticky notes where I can grab the sticky note and determine if they have understood what I have been teaching.

Likewise, P12 discussed, "After daily formative assessments, I take notes to help plan for the next day's lesson. Then I adjust content or instructional strategy as needed." P13 stated, "I use a lot of quick formative assessments. I listen to them when they turn and talk, I use thumbs up, thumbs down and in-between." P14 volunteered, "When I teach content at the end I give a formative assessment and look at the results. I look at areas where the students are having problems then I pull them into flexible small groups." P11 felt that using data to know your learners is, "One of the most important things for students to be successful."

Theme 3 was supported in the literature by Moore (2011) who explained that data that is used to drive instruction provides a baseline for setting measurable goals and provide data to inform instruction through frequent formative and summative assessment. Moreover, Moore further believed that using data to drive instruction promotes an environment that demands the use of best practices when teaching. In addition, Moore disclosed that teachers who are data-driven are goal oriented and are slated to identify key instructional goals. They can spot a student's strengths and weaknesses and use the data from that to inform instruction. Similarly, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) believed that using data to drive instruction has the ability to provide a baseline of where the students is at academically. This baseline allows the teacher to know what learning targets or standards the student has mastered as well as the student who has not yet mastered the learning target.

Theme 4: Effective Teachers are Highly Qualified

Of the participants, 96% felt that they were successful teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom because they were experienced and well trained. Interview questions:

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. What is your highest level of education?

3. Do you have an ESOL certification or endorsement or other endorsements?

These interview questions provided rich narrative data that helped this theme evolve. Through the interview process, it was revealed that 64% of the participants felt that they were better at differentiating instruction due to having years of experience teaching ELs

in the mainstream classroom using differentiated instruction. P8 stated, "Each year I learn a little more. I feel I get better and better at differentiating instruction each year."

Master's degrees were held by 86% of the participants in varying topics of math and reading, early childhood education, curriculum and instruction, education, instructional technology, and science and math. One of the final two participants held an EdS in Early Childhood Education, and the other held a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. Of the participants, 50% had between four and nine years of teaching experience with the same amount if time teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom, the other 50% at the time of the study had between 10 and 27 years of teaching experience ELs in the mainstream classroom.

ESOL endorsements were held by 79% of the participants. Of the participants that did not have their ESOL Endorsement, two had started classes at the time of their interviews and were to receive their ESOL Endorsement by the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

P2 offered that during their teaching career they had always, "Met the kids where they were and brought them up to where they needed to be. It was just called teaching." Additionally, P4 felt they had been using differentiated instruction longer than they actually knew what it was. P4 went on to explain, "There wasn't a name for what I was doing, but would I like to think it was differentiated instruction." P8 divulged, "As I experienced things in the classroom and reflected on them, I have become better at differentiating instruction." Similarly, P11 declared that over the years of using differentiated instruction, "It had progressed into something different and felt more effective this year than in past years due to being more experienced with planning and

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using differentiated instruction on a daily basis." P14 mentioned that, "As a teacher you do things in the classroom that you don't have a name for and then you hear and learn about differentiated instruction and you say, Oh, I've been doing that for a long time."

Further, 71% of the participants felt they had been using differentiated instruction between four and eight years. P2, P9, P13, and P14 believed they had been using differentiated instruction between ten and twenty years. Additionally, 50% of the participants felt that they had been using differentiated instruction longer than what they indicated, but the instruction was under a different name. P1 mentioned that they felt they had been more effective in the school year the study took place than in years past due to having more experience teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom.

P7 and P12 felt that having experience teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom creates success. P7 stated, "For 20 years the experience with teaching these students has made me a successful teacher." P12 stated, "I have been on the same team for five years. I am comfortable working with the teachers and the students. Experience plays an important role in success."

Within the study, 79% of teachers have attended classes to obtain their ESOL endorsement. The school district, according to P6, "Offers to pay for a certain number of employees each year to obtain their ESOL endorsement, which makes it easy for teacher to complete the ESOL endorsement." P2 stated, "Getting the ESOL endorsement has been very helpful with teaching the ELs in my classroom." Two of the three participants who did not have their ESOL endorsement began the classes in the 2013-2014 school year.

Other staff development opportunities were mentioned such as workshops, in-house staff development, book studies and job-embedded professional development. P6 explained that the administration within the research site, "Understands how important staff development is, and they were, in the process of setting up more staff instruction for differentiated instruction." P10 mentioned that teachers are allowed to attend workshops when they are available, and P8 described that the teachers participated in several book studies on the topics of guided reading and differentiated instruction, as well as strategies for ELs.

The main source of staff development for teaching ELs according to 57% of participants was the classes for the ESOL Endorsement. P6 stated that, "Each year we have been given the opportunity to get our ESOL endorsement." P1, P6, P8, and P11 stated that they received ongoing staff development through the schools weekly GAN meeting (Greatest Area of Need). The GAN meetings according to P1 are, "A big help." P6 commented that, "During GAN meetings we have staff development on enrichment and remediation areas. During these meetings, we are constantly brainstorming on ideas of how we can better serve these students."

In addition to GAN meetings, 64% of the participants divulged that they also receive in-house staff development. P5 commented that during the faculty meetings, recommendations are made for ELs. P8 and P13 also mentioned that they have participated in several book studies on differentiated instruction. They further mentioned that during faculty meetings the administration will have teacher's share strategies to use with ELs. Further, P11 and P13 also mentioned that the literacy coach has provided in-house workshops on the topics of writing and Thinking Maps as well as Guided Reading.

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In addition, P3, P4, P8, and P12 reported that they had participated in online staff development activities from PD360 which included twelve videos on differentiated instruction. Attending workshops outside of the school was mentioned by P2, P11, P12, and P14. P2 stated, "I have attended several workshops on differentiated instruction. All were very interesting and helpful."

Further, 85% of participants within the study felt that they received adequate training to provide support for them to be successful in the mainstream classroom. Eleven of the fourteen participants had received their ESOL endorsement which according to them was paid for by the school district. At the time of the study, two more of the participants had started classes to receive their ESOL endorsement.

The participants all mentioned that they receive job-embedded professional development through a variety of resources such as online videos, book studies, peer sharing, redelivery from the literacy coach and the administration. The participants also mentioned that they attended workshops when available. Two participants felt that staff development included the research and reading they do on their own above and beyond what is offered within the research site. P9 mentioned, "I read a lot outside the classroom to keep up with what's going on. I keep up with what is going on in education. I keep up with the research. I am constantly searching for new ideas." P7 agreed stating, "I have done a lot of research and learning different ways to differentiate my instruction."

Theme 4 was supported in research by Joyce and Showers (2002) they believed that ongoing embedded professional development provides opportunities for teacher collaboration through professional learning communities and creates an environment of support from coaches, peers and administration. In addition, Joyce and Showers stressed,

in order for the teacher to become effective they need to be persistent and flexible, be able to apply the information learned to their classrooms and collaborate and work with peers.

Darling-Hammond (2004) further stressed that most effective professional development programs are job-embedded and provide key elements, collaboration, connections between curriculum and assessment and being able to apply the knowledge to the classroom. Further, teachers with collaborative learning approaches that aligns the curriculum across the grade levels and create connections between curriculum and assessment. In addition, professional development should also provide opportunities to apply the knowledge learned and obtain formative feedback.

Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Orphanos and the National Staff Development Council (2009), reported that teachers need staff development that is directly related to student achievement gains and just in time. Wei, et. al. further stated that effective staff development should be ongoing, connected to specific academic goals of the school and encourage collaboration and strong working relationships. In addition, Wei, et. al. mentioned that staff development opportunities should be extended throughout the school year to maximize learning and collaboration. Moreover, teacher should be able to apply the information learned within the classroom within a timely manner and return to discuss results collaboratively. Workshops should move beyond the traditional short-term workshops and conferences or college courses.

Further research by deJong and Harper (2005) supported the need for training to create good EL teachers including the ability to organize, create and assess the effectiveness of lessons, set SMART goals and provide support for background

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knowledge acquisition and real world experiences. Teachers also need training to create an environment that model positive learning behaviors and includes multiple learning activities and experiences. de Jong and Harper also encouraged staff development activities which help teachers to celebrate cultural diversity, and create a classroom environment which encourages student creativity.

Theme 5: Effective Teachers Provide Rigor When Teaching All Students

High expectations were considered another important factor in mainstream classroom success. P4 expressed, "I think holding all my students to a high standard has made my classroom a success because they know I expect 100% from them all." P2 divulged, "You want to keep them engaged and challenged by not so much of a challenge that they are not successful. In other words, you want rigor. You want to push them higher and higher to obtain more skills." P2 went on to caution against pushing students too hard and not allowing them to put too much pressure on themselves.

High expectations were supported in the literature by Fairbain and Jones-Vo (2010) who suggested that an effective mainstream teacher does not water down the curriculum but maintains high expectations for all students, even if they are still developing their language skills. Fairbain and Jones-Vo stressed that teachers receive the outcome of their expectation of their students. In other words, if a teacher has low expectations, students will achieve at a lower level. If a teacher has high expectations students will in turn achieve at a higher level. They continued to support this idea by ensuring that when a teacher lets their student show they have high expectations, academic achievement is increased.

In addition, Tomlinson (2001) further encouraged high expectations for student success. Tomlinson felt there were eight important activities that a teacher should do to ensure that all students were held to high expectations; (1) encourage students, (2) collect data to track student achievement, (3) provide ongoing formative feedback, (4) don't listen to gossip about the student, (5) use heterogeneous small groups, (6) communicate, (7) provide wait time, and (8) use differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Theme 5 was discovered through interview questions number 7 and 10.

7. What differentiated instructional strategies do you currently use with ELs?

10. What factors do you feel make differentiated instruction with ELs successful in your classroom?

This theme surfaced as the participants mentioned within the interviews that ELs are no different than their native English speaking peers. Of the participants, 43% felt that putting labels such as ELs on students was unacceptable. P3 stated, "When the students walk into my classroom. I don't look at them as EL or any other ethnic group or category. I look at them as students, and I expect 100% from all." Within these questions, 86% of participants indicated that holding students to high expectations creates an environment that is conducive to increased student achievement.

P2 stated:

You have to make sure that the content is within the realm of their understanding so that they can expand on it. They have to be interested to take the next step themselves and take charge of their own learning and take it beyond the classroom, creating high expectations.

P4 agreed stating:

> I think holding all my students to a high standard has made it successful because they all know I expect 100% effort from all of them and giving them a variety of choice boards to choose from. The choice boards make them accountable for their own learning. They have to choose which assignments to complete and read the instructions for the assignments and do what the assignment tells them to do. Whereas the other students might get bored just listening to whole group discussion. It gives the higher students the ability to go on their own and learn the content on their own.

P8 mentioned:

> Another thing I do is if they ask me a question I don't give them an answer. I instead ask them a question and make them think about it. By the end of the year all I have to do is say; where do you think we need to go to find the answer? And they do it. This makes independent learners and creates and environment of high expectations.

P8 further stated:

> All students need to understand the same standard at the end of the day. I just look at the standard and I find ways to break it down for those who need remediation and find ways to accelerate or take standards a step further for the students that need it.

Of the participants 57% felt that teachers need, "To give students the opportunity to choose the activities they want to do. P8 and P5 felt that teachers need, "To give students

the opportunity to choose the activities they want to do. This creates independent learners."

Theme 6: Effective Teachers Create Learning Community Among Teachers, Students, and Administration.

On several occasions, the participants within the study mentioned collaborative planning, brainstorming, administrative support and collecting data to set goals for increased student achievement. These keywords assist in describing a Professional Learning Community or PLC, which became apparent as a theme within the participant's responses to interview questions.

5. What data do you collect and how do you use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

6. What kind of staff development have you had on the topic of differentiated instruction?

7. What differentiated instructional strategies do you currently use with ELs?

9. What kind of support do you receive in regards to differentiated instruction with ELs?

10. What factors do you feel make differentiated instruction with ELs successful in your classroom?

As the participants answered these interview questions the data provide Support for theme 6 Learning Community. Participants continually mentioned strategies and processes that directly tied into what a PLC is.

Those in teachers who are in a PLC are willing to make mistakes, overcome challenges and become facilitators of learning they provide an environment which allows

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teams to work collaboratively and independently to achieve common goals with a focus on student success for each student (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2006). The following comments received during the interview process provide support for theme 6. P1 very excitedly explained, "I have students asking to create products or wanting me to put them in acceleration activities, I am making them explorers with motivation and excitement of students." P8 further expressed, "I have become a facilitator of their learning, and they are the teachers." Participants also mentioned that the administration provides support through collaborative meeting and administrative high expectations. P7 expressed the administrative high expectations, "Make me a better teacher. My plans are better than they ever have been."

Theme 6 was supported in research by Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Many (2006). Collaboration and learning about the students together within PLC's teachers have access to data to inform instruction and have access to best practices to assist in collaboration in order to increase student achievement for all. They further stressed that administration of a PLC can achieve at a higher level if they continually focus on questions within the school that have the highest need from improvement but are directly connected to teachers and learning. Further, Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Many maintained that schools who have successful teachers provide a safe learning environment, create clear and focused goals, provide frequent and ongoing formative assessments, provide acceleration and remediation, have a collaborative culture, have high expectations and strong administrative leadership.

Moreover, Piccano (2006) encouraged a supportive learning community which is focused on instructional interventions, practices data-driven instruction and sets

measurable instructional goals. These goals, according to Picciano create an environment that puts students first and sets a baseline for differentiated instruction. Furthermore, Picciano (2006) urged that in order to provide long-term sustainable academic improvement staff development was a must primarily in the use of analyzing data for the classroom. Picciano went on to encourage administration to remember that teachers play a key role in student achievement. Therefore, they need to be provided with ongoing staff development to meet their needs, ongoing staff development on analyzing data for classroom and ongoing administrative assistance and support opportunities in order to increase student gains.

The participant's responses provided six main things that administration does to provide support for teachers when differentiating instruction in the mainstream classroom. P7 and P9 felt that high expectations by administration provided support for classroom success. P7 stated:

> One support is a need to have to show it and have to do it. It's like a carrot on a stick. I would do it if the administration didn't tell me to do it, but probably not as much or as good as I do. Their high expectations of me make me a better teacher. My plans now are better than they have ever been.

P9 mentioned, "The challenge is putting it all into practice and living up to the administration's expectations. They have high expectations."

Another type of support provided by administration according to P6, P10, P13 and P14 was staff development opportunities. P6 stated:

> Our administration is in the process of setting up staff development instruction for differentiated instruction that is very much needed. Our administration realizes

this, so they are in the process of setting it up. They also realize with the number of

ELs in our classrooms we need help coming up with strategies to meet their needs.

Therefore, we are constantly brainstorming strategies we can use within the

classroom.

P10 mentioned, "They give us workshops where we can collaborate with other grade

levels strategies to meet the needs of the ELs in our classrooms." P13 agreed stating,

"They provide in-house staff development through the literacy coach and other teachers."

Further mentioned by P6, P10 and P14 as a support that the administration

provides were instructional resources. P5 reported, "The administration gives us

resources when they have the money available." Likewise, P10 stated, "They give us

materials, but they also provide paraprofessionals to help in the classroom for a short

time during the day." P13 agreed reporting, "The administration provides resources for

curriculum support differentiated instruction. For example, we have a huge guided

reading library."

The next type of support mentioned by 36% of participants was the weekly GAN,

or Greatest Area of Need, meeting. P1 mentioned, "The weekly GAN meetings are a big

help. We can bounce ideas off of each other and the administration." Similarly, P3

declared, "I have to say this year in the GANs we have been sharing differentiated

strategies for our classrooms. I have enjoyed that." P11, as well as P12, felt that the

weekly GAN meetings were, "a big help," when planning for differentiated instruction.

Further, 50% of participants felt that the administrative feedback was another key

point for administrative support. P1 remarked, "They provide feedback on our

walkthroughs and evaluations which provides valuable ideas to help with instruction."

Likewise, P2 stated, "Feedback from evaluations has been very helpful. I feel I have sufficient support from the administration. They are busy too. If I need help I just ask. Administrative support can bring in a new point of view and fresh ideas." Similarly P8 felt they had, "A good working relationship with the administration so if I need it help or suggestions they pull whatever resources I need or brainstorm ideas to help me with strategies and provide feedback which helps me to become a better teacher." P11 and P12 shared that they felt administration listened to their needs and gave valuable ideas and provided feedback on their walkthroughs as well as giving valuable ideas to help with differentiated instruction. P14 agreed stating, "They provide valuable suggestions and feedback and can tell you which direction to go."

The final common administrative support mentioned by 57% of the participants was that the administration is providing help when needed. P1 offered, "They provide us with amazing support. They listen to our needs." Further, P2 mentioned that the administration helped when there was a struggle meeting the students' needs by, "providing tips, support and ideas on how to meet the needs of my students." P4 stated, "I have gotten a lot of help from the administration. They have a lot of ideas about differentiated instruction." P8 agreed, "If I need help or suggestions they pull whatever resources I need or brainstorm ideas to help." P9 echoed P8 by stating, "The administration is very supportive. They have helped me with a large group of low students. We talked about strategies for reading instruction. I feel very comfortable walking into their offices and asking for help." P11, P12 and P14 felt that administration provided amazing support. P14 added, "If you need advice, all you have to do is ask."

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Another factor that was felt to be important in classroom success was for the teacher to be willing to take risks. P2 stated:

The things that make my classroom successful vary. It's a trial and error thing. Just like anything you do. It's different for every kid, for every personality, subject, content area and student interest. I am willing to take risks and make mistakes and reflect to see what I need to do to be a better teacher.

P5 mentioned to be successful a teacher has to be open for change and take risks in the classroom even if they don't work to increase student achievement. Then they need to step back and ask, "How do I change this to where it will meet my student's needs?"

Additionally, P14 declared:

Regardless of what is in the curriculum to be covered I cannot move at fast pace where they are being left behind. If the students do not understand, I need to be able to provide time to re-teach and remediate. I look where they are and determine what is next and plan for that. The standard may need to be broken down a little more for them to understand it. We may need to go back to a lower grade level standard to provide background knowledge they have not learned. I cannot look at another class and say they are already two or three standards ahead of us on the pacing guide. This is risky because of teacher accountability, but I have to move at their pace so that they will be able to meet standards on the state test. After all that is what we are preparing them for.

P8, P11 and P12 felt that creating a classroom community is what made their classrooms successful when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. P8 stated:

The most important thing I feel makes my classroom successful is the relationships with the students. At the beginning of the year, the first two weeks is to get to know the families and get to know the students and what they like. I have them share a lot about themselves, and we become a family in the classroom and once I build that relationship they will do anything I ask. They will work their tails off if I ask them too. If they don't understand something, they trust me enough to come up and ask me. They are not afraid to come up and tell me they are having difficulties, and they are not afraid of feeling silly when asking a question or feeling like they are asking a dumb question. They create a family environment where if one student does not understand it another one will volunteer to help them and explain it to them in a way that I may not be able to explain it to them it just creates a little community in here so it becomes where I am not the only teacher in here they are too. It helps with students who are language learners because they don't have that confidence and they want to feel safe to make mistakes so you want to create an environment where it is safe to make mistakes and by teaching them that we need to help each other and we need to understand that we all are going to make mistakes then they feel safer to raise their hands and volunteer. When learning about the students, I can see their little personalities coming through, and I can begin to learn what products and topics they would love to do in class and the topics that we can incorporate into reading. So just by understanding my kids from day one helps me drive how I plan for differentiated instruction in my classroom. I think it helps me whenever I focus on that in the beginning. I have been doing that the last couple of years, and I have

had success with it. I like to see the kids being kind to one another and helping

each other. Think this has been a huge success in my classroom. I have become

more of a facilitator of their learning; they are the teachers.

P11 and P12 agreed stating, "Knowing your learners and creating a community is one of

the most important things for students to be successful." P3 and P9 felt that successful

classrooms depend on a positive environment. P3 mentioned:

We are truthful. We hide nothing in my classroom. They know where they stand

if they are low we all know it, and we all help them. We don't hide it. One student

may stink at math but be an excellent reader. We will all go and help those that

are having a hard time. I think that the most important self-esteem builder is

learning how to take constructive criticism. I not telling them that they are low to

put them down, I want them to be self-aware and know I need to improve this

which provides rigor. I don't like give them something easier to do. They still take

the same test that a native English speaker will take. It is just they know where

their weaknesses are, and they have to work a little harder, and they know what

they are the best at and they can help others in this area. If they know where they

are and know what their strengths and weaknesses are, it is a big self-esteem

builder. Instead of like having the boys talking about one another behind their

backs saying they are dumb. We have already ousted the weaknesses out in the

classrooms so why talk about him you know he isn't good at it. Everyone knows

their strengths and weaknesses I think it makes them all feel more comfortable.

Likewise, P9 stated, "I really, really care. I want these kids to be successful. They know I am trying to help them. They have a teacher that cares. It creates a positive environment and makes all the difference in the world."

Theme 7: Effective Teachers Display Courage and Resilience when Faced with Challenges

All the participants had challenges that they needed to overcome in order to meet the needs of the ELs in the mainstream classroom. P1, P3, P4 and P14 felt that differentiating instruction in the mainstream was hard. P1 stated, "There is so much to do when differentiating that it is hard to remember it all." P13 explained further by stating, "Differentiation is really hard because ELs still have to learn the same standards as everyone else in their grade level. P3 further commented about differentiated instruction being hard. "It's a pain," P3 stated, "I say it's a pain in a joking way. It's harder, but it's worth it." P4 mentioned that differentiated instruction is challenging to make students understand that:

> They are going to do an assignment that meets their needs, and they can do other assignments based on their level. You have to teach the students that they all work at different paces and different levels and its okay of they are doing that and are not the same as others.

P14 agreed that using differentiated instruction was hard stressing:

> Differentiated instruction is a lot of hard work because you have to take into consideration where they are academically and with language ability and how they learn and then you have to find as many ways to teach the standard as you can.

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Multiple level or tiered activities were seen as a challenge by 71% of the participants. P1 voiced, "Finding remediation activities to help struggling students is a huge challenge." Likewise, P2 stated:

> I struggle with tiered lessons. We have multiple levels to a concept or lesson that addresses a varied group at varied levels. It's tough; it's tough because you get them at so many different levels. It's hard to stay ahead of them, and it's hard to keep them all engaged.

P3 agreed by stating, "It's hard to differentiate content with so many reading levels. This is really hard because they still have to learn the same standards for their grade level." Further, P4 mentioned that the EL students do not understand why they have to do a different project than the other students. P4 stated, "It is a challenge to make students understand that they are going to do an assignment that meets their needs." Likewise, P5 stated, "It is difficult because we have so many different levels of EL students." Likewise, P6 felt that differentiating instruction, "Is a challenge because of multiple students being below grade level academically." P8 felt the difficulty with differentiating instruction was, "The time to meet with all the children because they are developing their language at a different and varying speeds." Comparatively P9 divulged:

> When you have guided reading benchmarks, you are going to have a variety of reading levels. This year I had a student at the second-grade level, most at third grade reading level and some were on a fourth-grade reading level. You can pick out a book on their reading level and their comfort and ability level and then you have to plan something that you can incorporate all these levels into something that a whole class can do for a project in spite of their varied levels.

P14 offered that in order to meet all the students' needs, "You just have to make sure you plan for the different levels of learning such as; on target, remediation and acceleration as well as how they learn."

Time constraints were seen as one of the biggest challenges by P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P13 and P14. P2 mentioned differentiated instruction, "Is very time-consuming outside of the classroom. Not the delivery of it but differentiated instruction is very time consuming planning for the multiple levels within the classroom EL or non-EL." P3 added:

> If I don't have things readily available, it takes time. I don't have enough time
> during the day to plan and gather resources from the library. Time constraints are
> an issue but could be solved if resources were more readily available then it
> would be a lot easier.

P3 went on to say:

> It's a pain, very time-consuming, very in-depth. There are no differentiated
> lesson plans you could do in a snap. When planning for differentiation you have
> to get all your materials ahead of time. You have to make sure all the computers
> are working ahead of time. It's hard, but it's worth it.

Likewise, P6 volunteered, "I find it a challenge to have enough time for small groups that is needed. I have a paraprofessional, but the time is limited, and it is very hard to work in small groups during the time I am provided." In addition, P8 stated, "It's hard to get the time to meet the needs of all the children because they are developing their language at different speeds." In like manner, P8 mentioned, "The time to meet the needs of all children because they all are learning at different varying speeds." Additionally, P13

agreed stating, "I have to make sure I plan a lot of extra questions. When planning for reading you can't plan for all the glitches. This takes extra time." Similarly, P14 disclosed:

It is a lot of work because you have to take into consideration where they are academically and with language ability and how they learn and then you have to try to find as many ways as you can to teach that standard as you can. Differentiated instruction takes time to teach, but it works out in the end. You just have to make sure you plan for the different levels of learning such as on target, remediation and acceleration as well as how they learn.

P3, P5, P6 and P8 felt that a lack of available resources was their biggest challenge when differentiating instruction. P3 stated, "Not having enough resources; this has nothing to do with administration, but educational funding. If resources were more readily available then it would be easier." Likewise P6 mentioned:

We are very limited on the resources provided, so I am constantly looking online for resources to use to provide vocabulary enrichment and visual content that will reach my students. It is frustrating to have to spend my own money constantly to provide resources for my students.

The lack of background knowledge of EL students was considered as a challenge by P3, P7 and P9. P3 disclosed:

ELs lack a lot of background knowledge that their English speaking peers have. This really puts teachers at a disadvantage because you may have to go back even further than their current grade level to provide the background for them to be successful.

P13 offered, "When planning for reading you can't plan for all the glitches, but you stop and add to the plans to help those students who need remediation or acceleration." P14 made another key point, "Differentiated instruction takes time to plan for but it works out in the end. You just have to make sure you plan for all the different levels of learning such as, on target, remediation, and acceleration as well as how they learn."

Other difficulties in teaching differentiated instruction were mentioned by individual participants such as the need for more administrative support, more collaboration between teachers and the fact that many ELs are shy and need encouragement to speak out in class.

P3 expressed that planning for differentiated instruction, "Is a pain. Very time consuming, very in-depth, there are not differentiated lesson plans that you can do in a snap. It's harder but worth it." P13 stated:

> I have to make sure I plan a lot of extra questions, and I have to focus on what they need to get out of the reading more and focus on what they won't understand because I won't know until I teach it then you rework it to meet those needs. When planning for reading you can't plan for all the glitches but you stop and add to the plans to help those students that need remediation or acceleration.

In contrast P2 declared, "It's tough! It's tough because when you get them at so many levels it's hard to stay ahead of them, and it's hard to keep them engaged.

P8 volunteered that it s stressful because you have to make sure that the students are not at a frustrated level. So finding materials at their level is sometimes stressful, but when you see it actually working in the classroom, it is worth it.

P14 felt that they, "Really don't face any challenges because when you differentiate things you really are trying to meet the students at their level. You simplify the language without dumbing it down, and you try to be clear in your explanations and your directions do it hasn't been a challenge as such." Although P2, P3, P5, P6, and P8 felt that time constraints were a challenge when differentiating instruction. P2 mentioned, "It is very time-consuming outside of the classroom. Not the delivery of it but is very time-consuming planning for differentiated instruction." P6 further mentioned, "I find it challenging to have enough time for small groups that they need. My time with para-pros is very limited, and it is very hard to work in small groups during the time provided." P8 expressed, "The time to meet the needs of all the children because they are developing their language at different varying speeds, so it's that time to meet all the individual needs."

P1 and P11 agreed that finding remediation activities were a challenge they faced when teaching differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom. P11 stated, "Finding alternative activities when students don't understand the standard being taught or remediation activities." Similar, P5 and P7 felt that finding activities for multiple levels of students was a challenge when using differentiated instruction. P7 shared, "I have trouble finding ways to meet the needs of all students with the vast number of needs. It seems that everyone needs something individual. I have 17 of 22 being EL students, so it is hard to individualized instruction."

On the other hand P8 thought success was attributed to not over thinking and stated:

> With me, I think I got overwhelmed with trying to recreate something. I suggest taking the base standard and focus on the base standard and just try to change it

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just a little bit for those students who need it. Don't try to recreate anything, just look at the standard instead of trying to do something completely different just look at the standard and see if you can simplify it or take it up a notch. At first I made differentiation harder than what it is, so I want people to understand that you need to know your students, you need to understand how they learn, you need to know constantly where your students performance and where they are academically. You need to be constantly flexible with grouping them, but the actual instruction itself don't make it harder than what it is. You need to be aware of their performance that way you can reach those students.

P3 and P5 mentioned that a lack of educational resources was a challenge when differentiating instruction. P3 stressed:

Not having enough resources, this is nothing to do with administration, but educational funding. Most of my students have trouble with comprehension. I don't have things readily available. I don't have enough time during the day to go to the library and gather resources. I need them readily at my fingertips."

However, P2 felt that, "Trying to come up with something that is engaging and not frustrating them," Was a challenge when differentiating instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom." Another challenge presented by P10 was:

The challenges are that most ELs are shy, or they are afraid because they are just coming into the country, and they cannot talk well in English or speak English at all. The other problem I have with them is participation. You really need to encourage them a lot to talk.

Additionally, P9 mentioned that a challenge was the language barrier stating, "I can't speak Spanish. I don't have a fluent second language with the kids. It is also speaking the language with parents in order to communicate effectively about the child."

Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005) mentioned in their study that the top five challenges found in their research were, (a) teacher, parent communication. (b) lack of time, (c) lack of teacher resources, (d) multiple levels of student academic needs, (e) difficulties encouraging or motivating ELs in the classroom. Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll challenges for teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom matched those challenges mentioned by participants in this study. In correlation with the two findings, it seems that teachers across the country face the same challenges when meeting the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom. The study by Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll also noted that these challenges can be made less stressful for the teachers by providing teachers ongoing staff development activities which discuss how to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom. Even though the teachers in the study were presented with multiple challenges they had the courage to find the resources, administrative support, strategies and

Chapter 4 Summary

Fourteen mainstream classroom teachers participated in the research study. These teachers teach in a school with a high population of ELs. All of the participants volunteered for the study when approached. The lived experiences of teaching ELs in the classroom were unique to each participant within third through fifth grades. The teachers had valuable insight into teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom.

Each of the teachers felt different things made their classrooms successful when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. Of the responses, 43% felt that a teacher should make no assumptions when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. P6 stated:

I think the most important thing to remember when differentiating with ELs is never to assume they understand something. Sometimes the simplest things we just assume they understand. When asking ELs questions it becomes obvious they do not always understand what you are trying to tell them, so you have to break it down using lots of visuals.

P13 stated, "Never assume they know what to do. I explain things over and over. If they need it, I explain it again." P7 addressed the assumption that when students go home they are speaking English by stating:

When they leave this school, and they go home they are speaking almost 100% Spanish. Over the summer, it is almost 100% Spanish, over the Christmas break they speak almost 100% Spanish. When they are with their family, it's always almost 100% Spanish. When they get here, it must be exhausting to speak two languages. I certainly don't mind them speaking Spanish to each other some.

P11 and P12 agreed with P7 by mentioning that when ELs go home they are probably speaking Spanish full time. P12 stated, "When you are teaching you are teaching in English. They are putting it in their heads translating it in Spanish and coming up with an answer in English." Additionally P14 felt that teachers should never assume their lessons will always be successful. P14 claimed, "Teachers need to be willing to stop and make changes as needed to improve on their lessons." P3 felt that to be successful in the mainstream classroom the teacher needs the strength to overcome the challenges

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associated with teaching ELs. P3 encouraged teachers too, "Be patient, they are probably not going to get it the first time. Don't get discouraged."

P2 stated for mainstream classroom success teachers need to remember not to "Frustrate the students. Don't take the joy out of educating them for yourself. Let them have fun with their products so they can create a joy of learning."

According to the participants within the research study, successful mainstream teachers provide rigor for all students expecting 100% of all students. They are data-driven; they collect data about the learner, pre-tests, post-tests as well as ongoing formative and summative assessments to plan for and drive differentiated instruction. Successful teachers use a multitude of research-based instructional strategies with differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students they are well trained and have experience teaching ELs. They participate in job-embedded learning as well as workshops and other staff development opportunities. Furthermore, to be successful in the mainstream classroom teachers need courage. They need the courage to overcome the many challenges they face on a daily basis. They need the courage to find a way to meet the needs of all students within the classroom no matter what.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter five includes the conclusions of this research study and discussions about the results, findings, limitations, and implications for further research on the topic. The chapter begins with a summary of the study that includes that description of the research study and the central research question as well as the corollary questions that were explored.

The chapter includes a summary of the study, a summary of the findings and conclusions, a discussion of the results as it relates to the literature, the limitations of the results, the implications of the findings for practice, as well as recommendations of the findings for further study, and a conclusion of the study.

Summary of the Study

In order to discover what process, strategies, practices and theories effective mainstream teachers use during reading instruction to meet the needs of English learners. Interview research from teachers who teach at an elementary school in the South Eastern, United States with a high population of English learners was analyzed. Within the United States, the population of Hispanic children has continued to grow over the past 40 years. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of fourteen certified teachers who teach ELs on a daily basis and what those experiences meant to the

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participants. Moreover, the idea for the problem studied evolved from the fact that it is not known how mainstream teachers effectively use differentiated instruction to meet the needs of English learners on a daily basis (Heacox, 2002). There is also a need for quality studies on how mainstream teachers can best meet the needs of ELs in order to close the achievement gap (Samson & Collins, 2012).

Consequently, after a thorough review of the literature related to the topic a determination was made that there was a need for further research on teachers who effectively teach ELs in the mainstream classroom. Therefore, this research study was completed in an attempt to explore the lived experiences of fourteen teachers who teach ELs on a daily basis in the mainstream classroom. The study was conducted in order to discover what these experiences meant to the participants and how this knowledge has helped to shape their lived experiences when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom, and what these teachers do to meet the needs of the ELs their classrooms. The research study was conducted in an attempt to fill a gap in the literature about teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. It was also conducted explore what effective mainstream teachers, who use differentiated instruction do during reading instruction. Data was collected through interviews to determine what processes, strategies and techniques mainstream teacher use when teaching EL students.

Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) relate effective teaching to the ability to provide instruction that meets the need of diverse groups of students while incorporating instructional activities to meet the needs of diverse groups of students with different abilities. While doing this, they can incorporate standards-based instruction and assess for mastery. An effective teacher was also characterized as a data-driven teacher who uses

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data to inform instruction. Goe, Bell and Little (2008) stated that effective teachers do five things; they have high expectations for all. Contribute to a positive academic behavior including attitudes, social outcomes and promotion. As well as, use of a multitude of research strategies for planning and implementing instruction, contribute to the classroom development and use effective teaching strategies. Therefore, the research study was conducted in an effort to explore the experiences of mainstream teachers lived experiences with ELs in the mainstream classroom when using differentiated instruction. Moreover, this research study was completed in order to seek and discover what challenges of teachers of ELs in the mainstream classroom face on a daily basis.

This research study was conducted using a basic qualitative approach a using semiformal interviews for gathering the data. These interviews provided the researcher with the information to discover what effective teachers of ELs do in a daily basis to meet their educational needs. The researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing qualitative research (Merriam & Associates, 2002). The goal of qualitative research is to determine the meanings that participants have attached to their lived experiences. Merriam (2009) pointed out that researchers interested in conducting qualitative research would be interested in how the participants interpret their lived experiences, and how their world is constructed around the phenomena being studied. When a researcher conducts qualitative research, they want to give power to the participants within the study in order to get them to share their lived experiences freely. They want to listen to their voices and opinions in order to fully understand the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2012). Using basic qualitative approach provided the researcher with rich and thick data in order to conduct a descriptive analysis

(Creswell, 2005). Purposeful sampling was used with a group of teachers at a Title One school in the South Eastern, United States who have a large population of ELs in their mainstream classrooms. Teachers were selected based on the percentage of their EL students meeting or exceeding on the mandatory state standardized test. For teachers to qualify to be part of the study, they needed to have at least 80% of their ELs in their mainstream classroom meeting or exceeding in reading on the state mandated standardized test. Personal one-on-one interviews were conducted as the method of data collection. Open-ended interviews were used, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Finally, the interview data was put into a CAQDAS or Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software. According to Merriam (2009) using a CAQDAS, provides an opportunity for the researcher to be more creative when coding and analyzing research data. Coding, according to Lewin and Silver (2007) is the process of breaking down the data into segments to determine themes or categories in the research. According to Lewin and Silver (2007) coding is essential to qualitative research as it provides management, connects similarities, identifies differences, and finds patterns and relationships within the data.

The central question addressed in this research study was: What differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices are used by mainstream teachers who have obtained at least 80% reading comprehension performance with English learners? This question was devised to enhance the dialogue in the field of education about teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. As well as, the lived experiences of teachers who teach a high number of ELs on a daily basis within the mainstream classroom as a suburban Title one elementary school.

The corollary questions explored in the study were used to create a focal point of the interview process. There were five corollary questions in the study. They were:

R1: How do teachers use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

R2: How do teachers describe their experiences with differentiated instruction methods in planning reading lessons?

R3: What processes do teachers go through when differentiating process, content and product during differentiated instruction?

R4: What training do teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching EL students?

R5: What challenges do teachers have when using differentiated instruction?

Question number one assisted the researcher in understanding what data teacher use during the planning process to plan for differentiated instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom. The second question provided the researcher with a look into the lived experiences when planning reading lesson plans for ELs in the mainstream classroom. The third question explored what mainstream classroom teachers differentiate process, content and product when differentiating for ELs in the mainstream classroom. The fourth question provided a look into what staff development opportunities teachers who are effective at teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom have or have participated in. Question number five explored the challenges mainstream teachers face when teaching ELs in their classrooms.

Summary of the Findings and Conclusions

The research study explored the lived experiences of fourteen certified teachers in a suburban Title I elementary school who worked with large numbers of ELs in the

mainstream classroom. The teachers were individually approached by the researcher as potential participants after by reselected with purposeful sampling. The participants took part in face-to-face, one-on-one semi-structured open-ended interviews about their lived experiences with teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom.

The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. The participants' experiences were analyzed into themes that emerged from the participants' responses. The central question was: What differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices that are used by mainstream teachers who have obtained at least 80% reading comprehension performance with English learners? The five corollary research questions were used to expand on the experiences of teachers who teach ELs in the mainstream classroom as well as the participants' challenges when differentiating instruction with ELs. The data mainstream teachers use to plan for differentiated instruction and what staff development activities these teachers' participants in and the process that teachers go through when differentiating process, content and product.

Based on the findings of the interviews, seven themes emerged from the responses given by participants. The themes correspond with much of the literature that was gathered and evaluated prior to data collection with the fourteen mainstream teachers. The themes discovered provided an understanding of the experiences of teachers who teach ELs on a daily basis in the mainstream classroom. The seven themes present in the study were:

1. Effective teachers deemed collaboration important for student success

2. Effective teachers use research based instructional strategies.

3. Effective teachers use multiple sources of data collection to drive instruction.

4. Effective teachers are highly qualified.

5. Effective teachers provide rigor when teaching all students.

6. Effective teachers create a learning community among teachers, students, and administration.

7. Effective teachers display courage and resilience when faced with challenges.

The central question about what instructional strategies, techniques and practice that mainstream teachers use during teaching reading to ELs provided varied responses. The responses from participants led to the discovery of the use of multiple strategies, techniques and practices being used to meet the needs of ELs within the mainstream classroom on a daily basis. The conclusions were also that these teachers used these strategies, processes and techniques within differentiated instruction.

The five corollary research questions also received varied responses with the responses leading to similar conclusions. For research question one, the lived experiences of teachers who teach ELs in the mainstream classroom revealed that the participants are data-driven. The participants collected various forms of data such as data about the student, formative and summative data, learning style and multiple intelligence data which was used to plan for differentiated instruction. The participants reported using the data to plan differentiated instruction lesson plans and for differentiated small group lessons within differentiated instruction. The data was also used to form flexible small groups for remediation and acceleration.

For research question two, the responses of the participants revealed that differentiating instruction is hard, time consuming and very in-depth but according to the participants these experiences although difficult are worth it. The participants reflected on

the collaborative opportunities made available when planning or differentiated instruction. Participants shared that differentiating instruction is tough because not only are native English speaking students in the mainstream classroom but, these students have varying levels of academic proficiency. Likewise, ELs in the mainstream classroom also have varying levels of academic and language proficiency. All things considered the participants felt that using differentiated instruction was the only way to meet the needs of all learners in the mainstream classroom.

The participants' responses to the research question number three, which described the process mainstream teachers go through to differentiate process, content and product provided needed incite about how mainstream teachers differentiate for ELs on a daily basis. The most common response was that the process to differentiate instruction in the mainstream classroom was based on a continuous improvement model. According to participants teachers pre-test put students into flexible small groups based on pre-test data, instruct, post-test, then remediate and accelerate based on post-test data. If students still need further instruction, the teachers continue to remediate and instruct in flexible small groups.

Through the research process, the participants described a process they go through to meet the needs of all learners in their mainstream classrooms. The participants begin by pretesting students the data gathered from pretest is used to create flexible small groups. From there the teachers instruct and then posttest students. The results are used from the post-test to determine if students need remediation. Students who are struggling are given remediation on the standard and those who have met the standard are given

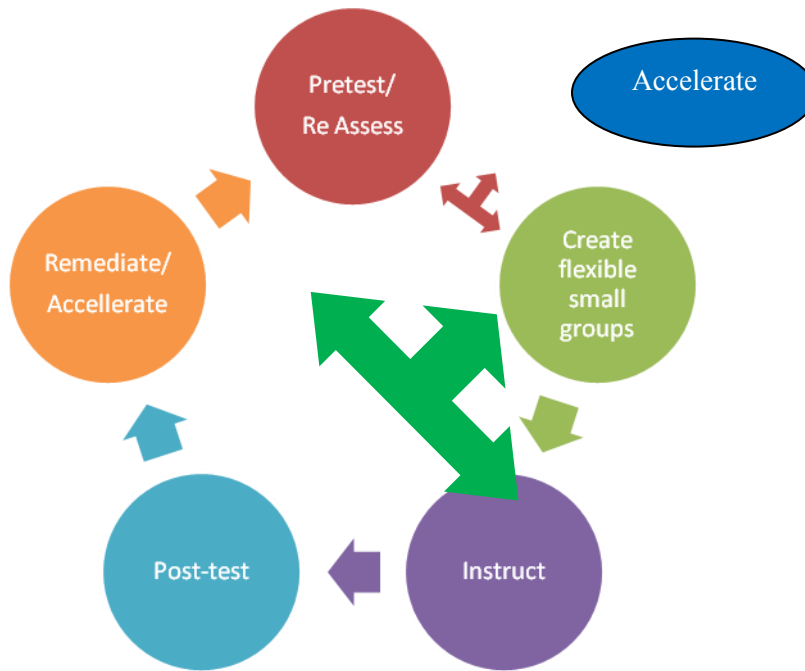acceleration activities. The flexible small groups within the classroom are fluid and never staying the same.

Figure 3 Differentiated Instructional Process Defined in Study

Participants further commented that content is often not differentiated for ELs because ELs need to take the same state mandated test at the end of the year as the non-EL students. Differentiating process and product were believed by participants to be done mainly by student choice. Choice according to the participants is offered through Tic-Tac-Toe boards and learning contracts, which allows the student to choose the instructional activities they wish to complete. These choice boards offer activities based on multiple intelligences, modalities of learning and levels of Blooms Taxonomy. Also for process the participants mentioned a plethora of research-based instructional strategies that they use to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom within

differentiated instruction. Participants agree that ongoing formative assessment with feedback was an important strategy to implement into the differentiated instruction process. Collaboration was considered an important step in differentiating instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom. Participants also felt that incorporating performance projects and performance assessments within a project-based learning environment.

The participants' responses to research question four which described the training that mainstream teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching ELs. Participants offered varied responses including book studies and online videos. Participants also mentioned that staff development including job-embedded staff development, staff shares and teacher-led staff development offered staff development activities to improve instruction other forms of staff development such as workshops and conferences. Many participants felt that obtaining their ESOL endorsement had been crucial for their success with ELs in the mainstream classroom. The consensus of the participants was that being well trained was the key to successfully teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom.

The participant's responses to question number five which detailed the challenges mainstream teachers face when teaching ELs on a daily basis. Participants felt that using differentiated instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom was very time-consuming. It took extra time to plan tiered lessons and to teach the students using flexible small groups. Participants also felt that finding alternate levels of activities to use within differentiated instruction was one of the biggest challenges. Although participants shared many challenges for differentiating instruction, there was a commonality that in

spite of these challenges, using differentiated instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom is worth it.

Discussion of the Findings in Relation to the Literature

The six themes that emerged from the study coincided with the literature on the topic of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. However, the respondents' insights concerning their lived experiences with teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom added a much-needed insight on the topic. In this section the six emergent themes, the central questions, and the five corollary questions are reviewed in this section as to how they are connected with current literature.

As a result of the study, there was an emergence of six themes during the exploration, coding and transcription of the participant interviews. The six themes present within the study were:

1. Effective teachers deemed collaboration important for student success.

2. Effective teachers use research based instructional strategies.

3. Effective teachers use multiple sources of data collection to drive instruction.

4. Effective teachers are highly qualified.

5. Effective teachers provide rigor when teaching all students.

6. Effective teachers create a learning community among teachers, students and administration.

7. Effective teachers display courage and resilience when faced with challenges..

Theme 1: Effective Teachers Deemed Collaboration Important for Student Success

Collaboration was deemed important by eight of the eleven participants. Which included, collaboration between mainstream classroom teachers, ESOL teachers and administration. P7 stated, "Luckily, I have the ESOL teacher right next door, so we collaborate and plan reading lessons all the time. She helps greatly with the differentiation for the ESOL students. Without this collaboration, I don't know how I would do it all." P1 passionately stated, "Collaborative planning is one of the most beneficial things when planning for differentiated instruction. We sit down and share ideas and say this is what I try to do, try it and see if it works for you. We not only plan with the team, but we also do collaborative planning with the ESOL teacher.

Moreover, collaboration between the administration and teachers was mentioned as being helpful. P1, P3, P4, P11 and P12 shared that the administration at the research site provides adequate time for collaboration through weekly GAN meetings or Greatest Area of Need meetings. P3 reported, "During the weekly GAN meetings, we brainstorm ideas, and the administration gives us pointers and suggestions for differentiating instruction."

While most of the participants felt, they had adequate time to collaborate with peers P4 disagreed. P4 stressed, "If there were more collaboration than planning for and differentiating instruction would be a lot easier."

Theme 1 was supported in the literature by Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Many (2006), who believed that the purpose of collaboration is to increase student achievement but can only be accomplished if those collaborating are focused on the right things. The right things require that those collaborating focus on creating a higher level of learning by

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asking questions about what they want the students to learn. How the information will be assessed. How the data will be analyzed to determine mastery. What will be done if the students have not learned the information and what can be done to extend or enrich the learning for the students.

Theme 1 was further supported through the literature of O'Neill and Conzemuis (2006) who believe that having conversations as small groups or an entire staff is essential. One the GAN or Greatest Area of Need has been identified these conversations should be about the educational outcomes you want to achieve, how progress will be measured and how the progress will be celebrated. Furthermore, O'Neill and Conzemuis believed that collaboration can effectively improve teaching and learning. Through collaboration, teachers make sense of and respond to data in a way to improve academic achievement.

Theme 2: Effective Teachers Use Research Based Instructional Strategies

Mainstream classrooms are full of multiple levels of students if they are EL or native English speakers. Theme 2 determined that successful teachers of ELs in the mainstream classroom have a huge inventory of strategies, process, techniques and practices to meet those student's needs.

The participants within the research study consistently mentioned multiple intelligence theory as a strategy that was used within their classrooms. Participants also mentioned that they are continually searching for and brainstorming new ideas in order to meet the EL students needs within the mainstream classroom. P9 shared, "I am constantly searching for new ideas. I keep up with the latest research. My mind does not stop

thinking about school just because I am not there. I am constantly thinking about how I can improve instruction."

The participants each mentioned multiple research-based instructional strategies that they use within differentiated instruction. These strategies were supported in the literature by multiple authors such as, Tomlinson (2006) Differentiated instructional strategies. Echevarra, Voght and Short (2009) The SIOP model for English Language Learners. Fountas and Pinnell (2012) Guided Reading, Chapin, O'Conner and Anderson (2007) Math Talk and many more well known educational authors. When asked what made their classroom effective P2 exclaimed:

> Wow! I don't know. I guess it varies. I have things that work. It's a trial and error thing just like anything you do. It is different for every kid, for every personality, subject, its different for every content area and student interest. You have to use whatever is needed to meet the needs of the student.

Students in today's classrooms have diverse literacy needs. When equipped with data about the student such as learning style, habits and modalities of learning multiple strategies are needed to provide meaningful and engaging activities to meet those needs (Tomlinson, 2006). One lesson cannot incorporate all of the strategies that participants mentioned, but thorough acceleration and remediation many strategies will be used. Moreover, Tomlinson (2006) encouraged teachers to use multiple strategies during differentiating instruction when she disclosed that the more ways a teacher teaches what is being learned, the increased likelihood that the teacher will reach their students and increase their ability to learn.

Theme 3: Effective Teachers use Research Based Instructional Strategies.

Many participants within the research study stressed collection data to inform differentiated instruction. Using the data collected to inform flexible small group instruction. Furthermore, data to drive instruction was mentioned continuously throughout the participant interviews. In several participant responses the use of data from formative and summative assessments, ACCESS tests, and Rigby Benchmark Assessments were used to inform instruction in the mainstream classroom. Data about the learner was also mentioned as being a useful for meeting the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom such as multiple intelligence information, learning modalities, and interest inventories. Data, according to P4, "Is used to determine which products students can complete." P8 mentioned:

> You need to have data to be aware of the students presences that way you
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> can reach the students. You constantly need to be aware if the students are
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> meeting the standards, if they aren't then you need to put them into another
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> flexible small group and remediate. If they understand it then accelerate with a
>
> project. The teacher needs to do constant formative and summative assessments
>
> with good records.

P11 felt that using data to know your learners is, "One of the most important things for students to be successful."

Themes 3 was supported in the literature by Moore (2011) who explained that data that is used to drive instruction provides a baseline for setting measurable goals and provide data to inform instruction through frequent formative and summative assessment. Moreover, Moore further believed that using data to drive instruction promotes an

environment that demands the use of best practices when teaching. In addition, Moore disclosed that teachers who are data-driven are goal oriented and are slated to identify key instructional goals. They can spot a student's strengths and weaknesses and use the data from that to inform instruction.

Similarly, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) believed that using data to drive instruction can provide a baseline of where the students is academically and data that allows the teacher to know what learning targets or standards the student has mastered, as well as the student who has not yet mastered the learning target. Moreover, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) felt that data-driven instruction provides a way for teachers to increase student achievement and using data creates opportunities to collaborate, differentiate, individualize instruction and provide meaningful, engaging learning activities.

Theme 4: Effective Teachers are Highly Qualified

Many of the participants felt that they were successful teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom because they were experienced and well trained. All but three of the teachers who participated within the study have attended classes to obtain their ESOL endorsement. The school district according to P6 offers to pay for a certain number of employees each year to obtain their ESOL endorsement. P2 stated, "Getting the ESOL endorsement has been very helpful with teaching the ELs in my classroom. Two of the three participants who did not have their ESOL endorsement began the classes in the 2013-2014 school year.

Other staff development opportunities were mentioned such as workshops, in-house staff development, book studies and job-embedded professional development. P6 explained that the administrations within the research site know how important staff

development was, and they were, "In the process of setting up more staff instruction for differentiated instruction." P10 mentioned that teachers are allowed to attend workshops when they are available, and P8 described that the teachers participated in several books studies on the topics of guided reading and differentiated instruction.

Theme 4 was supported in the research by Joyce and Showers (2002) they believed that ongoing embedded professional developments provides opportunities for teacher collaboration through professional learning communities and creates an environment of support from coaches, peers and administration. In addition, Joyce and Showers stressed, in order for the teacher to become effective they need to be persistent and flexible, be able to apply the information learned to their classrooms, and collaborate and work with peers.

Darling-Hammond (2004) further stressed that most effective professional development programs are job-embedded and provide key elements, collaboration, connections between curriculum and assessment and being able to apply the knowledge to the classroom. Further, teachers with collaborative learning approaches that aligns the curriculum across the grade levels and create connections between curriculum and assessment. In addition, professional development should also provide opportunities to apply the knowledge learned and obtain formative feedback.

Theme 5: Effective Teachers Provide Rigor When Teaching All Students

High expectations were considered another important factor in mainstream classroom success. P4 expressed, "I think holding all my students to a high standard has made my classroom a success because they know I expect 100% from them all." P2 divulged, "You want to keep them engaged and challenged by not so much of a challenge

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that they are not successful. In other words, you want rigor. You want to push them higher and higher to obtain more skills." P2 went on to caution against pushing students too hard and not allowing them to put too much pressure on themselves.

The use of high expectations was supported in the literature by Fairbain and Jones-Vo (2010) who suggested that an effective mainstream teacher does not water down the curriculum but maintains high expectations for all students, even if they are still developing their language skills. Fairbaine and Jones-Vo stressed that teachers receive the outcome of their expectation soft her students. Therefore, if a teacher has low expectations, students will achieve at a lower level if a teacher has high expectations students will in turn achieve at a higher level. They continued to support this idea by ensuring has shown that when a teacher lets their student show they have high expectations, academic achievement is increased.

In addition, Tomlinson (2001) further encouraged high expectations for student success. Tomlinson felt there were eight important activities that teacher should do to ensure that all students were held to high expectations; (1) encourage students, (2) collect data to track student achievement, (3) provide ongoing formative feedback, (4) don't listen to gossip about the student, (5) use heterogeneous small groups, (6) communicate, (7) provide wait time, and (8) use differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Theme 6: Effective Teachers Create a Learning Community Among Teachers, Students, and Administration

On several occasions, the participants within the study mentioned collaborative planning, brainstorming, administrative support and collecting data to set goals for

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increased student achievement. The key words assist in describing a Professional learning community or PLC. In a PLC teachers are willing to make mistakes, overcome challenges and become facilitators of learning (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2006). P1 very excitedly explained, "I have students asking to create products or wanting me to put them in acceleration activities, I am making them explorers with motivation and excitement of students." P8 further expressed, "I have become a facilitator of their learning, they are the teachers." Participants also mentioned that the administration provides support through collaborative meeting and administrative high expectations. P7 expressed the administrative high expectations, "Make me a better teacher. My plans are better than they ever have been."

Theme 6 was supported in research by Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Many (2006). Collaboration and learning about the students together within PLC's teachers have access to data to inform instruction and have access to best practices to assist when collaborating to increase student achievement. They further stressed that administration of a PLC can achieve at a higher level if they continually focus on questions within the school that have the highest need from improvement but are directly connected to teachers and learning. Further, Dufour, Dufour, Eaker and Many maintained that schools who have successful teachers provide a safe learning environment, create clear and focused goals, provide frequent and ongoing formative assessments, provide acceleration and remediation, have a collaborative culture. In addition, they have high expectations and strong administrative leadership.

Moreover, Piccano (2006) encouraged a supportive learning community which is focused on instructional interventions, practices data-driven instruction and sets

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measurable instructional goals. Further, according to Picciano creates an environment that puts students first and sets a baseline for differentiated instruction.

Furthermore, Picciano (2006) urged that in order to provide long-term sustainable academic improvement staff development was a must primarily in the use of analyzing data for the classroom. Picciano went on to encourage administration to remember that teachers play a key role in student achievement. Therefore, they need to be provided with ongoing staff development to meet their needs, ongoing staff development on analyzing data for classroom and ongoing administrative assistance and support opportunities in order to increase student gains.

Theme 7: Effective Teachers Display Courage and Resilience When Faced with Challenges

Being a teacher in today's classrooms is difficult, but adding a large number of ELs with the same expectations for a classroom with a large number of native English speakers makes meeting the needs of all students a challenging feat. These teachers were met with challenges that range from a lack of resources to finding enough time to meet all students' needs. Without courage, the needs of students would never be met.

During the interview process, it became evident that in spite of all the challenges that they meet when teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. These teachers had positive attitudes even though they face a multitude of challenges. These teachers search to find answers to meet the needs not just the ELs in the mainstream classroom but all students. P9 shared, "I am constantly searching for new ideas. I keep up with the latest research. My mind does not stop thinking about school just because I am not there. I am constantly thinking about how I can improve instruction." "It's a pain," P3 stated, "I say

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it's a pain in a joking way. It's harder, but it's worth it." All the research participants described challenges that they needed to overcome in order to meet the needs of the ELs in the mainstream classroom. P1, P3, P4 and P14 felt that differentiating instruction in the mainstream was hard. P1 stated, "There is so much to do when differentiating that it is hard to remember it all." P13 explained further by stating, "Differentiation is really hard because ELs still have to learn the same standards as everyone else in their grade level."

Central Phenomenon Question

What differentiated instructional strategies, techniques and practices are used by mainstream teachers who have obtained at least 80% reading comprehension performance with English learners.

The overwhelming majority of the participants shared that in order to meet the needs of the ELs in their mainstream classrooms use guided reading and differentiated instruction to meet those students academic needs. The general feeling among participants is that they used a number of different strategies, techniques and practices within differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom to meet the needs of the ELs and other students within the classroom. P1 mentioned, "There is so much I do it's hard to remember it all." P3 expressed that differentiated instruction, "Is really hard because the students still have to learn the standards for their grade level. It is hard but, worth it."

The use of differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom was supported in the literature by Ford (2011). Ford mentioned that effective differentiated instruction requires teachers to provide ongoing evaluation and using that information to create instructional activities and assessments to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream

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classroom. Jones went on to explain that teacher who are continually successful using differentiated instruction with ELs learn about the student, have high expectations, uses a variety of research-based instructional strategies, and uses ongoing formative and summative assessments to track student progress and adjust instruction as needed.

Corollary Research Question One

How do teachers use data to plan for differentiated instruction? Multiple participants within the study described using data collected such as data about the student, reading level data, pre-assessments, post assessments, formative and summative assessments are used to construct and plan for flexible small groups during reading instruction. The data gathered is also used for creating plans for and grouping students for remediation and acceleration.

Boudett, City and Murnane (2005) suggested when teachers are empowered with data; students achieve higher academic levels and they feel that using data to inform differentiated instruction is essential. Further, Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) agreed that data-driven instruction should include data do create a positive classroom environment, use data to inform instruction for student learning styles and multiple intelligences and uses data to inform instructional strategies for differentiating, product, process and content. In addition, Brimijoin, Marquissee and Tomlinson mentioned that using data about the learner and pre and post assessment data as well as formative and summative assessments provides the teacher with the information needed to target instructional strategies for the learners needs.

Corollary Research Question Two

How do teachers describe their experiences with differentiated instruction methods in planning reading lessons?

A number of participants felt that using differentiated instruction provided them with collaborative opportunities and was worth it even though it is often stressful and hard. P13 stated, "Differentiated instruction takes time to plan for, but it works out in the end." P1 exclaimed, "I love it when we collaborate. I can use the ideas to help students." P8 volunteered that it was stressful because you have to make sure that the students are not at a frustrated level. So finding materials at their level is sometimes stressful, but when you see it actually working in the classroom, it is worth it. P3 expressed that planning for differentiated instruction, "Is a pain. Very time consuming, very in-depth, there are not differentiated lesson plans that you can do in a snap. It's harder but worth it." P13 stated:

> I have to make sure I plan a lot of extra questions, and I have to focus on what they need to get out of the reading more and focus on what they won't understand because I won't know until I teach it then you rework it to meet those needs. When planning for reading you can't plan for all the glitches but you stop and add to the lesson plans to help those students that need remediation or acceleration.

In contrast P2 declared, "It's tough! It's tough because when you get them at so many levels it's hard to stay ahead of them, and it's hard to keep them engaged.

Gibson and Hasbrouck (2008) mentioned that a successful implementation of differentiated instruction included two main questions or concerns that the participants mentioned, (1) What are the students doing while I am teaching? (2) How do I have

enough time to get to everything during the day? Gibson and Hasbrouck suggested a four step instructional management system; 1) create a learning environment which provides opportunities for working collaboratively, 2) includes splitting the students into either homogenous or heterogeneous flexible small groups, 3) encourages teachers to manage their instructional time, resources and daily schedules, 4) suggests that in order to make differentiating with flexible small groups easier teachers should create a rotating system which rotates small groups through centers and small group instruction.

Corollary Research Question Three

What processes do teachers go through when differentiating process, content, and product during instruction?

When differentiating content, P2 felt this was the hardest to differentiate, While, P13 stated, "All students need the same content, I don't differentiate content because all students need to meet students on the same state mandated test." The majority of other participants began the process of differentiating instruction by pre-testing students to determine the level of background knowledge the students have then placed them into either a group for remediation, acceleration or on grade level. P5 explained, "Once the students are grouped according to mixed ability groups process is differentiated thorough these small groups, according to P2 content, "Is the hardest of them all because you don't want to develop gaps in their learning. Students should have a choice which allows them the choice of multiple intelligence activities, learning modalities and the different levels of Blooms Taxonomy.

When differentiating process, many of the participants believed that allowing student's choice was the best way to differentiate for process and product. They believed

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that allowing students' choice provides accommodations for student readiness, learning styles, environmental preferences, and multiple intelligences preferences. P8 stated:

> I do a lot of choice boards or Tic-Tac-Toe boards with ELs so they can choose what type of learning they prefer kinetic, tactile, auditory or visual activities. Tic-Tac-Toe boards require the students to complete three activities of their choices or However, many I decide I want them to do.

P12 stated when discussing process:

> We do this through a lot of choice boards most of the time we allow them choice but often assign a couple of activities that they are required to do. We try to provide several different ways for students to understand the standard being taught.

For process, the participants also shared a plethora of research-based instructional strategies that they use to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom during differentiated small group instruction. Tomlinson (2005) stated that differentiating for process includes the learning strategies and activities which will be used to teach the student the learning target or standard. Tomlinson goes on to discuss differentiating process. Process is the differentiated instructional strategies that will be used to meet the academic needs of the students in order to create increased achievement.

According to Tomlinson (2005), the before mentioned processes contribute to successful implementation of differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom. When differentiating content, teachers need to look at the student's academic level. If a student is struggling remediation is needed. On the other hand if the student has mastered

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the standard then acceleration should be implemented. The teacher needs to offer the same standards at varying levels of academic ability.

Product is differentiated through the use of different learning outcomes or activities using varying modalities of learning, multiple intelligences as well as levels of Blooms Taxonomy to actively engage all students. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) stated that the key to successful differentiation of product provides assessment and performance tasks that are authentic and incorporate all of the Blooms levels of learning.

Corollary Research Question Four

What training do teachers receive to help them become effective at teaching EL students?

The majority of participants within the study felt that they received adequate training to provide support for them to be successful in the mainstream classroom. Eleven of the fourteen participants had received their ESOL endorsement which according to them, was paid for by the school district. At the time of the study, two more of the participants had started classes to receive their ESOL endorsement.

The participants all mentioned that they receive job-embedded professional development through a variety of resources such as online videos, book studies, peer sharing, redelivery from the literacy coach and the administration. The participants also mentioned that they attended workshops when available. Two participants felt that staff development included the research and reading they do on their own above and beyond what was offered within the research site. P9 mentioned, "I read a lot outside the classroom to keep up with what's going on. I keep up with what is going on in education.

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I keep up with the research. I am constantly searching for new ideas." P7 agreed stating, "I have done a lot of research and learning different ways to differentiate my instruction."

Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Orphanos and the National Staff Development Council (2009), reported that teachers need staff development that is directly related to student achievement gains and just in time. Wei, et. al. further stated that effective staff development should be ongoing, connected to specific academic goals of the school and encourage collaboration and strong working relationships. In addition, Wei et. al., supports staff development workshops should move beyond the traditional short-term workshops and conferences or college courses. Instead, staff development opportunities should be extended throughout the school year to maximize learning and collaboration. Moreover, teacher should be able to apply the information learned within the classroom within a timely manner and return to discuss results collaboratively.

Further research by de Jong and Harper (2005) supported the need for training to create good EL teachers including the ability to organize, create and assess the effectiveness of lessons, set SMART goals and provide support for background knowledge acquisition and real world experiences. Teachers also need training to create an environment that model positive learning behaviors and includes multiple learning activities and experiences. de Jong and Harper also encouraged staff development activities which help teachers to celebrate cultural diversity, and create a classroom environment which encourages student creativity.

Corollary Research Question Five

What challenges do teachers have when using differentiated instruction?

P14 felt that they, "Really don't face any challenges because when you differentiate things you really are trying to meet the students at their level. You simplify the language without dumbing it down, and you try to be clear in your explanations and your directions do it hasn't been a challenge as such." Although P2, P3, P5, P6, and P8 felt that time constraints were a challenge when differentiating instruction. P2 mentioned, "It is very time-consuming outside of the classroom. Not the delivery of it but is very time-consuming planning for differentiated instruction." P6 further mentioned, "I find it challenging to have enough time for small groups that they need. My time with para-pros is very limited, and it is very hard to work in small groups during the time provided." P8 expressed, "The time to meet the needs of all the children because they are developing their language at different varying speeds, so it's that time to meet all the individual needs."

P3 and P5 mentioned that a lack of educational resources was a challenge when differentiating instruction. P3 stressed:

> Not having enough resources, this is nothing to do with administration, but educational funding. Most of my students have trouble with comprehension. I don't have things readily available. I don't have enough time during the day to go to the library and gather resources. I need them readily at my fingertips.

P1 and P11 agreed that finding remediation activities were a challenge they faced when teaching differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom. P11 stated, "Finding alternative activities when students don't understand the standard being taught or remediation activities." Similar, P5 and P7 felt that finding activities for multiple levels of students was a challenge when using differentiated instruction. P7 shared, "I have

trouble finding ways to meet the needs of all students with the vast number of needs. It seems that everyone needs something individual. I have 17 of 22 being EL students, so it is hard to individualized instruction."

However, P2 felt that, "Trying to come up with something that is engaging and not frustrating them," was a challenge when differentiating instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom. Another challenge presented by P10 was:

> The challenges are that most ELs are shy, or they are afraid because they are just coming into the country, and they cannot talk well in English or speak English at all. The other problem I have with them is participation. You really need to encourage them a lot to talk.

Additionally, P9 mentioned that a challenge was the language barrier stating, "I can't speak Spanish. I don't have a fluent second language with the kids. It is also speaking the language with parents in order to communicate effectively about the child."

Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005) mentioned in their study that the top five challenges found in their research were, (a) teacher, parent communication. (b) lack of time, (c) lack of teacher resources, (d) multiple levels of student academic needs, (e) difficulties encouraging or motivating ELs in the classroom. Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll challenges for teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom matched those challenges mentioned by participants in this study. In correlation with the two findings, it seems that teachers across the country face the same challenges when meeting the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom. The study by Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll also noted that these challenges can be made less stressful for the teachers by providing

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teachers ongoing staff development activities which discuss how to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom.

Limitations of Findings

The limitations of the findings in this research study were that the respondents represented only one school within the South Eastern United Stated. Therefore, the participants for this research study were from one school and one teacher population. Also, participants were also purposefully selected. Therefore, the participants were only those who had ELs meeting 80% or more in reading instruction. Meaning, teachers perceptions of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom were only from this group of fourteen teachers within the research site. Another limitation consisted of the only form of data collected within the research study which was open-ended interviews. This limitation may have limited the information that could have been gleaned from the study.

Implication of the Results for Practice

The implications for further practice are to encourage the use of differentiated instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom. The practice of using differentiated instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom should be promoted and advanced in the educational community in order to provide ELs with every opportunity to succeed in the mainstream classroom.

Furthermore, Ford (2011) contended that using differentiated instruction with ELs creates learning opportunities that make way for differences in individual learning styles, as well as equal access to academic content. Differentiated instruction allows content to be modified for students who need remediation or acceleration to ensure mastery of the standard being learned. This approach to teaching is not merely a collection of strategies

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of activities, but effective differentiated instruction requires educators to be data-driven and use the data to drive their instruction.

Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) urged that when using differentiated instruction a teacher needs to have an extensive knowledge of research-based instructional strategies. They must be flexible and be able to think outside the box. Using differentiated instruction provides the educator with the tools to create an environment that provides rigor for all students and individualized instruction through multiple intelligences, modalities of learning and Blooms Taxonomy. Using differentiated instruction with ELs also creates an environment that allows the teacher to meet the needs of students with varied background and needs. When using differentiated instruction teachers have an arsenal of research-based instructional activities and strategies in order to teach, remediate and accelerate instruction for ELs and native English speakers in the mainstream classroom.

Recommendations for Further Research

The main recommendation for further research is to develop a qualitative study on the experiences of mainstream teacher of ELs to include school districts and other schools around the country that have a high population of ELs. In addition, it is recommended that a broader qualitative study be designed to observe the use and planning of differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom through classroom observations of teachers using differentiated instruction to meet the needs of ELs. Further research should also be done on the perceptions of all teachers of ELs in the mainstream classroom. Additionally, qualitative studies on the experiences of the EL students and their successes and failures when being taught with differentiated instruction in the

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mainstream classroom. Finally, through using the data gathered from these studies adjustments to differentiate instruction with ELs could provide improvement in the area of differentiated instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom.

1. Researchers must widen the area for the qualitative study on the experiences of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. In order to gain a clearer and more extensive look into the experiences of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. The studies should be conducted in other areas with high population of ELs.

2. Researchers should develop a broader qualitative study using observations to evaluate strategies, processes and activities being used to meet the need of ELs in the mainstream classroom.

3. Researchers must develop a more in-depth qualitative study which looks at all teachers' perceptions on teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. Including beginning teachers as well as teachers who did not meet the criteria for participation within this study.

4. Researchers must broaden the area of study to include EL students' perceptions of being taught using differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom. This form of study could inform research on ELs successes or failures when being instructed using differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom.

5. Researchers should use the data from the research studies to inform differentiated instruction improvement with ELs in the mainstream classroom. In order to increase achievement in ELs in the mainstream classroom.

Conclusion

The increasing number of ELs in classrooms across the country has created a need for research on teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. Therefore, this research study was conducted in an effort to determine what mainstream teachers do to meet the needs of ELs on a daily basis. There was a gap in the literature regarding teachers' perceptions of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. Although various studies have been conducted on using differentiated instruction in the classroom, very few focused on the use of differentiated instruction with ELs in the mainstream classroom. Therefore, teacher perceptions of teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom were explored within this qualitative research study.

Furthermore, the interviews with mainstream teachers revealed that these teachers perceived that in order to be successful at teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom teachers need to be data-driven, willing to collaborate, flexible, willing to take risks and attend ongoing job-embedded staff development activities.

Consequently, interviews with mainstream teachers of ELs uncovered experiences using differentiated instruction on a daily basis. Teacher perceptions of using differentiated instruction to meet the needs of ELs in the mainstream classroom included the idea that it was time-consuming both in and out of the classroom, it was difficult to plan for, and teachers often dealt with a lack of educational resources to use during instruction. Although the participants had a number of challenges, they perceived they needed to overcome, they felt that the use of differentiated instruction in the mainstream classroom was the only way to meet the needs of ELs.

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APPENDIX A. Field Test Questions

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. What is your highest level of education?

3. Do you hold ESOL certification?

4. How long have you used differentiated instruction in the classroom?

5. What data do you collect in order to plan for differentiated instruction?

6. How do you use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

7. What kind of staff development have you had on the topic of teaching ELs?

8. What kind of staff development have you had on the topic of differentiated instruction?

9. What is the process you go through in order to differentiate instruction with Els during reading instruction?

10. What differentiated instructional strategies do you use in your classroom to meet the needs of ELs?

11. What challenges do you face when using differentiated instruction with the EL students in your classroom?

12. How do you determine how to differentiate content, process and product?

13. Reflect on how you use differentiated instruction in your classroom.

14. How would you describe your experiences when planning instruction for the ELs in your classroom?

15. What kind of support do you receive from administrators in regards to differentiated instruction with ELs?

16. What do you feel is the most important thing to remember when differentiating instruction with ELs?

17. What factors do you feel make differentiated instruction with ELs successful in your classroom?

APPENDIX B. Interview Questions

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. What is your highest level of education?

3. Do you have ESOL certification or endorsement or other endorsements?

4. How long have you use differentiated instruction in the classroom?

5. What data do you collect and how do you use data to plan for differentiated instruction?

6. What kind of staff development have you had on the topic of differentiated instruction?

7. What differentiated instructional strategies do you currently use with ELs?

8. What challenges do you face when differentiating instruction with ELs in your classroom?

9. What kind of support do you receive in regards to differentiated instruction with ELs?

10. What factors do you feel make differentiated instruction with ELs successful in your classroom?

APPENDIX C. STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK

Academic Honesty Policy

Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) holds learners accountable for the integrity of work they submit, which includes but is not limited to discussion postings, assignments, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation or capstone project.

Established in the Policy are the expectations for original work, rationale for the policy, definition of terms that pertain to academic honesty and original work, and disciplinary consequences of academic dishonesty. Also stated in the Policy is the expectation that learners will follow APA rules for citing another person's ideas or works.

The following standards for original work and definition of *plagiarism* are discussed in the Policy:

> Learners are expected to be the sole authors of their work and to acknowledge the authorship of others' work through proper citation and reference. Use of another person's ideas, including another learner's, without proper reference or citation constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct. (p. 1)

> Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own. Plagiarism also includes copying verbatim or rephrasing ideas without properly acknowledging the source by author, date, and publication medium. (p. 2)

Capella University's Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06) holds learners accountable for research integrity. What constitutes research misconduct is discussed in the Policy:

> Research misconduct includes but is not limited to falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misappropriation, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. (p. 1)

Learners failing to abide by these policies are subject to consequences, including but not limited to dismissal or revocation of the degree.

Statement of Original Work and Signature

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University's Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) and Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06), including the Policy Statements, Rationale, and Definitions.

I attest that this dissertation or capstone project is my own work. Where I have used the ideas or words of others, I have paraphrased, summarized, or used direct quotes following the guidelines set forth in the APA *Publication Manual*.

Learner name and date	Kerri Palmer 9/17/14	
Mentor name and school	Dr. Chris Stabile	School of Education