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Teaching English Learners: A Study of Procedures and Perceptions of Missouri Program Directors and Mainstream Classroom Teachers

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A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education Lindenwood University, School of Education

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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Signature: Merica Schoen Clinkenbeard Date: November 4, 2019

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Abstract

Professional development for mainstream classroom teachers to meet the influx of diverse learners is not adequately met by most school districts (Quintero & Hanson, 2017). The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to gain information from English learner program directors about English learner program practices and professional development specific to the needs of English learners in Missouri school districts. Mainstream classroom teachers from different-sized schools with high- and low-incidence of English learner students were interviewed to gather the perceived level of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies. The *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success* guided this study (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2013). The quantitative phase population included all English language program directors in Missouri public and charter school districts who reported serving 10 or more English language learners during the 2017-2018 school year. Quantitative data included survey responses from 26 English learner program directors. A purposive stratified random sample was used in the qualitative phase. Mainstream classroom teachers' names were placed in four strata, high-incidence in kindergarten through sixth grades, low-incidence in kindergarten through sixth grades, high-incidence in seventh through 12th grades, and low-incidence in seventh through 12th grades. Nine mainstream classroom teachers participated in the interview phase. The findings revealed a lack of understanding of the role of an English learner teacher. Additionally, the English learner program directors and the mainstream classroom teachers agreed teachers are not receiving adequate training in the use of effective strategies for English learners.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The largest-growing subgroup in schools across the United States is students who do not speak English as their native language (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018). English learners make up this fast-growing group, accounting for more than 4.8 million students (Albers & Martinez, 2015; Kena et al., 2016; NCES, 2018, para. 1). As the English learner student population continues to grow, the dynamic of the mainstream classroom must match the educational needs of this diverse population (Gottlieb & Castro, 2017).

Implementation of effective strategies geared toward the needs of English learners within the mainstream classroom setting is a challenge for school districts nationwide (McGraw Hill Education, 2017; U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], Office of English Language Acquisition [OELA], 2017a). The unique educational needs of English learners increase demands on school districts and put pressure on mainstream classroom teachers (Rutherford-Quach, Camey Kuo, & Hsieh, 2018). While there are state and federal policies that address the responsibility of school districts to provide equitable access to classroom content and materials, there is little prioritization given to the training of classroom teachers to meet these demands (TESOL International Association [TESOL], 2016).

With three of four American classrooms serving at least one English learner student, educators must recognize the particular needs of the English learner student population and provide teacher training needed to ensure quality instruction (U.S. Department of Justice [USDOJ] & USDOE, n.d., para. 1). There exists little evidence about which strategies are perceived as most effective by classroom teachers for

English learners to progress toward English proficiency (Boyle et al., 2014; Heitin, 2016). Moving forward, it is essential to determine the most effective method to prepare teachers for English learners and to evaluate teachers' perceptions of their preparation (Gonzalez, 2016). This study involved investigating if professional development focused on best practices for instruction of English learners can be effective for better preparation of mainstream classroom teachers.

Background of the Study

English learners in the United States and Missouri. According to the USDOE (2018), at least one school district in every state has experienced growth in English learner population by more than 50% since the 2010 school year (p. 6). Because of this growth pattern, educational professionals will likely work with at least one English learner student either directly or indirectly during their careers (Albers & Martinez, 2015). As of the year 2016, English learners accounted for nearly 10% of all students in grades kindergarten through 12 (Sugarman, 2016, p. 4).

The challenges faced in the classroom with the English learner student population go beyond the variety of languages spoken (Cook, 2016). English learners also bring varying language proficiency levels and educational backgrounds (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). Nearly 4.9 million students in the American public school system are learning English as a new language, and this population consists of immigrants, refugees, and children born in the United States but whose parents speak languages other than English at home (Sugarman, 2016, p. 4). Spanish is the number one spoken second language, followed by Chinese, Arabic, and Vietnamese (Park, Zong, & Batalova, 2018). Many English learner students score lower on standardized tests, experience higher

dropout rates, and have lower graduation rates than their native-speaking English counterparts (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). The disproportion of English learner educational achievement translates to a crucial educational challenge for the nation's school districts (Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017).

In 2016, the approximate number of English learners in Missouri public schools was 29,256, and the 2018 count was approximately 34,192, which reflects an increase of about 5,000 English learner students statewide over two years as part of a 75% increase since 2010 (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2018d). The most prevalent language of English learners in Missouri is Spanish, followed by Arabic and Vietnamese (MODESE, 2016). Recognition of the complex layers of the English learner student has led to federal mandates and policies that require a responsive change from school districts (Wixom, 2015). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) initiated a pivotal moment for English learner policy and practice (Commission on Language Learning, 2017).

Current federal and state policies for English learner education. State and federal policies play a tremendous role in improving the education of linguistically diverse students (TESOL, 2016; USDOE, 2017; USDOE, Office for Civil Rights [OCR] & USDOJ, 2015). Politics has a significant influence on English learner education (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2017). In the 1974 landmark case *Lau vs. Nichols*, the Supreme Court ruled that an equitable education for non-English speaking students is not provided merely by placing students in the same classrooms with the same textbooks and curriculum as their English-speaking peers

(Herrera, 2016; USDOE, 2016a). As stated in *English Learner Guidance*, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Supreme Court decisively ruled school districts must comply with equitable provisions and guidelines for students with limited English proficiency so English learners may have "meaningful" participation in all educational services (MODESE, 2018a, p. 6). Additionally, in 1964, Congress enacted the Equal Educational Opportunities Act that confirmed state educational agencies must implement procedures to remedy impediments due to language that may hinder equal involvement in instructional programs (Rice, Huang, & Derby, 2018; TESOL, 2016; USDOE, 2016a).

The general problem is that as a consequence of English proficiency levels not equal to those of native English-speaking peers, English learners experience a gap in achievement when compared to non-English learners (Murphey, 2014; NASEM, 2017; Quintero & Hanson, 2017). Recent federal guidelines require educators to focus more attention on the language needs of English learners to address this achievement gap (USDOE, 2016a). The ESSA, passed in December of 2015, had significant implications for English language learners (USDOE, 2016a; Zinskie & Rea, 2016). Four specific areas of implication included classification of English learners, growth measurements beyond standardized testing, English proficiency moving from Title III accountability to Title I, and reporting requirements (TESOL, 2016; USDOE, 2016a).

Commencing with the ESSA, English proficiency growth for English learners was assimilated into a school-wide accountability system (USDOE, 2016a). In past policy, Title III administrators held clear responsibility for English learner academic growth (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2017). With new ESSA accountability measures now integrated, districts are required to show English learner

programs are effective and to track academic performance of English learner students (USDOE, 2016a). Title III funding is still *dedicated* funding, and authorization levels were increased to reflect the increase in the percentage of the English learner population in schools (TESOL, 2016; USDOE, 2016a). The ESSA extended the necessity for states and school districts to inaugurate, employ, and maintain language development programs designed to develop proficiency in both language and academic content (USDOE, 2016a). States must benchmark progress in all academic areas and impart support to districts with ineffective language development programs (Rice et al., 2018; TESOL, 2016; USDOE, 2016a).

Statewide entrance and exit procedures for English learners are mandated to verify English learners receive the resources necessary to support continued English proficiency growth (USDOE, 2016a). Entrance and exit procedures ensure cohesion if English learners transfer schools or districts, providing stability and accountability that was lacking previously (TESOL, 2016). Required by the ESSA, English learners with disabilities and students who have retained English learner status for five or more years must be reported as long-term English learners (USDOE, 2016a). On January 7, 2015, the OCR and the USDOJ released joint guidance reminding school districts of their due diligence to ensure English learners have equal and equitable access to education. Under federal law, states must identify English learners using a credible and reputable English language proficiency assessment, administer suitable language development programs, and establish equal opportunity for English learners to participate in school curriculum (USDOE, OELA, 2017a).

Educating linguistically diverse students. Educators must ensure English learner students receive opportunities to succeed equitable to those received by native English students (USDOE, OCR & USDOJ, 2015). Since 1964, with the enactment of the Equal Opportunities Act, states and local school districts have been made aware of the obligation to address language barriers (USDOE, 2016a). This obligation extends to equal participation in all school programs by students with limited English proficiency (USDOE, OCR & USDOJ, 2015).

Every Missouri public school district "must have the means in place to identify students who come from non-English language backgrounds or home environments" (MODESE, 2018a, p. 11). Preferably, all students, current and newly enrolled, should complete a Language Use Survey or answer similar questions with regard to language use in their home (MODESE, 2018c). As outlined by the MODESE (2018c), three main questions must be answered on the Language Use Survey: the student's first language, the language the student uses at home and with others, and the language the student hears at home and understands. The fundamental reason for the Language Use Survey is to ascertain the need to assess a student for possible limited English proficiency (MODESE, 2018c). The survey is administered to parents of all new students enrolling in kindergarten through 12th grade (MODESE, 2018c).

When a family reveals a language other than English is spoken or understood by the student, or when it is speculated a language other than English has substantially impacted the student's acquisition of English, screening is required in the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (MODESE, 2018c). Missouri belongs to the WIDA (n.d.) consortium. At its conception, the original three-member states were

Wisconsin, Delaware, and Arkansas (WIDA, n.d.). When Arkansas withdrew from membership and other states began to join, WIDA (n.d.) was no longer an acronym and now serves as a stand-alone identifier of the organization. The current WIDA (n.d.) Consortium is made up of 39 U.S. states, territories, and federal agencies. English language proficiency testing, language screeners to assess and identify newly enrolled English learner students, English language development standards, and research to support and promote education and scaffolding for language learning and academic growth are all components and supports offered by WIDA (n.d.).

To assess the English language proficiency growth of English learners in Missouri, the WIDA Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) 2.0 is administered annually (MODESE, 2018c). The four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening are assessed for attained levels of English proficiency (MODESE, 2018a, 2018c; USDOE, OELA, 2017a). As required by federal law, Missouri defines English language proficiency as a level 4.7 overall composite score on the state's English language proficiency assessment, the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (MODESE, 2018c; USDOE, 2016a). It is the responsibility of the school district to provide English language development services to all students who do not meet the proficiency criteria (MODESE, 2018a). Even if a parent refuses English language services, and the student has been identified as Limited English Proficient, the student must be administered the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs annually until the student attains Missouri's definition of English language proficiency or reclassification criteria (MODESE, 2018c). If a district does not implement adequate testing policies for its

English learners through the annual administration of the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, the district's ESSA Title 1.A funding can be affected (MODESE, 2018a, 2018b).

Program models vary in states and districts, depending on the number of English learners and the number of certified English as a Second Language teachers in the district (Sugarman, 2018). Due to the diverse needs of the English learner population, it has become increasingly difficult to prioritize the elements necessary to help the growing body of English learner students achieve academic progress (Linquanti, Cook, Bailey, & McDonald, 2016). In Missouri, a district does not have to retain a teacher certified as a Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) until the number of district English learner students exceeds 20 (MODESE, 2018a). Even when the number of English learners far exceeds 20, some districts do not choose or have the means to hire additional certified personnel, leaving the student-teacher ratio at a disadvantage (R. Rumpf, personal communication, September 16, 2018).

In Missouri, as of 2016, the average student-to-English language teacher ratio was 39:1, while 49% of districts had a caseload higher than 50:1, and 142 districts had no English learner teacher (R. Rumpf, personal communication, September 16, 2018). These numbers support the phenomena that mainstream classroom teachers are called to assess the academic and language needs of English learner students and must scaffold instruction to meet these needs (Gibbons, 2015; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017). Appropriate instruction must be delivered to prepare English learners to participate in an academic curriculum in English and to achieve proficiency in a reasonable amount of time (TESOL, 2016). To ensure ongoing progress toward English proficiency, classroom strategies should be implemented to improve language acquisition (TESOL, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

English learners can experience academic progress in the mainstream classroom when effective supports and instruction are provided by teachers trained and prepared to work with English learners (Master, Loeb, Whitney, & Wyckoff, 2016; Quintero & Hanson, 2017). The mainstream classroom teacher is instrumental in the academic achievement of the English learner (Singer, 2018). A path of increased academic achievement is indicative of the quality of collaborative interventions employed to assure daily fulfillment of the competencies required to build sustainability of effective instructional practices (Learning Forward & Education Counsel, 2017).

The *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success* guided this study (MODESE, 2013). The professional learning guidelines support mainstream classroom teachers with best practices needed to progress the English proficiency and academic achievement of English learners (MODESE, 2013). Intrinsic in this framework is the simultaneous development of English learners' linguistic and academic capacities as a shared responsibility of all educators (MODESE, 2013). All levels of the school system have a role to play in ensuring the success and achievement of the nearly 35,000 English learners who attend Missouri schools (MODESE, 2018a, 2018c).

As illustrated in Figure 1, the professional frames of educators are divided into three components in the Missouri Professional Learning guidelines, with each of the components encompassing specific underpinnings from Learning Forward's seven standards of what is most essential about effective professional learning (MODESE, 2013). The interrelation of all the components emphasizes the synergy needed to achieve effective, comprehensive, and "holistic" professional practice (MODESE, 2013, p. 50).

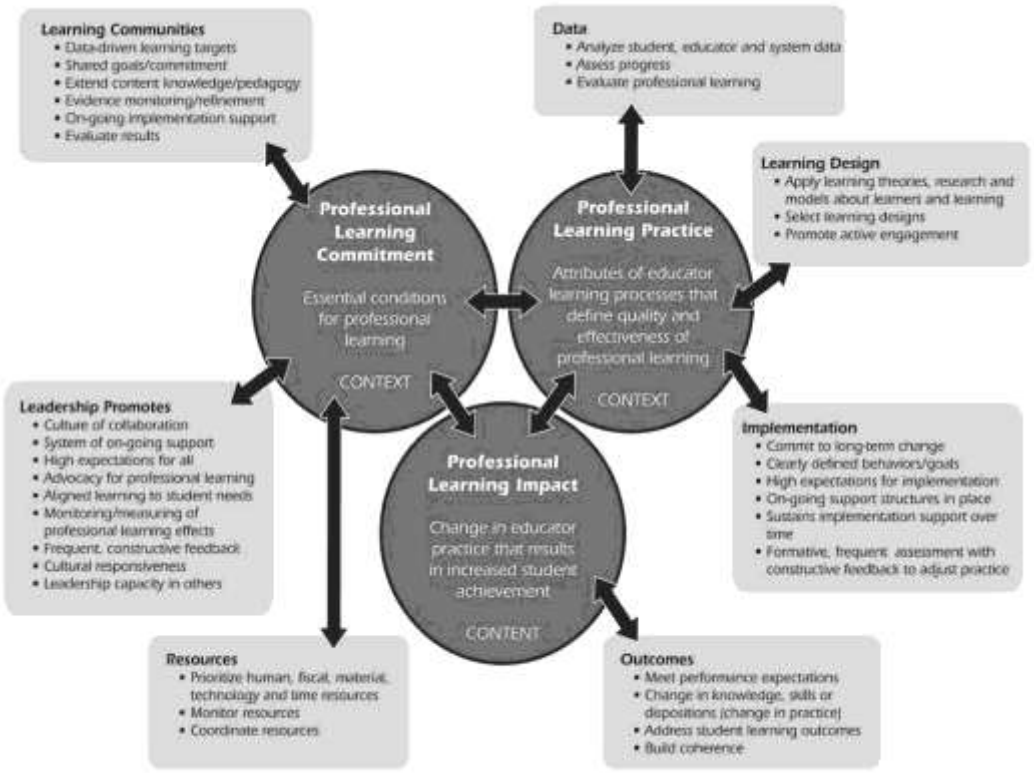

Figure 1. The three frames that guide professional learning in Missouri. Adapted from *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success,* 2013, p. 57. Copyright 2013 by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The first component of the module is professional learning commitment (MODESE, 2013). Professional learning commitment promotes the concept that vital factors must be present for professional learning to occur, including learning communities, leadership, and resources (MODESE, 2013). The second component of the three-pronged module is professional learning practice (MODESE, 2013). The defining traits of professional learning practice are data, learning design, and implementation (MODESE, 2013). The third component of the module is professional learning impact,

with distinctive characteristics, including student outcomes and educator change of practice (MODESE, 2013).

Constructed based upon research on effective teaching and leading, the Learning Forward's *Standards for Professional Learning* defines professional learning and establishes key characteristics of educator practices that result in improved outcomes for all students (Learning Forward & Education Counsel, 2017). The standards contribute to the academic success of English learners by providing guidance regarding professional development best practices (Learning Forward & Education Counsel, 2017). The focus of the standards is to provide school districts with guidelines on how to approach systemic and improvement-oriented professional learning, which can provide a catalyst for change when partnered with research-based approaches to improve the education of English learners (Hirsh, Psencik, & Brown, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The specific problem addressed in this study is that the need for professional development for mainstream classroom teachers to meet the influx of diverse learners is not adequately met by most school districts (Quintero & Hanson, 2017). The accountability measures of the ESSA relating to the proficiency and academic growth of English learners have been dictated directly to local school districts, and English learner progress toward English proficiency is a major component of Title I accountability (MODESE, 2018a, 2018b). This expectation is combined simultaneously with achievement in math, language arts, and science, and mainstream classroom teachers play an integral role in this process (MODESE, 2018a; TESOL, 2018). When effective

strategies are used to scaffold instruction in the classroom, English learners experience language growth in conjunction with increased content knowledge (Herrera, 2016).

In Missouri, it is not certain to what extent mainstream classroom teachers are trained in best practices for English learners (MODESE, 2018a, 2018c; R. Rumpf, personal communication, September 16, 2018; S. Cockrum, personal communication, September 16, 2018). It is important to find what professional development opportunities school districts offer to mainstream classroom teachers to develop strategies specifically for English learners (Lucas, Strom, Bratkovich, & Wnu, 2018). Excerpts from *Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* legitimize the requirement with statements on professional development:

> (vi) advance teacher understanding of (I) effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based; and (II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and (ix) are designed to give teachers of English learners, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments. (USDOE, 2016a, p. 22)

Scaffolds and strategies appropriate for English learners implemented by mainstream teachers are a means to equitable access to content for these students (Gibbons, 2015).

As more English learner students enroll in public schools, they are challenged with attaining proficiency in English language usage while achieving academically (MODESE, 2018a). Teachers must recognize these students are diverse in cultural and

linguistic backgrounds and educational needs (Staehr Fenner, 2015). Most classroom teachers have minimal, if any, training in teaching practices to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students, with over 30 states not requiring any additional training for mainstream classroom teachers who have English learners in the classroom (Quintero & Hanson, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to gain information from English learner program directors about English learner program practices and professional development specific to the needs of English learners in Missouri school districts. In addition, mainstream classroom teachers from different-sized schools with high and low incidence of English learner students were interviewed to gather the perceived level of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies. Information obtained from district English learner program directors is key to understanding what resources and instructional strategies are introduced and supported (Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015; TESOL, 2016). When best practices with regard to instructional strategies are in place, English learner students experience both language and academic growth (TESOL, 2018). Significant for this study were mainstream classroom teacher experiences with strategies used to support English learners and their perception of adequacy of these supports (Correll, 2016).

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How are school districts supporting English learners as reported in the following areas: regulatory policies, instructional program models, professional development, and instructional strategies in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri?
2. How do supports vary in programs and instructional strategies for English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri as reported by English learner program directors?
3. How do mainstream classroom teachers perceive teaching practices promoted to support English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts?

Significance of the Study

Due to the growing population of English learners, school districts face multiple challenges when preparing mainstream classroom teachers (Heineke & McTighe, 2018; NASEM, 2017; Rillero, Koerner, Jimenez-Silva, Merritt, & Farr, 2017). English learners must gain English proficiency and excel academically (MODESE, 2018a; USDOE, 2016a). School districts are underprepared and overwhelmed by the changing demographics of non-native English speakers (Quintero & Hanson, 2017; NASEM, 2017). Enrolling English learners in age-appropriate grade levels provides meaningful access to content, and when placed in the mainstream classroom instead of segregated settings, English learners are at less risk of academic failure (USDOE, 2016a). Fundamental for moving forward, the procurement of a successful academic future for English learners is based upon access to appropriate instructional practices (NASEM, 2017).

Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

Academic language. Academic language refers to English language proficiency required to be successful in an academic setting (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). This type of language includes comprehension of vocabulary and grammar in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in content-specific areas (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014).

Affective filter. Affective filter, coined by Stephen Krashen, describes how negative emotions may interfere with the learning process (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). The term is emblematic for the barrier to language learning despite appropriate instruction (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013).

Bilingual education. A bilingual education program leverages two languages to teach content (USDOE, OELA, 2017a). Bilingual education programs are used to help English learners obtain content through both their native language and English and to provide second language opportunities for English-only speaking students (USDOE, OELA, 2017a).

Biliteracy. Biliteracy describes a person fluent in two languages (Lesaux & Harris, 2015). This fluency includes the ability to both read and write in the two languages (Lesaux & Harris, 2015).

Culturally responsive instruction. Culturally responsive instruction leverages knowledge of cultural background as a means of building relationships with students and as a method of scaffolding instruction by recognizing that culture influences thinking (Hammond, 2015).

English language development. English language development is a descriptive precursor of the instructional models recommended to districts and standards by which instruction within the described English language development model should adhere (MODESE, 2018a; WIDA, n.d.)

English learner. Any public school student who has been screened for English language development due to other languages spoken by the student or other languages spoken in the home, and who does not meet a state's required English proficiency score, is identified as an English learner (TESOL, 2016; USDOE, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education [OESE], 2017).

Immigrant. The federal government defines a student as an immigrant if he or she is aged three through 21, was not born in any U.S. state, and has not been attending one or more schools in the U.S. for more than three full academic years (USDOE, 2016a).

Language domain. Language proficiency requires knowledge in the four domains of reading, listening, speaking, and writing (WIDA, n.d.). How a student acquires and processes information, along with how a student expresses what is learned, are essential components through which instruction must be directed for English learners to reach proficiency (Gottlieb & Castro, 2017).

Limited English proficient. The term limited English proficient is used once a student has been screened and it is determined academic support is needed for language proficiency growth and acquiring content in English (MODESE, 2018a). The term is typically used as an assigned code in school reporting data systems to identify the student as an English learner (MODESE, 2018a).

Long-term English learner. A long-term English learner is a student who has been enrolled in U.S. schools for at least six years but still has not reached adequate proficiency levels on state proficiency exams and is not experiencing adequate growth academically (Olsen, 2014).

Mainstream. Mainstream refers to the regular general education classroom (De Oliveira & Yough, 2015). Mainstream classroom teachers are educational professionals trained to teach content at specific grade levels (De Oliveira & Yough, 2015).

Native language. A student's native language is the language first learned (Guasti, 2017). Native language is often used interchangeably with first language (Guasti, 2017). The distinction is the native language is the language the child is born into, whereas the first language is that which the child first learns to speak (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013).

Newcomer. Newcomer describes a student who was not born in the United States and has either recently arrived in the United States or whose English language proficiency is little to non-existent (TESOL, 2016).

Primary language. The primary language, sometimes referred to as the home language, is the language first learned or understood by the student or the dominant language used most often in the home or settings outside of school (USDOE, OCR & USDOJ, 2015).

Refugee. Refugee students have entered the United States due to their families fleeing violence or oppression in their home country (USDOE, 2016a). Refugee status does not cover individuals fleeing natural disasters or economic issues (USDOE, 2016a).

Scaffolding. Scaffolding is a metaphorical term used in educational settings to describe temporary assistance given to students to complete tasks with the intention of gradually removing assistance once the student can successfully complete the task independently (Gibbons, 2015).

Sheltered English. Sheltered English is a term used to describe a program model for English learners in which all instruction is delivered in the student's second language (MODESE, 2018a). Sheltered instruction is a method of supporting English learner students with the integration of language learning within the classroom content (MODESE, 2018a).

WIDA Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (**ACCESS) for English Learners (ELs) 2.0.** The WIDA ACCESS for ELs 2.0 is administered annually as a language proficiency assessment to kindergarten through 12th-grade students who have been identified as English learners in WIDA Consortium member states (WIDA, n.d.). The purpose is to monitor the acquisition of academic English (WIDA, n.d.).

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The following limitations were identified in this study:

Sample demographics. One of the first limitations of this study was the position of the English learner program director to which the survey was addressed. In some cases, the survey participant may not have any background or certification in English learner education, and therefore, may not have the background knowledge to answer the survey questions thoroughly (S. Cockrum, personal communication, December 16, 2018). Another possible limitation was due to the professional position held by the researcher as

a Missouri Migrant and English Learner Instructional Specialist; some survey respondents may have recognized the name of the researcher. This was also a possible limitation with the interview participants. It is possible an interview candidate was familiar with the researcher or had attended a training conducted by the researcher.

Instrument. There were possible limitations to the survey instrument. As the study was based on completed surveys, the return rate significantly impacted the depth of descriptive statistics (Rea & Parker, 2014). A low return rate could have a possible adverse effect on the qualitative interview phase of the study, diminishing the pool of possible candidates for the selection process (Rea & Parker, 2014). Further, it is possible the candidates selected for the interview protocol were not a representative sample of high- and low-incidence English learner enrollments.

Respective to the study, several assumptions were accepted. It was assumed the participants in the survey and interview phases of the study offered nonbiased and honest responses. It was assumed the survey sample population were representative of the general population of English learner program directors in Missouri. With regard to the interview sample population, a large variance could exist in the amount of experience and training of mainstream classroom teachers.

Summary

The growing number of linguistically diverse students creates new challenges for school districts and mainstream classroom teachers (Singer, 2018). Embedding language growth within instructional content without compromising the cognitive level of instruction requires specific training and strategies (TESOL, 2016). Contributing to this issue are new policies that prescribe federally mandated guidelines for school districts

nationwide (USDOE, OESE, 2017). In this study, teachers' perceptions of their preparation for teaching English learners were investigated.

Building on the *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success*, this inquiry focused on the crucial role of mainstream classroom teachers as the catalyst for language proficiency and academic growth of English learners (MODESE, 2016; Staehr Fenner, 2015). In Chapter Two, the complexities encompassed in the term "English learner" and crucial components of federal law and guidance are discussed. Explored further are the importance of professional development for educators and the effectiveness of professional development pertaining to research-based strategies specific for English learners.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The themes outlined in this review of literature comprise four focus areas. The first area includes the Missouri Professional Learning guidelines and how Learning Forward's seven Standards for Professional Development shape professional learning decisions and ideology in Missouri. The second focus area includes an overview of the English learner student in the United States and Missouri, along with the complexities that can accompany that title. A third focus area is teaching the English learner student. This section includes a dissection of research on strategies and a comparison and contrast of various principles for teaching English learners. The final focus is on theories and best practices suggested by researchers concerning what constitutes professional development for mainstream classroom teachers. In this section, characteristics of effective professional development identified through current research are highlighted and applied to the realm of preparing mainstream classroom teachers for English learners entering today's classrooms.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided this study was grounded in Missouri's Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success (MODESE, 2013). There are three frames within the guidelines: Professional Learning Commitment, Professional Learning Practice, and Professional Learning Impact (MODESE, 2013). The guidelines are in part a result of the Missouri Excellence in Education Act of 1985, which called upon school districts to implement support for continuous improvement of instruction (MODESE, 2013). Missouri guidelines are the execution of a plan to support the belief that increased professional learning leads to increased student success (MODESE, 2013).

Missouri's three frames are the gears that serve as the underpinnings for Learning Forward's Seven Standards for Professional Learning (see Figure 1) (Learning Forward, n.d.; MODESE, 2013). Learning Forward, a professional organization, combined research demonstrating a correlation between student achievement and teacher professional development into seven standards (Crow, 2017). Each standard is a reflection of those features (Learning Forward, n.d.).

When schools incorporate teacher collaboration into professional development, there is an increase in student academic achievement (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Learning Forward, 2018). Professional development should be episodic, occurring over time, and not a one-time experience (Farrell, 2015). The following seven standards from Learning Forward (n.d.) supported this current study and provided its framework.

Standard one emphasizes learning communities and their ability to create an environment where unceasing educational enrichment, accountability, and responsibility for student success are pooled rather than in silos (Learning Forward, n.d.; MODESE, 2013). Standard two calls for district leadership to play a vital role in the portrayal and implementation of effective professional learning (Crow, 2017). Standard three emphasizes the coordination of resources by district leadership to enhance the effectiveness of professional learning (Learning Forward, n.d.).

In standard four, the "how" in the learning process is prominent (Learning Forward, n.d.). The knowledge and awareness of different learning theories and practices are supportive tools when educational institutions choose a method of professional learning (Kennedy, 2016). Standard five indicates professional development should be

an acute parcel of an exhaustive structure of teaching and learning that promotes student success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; K-12 Education Team, 2015; Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). Specifically, schools should use data derived from both qualitative and quantitative measures (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Learning Forward (2018) released results from a national survey on the state of teacher professional development, which resulted in school improvement and rectification as a top concern. Standard six counters this concern by addressing the need for enrichment opportunities for educational professionals offered in both formal and job-embedded formats (Althauser, 2015; Crow, 2017). Standard seven rounds out the initiative by calling for professional learning to align with district expectations and standards (Learning Forward, n.d.; MODESE, 2013). Cultivating a sustained teaching practice alongside student achievement boosts the promise that professional learning is connected to student gains (Learning Forward, n.d.; MODESE, 2013; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015).

English Learners

According to the federal definition of an English learner, the student must be between the ages of three and 21, enrolled in an elementary or secondary school, not born in the United States or with a native language other than English, and whose difficulties in understanding the English language may prohibit his or her academic success on classroom and state assessments (MODESE, 2018a; USDOE, 2016a). Federal and state policy drives what is legally required for English learners (MODESE, 2018a; USDOE, 2016a; USDOE, OESE, 2017). Such policies led to the formation of various attitudes

about the educational path and success of English learners (MODESE, 2018a; USDOE, 2016a; USDOE, OESE, 2017).

One major change under the new ESSA is that many of the standards, assessment, and accountability requirements that previously fell under Title III are now under Title I, such as the assessment and accountability of English Learners (Hakuta & Pompa, 2017). All school districts are required to have a Lau plan that outlines the adherence to compliance and accountability (TESOL, 2016). The plan is named after a 1974 Lau vs. Nichols United States Supreme Court decision (USDOE, 2016a).

A Lau plan requires approval from a school board, and the components cannot be altered unless revisions are submitted for board approval (USDOE, 2016a). Key components include the legal foundation, education plan, student screening and assessments, family engagement, qualified personnel, program models, a budget, and any other possible considerations (USDOE, OELA, 2017a). The law requires a district have a Lau plan even if the district has no current identified English learners, citing regulations that a plan be in place should the student population change (USDOE, 2016). Without the guidance of a Lau plan, English learners are often placed in classrooms where the instruction is not adjusted to meet their needs, thus denying them equitable education opportunities (Johnson, Stephens, Nelson, & Johnson, 2018).

Those considered English learners. The term English learner acts as nomenclature for the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the student; not all English learners identified in schools are alike (Albers & Martinez, 2015; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016). There exists a wide variety of educational and cultural backgrounds intermixed with linguistic diversity (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016). In this current

study, there is a focus on the particular challenges of three specific categories: newcomers, students with limited or interrupted education, and long-term English learners (Olsen, 2014; USDOE, OELA, 2017a).

A newcomer English learner student is defined as a "foreign-born student who has recently arrived to the United States" (USDOE, OELA, 2017b, p. 2). The newcomer classification is maintained for an average of two years (USDOE, OELA, 2017b). Most literature highlights the components of newcomer success in three categories: the amount of formal schooling prior to arrival, the degree of literacy in the native language, and the age of the student (Greenberg Motamedi, 2015; Heritage et al., 2015).

Students with limited or interrupted formal education are newcomer English learners with additional challenges (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Salva, 2017). Many are from countries of poverty and disaster such as war or civil unrest; therefore, the students lack educational experiences upon enrollment in U.S. schools (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). In addition to learning English and the academic content, the student has to learn a basic use of directions, the use of school supplies, and how to follow a routine (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). The process of acclimation to a new country, school, and society necessitates additional support in instruction and emotional support (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Imparities in literacy and academics contribute to the educator's challenges (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; Salva, 2017).

The long-term English learner category has raised the attention of educator groups (Clark-Gareca, Short, Lukes, & Sharp-Ross, 2019). Although definitions vary, generally these are English learner students who have been enrolled in a U.S. school for six or more years but have not been reclassified as English proficient as outlined by state-required

proficiency tests (Cook-Harvey, Darling-Hammond, Lam, Mercer, & Roc, 2016). Typically, long-term English learners were born in the United States and began learning English in kindergarten (Olsen, 2014).

The ESSA includes a policy that addresses the growing concern over the educational outcomes of long-term English learners (MODESE, 2018b). Specifically, states are now required to report on the academic progress of long-term English learners (USDOE, OELA, 2017a). In a 2016 report, WestEd spotlighted additional characteristics of long-term English learners, including limited literacy skills in their first language, over-identification for disabilities, and a high rate of high school dropout. In a similar report, Clark-Gareca et al. (2019) called for district leaders to recognize the needs of long-term English learners and to implement supports and safeguards to improve their academic well-being.

Second language acquisition. With prodigious growth in the number of English learners comes additional challenges when ensuring equitable access to content in public school classrooms (NASEM, 2017; Park et al., 2018). Some challenges come in the form of regulatory requirements, while others come in the form of teacher practice. For example, under the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the Civil Rights Act in *Lau v. Nichols,* Douglas (1974) stressed the obligation of school districts to sustain relevant services to English learners, regardless of the duration of time necessary for proficiency (USDOE, 2016a). Theories from Jim Cummins (1979) and Stephen Krashen (1982), two predominant linguists, guided the following discussion.

BICS and CALPS. The acronym BICS stands for basic interpersonal communicative skills, and the acronym CALPS stands for cognitive academic language

proficiency. The concepts of basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency were first introduced to outline the challenges second language learners face in the classroom (Cummins, 1979). According to Cummins (1979, 2008), there is a difference between social and academic language acquisition. This difference is often confused by educators as fluency (Benati & Angelovska, 2016). First, basic interpersonal communication skills are language skills for daily interaction with other people (Mozayan, 2015). English learners utilize basic interpersonal communication skills when the language required is not specialized (Mozayan, 2015). When occurring in a purposeful social setting, required basic interpersonal communication skills are not as cognitively arduous and generally develop within six months to two years after arrival in the United States (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). Since social interactions are usually context-embedded, basic interpersonal communication skills can be mistaken for the comprehension and proficiency required in academic contexts (Albers & Martinez, 2015).

Second, cognitive academic language proficiency refers to linguistic abilities for academic learning and is applied to the four linguistic domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject-area material (Gibbons, 2015). This degree of language learning is imperative for academic success, and students need reinforcement and time to develop academic proficiency (Zwiers & Soto, 2017). Acquiring academic language goes beyond grasping content vocabulary (Calderón & Soto, 2017). It requires encompassing depths of knowledge, such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring (Zwiers, 2014). This academic level of English proficiency usually takes from five to seven years to develop (Albers & Martinez, 2015).

Second language acquisition theory. While Cummins' (1979, 2008) work distinguished between academic and social language, Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition has had a large impact on second language teaching. His theory is divided into five main hypotheses: acquisition-learning, monitor, natural order, input, and affective filter (Benati & Angelovska, 2016).

The acquisition-learning hypothesis distinguishes between language learning and language acquisition (Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012). Learning, as defined by Krashen (1982), is formal knowledge or the rules about the second language. Acquisition is developing the capability in the second language to communicate in all situations (Krashen, 1982). Krashen's (1982) language acquisition theories are pertinent to the instruction of English learners (Cook, 2016). His theories are leveraged to encourage language instruction in the classroom to be natural and to use language as a means for real communication as opposed to grammar-based instruction (Gass, 2017). Krashen's (1982) theory of second language acquisition is comprised of four key hypotheses: the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013).

The monitor hypothesis states that formal knowledge of a language does not create fluency (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). Krashen (1982) separated learning and acquiring, labeling them as distinct processes, each with a specific purpose. The monitor hypothesis contains significant elements that can have an effect on English learner instruction in the classroom (Krashen, 1982). Based upon the premise students need to begin producing the second language almost immediately, the monitor hypothesis theorizes using language in a natural setting is the pathway to fluency (Krashen, 1982).

Functioning as a monitoring tool, grammar supports the use of language objectives in the classroom to advance proficiency (Laman, 2013).

For the monitor hypothesis to be effective, three conditions must exist (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). The first condition is time; language learners need time to recall knowledge and apply rules they have learned (Krashen, 2003). The second condition is focusing on form, or the way meaning is expressed (Krashen, 2003). The third condition is knowing the rule (Krashen, 2003). The monitor hypothesis maintains that monitoring through self-correction is the only aspect of conscious language learning (Krashen, 1982).

The natural order hypothesis states the acquisition of grammar follows a predictable order (Krashen, 1982, 2003). According to Krashen (1982), other factors such as age, language, and culture have no bearing on this order. This hypothesis has not been without criticism (Benati & Angelovska, 2016). Critics suggest the influence of the first language is not accounted for, and grammatical structures are not necessarily learned in a certain order (Lin, 2012; Liu, 2015).

The input hypothesis claims the way language is acquired is through language exposure (Krashen, 1982). According to Krashen (1982), language is acquired when language input is provided just beyond the individual's current level of comprehension. Often seen as $i + 1$ (input + level just beyond), the input hypothesis has been the basis for other researchers' production of materials and programs that assist classroom teachers with English learner instruction (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2017).

Finally, the affective filter hypothesis suggests variables such as emotions and feelings have an effect on language learning (Krashen, 1982). Having a low affective

filter aids in the language learning process (Benati & Angelovska, 2016). If the English learner has a low affective filter, anxiety is low, allowing for a more effective learning environment (Bailey & Heritage, 2019). Conversely, if the affective filter is high and the student is under stress, any comprehensible input provided by the teacher will be obstructed (Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012).

Stages of language acquisition. There are five stages of language acquisition which involve the culmination of both Krashen's and Cummins's work. Krashen and Terrell (1983) described these stages as preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). All students pass through these levels, and although each student varies, the estimated level at each stage is pertinent to mainstream classroom instruction (Hill & Miller, 2013).

In the first stage, pre-production, the student has minimal comprehension (Freemon & Freemon, 2014). During the second stage of early production, the student can begin to produce one- or two-word responses (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). The third stage is the speech-emergence stage (Mann & Walsh, 2017). The student now comprehends well and can produce simple sentences, but grammar and pronunciation errors are expected (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). In the fourth stage, intermediate fluency, the student's comprehension increases significantly, and fewer grammatical errors are made (Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000). Advanced fluency, the fifth stage, is the point where the English learner has near-native fluency (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Familiarity with the stages and theories of second language acquisition will enhance instruction for English learners (Hill & Miller, 2013). Teachers can leverage this knowledge to supply appropriate scaffolds (Arechiga, 2012; Seidlitz & Castillo,

2013). In addition, these five stages are the basis for score interpretation of English proficiency exams such as the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 (WIDA, 2012). Score reports from such exams, that level the English proficiency of the student, coincide with the stages of second language development identified by Krashen and Terrell (1983).

Understanding these stages and the theories of second language acquisition can be a significant support to mainstream classroom teachers in their instruction of English learners (Pereira & de Oliveira, 2015). Teachers agree knowledge of these processes assists with scaffolds and strategies chosen for instruction of English learners (Gibbons, 2015). The misunderstanding of second language acquisition can lead to misinterpretation of student cognitive ability (Cook, 2016).

Academic achievement. English learners and academic achievement are topics of two major discussions. The first discussion centers around the effect instructional models have on the academic achievement of English learners (Sparks, 2016). Second, there is a debate surrounding the authenticity of an existing achievement gap between English learners and their English-speaking peers (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018).

Instructional models. The ESSA contains a renewed focus on the delivery of effective programs as a means of equitable opportunities for English learner students (USDOE, 2017). Limiting academic exposure while developing language proficiency leads to discussions regarding the effectiveness of various program models for language minority students (Calderón & Soto, 2017). The academic achievement of English learners can be dependent on the implementation of appropriate instructional models, but there is little research to support the effectiveness of one program over another (Sugarman, 2018). Although some characteristics in certain programs may lead to higher

achievement for English learners, most researchers have suggested the implementation of a variety of service models (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; McGraw Hill Education, 2017; MODESE, 2018a).

English language development program models reside in two distinct categories, English-only or bilingual (USDOE, OESE, 2017). The efficacy of these program choices is at the center of debate for English learner education (Sparks, 2016; Sugarman, 2018). No program offers a one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to district capacity to serve the diverse English learner population or in terms of effectiveness for educational outcomes (Goldenbert, 2013; MODESE, 2018a; USDOE & USDOJ, 2015).

Sheltered instruction is a method where English learner students are delivered content alongside their peers (Gibbons, 2015; Gottlieb & Castro, 2017). In its essence, English learner students are presented with content and language instruction within the same lesson (Gottlieb & Castro, 2017). The sheltered instruction observation protocol, often referred to as the SIOP model, was originally developed to provide district accountability in implementing sheltered instruction as a school-based initiative (Echevarría et al., 2017). The model serves as a foundation for consistency of the sheltered instruction model (Heineke & McTighe, 2018).

To support this foundation, the sheltered instruction observation protocol model offers eight components (Echevarría et al., 2017). The components include lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment (Echevarría et al., 2017). While some researchers agree the sheltered instruction observation protocol leads to an effective delivery of services, others caution that without proper district support and

ongoing training for teachers, effectiveness wains (Herrmann, n.d.). Application of the model is a solution when a lack of certified English language teachers exists (Echevarría & Short, 2003).

Another common model is the pull-out model (Barton, 2015). The pull-out model allows the English learner student to receive language intervention services from a certified English learner teacher (MODESE, 2018a). This model is most often viewed as appropriate for elementary students (MODESE, 2018a; Pearson, 2015). Researchers have concerns with pulling English learner students from the classroom environment (Barton, 2015; De Oliveira, 2016; Helman, 2016). Zwiers and Soto (2017) agreed when English learners are pulled from the regular classroom, the opportunity for language interaction with peers diminishes.

A growing body of research indicates bilingual education is an effective program model for English learners (Hakuta, 2018; Nieto, 2009). Bilingual instructional programs deliver content to students in their home language and are grounded in the pedagogic approach that bilingualism provides an academic advantage (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018). Usually, students are taught in their native language in conjunction with a second language (Magrath, 2016). The two common bilingual education models in schools are transitional and dual language (USDOE, OELA, 2017a).

In the transitional bilingual model, instruction is delivered in the student's native language, and the student is also assisted with English language development (Baker & Wright, 2017). The goal is to keep the student academically successful by delivering content in the primary language (Baker & Wright, 2017). As proficiency in English increases, the delivery of content in English also increases, with the end goal of the

English learner student progressing to the mainstream classroom setting (Barbian, Gonzales, & Mejía, 2017).

Dual language programs are intended to simultaneously serve English-speaking and non-English speaking students learning to speak and write in a second language (Ovando & Combs, 2018). Most dual language programs consist of one-half native English speakers and one-half non-native English speakers (Nieto, 2009). Although some researchers surmise this method is effective with English learners, more recent reports say otherwise (Valenzuela & Rubio, 2018).

In a 2016 report, Barrow and Markham-Pithers cautioned districts who cannot implement a dual language program with fidelity due to its complexities. Several concerns were highlighted. For one, there is a scarcity of multilingual teachers (Mitchell, 2019). Second, programs seem to be limited to Spanish, and the diversity represented by English learners is much broader for many districts (Mitchell, 2016). Finally, there exists the trepidation that the dual language program serves the native English-speaking student as a foreign language learner more than supporting the English learner (Thomas & Collier, 2019).

There is little evidence any one program model is the most effective for English learners (Sugarman, 2018). Elements of all program models can co-exist to meet the end result of equitable education for English learners (Albers & Martinez, 2015; MODESE, 2018a). Most current legislation has created a renewed urgency around these topics (MODESE, 2018a; Quintero & Hanson, 2017; USDOE, OESE, 2017). The ESSA created a pivotal moment for English learner policy and practice (MODESE, 2018b; USDOE, 2016a). Accountability measures in the ESSA require English learners to not

only progress in language but also in content mastery (USDOE, 2016a). Displaying the priority of learning outcomes for English learners, the ESSA places emphasis on effective language instruction, professional development to acquire skills to deliver instruction, and English language instruction programs (MODESE, 2018b).

***The achievement gap*.** There are two predominant viewpoints regarding the achievement gap of English learners (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018). One viewpoint focuses on the continued underachievement of English learners when compared to their native English-speaking peers (NCES, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d). The second viewpoint disputes the presentation of the data and proclaims the focus needs to be on growth (Perez & Morrison, 2016).

According to test scores, achievement gaps between English learners and their English-speaking peers are present (NCELA, 2015a). The scores further indicate and demonstrate English learner achievement gaps that have remained relatively unchanged (NCELA, 2015a). In 2013, proficiency levels for English learner students were below their English-speaking peers (NCES, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d).

Some experts argue the elimination of former English learners from the data distorts the real academic story (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018). When former English learners are tracked with native English-speaking peers, the former English learners outperform the native speakers (MODESE, 2019a). The very essence of the definition of English learners is they do not yet have the language proficiency to perform at the same level as their native-speaking peers (USDOE, OESE, 2017). When data only include current English learner students, the gap will always exist (MODESE, 2019a). Therefore, the underperformance on assessments by English learners only means they are still

acquiring English; it does not signify lack of ability (Perez & Morrison, 2016). The real concern is growth and the amount of time it takes to get English learners to proficiency (Ottow, 2019).

Both groups, however, agree the English learner population has a higher dropout rate and of the student population that does graduate, often decline to pursue postsecondary education (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). In school, they tend to be enrolled in lower-level courses taught by underprepared or less-experienced teachers who may not have the specialized training and resources needed to teach English language learners (Musu-Gillette et al., 2016). The lack of growth of those who are still classified as English learners is the key to fundamentally changing English learner equitable education issues (Ottow, 2019).

Teaching English Learners

Calderón, Slavin, and Sánchez (2011) described the goal of instruction for English learners as the integration of language and literacy into the content. Most researchers agree the best pathway to English proficiency for English learners is to develop language proficiency simultaneously with academic skills (Gottlieb & Castro, 2017; Singer, 2018; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017; TESOL, 2018). Developing proficiency through content coincides with the ESSA cumulative requirement of the policy that the cognitive level of content must not be compromised (MODESE, 2018a, 2018c; USDOE, 2016a).

With almost five million students learning English in U.S. public schools, educators face the challenge of improving student achievement (NCES, 2018, para. 1; TESOL, 2016). In a survey conducted by Hanover Research in 2017, 46% of the 1,368

respondents indicated English learner instruction is delivered by the classroom teacher (McGraw Hill Education, 2017, p. 10). This percentage translates to an assumption that mainstream classroom teachers play a significant role in English learner education (McGraw Hill Education, 2017; Russell & Von Esch, 2018). The probability mainstream classroom teachers will have at least one English learner student in the classroom, coupled with the complexities that accompany linguistically diverse students, signals mainstream teacher preparation is prudent (Mellom, Straubhaar, Balderas, Ariail, & Portes, 2018; NCES, 2018; USDOJ & USDOE, n.d.). Instruction provided in the mainstream classroom has an impact on the overall achievement of English learners (De Oliveira & Yough, 2015).

Instructional strategies for English learners. In the teaching of English learners, teachers employ both standard instructional practices and research-based strategies (Sparks, 2016). When implementing standard instructional practices, teachers often utilize strategies with English learners with no regard for their specific needs (Echevarría et al., 2017). For example, teachers may provide a graphic organizer well-suited to some learners but take no account of the specific needs of the English learners (Peercy, Artzi, Silverman, & Martin-Beltrán, 2015).

Research-based strategies are defined as instructional strategies that have been thoroughly researched and result in heightened achievement levels for English learners (Lin, 2012). There are a number of instructional strategies that can be regarded as research-based (Levine, Lukens, & Smallwood, 2013). For example, described by Gibbons (2015) as “temporary” but “essential,” scaffolding is a method for moving learners toward “new levels of understanding” (p. 16).

Scaffolding of instruction for English learners needs to be mastered by mainstream classroom teachers to successfully bridge the gap between academic growth and language proficiency (Echevarría et al., 2017). One example of a research-based strategy is when the instructor provides avenues for students to associate background knowledge and culture with what is introduced in the classroom setting (Herrera, 2016; Levine et al., 2013). Another example of a research-based instructional strategy is structuring ample opportunity for language use in the classroom through the increase of academic conversations (Zwiers & Soto, 2017).

Highlighting the importance of such strategies, the 2015 letter from the OCR updated the guidelines addressing what districts should be doing for English learners, stressing research-based instructional practices are favored to help English learners meet content standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (USDOE, OCR & USDOJ, 2015). With the implementation of the ESSA, policy drives district decisions with a new accountability system, which places responsibility for academic and proficiency growth on local districts instead of entirely on the Title III program, hence embracing all teachers as teachers of English (TESOL, 2016, 2018). Moving forward, mainstream classroom teachers must improve at implementing effective research-based teaching strategies for English learners (Lucas, Villegas, & Martin, 2015).

Elevating the profile of research-based practices, the Ceedar Center released *Evidence-Based Practices for English Learners* (Richards-Tutor, Aceves, & Reese, 2016). This study, compiled for teacher preparation professionals, summarized effective practices for English learners in the following categories: academic instruction, progress monitoring, and family-school partnerships (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016). Similarly, in

2012, a study was released that summarized literature about instructional practices all teachers can utilize when working with English learners, specifically recommending consistent guidelines to address oral language, academic language, and cultural needs (Samson & Collins, 2012).

Overall, these studies and recommendations were created under the premise of the continued increase of linguistically diverse students in schools (Samson & Collins, 2012; TESOL, 2018). In tandem with this increase, general education teachers must be equipped with knowledge of second language acquisition and must recognize academic language and cultural components are essential to desired academic growth (Samson & Collins, 2012; TESOL, 2018; USDOE, OCR & USDOJ, 2015). Regardless of the manner in which the foundations of instruction are framed, effective strategies and scaffolding for English learner students are necessary (Wright, 2015). When an instructor focuses on the potential an English learner brings to the classroom instead of the language deficit, the role of that instructor is to provide support until the English learner is capable of independence (Herrera, 2016). However, scaffolding does not occur in all instruction (Gibbons, 2015; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2018; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017).

Best practices for classroom instruction. The literature points to four critical areas for teachers of English learners (Gottlieb & Castro, 2017; Singer, 2018; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017; TESOL, 2018; Stanford University, 2013). These four—educational environment, lesson development, assessment, and stakeholder involvement serve as conduits for mainstream classroom teacher effectiveness for the instruction of English learners (Gottlieb & Castro, 2017; Singer, 2018; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017;

Stanford University, 2013; TESOL, 2018). The infrastructure of English learner students' success in school is based upon instructional practices which support the growth of social, instructional, and academic language (WIDA, 2010).

Educational environment. Relationships are at the core of effective teaching (Helman, 2016; Muijs & Reynolds, 2017; Stronge, 2018). Research within the domain of English learner educational environment centers upon two primary topics: knowing the learner and connecting to background knowledge (Markos & Himmel, 2016). Various researchers have examined the impact of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; Herrera, 2016).

Culturally responsive teaching is instruction that supports English learners by building on student background knowledge (Hammond, 2015; Heineke & McTighe, 2018). Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive instruction as "using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). This form of instruction allows the teacher to engage the student in tasks designed to access prior knowledge (Gibbons, 2015; Goldenbert, 2013).

English learners come to school with a wealth of knowledge and experiences (Lucas, Villegas et al., 2018). Teacher efforts in getting to know learners can facilitate connecting lessons (Gass, 2017; Gay, 2010; Herrera, 2016). When students connect learning to their backgrounds, achievement increases (Gottlieb, 2016). First, background knowledge can be defined as the knowledge students have gained through life experiences (Heineke & McTighe, 2018; TESOL, 2018). Second, background knowledge also includes content knowledge, academic language, and vocabulary

necessary for comprehending content information (Heineke & McTighe, 2018; TESOL, 2018).

Linking to personal life experiences can help students find meaning in academic content (Hammond, 2015; Herrera, 2016). Linking to a student's personal experience stimulates learning and boosts comprehension (Echevarría et al., 2017). Academic content related to a personal experience substantiates the English learner's cultural viewpoint and contributions (Herrera, Kavimandan, Perez, & Wessels, 2017).

Brain research confirms that learning occurs when students attach a new concept to something already known (Hammond, 2015). Academic content can become a complex text for the English learner (Singer, 2018). The activation of background knowledge not only becomes a crucial step in the comprehension of content, but also a strategy to be employed by the classroom teacher (Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017).

Studies on eliciting background knowledge have focused on reading comprehension (Braunworth & Franco, 2017). Willingham and Lovette (2014) contended comprehension is dependent on what the reader already knows. Further, Willingham (2017) suggested background knowledge and vocabulary play a large role in text comprehension. Additional researchers supported the concept that activating prior knowledge to build background is fundamental in supporting the language and academic growth of English learners (Goldenbert, 2013; Herrera et al., 2017).

There are many methods mainstream classroom teachers can implement with English learners to activate prior knowledge and build background knowledge (Lucas, Villegas et al., 2018). Two primary avenues are suggested for implementation (Lupo, Strong, Lewis, Walpole, & McKenna, 2018). First, background knowledge can be

supplied where none exists (Anderson, 2013; Marzano, 2004). Providing new knowledge can be accomplished by supporting information from the text in the form of a mental picture for the student (Anderson, 2013; Marzano, 2004). Second, there should be the activation of existing knowledge by soliciting what a student may already know (Pinto, 2013).

There are several recommended strategies related to building background and activating prior knowledge (Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017). One particularly highly supported strategy is the use of sentence starters or sentence frames (Braunworth & Franco, 2017). Another research-based activity is known as the picture-word inductive model (Calhoun, 1999; Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2018). In this activity, students are given a visual (Calhoun, 1999; Herrera, 2016). Individually or in groups, the students then begin to link words they know to things they see in pictures (Calhoun, 1999; Herrera, 2016). One of the positive aspects of this activity is the student can use the first language (Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2018; Novia, 2015). The primary purpose of the visual is to illicit knowledge, regardless of the language in which it arrives (Herrera, 2016; Novia, 2015).

According to the affective filter hypothesis, high anxiety and low self-confidence can cause an English learner to filter out language inputs and make it extremely difficult to acquire another language (Nath, Mohamad, & Yamat, 2017). Culturally responsive teaching is a key component in the reduction of student anxiety and the promotion of a safe learning environment (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Wang & Degol, 2016). Researchers agree English learners bring a wealth of background knowledge and experiences that can support learning new content in a new language (Stanford University, 2013). However, the student making those connections depends on the

appropriate tasks and guidance of the teacher (Arechiga, 2012; Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012; Calderón & Soto, 2017). According to Marzano (2004), "What students *already know* about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information relative to the content" (p. 1).

Lesson development. Collectively, Echevarría et al. (2017), Singer (2018), and TESOL (2018) agreed there are three critical elements of lesson development for English learners: (a) academic rigor (Bailey & Heritage, 2019; Gottlieb & Castro, 2017; Seidlitz & Castillo, 2013), (b) language objectives (Gibbons, 2015; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018; WIDA, 2012), and (c) comprehensible input (Krashen, 2017; Krashen, Lee, & Lao, 2018; Stanford University, 2013).

Academic rigor is defined as the ability to manage text complexity and incorporate critical thinking (Blackburn, 2018). The understanding of academic rigor can guide what is considered achievement among the English learner population (Wormeli, 2018). English learner students have the right to the same rigorous content as their English-speaking peers (USDOE, 2016a). For this reason, researchers have provided avenues teachers can access to keep lesson rigor high, even if the student is not English proficient (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016).

Scaffolding is temporary support given to a student to perform a task (Gibbons, 2015). Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1986) believed learning takes place at a level just beyond what learners can do independently, or within the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development exemplifies the place of rigor wherein English learners stretch their linguistic and conceptual understanding (Vadeboncoeur, 2017). Vygotsky's (1986) work has been a major contribution to understanding how to take

students from the current point of development to the next level (Daniels, 2016; Vadeboncoeur, 2017).

If instruction is aimed at the level where students can already work independently, there is no growth (Daniels, 2016; Karpov, 2014; Vadeboncoeur, 2017). The zone of proximal development provides insight to educators to observe not only what students can do independently but also what can be accomplished in the zone of proximal development, creating a vision of the relationship between instruction and development (Billings & Walqui, 2016). English language learners are among the student populations perceived to be less capable of participating in the rigorous curriculum prescribed for their more English-proficient peers (Lucas et al., 2015). As outlined in the 2015 *Dear Colleague Letter*, school districts were notified that instructional practices must allow English learners to meet state content standards (USDOE, OCR & USDOJ, 2015). The guidance advocates when planning instruction for English learners, rigor should not be compromised due to lack of English proficiency (Heritage et al., 2015; Zinskie & Rea, 2016).

Language objectives specifically outline the type of language students will need to learn and use to accomplish the goals of the lesson (Mesta & Reber, 2019). Quality language objectives complement the content knowledge and skills identified in content-area standards (TESOL, 2018). They also address the aspects of academic language that will be developed or reinforced during the teaching of grade-level content concepts (Echevarría & Short, 2003).

Language objectives focus on the four linguistic domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (WIDA, 2013). Language objectives are a tool to articulate the

academic language functions and skills needed to participate in the lesson and meet grade-level content standards for both the learner and the instructor (WIDA, 2010, 2013). The use of language objectives can ensure English learners have equal access to the content (WIDA, 2010, 2013).

There are three components of a language objective (Testa, 2017). First, it must address the language function of the lesson (Testa, 2017). The language function refers to the depth of knowledge or the cognitive function of a lesson (WIDA, 2019). Examples of language functions are to describe, explain, compare, or justify (Staehr Fenner & Synder, 2017; TESOL, 2018). The second component of a language objective is the consideration of the essential vocabulary needed for the student to fully participate in the lesson (Testa, 2017). The third component is the support or scaffolding that will assist the English learner with comprehension (Staehr Fenner & Synder, 2017; TESOL, 2018; Testa, 2017; WIDA, 2010, 2013, 2019).

The WIDA English language development standards support the use of language objectives as a path to English learner linguistic and academic achievement (WIDA, 2013). An example of a WIDA (2013) language objective is to "identify character traits based on evidence from oral text using visual and graphic support" (p. 75). Incorporating language objectives in lesson development increases focus for the teacher and the student (Echevarría et al., 2017; Singer, 2018; TESOL, 2018).

The teaching theory of comprehensible input, developed by Krashen (2017), is effective in helping English learner students participate and comprehend academic content (Echevarría et al., 2017; Herrera, 2016). Comprehensible input is a when instruction is linguistically delivered in a manner just beyond the English learner's

current fluency level (Krashen, 1982). Instructional delivery of comprehensible input requires focus on content and language domains and proficiency levels of the student (Echevarría et al., 2017; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017). English learners often struggle with what they hear in class during direct instruction, and providing comprehensible input is a way teachers can ensure English learners are absorbing the essence of what is said (Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2018).

There exists a plethora of strategies mainstream classroom teachers can use to negate simplifying the language of instruction (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016). The sheltered instruction observation protocol model strongly reinforces the use of strategies for comprehensible input (Echevarría et al., 2017). One such strategy is using gestures, body language, and objects to support or enhance what is being communicated (Echevarría et al., 2017). Another sheltered instruction observation protocol supported comprehensible input strategy is providing a model of the process of an assignment or graphic organizers (Echevarría et al., 2017).

Stakeholder involvement. Staehr Fenner (2015), a seminal author in the field of instruction of English learners, highlighted the significance of stakeholder involvement. Responsibility for the education of English learners should be shared among key partners in learning (TESOL, 2018). There are at least two levels of stakeholder involvement related to English learners: internal and external (Delgado, Huerta, & Campos, 2012; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Staehr Fenner, 2015).

One aspect of internal stakeholder involvement refers to district and building-level administrators (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014). One key step administrators can take is to cultivate a school atmosphere that values cultural diversity and languages other than

English (Dormer, 2016). Educators, regardless of the manner in which they serve the district, need to see themselves as equal stakeholders in the success of English learners (Staehr Fenner, 2015).

External involvement is focused on the connection to families of English learner students (Zacarian & Silversone, 2015). Collaborative relationships with the families of English learners can lead to higher achievement (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014). Parents are more likely to become involved if their input and presence are welcome (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Georgis, Gokiert, Ford, & Ali, 2014).

Schools historically struggle with parents of English learners becoming involved (Cook, Pérusse, & Rojas, 2015). In one study, the parents of English learners were less involved due to their lack of confidence in their own language skills (Delgado et al., 2012). Additionally, it was surmised differences in culture could have some effect on why English learner parents are not comfortable being involved in school (Delgado et al., 2012).

Professional Development

Recent growth in the English learner population has considerable ramifications for schools and the role of teacher preparedness and effectiveness in improving educational outcomes (Samson & Collins, 2012). Although educational specialists for English as a second language have been trained in supporting English learners, the majority of English learner students' time is spent in mainstream classrooms (Heritage et al., 2015). Mainstream teachers, unfortunately, often have little or no training or knowledge of second language instructional strategies (Heritage et al., 2015).

Researchers have sought to examine classroom teacher preparedness for English learners (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016; Helman, 2016; Russell, 2016). Many researchers have found these practices are not in full effect (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016; Helman, 2016; Russell, 2016). According to a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (n.d.) report, schools are not providing adequate instruction for English learners. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (n.d.) concluded districts utilize their most valuable resource, general education teachers, and adapt teacher training and professional development to support general education teachers in meeting the needs of English learners.

Professional development refers to educational experiences related to an individual's work (Mizell, 2010). For schools, it is a strategy used to provide educators with the tools they need to improve their practice (Kennedy, 2016; Mizell, 2010). Teaching quality and school leadership are the most important factors in raising student achievement (Good & Lavigne, 2018). The term "professional development" has received a renewed focus (Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull, & Hunter, 2016; Learning Forward & Education Counsel, 2017). Primarily, the ESSA directs attention from teacher observations to teacher professional development (Learning Forward & Education Counsel, 2017). Also, when current professional development programs are deemed ineffective, attention to improving teacher professional development has become a priority (Jacob & McGovern, 2015; Kennedy, 2016; Learning Forward, 2018).

There are some common components necessary for effective teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Learning Forward, n.d). Key features of professional development outlined by researchers can be condensed

into four major themes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Learning Forward, n.d). First, professional development should be aligned to student standards and monitored based on student data (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Learning Forward, n.d). Second, professional development must not be an isolated event (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Learning Forward, n.d). Third, professional development should occur in a collaborative environment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Learning Forward, n.d). Finally, the responsibility for professional development should be shared among all educators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Learning Forward, n.d).

Components of effective English learner professional development. Official TESOL (2016) recommendations define professional development. One such is the *English Learner Tool Kit* (2016), wherein the Office of English Language Acquisition provided recommendations for effective professional development for mainstream classroom teachers based on a 2011 policy brief issued by the National Education Association (National Education Association, 2011; USDOE, OELA, 2017a). These recommended components call for the following: a process for language acquisition with academic content, general education teachers' understanding of language proficiency within the standards, pedagogy and instructional strategies specific for English learners, exposure to the demonstrations of effective strategies and instruction, and resources on effective instruction and cultural awareness (National Education Association, 2011; USDOE, OELA, 2017a).

The need for general education teachers to implement instructional practices that advance academic and language growth for English learners promotes professional

development on research-based instructional strategies for English learners (Pillars, 2016; Téllez & Manthey, 2015). In a 2014 study released by the National Center for Education and Regional Assistance, teachers reported professional development on strategies for English learner students improved their ability to teach English learners (Boyle et al., 2014). Likewise, a recent survey revealed 76% of teachers surveyed agreed training, specifically for English learners, improved their instruction (McGraw Hill Education, 2017, p. 56).

Mainstream classroom teachers may still receive insufficient professional development to support instruction for English learners (Von Esch, 2018). This absence of quality training can be due to a lack of opportunity to receive appropriate professional development tailored to the mainstream classroom needs of English learners (Correll, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education (n.d.) National Professional Development Program has contributed to the solution by awarding grants to support educators of English learners. These grants were awarded to institutions of higher education for the purpose of implementation of professional development activities for educators of English learners (USDOE, n.d.)

The Center for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy was a recipient of a U.S. Department of Education professional development grant (USDOE, 2016b). A year-long professional development training was implemented for 27 elementary classroom teachers (Powell, Cantrell, Malo-Juvera, & Correll, 2016). Professional development was based on the Culturally Responsive Observation Protocol (Powell et al., 2016). The Culturally Responsive Observation Protocol is a framework used to measure, assess, and support instruction in the seven components of culturally responsive teaching (Powell et

al., 2016). The components include classroom relationships, family collaboration, assessment, curriculum, instruction, discourse, and socio-political consciousness (Powell et al., 2016). Classroom observations of the participating teachers confirmed the use of the new practices (Powell et al., 2016). One-year results indicated English learners in the classes of participating teachers showed "significant gains" in reading and math (Powell et al., 2016, p. 30).

Another use of the National Professional Development Program grant funding enabled additional teacher TESOL endorsement (USDOE, n.d.). For most grant recipients, the endorsements take two years to complete and are available to currently employed licensed teachers with English learners in their classrooms (USDOE, n.d.). The teachers are part of University-designed cohorts and follow the residing state's required coursework for a TESOL certification (USDOE, n.d.). There are three grant recipients in Missouri: Missouri State University, University of Missouri St. Louis, and Webster University (USDOE, 2016b, 2017). Collectively these grants build state capacity to serve students with linguistic needs (Boyle et al., 2014; Gonzalez, 2016; Tran, 2015).

English learners bring challenges to the classroom, both linguistically and culturally (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019; Singer, 2018). Professional development is a viable method for supporting mainstream classroom instruction for English learners (Master et al., 2016). To support English learners in language acquisition and content knowledge, mainstream classroom teachers need to be given the tools to create and sustain appropriate classroom learning environments (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). This

requires a focus on professional development to deliver that support (De Oliveira & Yough, 2015; Gándara & Santibañez, 2016; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019).

Summary

The *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success* provided the conceptual framework for this study. The related literature discussed in this chapter was focused on the variances of what constitutes an English learner and the role of past and current federal policy in the education system for English learners. Additionally, current educational principles and strategies recommended for implementation in the classroom by mainstream classroom teachers were reviewed. Professional development nuances that can contribute to the successful implementation of these instructional practices also shaped the review.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study was designed to describe English learner programs and practices in Missouri public and charter school districts and mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions of teaching practices to support English learners. Chapter Three begins with a summary of the problem and purpose and the research questions. For this study, a mixed-methods approach was used as the research design. Also included in this chapter is a description of the population and sample, instruments, and data collection. The chapter concludes with the data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Meeting the language and academic needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students is of critical concern for educators (Albers & Martinez, 2015). The debate continues concerning how to most effectively implement research-based strategies that specifically support language development and academic achievement for English learners (Singer, 2018). Government mandates now require districts to submit test results for the subgroup of English learner students to prove federal directives have been followed by state and local education agencies (MODESE, 2018b). Consequently, improving outcomes for English learners is dependent on building the capacity for mainstream classroom teachers to implement strategies that increase language development and access to grade-level content (Gibbons, 2015).

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to obtain information from English learner program directors about English learner program practices in Missouri public and charter school districts. In addition, mainstream classroom teachers from schools with high and low incidence of English learner students were interviewed to gather their

perceived level of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom.

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How are school districts supporting English learners as reported in the following areas: regulatory policies, instructional program models, professional development, and instructional strategies in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri?
2. How do supports vary in programs and instructional strategies for English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri as reported by English learner program directors?
3. How do mainstream classroom teachers perceive teaching practices promoted to support English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts?

Research Design

A mixed-methods design was chosen for this study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) asserted mixed-methods research is "most adequately described" by its "core characteristics" (p. 5). These characteristics include collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, combining results, using a specific form of mixed methods design to provide a coherent process, and framing it all within a theory or philosophy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Due to the unique combination of collecting quantitative and qualitative evidence, mixed-method research is gaining acceptance because it enables the viewing of problems with more complete understanding (Heyvaert, Hannes, & Onghena, 2017).

There are multiple ways to collect data in a mixed-methods study (Creamer, 2017; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). One core design is the convergent design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this design, the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed separately but simultaneously (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). The data are "compared with the intent of obtaining a more complete understanding" of the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 65).

A convergent mixed-methods design was implemented for this study. In the convergent design, the researcher orchestrates concurrent quantitative and qualitative data collection that transpires into a final convergence of results for a more comprehensive understanding of that which is studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015). The convergent design was chosen, because while it is important to collect data separately, the design allows for the simultaneous implementation of the quantitative and qualitative phases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Population and Sample

The population of a study is the larger group of individuals with a defined set of characteristics to whom results can be generalized (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2016). The survey population was the entire population (157) of school district English learner program directors from Missouri public and charter school districts that reported English learners during the 2017-2018 school year (MODESE, 2018d). When a survey is administered to the whole of the population, it is a census survey (Rea & Parker, 2014). A total of 26 English learner program directors participated in the survey.

The population for the interview phase was determined by gathering the total number of teachers from the Missouri public and charter school districts that reported

having 10 or more English learners during the 2017-2018 school year (MODESE, 2018d, 2018e). According to the MODESE website, of the 157 districts reporting 10 or more English learners, there were 44,280 certified staff employed during 2018-2019 school year (MODESE, 2018d, 2018e). From this population, the aim was to interview a maximum of 12 mainstream classroom teachers chosen via a random stratified sample.

A purposive stratified random sample was used in the qualitative phase. Purposive sampling is a technique that depends on the reasoning and experience of the researcher when it comes to the categorical divisions of the study (Sharma, 2017). Stratified random sampling divides the population into specific categories, or strata, by collective or shared qualities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The four strata of the mainstream classroom teachers were based on the districts' percentages of English learner students. The median of the percentage of English learners in the 157 Missouri public and charter school districts who reported having 10 or more English learners during the 2017-2018 school year was 3.18% (MODESE, 2018d, 2018e). For this study, a district whose percentage of English learner students was 3.18% or above was considered a high-incidence school district, while if the English learner population was less than 3.18%, the district was categorized as a low-incidence school district. The names of the mainstream classroom teachers were placed in four strata, high-incidence in kindergarten through sixth grades, low-incidence in kindergarten through sixth grades, high-incidence in seventh through 12th grades, and low-incidence in seventh through 12th grades. A total of nine mainstream classroom teachers participated in the interview phase. Each stratum consisted of two teachers, with the exception of the high-incidence kindergarten, which had three participants.

Instrumentation

The convergent design in mixed-methods research calls for gathering both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus the design of the qualitative instrument is not dependent on the quantitative results (Creswell, 2014). Further, when conducting a mixed-methods study, validity and reliability are strengthened when methods of collecting information are diversified (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Therefore, two separate instruments were used to gather the data needed to answer the research questions (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

For the quantitative phase of this study, an original survey instrument was developed by the researcher to collect data from English learner program directors (see Appendix A). Surveys have become widely used and acknowledged as an effective method for gathering descriptive data for research (Hoy & Adams, 2016). Survey research is "an attempt to obtain data" from the target population "to determine the current status with respect to one or more variables" (Fraenkel et al., 2016, p. 12). The survey was developed in response to the research questions with the purpose to collect information pertaining to existing conditions.

For the quantitative phase of this study, an original survey instrument was developed by the researcher to collect data from English learner program directors (see Appendix A). Surveys have become widely used and acknowledged as an effective method for gathering descriptive data for research (Hoy & Adams, 2016). Survey research is "an attempt to obtain data" from the target population "to determine the current status with respect to one or more variables" (Fraenkel et al., 2016, p. 12). The survey was developed in response to the research questions with the purpose to collect

information pertaining to existing conditions. The survey questions were designed to gather information in three categories.

First, the survey items in part one were designed to solicit information about the English learner program director's current qualifications. For example, one item asked the respondent to indicate if they are TESOL certified. The next section contained items designed to gather information on district adherence to federal guidelines in regard to English learners. In a descriptive study, surveys can be used to explore aspects of an environment (Rea & Parker, 2014).

The survey items in the third section focused on gathering information about English learner training and support offered to the mainstream classroom teachers. Fraenkel et al. (2015) explained that to describe conditions it is important to examine circumstances to that environment.

For the qualitative phase of the study, original interview questions were developed and used to gather qualitative data regarding the perceptions of mainstream classroom teachers. Interviews allow information to be gathered through the perspectives of the participants (Miller & Glassner, 2016). Each interview question was designed to gather the individual perceptions of mainstream classroom teachers on the implementation and effectiveness of research-based strategies for English learners.

The *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success* and the review of literature guided the development of the interview questions. Nine questions were designed to address research question number three. The final question was open-ended. Neuman (2014) suggested the final question to inquire from participants what has not been asked.

Validity and reliability. Survey research is an approach that can help researchers describe variables (Irwin & Stafford, 2016). A survey instrument is valid if "it measures what is supposed to be measured" (Fraenkel et al., 2016, p. 113). The collection of content-related evidence contributes to survey instrument validity (Ruel, Wagner, & Gillespie, 2016). Content-related evidence is collected from individuals who have a considerable level of knowledge about what is to be measured (Fraenkel et al., 2016). The group of educators chosen to field-test and confirm the validity of the survey instrument included three Missouri Migrant and English Learner instructional specialists and the Missouri Director of English Language Development Curriculum.

An instrument is reliable if it "is one that gives consistent results" (Fraenkel et al., 2016, p. 113). The group of individuals used to test the reliability included two Missouri Migrant and English Language Learning (MELL) instructional specialists; Missouri's Director of English Language Development; the Assistant Director of Assessment; and the Director of Migrant, English Learner, Immigrant & Refugee Education. Piloting a survey can identify questions that might lead to biased answers or might not be clear to participants (Irwin & Stafford, 2016).

The data-gathering instrument for the qualitative phase was a 10-question semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B). Seidman (2013) stated, "The primary way to research an educational organization is through the experience of individual people" (p. 9). The questions were developed to address the qualitative research questions and to ascertain the importance of mainstream classroom teachers' experiences with English learner students.

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are influenced by the viewpoints and bias of the researcher (Fraenkel et al., 2016). To ensure cohesion and suitability of the questions, they were tested through the four-phase Interview Protocol Refinement framework (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The first phase is "ensuring interview questions reflect the data collection needed from the research questions" (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 812). The second phase is constructing questions that are inquiry-based so the researcher elicits "experiences" and not just answers (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 813). The third phase described by Castillo-Montoya (2016) is feedback. A close reading from a colleague was elicited to check for reliability. The last phase calls for piloting the interview protocol in an environment as close to the actual environment as possible to check for fluidity of the interview process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). This last phase was conducted with two classroom teachers with English learner classroom experience who recently retired from the Missouri school system.

Data Collection

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the data collected in a convergent design are collected "congruently" but "typically separate" (p. 69). This design allows the researcher to collect both types of data in the same stage of the study, to analyze the data separately, and to combine and compare results (Decuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). Before any research was conducted, an Institutional Review Board approval (see Appendix C) was secured from Lindenwood University.

Quantitative. Prior to the study, the superintendents from each of the 157 Missouri public and charter school districts in the survey population were sent an electronic mail requesting permission to send a survey to each district's English learner

program director and to interview teachers from the district (see Appendices D & E). Only the districts with superintendent permission were included in the study. For the survey, a personalized recruitment letter with a link to the secure survey was sent through electronic mail to the district English learner program director at each qualifying Missouri public and charter school district (see Appendix F). In this phase of data collection, an Informed Consent Letter (see Appendix G) was included in the survey recruitment letter to Missouri English learner program directors. The survey was designed to obtain information from the directors about district support and mainstream teacher professional development specific to English learner students. The list of Missouri English learner program directors in Missouri was supplied by the director of the Missouri State Migrant and English Language Learning department. To meet the inclusion criteria, all schools on the list were from Missouri public and charter school districts that reported 10 or more English learner students for 2017-2018.

The participant response rate was monitored with Qualtrics, which automatically instituted follow-up response prompts. For example, in the event an English learner program director did not respond within five business days of receiving the survey, an electronic mail was sent as a follow-up reminder with encouragement to complete the survey. In the event the survey was left incomplete, an electronic mail with an appropriate response link was sent to the English learner program director as an appeal to complete the survey.

Qualitative. The qualitative data collection consisted of semi-structured individual interviews with nine mainstream classroom teachers. For the interviews, the English learner program directors were informed of the impending receipt of an

additional electronic form, not associated with the survey, asking for recommendations of mainstream classroom teachers who they would consider good interview candidates. The form requesting names of mainstream classroom teachers was sent to English learner program directors five days after the survey recruitment letter, and the sample of teachers were garnered from this form (see Appendix H).

All teachers whose names were submitted by the English learner program directors were sent a participation recruitment letter (see Appendix I). Once permission had been obtained from the teachers to participate in a possible interview, the purposive stratified sampling was applied to select four groups: K-6 high-incidence, K-6 low-incidence, 7-12 high-incidence, and 7-12 low-incidence. Once teachers were selected, an electronic mail was sent confirming selection in the interview process (see Appendix J). The communication contained a link to an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix K) and a link to initiate the date, time, and location of the interview (see Appendix L). Upon receipt of interview date options, a phone call was made to confirm the date and review interview protocol environment factors (see Appendix M). If a teacher chosen could not be contacted, the process was replicated to select another potential interview participant. All interviews were conducted using videoconferencing software.

Combining the strengths of quantitative data and open-ended qualitative strands facilitates a stronger understanding of the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The parallel data were analyzed separately and combined for a descriptive interpretation of English learner support by participating Missouri school districts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This method of data collection supplies a platform as to how the two data types relate to each other (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

Data Analysis

In a mixed-methods convergent design, although data are collected concurrently, the quantitative and qualitative data portions are analyzed separately (Decuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). Once analyzed separately, the databases are merged to bring greater understanding to the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the final analysis, equal merit was given to both quantitative and qualitative data sets.

Descriptive statistics were used to organize and summarize how Missouri public and charter school districts support English learner students and the variance in programs and instructional strategies. In descriptive statistical analysis, the researcher converts the raw data into a useful form (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Data received from the survey were exported from Qualtrics, and once data were visually inspected to determine the distribution, the appropriate descriptive statistics were applied to all major variables (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

In preparation for analysis, all responses were given a numerical value. Descriptive analysis was employed to determine general trends and report the relative number of participants within data categories (Fraenkel et al., 2016). The nominal and ordinal variables were interpreted using figures and tables to present the response breakdown of the survey questions (Mills & Gay, 2018). Interval and ratio variables were dependent on the value distribution (Mills & Gay, 2018). A frequency distribution was used to show counts of the number of responses to each question and to provide a general view of disbursement (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). The central tendency was calculated, and the data were presented in the form of mean, median, mode, and percentages (Johnson & Christensen, 2016).

Qualitative data analysis is the process of moving the qualitative data collected into a form of interpretation for what is being studied (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Qualitative data analysis necessitates the researcher look for evidence of common themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The first step in finding themes is coding to divide responses into relevant subgroups (Saldaña, 2016). Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) defined coding as "the process of grouping evidence and labeling ideas so that they reflect increasingly broader perspectives" (p. 214). Coding decisions are based on the study methodology and are implemented in two cycles (Saldaña, 2016). The first step begins with coding a word or phrase from the original discourse contained in the qualitative data record (Saldaña, 2016). The second cycle of coding is the process of filtering and organizing features found in the first cycle to describe and explore subcategories and their relationships to each other (Saldaña, 2016).

Together, the quantitative and qualitative analysis databases are tools to explore common phenomenon and allow for the use of tables and figures for concomitant findings to provide further insight into the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Although there are several integration procedures with the convergent design, the method described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) as a "primary data integration procedure" (p. 224) was utilized. These findings were represented in joint displays of figures and tables and accompanied by descriptive narrative (Fraenkel et al., 2016).

Ethical Considerations

To ensure confidentiality, all data and documents will remain in a file under the researcher's supervision (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). All electronic files and audio tapings are secured using a protected password and a personal computer on a secured site

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). All documents and files will be destroyed three years from completion of the research project (Fraenkel et al., 2016).

To ensure anonymity, data codes were used in the interview questions and with participants to lessen the possibility of identification (Saldaña, 2016). For the survey and interview, each participant received an Informed Consent Letter, which described in detail the purpose of the research, any possible risks, and the opportunity to opt out of the study at any time without negative effects (Rea & Parker, 2014).

Summary

The convergent mixed-methods design allowed for the investigation of school districts' support of Missouri English learner students. Quantitative and qualitative measures were used to describe current supports for English learners so that professional development can be designed to empower mainstream classroom teachers with effective strategies for English learners. Driven by the research questions, the population, detailed data collection, and analysis procedures were explained in Chapter Three.

The purpose of this study was to obtain information from English learner coordinators about English learner program practices in Missouri school districts and to gather mainstream classroom teachers' perceived levels of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom. In Chapter Four, specific results including quantitative and qualitative data collected for this mixed-methods study are reported.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to gain information from English learner program directors about English learner program practices and professional development specific to the needs of English learners in Missouri school districts. In addition, mainstream classroom teachers from different-sized schools with high and low incidence of English learner students were interviewed to gather the perceived level of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom. Chapter Four is used to present an analysis of the data.

First, the quantitative data are presented. The instrument was a researcher-created survey aligned with research questions one and two. The survey was managed by Qualtrics and consisted of 17 statements and one open-ended statement. Statistical analysis was used to describe the data.

Next, the qualitative interview data are presented. An analysis of each teacher interview question follows, which describes mainstream classroom teachers' perceived effectiveness of research-based strategies and their rate of implementation. The chapter concludes with a description of themes of the study in addition to a chapter summary.

Quantitative Data Analysis

A survey instrument was implemented to address research questions one and two in the quantitative phase of the study. To address research questions one and two, the survey was divided into three parts. The first part was to learn more about the role of the English learner program director. The second part was designed to learn about the status regarding serving English learners from the program director's district. The third part was used to learn more about support and training for mainstream classroom teachers

regarding research-based practices for English learners. The survey was delivered through Lindenwood University's survey management software Qualtrics, and the survey data were exported into Excel for data analysis.

The role of the English learner program director. There were five items in part one of the survey. This part of the survey was to learn about the program director's role. Survey data are depicted in bar graph representations or narrative descriptions.

Survey item one. Which of the following best describes your primary role?

A total of 26 English learner program directors responded to item one (see Figure 2). The majority of respondents, 50% (13), held the title of English learner program director. The remainder of the respondents shared this title along with other roles. English learner teachers made up 15.38% (4), followed by directors of special services at 15.29% (4). The remainder of the respondents, 7.69% (2), identified as federal program directors.

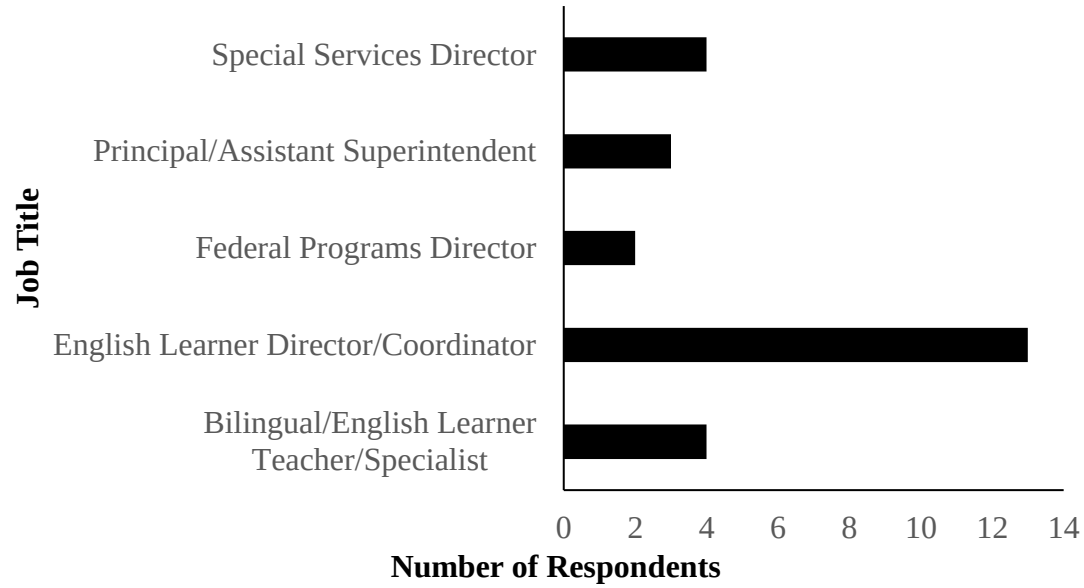

Figure 2. Respondents' primary roles. *n* = 26.

Survey item two. Are you TESOL certified in Missouri?

A total of 26 English learner program directors responded to item two. The largest percentage, 61.54% (15), indicated they were TESOL certified in Missouri. A smaller portion, 38.46% (10), were not TESOL certified, even though they held the role of English learner program director.

The TESOL certification by English learner program director role varied (see Figure 3). Serving in the role of bilingual/English learner teacher/specialist were three respondents, and they were all TESOL certified. The 13 respondents who were English learner directors/coordinators included three respondents who were not TESOL certified. Two respondents were federal program directors, and, only one was TESOL certified. There were four special service director respondents, and of those, three were TESOL certified and one was not. There were three principal/assistant superintendent respondents, and none were TESOL certified.

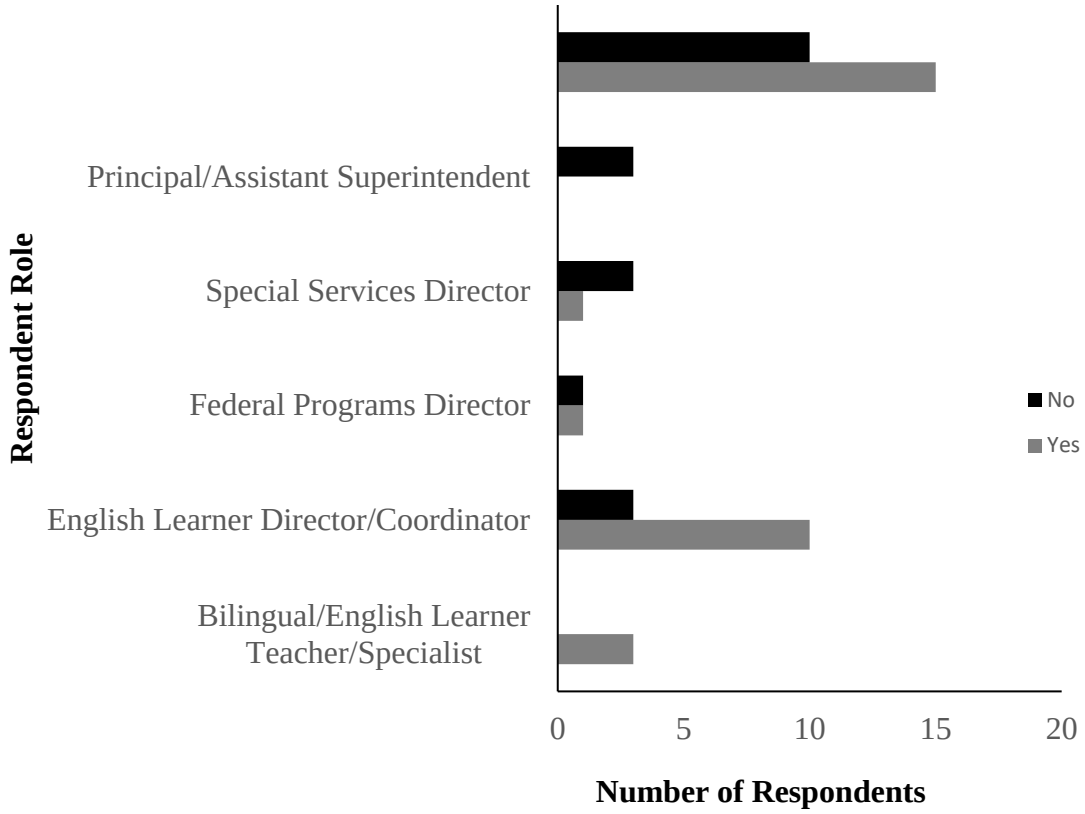

Figure 3. TESOL certification by role. *n* = 26

Survey item three. How many years have you been working in education, including this school year?

The total number of survey responses for item three was 25. The maximum number of years in education was 30 years, and the minimum number of years in education was two years. Of the 25 respondents, eight program directors had been in education for 25 to 30 years. Three respondents had 20 to 24 years of educational experience, eight respondents had 15 to 19 years, and three respondents had 10 to 14 years. Two respondents indicated five to nine years, and two respondents indicated two to four years in education.

Survey item four. How many years have you been working in English learner education, including this school year?

The total number of survey responses for item four was 25. The maximum number of years in English learner education was 23, and the minimum number of years in English learner education was one year. Of the 25 respondents, four had been in English learner education for 20 to 23 years. Four respondents had been in English learner education for 15 to 19 years, five respondents for 10 to 14 years, and five respondents for five to nine years. Four respondents indicated they had been in English learner education for only one to four years.

Survey item five. Approximately when was the last time you received professional development or training specific to the education of English learners?

The total number of survey responses was 25. The percentage of English learner program directors who had received training specific to English learners in the last year was 84.62% (21). Two respondents indicated it had been one to two years, and one respondent indicated it had been two to three years since his last professional development or training specific to the education of English learners. Only one respondent indicated she had never received training specific to English learners.

District programs and policies. There were nine items in part two of the survey. This part of the survey was to learn more about the districts' status regarding serving English learner students. Survey data are depicted in bar graph representations or narrative descriptions.

Survey item one. My district has a district-approved Lau plan on file.

There were 21 respondents, and 15 respondents stated their district had an approved Lau plan on file (71.43%). The remainder of respondents, six (28.57%), indicated they did not have a district-approved Lau plan on file.

Survey item two. My district is K-8, K-12, or Other.

There were 21 respondents. Twenty of the respondents (95.24%) reported their districts as K-12. Only one respondent indicated a K-8 district.

Survey items three and four. Participants were asked to provide their respective district's total student population and total number of English learners. The purpose of this information was to determine the breakdown of high-incidence and low-incidence school districts. The percentage of the English learner population in relation to the total student population was used to determine the districts' classification.

In this study, a high-incidence school district had a total English learner population of 3.18% or higher. A total English learner population less than 3.18% indicated a low-incidence school district. There was a total of 20 respondents to items three and four. In the high-incidence category, 12 districts (60%) reported numbers that indicated an English learner population of 3.18% or greater. In the low-incidence category, eight districts (40%) reported numbers that indicated an English learner population below 3.18%.

Survey item five. Participants were asked to indicate which language was most represented by the English learner population in their districts. There were 20 respondents. Spanish was indicated as the most-represented language for 12 (63%) of the districts. Two respondents indicated Russian as the most-represented language, and one

respondent indicated Bosnian as the most-represented language. One respondent chose "Other," but did not specify which language was the most represented in that district.

Survey item six. Participants were asked to choose the areas in which their districts use the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores (see Figure 4). There were 21 respondents. All 21 respondents indicated scores are distributed to parents. Nineteen respondents (17.12%) indicated scores are placed in student permanent files. Sixteen respondents (14.41%) indicated scores are distributed to mainstream classroom/content teachers and to IEP case carriers. Ten respondents (9.01%) indicated scores are distributed to the building principals and are used by mainstream classroom/content teachers to drive instruction. Eight respondents (7.21%) indicated scores are distributed to the administrative team. Six respondents (5.41%) indicated scores are distributed to a counselor, while only five respondents (4.5%) indicated scores are used by mainstream classroom/content teachers to develop language objectives.

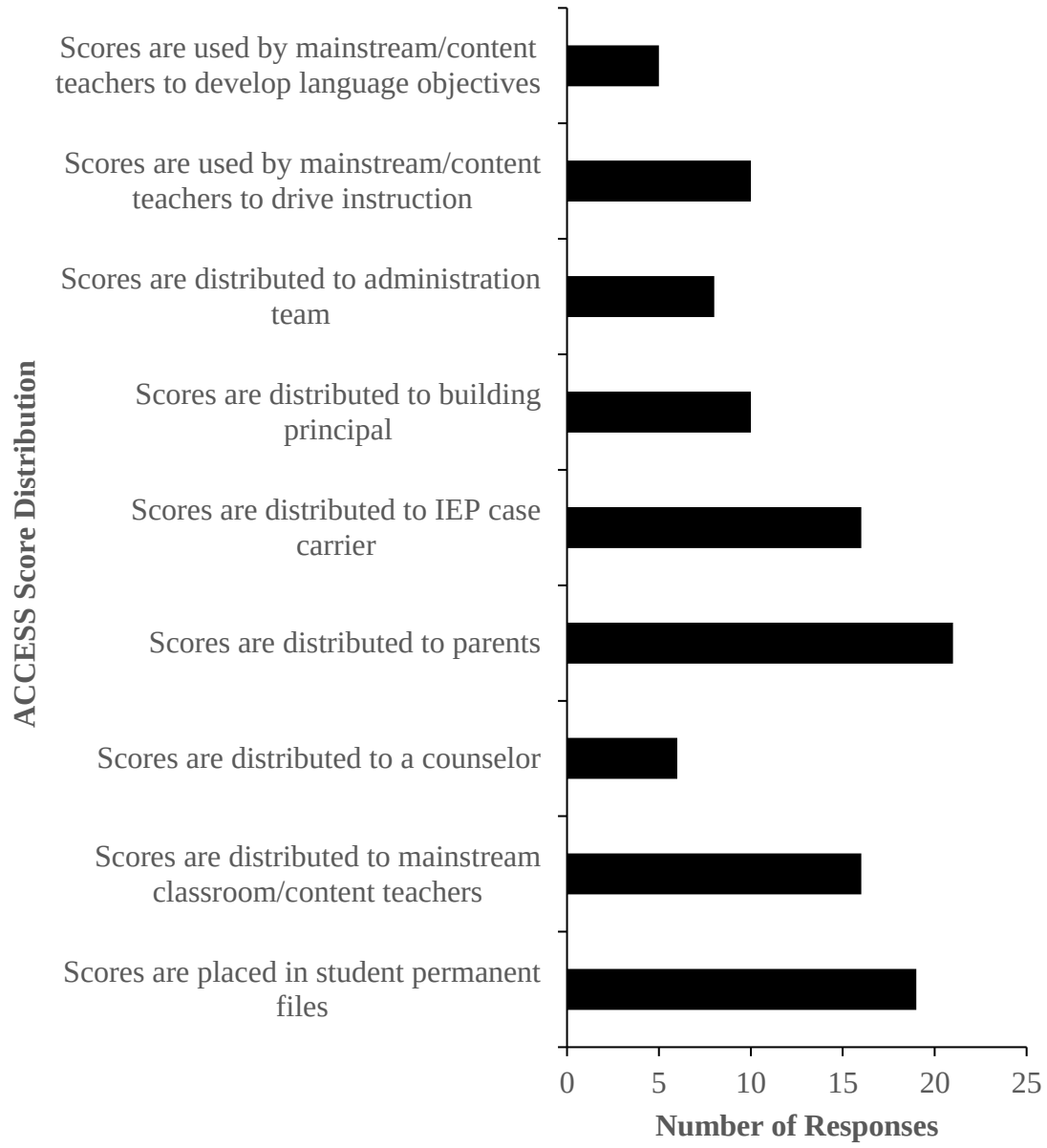

Figure 4. Placement of WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores. *n* = 20.

Survey item seven. Participants were asked to choose from a list what additional sources of data are used to monitor the language and academic progress of English learners (see Figure 5). There were 21 respondents. The prompt was a three-point Likert-type scale (Always, Sometimes, Never) with a fourth option of Not Applicable.

The data source choices included course grades, content assessments, grade-level reading assessments, district benchmark assessments, input from parents, input from classroom teachers, response to intervention (RTI), portfolios, and an open text box to specify "Other." There were no respondents who indicated they used other resources aside from the ones listed in item seven.

In the *Always* category, there were three areas most used by school districts to monitor the language and academic success of English learners. Nineteen respondents (90.48%) indicated they always use district benchmark assessments. Seventeen respondents (80.95%) indicated they always use input from classroom teachers, and 16 respondents (76.19%) indicated they always use grade-level reading assessments.

In the *Sometimes* category, there were three areas most used by school districts to monitor the language and academic success of English learners. Eleven respondents (52.38%) indicated they sometimes use portfolios. Eight respondents (38.10%) indicated they sometimes use input from the classroom teacher, and eight respondents (38.10%) indicated they sometimes use content assessments.

In the *Never* category, there were three areas not used by school districts to monitor the language and academic growth of English learners. Three respondents (14.29%) indicated they never use input from parents. Two respondents (9.52%) indicated they never use portfolios, and one respondent (5%) indicated the district never uses RTI.

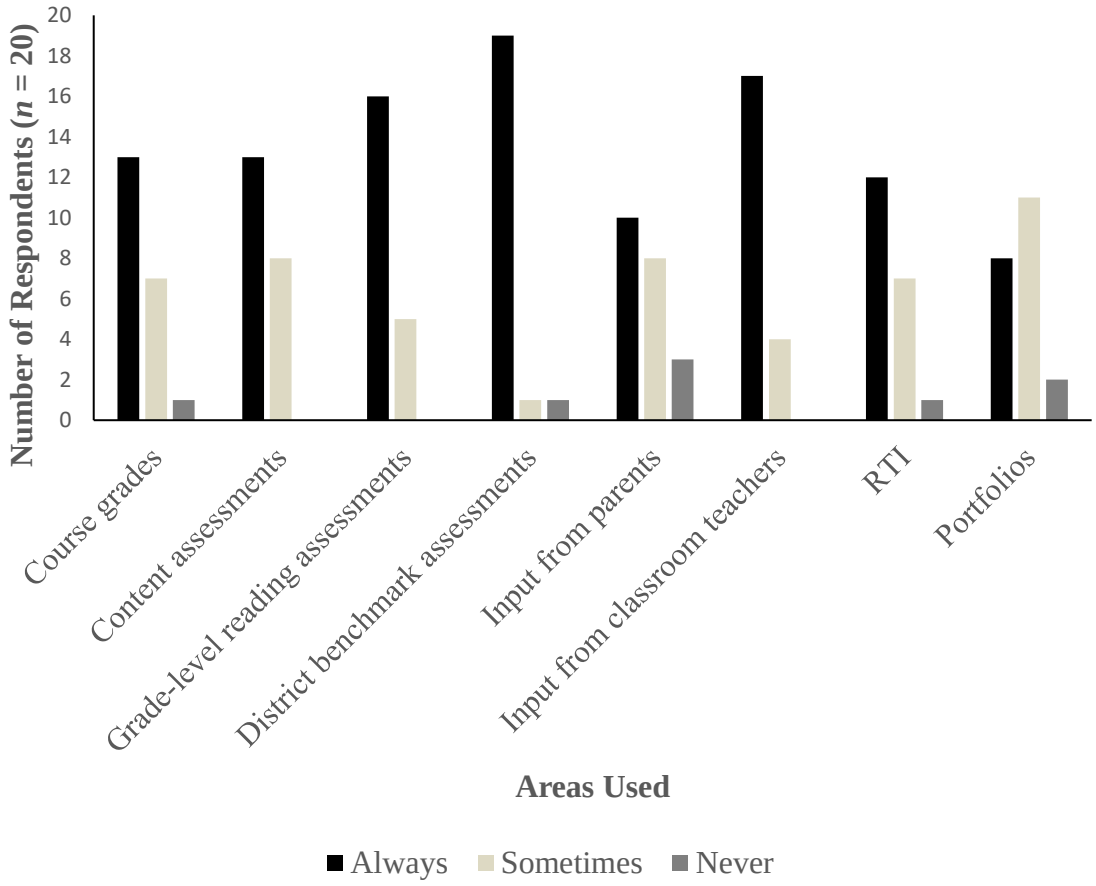

Figure 5. Areas used to monitor growth. *n* = 20.

Survey item eight. Participants were asked to choose all English language development instructional program models used in their districts (see Figure 6). There were 20 respondents. The program models listed included structured English speakers of other languages (ESOL), immersion, content based ESOL, pull-out ESOL, bilingual education, team/co-teaching, sheltered classrooms, resource rooms, newcomer centers, and English language development (ELD) coaching. There was also an option to provide a program model not listed.

The most widely used program model, pull-out ESOL, was chosen by 20 respondents (27.4%). The second most widely used program model, content based ESOL, was chosen by 18 respondents (24.66%). The third most widely used program model, sheltered instruction, was chosen by nine respondents (12.33%). The least-chosen models were resource classrooms (10.96%), team/co-teaching (9.59%), and ELD coaching (5.48%). No respondents indicated a program not listed in the survey.

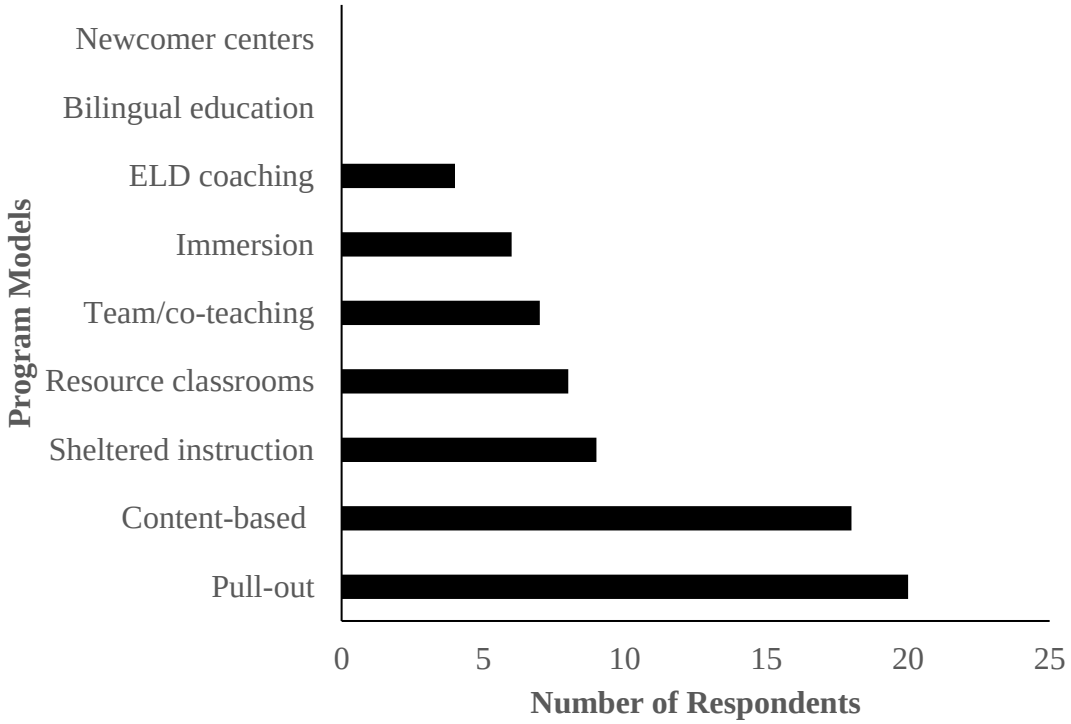

Figure 6. District program models. $n = 20$.

Survey item nine. Participants were asked to indicate the resources used by their districts to support English learners (see Figure 7). There were 20 respondents. The resources to choose from included eBooks, bilingual books, bilingual dictionaries, free online resources, video and audio resources, apps, textbooks adapted for English learner

education or equipped with scaffolds, adaptive learning software, publisher-provided curriculum, other, and none of the above.

Free online resources was chosen by 18 respondents (15.25%). The next most widely chosen resources were Apps with 17 respondents (14.41%) and bilingual dictionaries with 16 respondents (13.56%). Fifteen respondents (12.71%) indicated their district uses video and audio resources. Fourteen respondents (11.86%) indicated their district used bilingual books. Adaptive learning software was chosen by 10 respondents (8.47%), and nine respondents (7.63%) indicated the use of adapted textbooks for English learners. Only eight respondents (6.78%) indicated the use of eBooks, and seven respondents (5.93%) use the publisher-provided curriculum. The category of "other" was chosen by four respondents (3.39%).

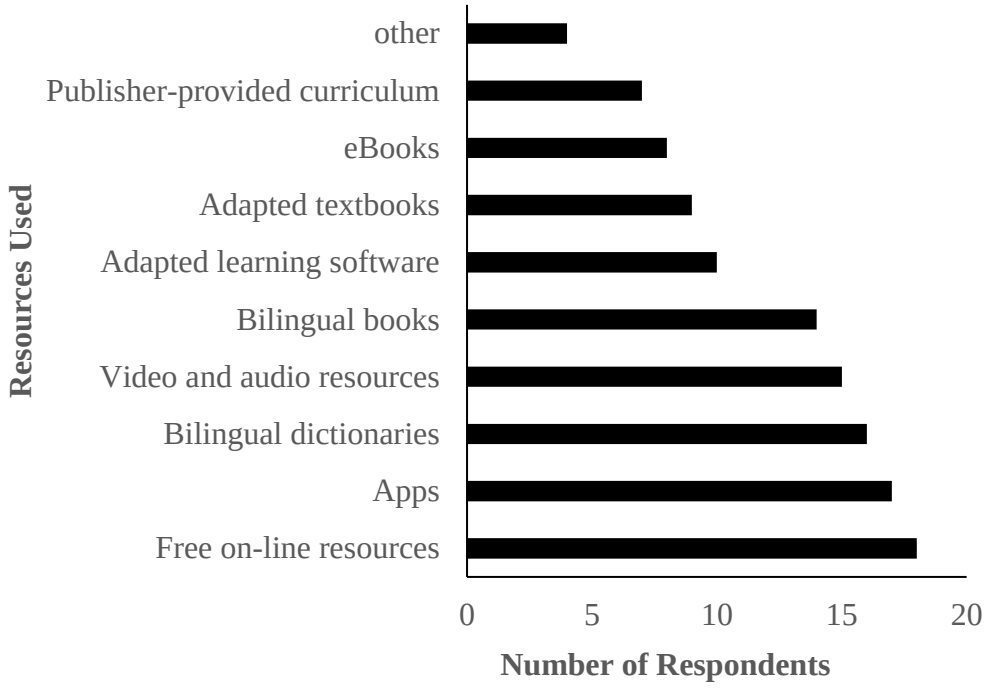

Figure 7. Resources used. $n = 20$.

Training for mainstream classroom teachers. This part of the survey was designed to learn more about support and training for mainstream classroom teachers related to English learners in the classroom. There were four items in this portion of the survey. Survey data are depicted in bar graph or narrative descriptions.

Survey item one. Participants were asked how often professional development is provided for mainstream classroom teachers to support English learner students in the classroom. There were 22 respondents, and six respondents (27.27%) indicated professional development for mainstream classroom teachers to support English learners in the classroom is provided once a year. Two respondents (9.09%) indicated professional development is provided twice a year. Professional development every two to three years was indicated by three respondents (13.64%), and one respondent (4.55%) indicated every four to five years.

Two respondents (9.09%) indicated they did not know when the last professional development was provided. Two respondents indicated no professional development is provided. The "other" category resulted in six responses: 1) Offered twice a year, but many teachers do not participate; 2) Teachers have TESOL/Sped certifications and use ELL strategies in their classroom; 3) Online resources created by our team and coaching are provided; 4) As needed in site-based programs; 5) Random; and 6) Job-embedded, ongoing.

Survey item two. Participants were asked in which research-based strategies mainstream classroom teachers have had training to scaffold instruction for English learners. There were 17 respondents. The use of graphic organizers was indicated by 17 respondents (13.39%). The use of cooperative learning strategies was indicated by 16

respondents (12.60%). Pre-teaching academic vocabulary was indicated by 15 respondents (11.81%). The strategies of introducing new concepts by linking them to what English learners already know; the use of sentence frames; and making lessons auditory, visual, and kinesthetic were each indicated by 13 respondents (10.24%). Determining content and language objectives for each lesson, connecting content to student background knowledge, and modifying vocabulary instruction were each indicated by 11 respondents (10.24%). Providing comprehensible input was indicated by six respondents (4.72%). In the "other" category, one respondent stated teachers had been given overviews of many research-based strategies; however, there had been no trainings that specifically focused on those strategies.

Survey item three. Participants were asked to choose all categories in which mainstream classroom teachers had been trained in their districts (see Figure 8). There were 16 respondents to this item. The most common area of training for mainstream classroom teachers who have English learners in their classroom was scaffolding instruction, with 13 respondents (20.97%). Ten respondents (16.3%) indicated interpreting WIDA ACCESS proficiency scores. Missouri English learner entry and exit criteria and culturally responsive teaching each had nine respondents (14.52%). WIDA English language development was indicated by eight respondents (12.90%), while seven respondents (11.29%) indicated the stages of second language acquisition. Incorporating language objectives with content objectives was indicated by six respondents (9.68%).

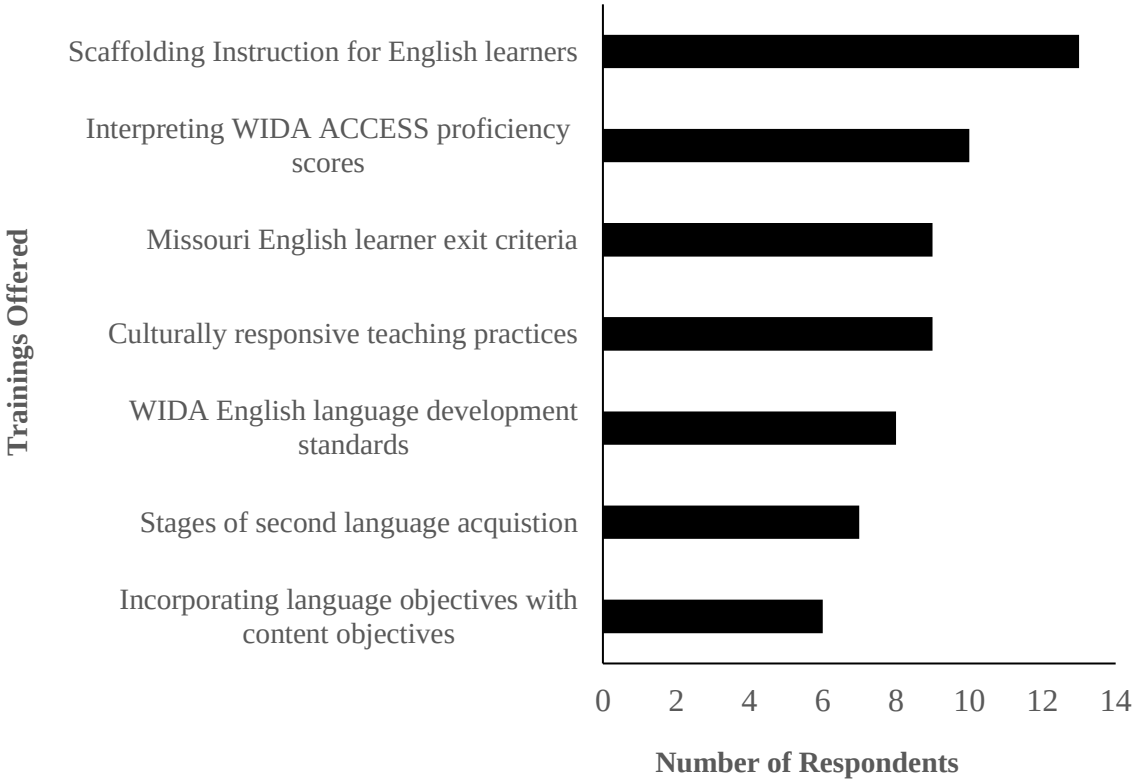

Figure 8. Training for teachers. n = 16.

Survey item four. Participants were asked to describe any support or training they thought would assist in better serving English learners. There were 13 respondents. The overarching theme of all responses was the need for more in-depth professional development for mainstream classroom teachers to support English learners in their classrooms. One respondent answered, "More professional development in learning strategies for general education teachers." Another stated, "More in-depth training, we just skim the surface." One respondent called for "professional development for training teachers to better understand English learners."

Specifically, the requests centered on strategies, culturally responsive teaching, and language objectives. One respondent indicated, "Training to incorporate language

and content objectives." Another specified, "Culturally responsive teaching practices along with secondary education providing accommodations."

Qualitative Data Analysis

Research question three was addressed through interviews with mainstream classroom teachers. The instrument was a 10-question interview protocol. Recorded interviews were conducted via telephone or video conferencing.

The sample for the qualitative portion of the study consisted of nine interview participants. The participants represented mainstream classroom teachers who have English learners in their classrooms. The sample was divided into four strata divided according to grade levels and high- and low-incidence English learner student populations. Three teachers interviewed were from schools in the K-6 high-incidence stratum. Two teachers interviewed were from schools in the K-6 low-incidence stratum. Two teachers interviewed were from schools in the 7-12 high-incidence stratum, and two teachers interviewed were from schools in the 7-12 low-incidence stratum.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed using common themes, words, and phrases to determine similarities and differences in the perceptions of respondents. Codes were assigned to specify stratum (see Table 1).

Table 1

Teacher Respondent Codes

Grade Level	Strata	Respondent	Code
K-6	High	1	KH1
K-6	High	2	KH2
K-6	High	3	KH3
K-6	Low	1	KL1
K-6	Low	2	KL2
7-12	High	1	SH1
7-12	High	2	SH2
7-12	Low	1	SL1
7-12	Low	2	SL2

Teacher interview question one. How has training or professional development supported your teaching in the classroom for English learner students?

Teacher responses indicated various levels and experiences related to professional development. The answers included similar indications that they had not been provided sufficient professional development specifically for English learners. Three respondents expressed their concern that no professional development had been offered. One teacher, KH1, indicated that although she had not received training directly from her district, she was earning TESOL certification through a grant and referred to this coursework as "some of the most valuable training I have received throughout my teaching career." Another teacher, KL1, responded she receives no professional development but initiates her own by "meeting with other teachers" and wondered why her pre-service coursework did not prepare her better for English learners.

Several teachers responded they had received a small amount of professional development. These experiences were most commonly provided by the districts' English learner teachers or coordinators. Commonalities of these experiences included strategies given for vocabulary development, sentence frames, and graphic organizers. Teacher SH1 shared her district had been trained in SIOP, but there had since been no follow-up or refresher training. It was also noted professional development comes in the form of electronic mail with resources to download, but the "responsibility of downloading and printing it off" becomes too time-consuming, and the techniques are not clear.

Two teachers responded they received professional development specifically for teaching English learners. Both participants shared the learning was focused on cultural awareness and was provided by their district English learner coordinator/teacher. Teacher SH2 noted, "The knowledge to understand where my students were coming from and to understand the difference in culture was very valuable to my teaching."

Overall, the categories of high-incidence or low-incidence did not determine the amount of professional development received. The K-6 category indicated less professional development received overall than the 7-12 category. Three teachers in the K-6 category indicated no professional development. Two teachers were from the high-incidence category, and one teacher represented the low-incidence category.

Two teachers in the 7-12 category indicated they had a "little" professional development, including one teacher from the high-incidence category and one teacher from the low-incidence category. Two teachers indicated they felt they received professional development, again including one teacher from the high-incidence category and one teacher from the low-incidence category. Over all four categories, all the teacher

respondents expressed they would like and need more professional development specifically for teaching English learners.

Teacher interview question two. In what ways has the English learner professional development provided by your district changed your understanding of the challenges English learners face in the classroom? Explain, and can you give me two examples?

There were two understandings highlighted. First, respondents described the different way they viewed vocabulary instruction. Teacher KL2 noted she was able to "recognize you need to slow down and offer more than one example for a vocabulary word." Respondent KH3 shared she was more sensitive to "introducing new vocabulary, especially vocabulary with double meaning." Another respondent, KH2, asserted she was now much more aware of "word overload" and learned to chunk her words and sentences.

A second understanding highlighted was cultural awareness. Teacher KH1 explained, "How to communicate with the parents" and knowing "a personal connection over just sending notes home in their home language" was helpful. Teacher SL1 shared, "Specific stories about our students helped to open my eyes" that she had no idea how her actions might be perceived by students from another culture. Teacher KH3 expressed, "Knowing that your students have different language abilities" puts you in a "different mindset."

Another noted understanding of challenges faced by English learners was the grasping of content along with language. Teacher SL1 said professional development gave her "some strategies that could be used with content across all disciplines." Another

teacher, SH2, noted training with the WIDA Can Do Descriptors "gave us a bit of knowledge," but something more "extensive" is needed.

Teacher respondents who had received no professional development responded they tried to work on "discussing strategies with other teachers [who] may have had training" and "making my own flashcards to help with unit vocabulary." Overall, more professional development geared specifically for English learners was desired. Teacher participants valued the support of other teachers who were recipients of English learner professional development.

Teacher interview question three. Which research-based instructional methods or strategies for English learners have been introduced through professional development provided by your district? For example, have you used strategies to activate background knowledge or increase academic language?

The majority of teacher respondents commented on strategies to strengthen vocabulary. There were several instructional scenarios that coupled vocabulary learning with activating background knowledge. Teacher participant KL1 responded, "Something I have found that is working is definitely flashcards with the words on the back and pictures so we can talk about it." This participant also said she tried to "find stories that bring in a lot of vocabulary." Teacher KH2 declared, "We use pictures, movements, and visual cues," while KH1 added, "They incorporate the use of sentence starters and word boxes" in order for the student to "make a link." Teacher KH3 reported using vocabulary grids and squares. She also commented, "I have visuals for things I wouldn't normally have visuals for."

Some strategies employed were derived from WIDA or the SIOP model. Specifically, for KL2, the WIDA Can Do Descriptors were used to "determine what DOK [depth of knowledge] levels they can do on their own and where you can push them and extend to get them to move to the next level in their language development." As a whole, all teacher participants were trying to implement any strategies they had been given and were working on ways to fill in the gaps where they were missing support. For example, teacher SH1 reported working on her TESOL certification, teacher KH2 was using SIOP strategies although there had not been any recent training, and teacher SL2 used Kagan cooperative learning strategies.

Teacher interview question four. Which of these strategies have you implemented in the classroom, and how often do you use them?

Strategies specified most often by participants as being used daily included sentence starters and graphic organizers. Also mentioned were visuals, modeling, and word walls. Teacher KL2 stated she uses sentence starters every day. She also uses "different levels of graphic organizers depending on the level of the student." She gave a specific example of a research project with a newcomer student.

Teacher KH3 asserted she "would not make it through a day without really emphasizing the academic vocabulary." She further indicated she elaborates with pictures and videos. Also noted by this teacher was that she knows she should be doing more and "knows there are strategies that I am not doing."

Teacher SH2 noted speaking and vocabulary are implemented daily in her math class. She shared she "tries to use vocabulary all throughout and to grow their vocabulary and empower them to become more accustomed with the technical language

of math." She also stated she uses a lot of anchor charts. In small groups, she incorporates think-a-louds, modeling, and guided questions.

Teacher SH1 recounted she uses word-building strategies daily. She indicated she tries to activate background knowledge and shared, "We hold a discussion before we read anything." Teacher SL1 reported using word walls all day. She stated she has her English learners add to the word wall as more vocabulary is introduced and "dig into the definitions themselves so they have to prove to her they know them."

Teacher interview question five. What effect do the strategies you use have on the language and educational growth of English learners in your classroom?

All teacher participants indicated seeing growth as a result of using strategies for English learner students in their classrooms. Most respondents described the reduction of stress for English learner students. Additionally, some respondents described academic achievement due to the use of the strategies.

One teacher respondent, KH1, specifically noted the use of sentence starters "takes the pressure off" and "allows them to just state their knowledge." This teacher also commented sentence starters are an effective way to give English learner students an opportunity to use the vocabulary correctly and "become more familiar with the vocabulary." She described taking away the language barrier to "allow what they actually know to shine through."

Teacher KH2 suggested making pictures of schedules and talking about and modeling morning routines eases anxiety of newcomer English learner students. She stated that by helping students feel comfortable with daily routines, they are able to focus more on content. Another teacher respondent, SH1, described spending time at the

beginning of the year with reading strategies. She stated, "Once they learn the ones that really work, I see them put them in place later on."

Teacher respondent SH2 asserted the strategies have "a huge effect." She relayed English learner students who are in the classroom with scaffolding such as hands-on modeling, think-alouds, and immediate feedback are "making better progress and feel more successful." She also noted that when she sees English learner students in classrooms with mostly teacher talk, the "English learner kids just kind of shut down."

Teacher respondent SL1 stated, "The strategies help them to be more comfortable and confident in the classroom," and "if you make it easier for them to follow along, then you know that leads to better comprehension." She also stated when information is hands-on and given to students "in different forms," it helps with absorbing the content. This respondent stated she "has seen the positive effect on their performance."

Teacher interview question six. Have you experienced a time when you implemented strategies for English learners and did not get the desired outcome? Please describe the experience(s).

All teacher responses mentioned experiences when they did not achieve the desired outcome. Teacher respondent KL2 stated, "That's daily life with teaching, you think something is going one way and it ends up going another way." Teacher KH1 described an experience when giving a frame for a report. She stated she thought she had it all organized so the English learner students could write paragraphs. She shared, "I thought I had done this great plan." She soon realized she had "given them everything all at once, and it overwhelmed them." She stated, "[I] learned that I had to back off and just give them a paragraph or a section at a time." She specified the concept of the report

frame was a good strategy for her English learner students, but she just needed to "further chunk it down."

Teacher respondent SH2 shared an experience when she changed buildings in her district. In her previous building, posting academic and language objectives was the norm. In her new building, this was not common practice. She stated it was difficult to integrate language objectives in the co-teaching model. She detailed, "It took several months," and "I was feeling like I was not successful." She described a "barrier between her and the students," and they seemed "really closed off." In the beginning, they did not want to talk and now, "they will talk to each other but no one else." Because of this situation, she spent the entire first quarter incorporating the language objectives with the academic objectives, and eventually, she began to see progress.

Three teacher respondents described experiences where they used a strategy and did not see results. Teacher KH2 described her experience teaching letters and sounds to newcomer English learner students. Although she was using pictures with letters and sounds, she explained, "My newcomers are still struggling to learn the letters and the sounds," and "it seems like they have one part but not quite the other." She further stated, "The hardest part, I think, is we use the strategy a lot, but getting it to click is really hard."

Teacher respondent SH1 described her discouragement that her relationship-building efforts have not produced a positive outcome with one of her English learner students. She acknowledged, "I've built a wonderful relationship with him, but I just cannot get him to show me what he knows." She added, "I've tried to pinpoint him a little bit more and sit down with him, but I'm still not getting a lot of progress."

Teacher respondent SL1 stated she recognizes strategies do not work the same for each student. She declared if a strategy does not work the first time, she will try it again or look for a different strategy. For example, she shared, "Maybe the quick mini-lesson wasn't enough to teach or re-teach something new, so I need to dig a little deeper and pull in some extra supports." She further explained she always feels it is her responsibility, and "If I am not meeting their needs, or I am not doing enough, then I need to just keep working."

One teacher respondent expressed frustration with not having strategies in her toolbox to help English learners. Teacher respondent SL2 admitted she often struggles with "How do you approach a learner when there is a language barrier?" She added, "I just watched him to pick up on cues until he got comfortable asking me questions and asking for help."

Teacher interview question seven. How confident are you in applying the English learner training/professional development you have received in your current teaching role? Please explain.

The confidence level of two teacher respondents was high. Four other teacher respondents described having a modest amount of confidence. The remaining two teacher respondents described feeling little to no confidence when applying professional development for English learners.

Teacher respondents KL2 and SL2 reported feeling "very confident." Respondent KL2 explained she has even led some professional development on federal mandates and program options. She also described developing many of the supports for English learners in conjunction with her district's English learner teacher.

Respondents SH1 and SH2 both said they felt “fairly confident” in applying the strategies they know. However, they both relayed what they know is limited, and having only limited strategies leaves them with a lack of confidence overall. Respondent SH2 said, “I know there’s areas for improvement so I wouldn’t say highly confident, but I know the places I could improve.” Respondent SL1 stated she felt confident “applying what I know;” however, she is “always looking for more.”

Teacher respondent KH1 reported, “There’s still things I have to ask somebody who’s had more experience.” Teacher respondent KH3 was apprehensive and acknowledged, “I know there are a lot of strategies that I am not using that would probably be very helpful for all my students, and I am not confident in the amount of strategies that I am using.” Likewise, teacher respondent SL1 reported feeling “confident in applying what I know, but I need to know more.”

There was a common factor among three teacher respondents who reported little to no confidence. All three respondents reported not receiving any or recent professional development in strategies specifically for English learners. Teacher respondent KH2 stated she had received professional development in the past, but none within the current school year. She asserted, “I would like to have more so I could brush up on skills,” and the lack of professional development has lowered her confidence level.

Similarly, teacher respondent SH1 has had SIOP training in the past, but it has been years since any follow-up training. Teacher respondent KL1 stated she could not even answer this question, because she has had “no training whatsoever.” This lack of training, as she described, left her “not feeling adequately trained.”

Teacher interview question eight. How do you measure or assess the strategies you use to know if they are successful?

All nine teacher respondents reported using some form of formative assessment. While some assessments were observations, others were in the form of feedback, specifically exit slips or conferencing with students. Although general formative assessment techniques were discussed, none of the respondents specified assessment strategies designed to measure the language growth of the English learner student.

Teacher respondent KL1 stated she "can only go off observation" with most of her English learner students, but noted with one in particular, "It's how her writing is improving." Teacher respondents KL2 and SL1 tend to use frequent student conferencing for authentic feedback. Respondent KL2 specified, "Having conversations with them looking at their day-to-day work so you can use it the next day to guide and support them." Respondent SL1 reported using "informal conversations or conferencing with students and kind of asking what they think, do you understand, and what would you like to see happen."

Teacher interview question nine. What other resources are needed to provide equitable access to the content in your classroom for English learners?

Professional development and bilingual materials were mentioned most often by the respondents. Other resources mentioned included more time, smaller class sizes, and more personnel qualified to work with English learners. Additional professional development would help teachers be independent with their knowledge of how to reach English learners. Teacher respondent KL1 stated she feels like professional development should focus on what she "needs to do." She further explained, "It is hard to ask for

resources when I don't know what I am supposed to be doing to help." Teacher KH2 said, "More professional development would definitely be the first step."

Most respondents described bilingual resources as beneficial to their instruction with English learners. Respondent KL1 added she would like bilingual programs for her computer center. She specified, "They will listen to a book online, but that's difficult if they do not understand what's being read to them," and she stressed she "doesn't want to hold them back just because they can't speak English."

Teacher respondent KH1 suggested, "More material in their native language to kind of ease some transitions" and help with "emotional support and culture shock." Teacher respondent KH3 said, "I would really like bilingual books. If I was going to push for something it would be that." Some respondents specifically mentioned English learner support within purchased curriculum. Respondent KL2 noted, "I think that would be really helpful for general classroom teachers that are not receiving English learner services."

Having more time was viewed as a needed resource. Teacher respondent KH2 wanted more small group time. Teacher respondent SH1 explained, "I think they need more time because they are capable." Similarly, teachers mentioned needing more personnel so English learner students have more learning time. Specifically, respondent SH2 felt smaller class sizes would give English learner students the extra time they need.

Respondent SH1 indicated, "We could use more English learner support in the classrooms like paraprofessionals who were actually specific for English learners." She also expressed the need for more presence in the building by the district English learner

teacher. Respondent SL1 suggested more time with the English learner teacher to meet content teachers' needs.

Teacher interview question 10. Is there anything you would like to discuss that I did not ask?

Four participants responded to this question. Consistent with previous questions, the majority of the elaboration was centered on professional development, materials, and English learner teacher overload. Teacher respondent KL2 shared her district employs a hybrid model of co-teaching and pull-out. She stated she "has found that co-teaching is really beneficial." She described that she has acquired most of her learning in a co-teaching setting. She further noted this is the best form of professional development for her, because in co-teaching situations, "I can learn right there from someone who is a specialist and understands how to support English learners."

Teacher respondent KH1 described what she feels is a lack of service to the English learner students in her district. She explained, "I have one English learner instructor for five or six buildings, and she sees about 100 kids." She also noted there are barriers due to the lack of bilingual staff.

Teacher respondent KH2 described that for the demographic of her district, they "probably need more professional development to help us with them." She also added that due to her district's high English learner population, there is an English learner teacher per grade level. However, she expressed it does not help if the classroom teachers "do not know what to do."

Teacher respondent SL2 reiterated the fact she would like more strategies to employ in the classroom. She explained, "It's hard when you do not have support," and

she would even appreciate some online resources. She also confirmed curriculum with included supports and resources for English learners would be helpful and further suggested textbook companies should include more "resources that come with aides or tools you can modify."

Themes

In the initial qualitative analysis, the transcripts from the interview participants were coded. As codes were finalized and reviewed, two predominate themes emerged. First, the desire for support in the instruction of English learners was present with all teacher participants. The participants engaged in an abundance of vocabulary strategies; however, there seemed to still remain some confusion on the application of other strategies. Second, there was an absence of understanding by the mainstream classroom teachers on the role of the English learner teachers in their districts. Each of these themes is discussed independently but together provide a deeper awareness of the perceptions of mainstream classroom teachers and their instructional needs for English learner students.

The desire for professional development. Woven throughout all of the answers to the interview questions was the desire for professional development, specifically for teaching English learners. Although the professional development experiences varied, the respondents expressed they did not feel adequately prepared. Each participant discussed some aspect of how they feel their training to support English learners in the classroom is lacking.

Teacher respondents perceived professional development was not to the depth they desired to serve English learners in the classroom. Teacher respondent KL1 did not feel "adequately trained," and teacher respondent SL2 called her professional

development “one meeting.” Respondent KH2 stated, “We have had no professional development this year.”

The need for more support through professional development was expressed by the respondents. Teacher respondent SH1 shared that in the past her district offered SIOP training, but there has been no follow-up. She explained it was a “huge help,” but “it would be helpful to hear it more than once.” Teacher respondent SH2 explained although she has had some training, she would like more “knowledge to understand where her students are coming from.”

Other responses about professional development were positive because strategies were introduced, but respondents also noted follow-up support was needed. For example, many respondents commented on vocabulary strategies or graphic organizers used. What was reported as lacking was follow-up support when such strategies are not perceived as effective. Teacher respondent SL1 added she would appreciate “strategies that could be used in different ways to approach our students not necessarily in the content but across all disciplines.”

Many respondents felt they were left to their own investigations on instructional strategies that would help English learners. Teacher respondent SH1 explained, “I seek out a lot of different strategies myself.” Vocabulary development and support was the most-requested need for supportive strategies. Teacher respondent SH2 said, “I think we need a lot of strategies with how to increase academic vocabulary,” but “I think they all just run together.” Teacher respondents SL2 and KL1 reported making their own flashcards to support vocabulary development, and respondent SL2 added, “It’s kinda hard when you are in there by yourself with no support.”

The role of the district English learner teacher. The role the district English language teacher fulfills, along with the knowledge base that accompanies this role, was not clear for most interview respondents. Most respondents did not know how to address the title or position of the English learner teacher/coordinator. The expertise of the district English learner teacher/coordinator was also misunderstood among the interview respondents. Acknowledgment of the heavy workload of the district English learner teacher/coordinator was consistent across the interviews.

All districts represented by interview teacher respondents employed a certified English learner teacher or coordinator. The purpose or designation of this role was not communicated by the interview participants. Teacher interview participant KL1 described, "We have, I don't even know, I would say kind of a K-12 EL lady." Another respondent described, "I think we have an instructional coach in our EL division, [and] we have a special education teacher who knows English learners." Also frequently referenced was "the person in charge of our ELs."

The capabilities of the district English learner teacher/coordinator as a primary professional development source were not widely recognized. Teacher respondent KH3 stated, "I feel like I could get more from people who are actually trained to do the professional development." Similarly, respondent KH2 stated of the English learner teacher, "She's been kind of unofficial professional development." Other respondents referred to training received by their district English learner teacher/coordinator as "meetings." Respondent SL1 stated her district could use "a specialist in this area."

Most interview respondents were cognizant of the workload bestowed on the district English learner teacher/coordinator. Teacher SH1 noted, "She's kind of

overwhelmed," while respondent KL1 described the English learner teacher/coordinator as "having too much on her plate" and "pulled in a lot of directions." Teacher respondent SH1 admitted her district should hire an additional English learner teacher and described the current teacher as being "spread too thin." Teacher respondent SL1 said, "There is only one of her and a lot of us teachers." Teacher respondent KH1 described further by explaining, "We have one ELL instructor for a five/six building, and she sees anywhere from about 100 kids."

Summary

The analysis of the data in Chapter Four was organized in two parts. First, quantitative survey data were described. The quantitative instrument was a survey developed to answer research questions one and two. The results of the survey data were presented in tables, percentages, and narrative form.

Qualitative analysis was the presented. The qualitative instrument of the study was a 10-question interview protocol. Mainstream classroom teachers who have English learners in their classrooms were interviewed for the purpose of answering research question three. Results of the individual interviews were described, and two emerging themes were addressed. The summary results of this study are presented in Chapter Five. Each of the three research questions is discussed and aligned in accordance with applicable literature. Chapter Five concludes with implications and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Students whose first language is not English are the most rapidly growing student population in the United States (NCES, 2018). Meeting the language and educational needs of the diversity within the English learner population is putting strain on districts nationwide (McGraw Hill Education, 2017; USDOE, OELA, 2017a). Currently in Missouri, the student load for English learner teachers exceeds the recommended teacher-to-student ratio (MODESE, 2018d). Due to this phenomena, mainstream classroom teachers are at the helm of quality instruction for English learners (Brisk & Kaveh, 2019). Therefore, the integration of professional development for mainstream classroom teachers in strategies specifically for English learners is needed (Coady, Harper, & De Jong, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to obtain information from English learner program directors about English learner program practices in Missouri public and charter school districts. In the U.S., effective educational plans for English learners are the responsibility of state and local agencies (Sugarman, 2018). In addition, mainstream classroom teachers from schools with high and low incidence of English learner students were interviewed to gather their perceived level of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom. According to current research, English learners respond to effective instructional practices (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016).

To establish a comprehensive understanding of English learner programs and practices, a mixed-methods design was used (Creswell, 2014). Through the use of quantitative analysis, programs and practices of English learner programs were examined.

A survey instrument was used to collect responses from English learner program directors. Graphs, percentages, and narratives were used to present the survey responses.

A review of mainstream classroom teachers' perceptions of strategies for English learners and their effectiveness comprised the qualitative phase of the study. An interview protocol was used to collect perceptions and practices from mainstream classroom teachers in high- and low-incidence Missouri charter and public schools. The interviews were coded, and two predominant themes emerged (Creswell & Poth, 2017)

Chapter Five begins with a review of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. The chapter continues with a discussion of the conclusions supported by the current literature presented in Chapter Two. Additionally, implications for practice and recommendations for future research are provided. The chapter concludes with a final summarization.

Findings

Results of the findings of the mixed-methods study were presented in Chapter Four. Discussion of those findings is presented in the subsequent section. The discussion is organized in order of the research questions. Research questions one and two were quantitative, and research question three was qualitative.

Findings from the quantitative data analysis. Research questions one and two guided the quantitative portion of the study.

Research question one. How are school districts supporting English learners as reported in the following areas: regulatory policies, instructional program models, professional development, and instructional strategies in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri?

Research question two. How do supports vary in programs and instructional strategies for English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri as reported by English learner program directors?

Survey part one. This section of the survey was designed to learn more about the English learner program directors' role in the district. This part of the survey contained five items. The objective for this section was to determine if there was a difference between the qualifications and experience of the English learner program directors in high-incidence and low-incidence school districts, and later to determine if this has any bearing on the amount of professional development and support for English learners.

This section of the survey had 25 English learning program director respondents. Thirteen (52%) program directors were from high-incidence school districts. Of the high-incidence school districts, eight program directors (61.54%) were TESOL-certified. There were five (38.46%) program directors from high-incidence school districts who were not TESOL-certified.

Six (46.15%) TESOL-certified program directors indicated it had been less than one year since they had received professional development or training specific to the education of English learners. The remaining two TESOL-certified program directors from high-incidence school districts reported one to two years (12.5%) and two to three years (12.5%) since their last professional development or training specific to English learners.

Five (38.46%) program directors from high-incidence school districts indicated they were not TESOL-certified. Four of these program directors (80%) indicated it had been less than one year since they had received professional development or training

specific to English learners. One (20%) non-TESOL certified program director indicated she had never received professional development or training specific to English learners.

There was a total of 11 (44%) English learner program directors from low-incidence school districts. Seven (63.4%) English learner program directors were TESOL-certified. The remaining four (36.36%) English learner program directors were not TESOL-certified.

All seven (100%) low-incidence school district program directors with a TESOL certification indicated it been less than one year since their last professional development or training specific to English learners. Three (75%) of the non-TESOL certified program directors from low-incidence school districts indicated it had been less than one year since their last professional development or training specific for English learners. It had been one to two years since the one (25%) remaining non-TESOL certified program director had received training.

School districts face challenges when trying to implement effective programs and practices for English learners (Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2018). The findings revealed districts with a low-incidence population of English learners are not inept at securing qualified or certified personnel in the role of English learner program director. The findings also revealed that in only 36% of school districts surveyed, decisions about English learners and English learner programs are being made by program directors who have no TESOL certification. However, the findings also revealed that even though not all program directors are TESOL-certified, they are receiving professional development or training specific to English learners.

Survey part two. This portion of the survey was designed to learn more about the school districts' status regarding serving English learners. This part of the survey contained nine items. Three of the prompts were designed to determine if the English learner program director respondent was from a high- or low-incidence school district and what grade levels were served. The remainder of the prompts were designed to gain information about districts' regulatory policies, instructional program models, professional development, and instructional strategies.

In this portion of the survey, there were only 20 English learner program director respondents. Eleven (55%) English learner program directors represented high-incidence school districts. Nine (45%) English learner program director respondents represented low-incidence school districts. The data collected indicated Spanish was the most widely spoken language in all districts in all but one low-incidence school district. This remaining district reported Bosnian as the top language of the English learner population.

The program directors were asked if their districts had a board-approved Lau plan. According to Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a Lau plan is required of public and nonpublic accredited school districts (MODESE, 2018a). Lau plans were reported in place by seven (63.64%) of the high-incidence school district program directors. Four (36.36%) high-incidence program directors reported their districts did not have a Lau plan.

In low-incidence school districts, seven (77.8%) English learner program director respondents reported they had a Lau plan. Only two (22.22%) program directors reported their districts did not have a Lau plan. Regardless of the number of English learner students enrolled in a district, the law requires districts to have a Lau plan to ensure

specific language and instructional requirements are in place for English learners (MODESE, 2018a).

Program directors were asked if WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores were used in specific areas. The respondents could choose all that applied. There were 11 program director respondents from high-incidence school districts and nine from low-incidence school districts for this prompt. All program directors (100%) from high- and low-incidence school districts reported distributing WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores to parents.

Current WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores should be placed in student permanent files (MODESE, 2018c). Ten (91%) program directors from high-incidence school districts reported placing WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores in student permanent files. Eight (89%) from low-incidence school districts reported permanent file placement of WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores.

The purpose of WIDA (2019) is to work with content standards and to support and boost teaching and lesson development for English language learners. Nine (82%) high-incidence program director respondents indicated WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores are distributed to mainstream classroom teachers. Seven (78%) low-incidence directors reported distributing the scores to classroom teachers.

Nine (82%) program directors from high-incidence school districts reported distributing WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores to mainstream classroom teachers. Five (42%) program directors from high-incidence school districts reported their mainstream classroom teachers use WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores to drive instruction. Four (36%) further indicated mainstream classroom teachers used scores to develop language objectives.

Program directors from low-incidence school districts reported similar use of WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores. Four (44%) program directors indicated scores were used by mainstream classroom teachers to drive instruction. Three program directors (27%) indicated scores were used by mainstream classroom teachers to develop language objectives.

Of the nine high-incidence program directors who said scores were distributed to mainstream classroom teachers, only two (22%) indicated teachers use those scores to drive instruction and develop language objectives. Three directors (33%) indicated the scores were used to drive instruction but did not indicate scores were used to develop language objectives. One director (11%) indicated scores were used to develop language objectives but did not indicate they were used to drive instruction.

Seven (78%) program directors from low-incidence school districts indicated WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores were delivered to mainstream classroom teachers. Two (29%) indicated the scores were used to drive instruction and develop language objectives. Only one (14%) indicated scores were only used to drive instruction.

Another shared frequent use of WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores was the distribution to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) case carriers. The prompt specified to mark only if the English learner student had an IEP. Nine (82%) program directors from high-incidence school districts reported this distribution. Seven (78%) program directors from low-incidence school districts reported distributing scores to IEP case carriers.

In addition to WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores, program directors were asked to rate how they monitor the language and academic progress of English learners. Nine (82%) English learner program directors from high-incidence school districts indicated they

always use district benchmark assessments and input from classroom teachers. Eight indicted their districts always use grade-level reading assessments.

District benchmark assessments were always used by all nine (100%) program directors from low-incidence school districts. Eight (89%) indicated they always use input from classroom teachers. Grade level assessments were indicated as always used by seven (78%) program directors from low-incidence school districts.

Portfolios are a valuable tool in providing assessment and progress monitoring for English learner students (Mahoney, 2017). Portfolios provide teachers background on students and a continuous picture of student progress (Gottlieb, 2016). Depending on school or district requirements, portfolios can include performance-based assessments (Renwick, 2017). Five (45%) program directors from high-incidence school districts indicated they always use portfolios. Three (33%) of the low-incidence school districts indicated always with the use of portfolios.

The program directors were to choose which English learner instructional models they use from a list of MODESE (2018a) English language development instructional models. All 20 of the program directors indicated their districts use a pull-out program model. The second most-chosen program model was content-based instruction. Only two districts (10%) indicated they did not use this program model. Both of these districts were high-incidence populations.

Resource classrooms were used by a total of seven (35%) districts. Four (57.14%) of the districts were high-incidence, and three (42.86%) were low-incidence school districts. Another program indicated by both high- and low-incidence districts was team/co-teaching. A total of five (25%) districts reported using this model. Four

(36.36%) high-incidence school districts reported using this model, whereas only one (11.11%) low-incidence district reported using team/co-teaching.

Structured English speakers of other languages (ESOL) was a shared program model of both high- and low-incidence school districts. Out of the 20 program director responses, there was a total of five (25%) districts who indicated this model. Three (15%) were from high-incidence school districts, and two (10%) were from low-incidence school districts.

English language development coaching was also a model indicated by both high- and low-incidence school districts. Three (15%) program directors reported using this model. One (33.33%) was indicated by a high-incidence school district, and two (66.67%) were low-incidence school district respondents.

Sheltered instruction was only indicated by three (15%) of the 20 respondents. All three were from high-incidence school districts. In essence, both high- and low-incidence school districts implement a variety of program models to meet the needs of their English learners.

The final item in part two of the survey asked program directors to choose what resources their districts use to support English learner education. For the high-incidence school districts, free online resources and apps were chosen the most. Nine (82%) indicated use in their districts. Next, the use of bilingual books and video audio resources were indicated by seven (64%) of the high-incidence program directors. Overall, technology resources comprised 36 (37%) of the total choices indicated.

Low-incidence school districts indicated the use of bilingual books and free online resources most frequently. Each was indicated by six (67%) program directors as

supportive of English learners. Five (56%) indicated the use of video and audio resources, and four (44%) indicated the use of apps. Overall, technology resources comprised 53% of all resources indicated by program directors representing low-incidence schools.

Survey part three. This portion of the survey was designed to learn more about support and training for mainstream classroom teachers in relation to English learners in their classrooms. There were four items. The final item was a question with an open-ended format.

The first prompt asked how often mainstream classroom teachers receive professional development to support English learner students. Two (18%) stated professional development was provided twice a year. Three (27%) of the program directors from high-incidence school districts indicated this occurs once a year. Two (18%) indicated every two to three years, and two (18%) indicated no professional development is provided. One (1%) program director chose the option *I do not know*. There was the option of other, which was indicated by one program director. This director stated that the occurrence of professional development was "random."

Two (22%) low-incidence program directors indicated professional development for mainstream classroom teachers to support English learners occurs once a year. One (1%) indicated *Every 2-3 years*, one (1%) indicated *Every 4-5 years*, and one (1%) indicated *I do not know*.

Four program directors from low-incidence school districts chose the other category. One stated, "Twice per year, but many don't participate." Another reported,

"Job-embedded, ongoing," while another stated, "Online resources and coaching." One respondent noted frequency "as needed in site-based programs."

Findings from the qualitative data analysis. Research question three guided the qualitative phase of the study.

Research question three. How do mainstream classroom teachers perceive teaching practices promoted to support English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts?

Ten questions were developed and utilized for the interviews. There were two main objectives with these research questions. One objective was to gain knowledge about how mainstream classroom teachers perceive professional development, specifically for English learners, improves instruction. The second objective was to gain knowledge about what English learner strategies the teachers deemed the most valuable.

School districts face the increasing challenge of supporting the linguistic and academic challenges of students whose first language is not English (USDOE, OELA, 2017a). After analyzing the interview data in Chapter Four, the findings revealed common themes.

Interview question number one. How has training or professional development supported your teaching in the classroom for English learner students?

When comparing the responses between teachers from high- and low-incidence school districts, there was only a slight difference in responses. Of the nine participants, a total of eight (90%) reported some type of professional development. There was no noted dissimilarity between K-6 and 7-12 mainstream classroom teacher responses.

All five of the teachers from high-incidence school districts reported professional development has, in some way, supported their instruction in the classroom for English learners. There was no distinct variance between responses from K-6 and 7-12 classroom teachers. Only one teacher from K-6 and the 7-12 categories reported feeling adequately supported.

One teacher from a K-6 high-incidence school district reported the district does provide professional development to support instruction for English learners. However, the professional development was paid through a grant from the MODESE and was not offered to all classroom teachers. The second K-6 teacher stated she had no training this current year, but past training and working with the English learner teacher provided support. The third teacher in K-6 category perceived a lack of support.

Two of the interview participants represented 7-12 high-incidence school districts. One teacher described previous training in SIOP but confessed it had been "years" and felt that since no follow-up training had been offered, her instruction could use more support. The second participant in this category reported her training offered a multitude of strategies to support instruction.

There were four interview participants in the low-incidence school district category. In K-6 low-incidence school districts, one teacher reported professional development to support English learners made an impact on her instruction. The remaining K-6 teacher reported she felt she received no training or professional development.

The two 7-12 low-incidence teacher participants each reported receiving some professional development. One teacher perceived her training as strong and supportive of

her instruction. The remaining teacher in this category reported she had one training that to her seemed more like a "meeting," and she felt it did not support her instruction.

Interview question number two. In what ways has the English learner professional development provided by your district changed your understanding of the challenges English learners face in the classroom? Explain, and can you give me two examples?

The disparity in the types of professional development provided impacted the results. Similarly, the amount of professional development received impacted the number of examples provided. In the high-incidence K-6 category, one teacher commented communication to parents was now something to which she pays close attention. She noted realizing parents of English learner students need a more personal means of communication. A second teacher in this category noted she is now aware of "word overload." The third teacher in this category perceived she needs to constantly be in a "different mindset" when instructing students whose first language is not English.

In the high-incidence 7-12 category, one teacher respondent stated her past SIOP training left her knowing she has to constantly work on finding strategies that work for her students. The second teacher in this category mentioned the awareness of the WIDA Can Do's and their use to support instruction.

In the low-incidence K-6 category, two teachers responded to the question. One teacher participant noted one understanding was her ability to be culturally sensitive. A second K-6 teacher reported the main challenge was the need for vocabulary support for her English learners.

In the low-incidence 7-12 category, both teachers responded. One teacher shared the English learner teacher in her district provided training on cultural sensitivity. The teacher stated it made her more aware of how to approach her students. The second low-incidence 7-12 teacher was unable to provide an answer.

Interview question number three. Which research-based instructional methods or strategies for English learners have been introduced in professional development provided by your district?

The high-incidence K-6 teacher participants all described learning about strategies to support vocabulary development. Specific strategies mentioned were sentence frames, visual cues, and vocabulary grids. The 7-12 teacher participants similarly reported learning strategies to support vocabulary development. Both 7-12 teachers added they could not name them specifically and described a lack of training from their district in specific strategies.

Similarly, the low-incidence K-6 teachers noted vocabulary strategies. The first teacher in this category described creating her own support of flash cards with words and visuals. The second teacher in this category reported the WIDA Can Do Descriptors guided her depths of knowledge questioning in the classroom.

The two low-incidence 7-12 teachers mentioned vocabulary supportive strategies. One teacher in this category reported using word walls and labeling the classroom with words and visuals. The second teacher described using flashcards to support vocabulary and pre-teaching vocabulary before lessons. She also reported Kagan strategies worked well to support her instruction for English learners.

Interview question number four. Which of these strategies have you implemented in the classroom, and how often do you use them?

This question served as a continuation of the previous question; therefore, teacher interview responses were consistent and similar. The strategies used did not differ according to grade levels served. Likewise, the identification of high- or low-incidence school had no impact on strategies used in the classroom. The only factor that impacted the use of strategies was the perceived level of training or support from the residing district. All teachers reported using strategies daily for English learners whether they were learned from district-provided training or sought through their own methods.

Consistently all teacher participants mentioned daily use of strategies to support vocabulary development. Specifically, there were several strategies mentioned most often. Of the nine total teacher participants, six (67%) described the implementation of visuals to support academic vocabulary. Four (44%) described building background knowledge to support vocabulary development. Three (33%) described the daily implementation of sentence starters and graphic organizers as vocabulary supports. Two (22%) said they supported vocabulary with modeling. One teacher reported using word walls, and one said she uses mini lessons daily.

Interview question number five. What effect do the strategies you use have on the language and educational growth of the English learners in your classroom?

All nine teacher participants described positive language and educational growth of English learner students resulting from the use of English learner strategies. There was no contrariety in responses among the four strata with the exception that the teachers in the high-incidence category were lengthier and more specific in their responses.

All teacher interview responses revealed the use of strategies for English learners to support instruction was instrumental in reducing stress in the classroom. It was ascertained this reduction of stress leads to greater language and academic gains. For example, one teacher specified the use of sentence starters eliminated the stress of struggling on how to start their thoughts. Additionally, working in small peer groups was noted as having an effect on increased conversations in the classroom with peers.

Visuals with repetition and drawing of pictures were credited for providing a wider understanding of topics. Hands-on experiences with teacher modeling were mentioned to have increased student achievement. Also noted as a method of scaffolding was the adjustment of graphic organizers. Teachers commented that by adding more text, sentence frames, or pictures, they could add support that aligned with the students' proficiency levels.

Interview question number six. Have you experienced a time when you implemented strategies for English learner students and did not get the desired outcome?

All nine teacher participants reported this was a common occurrence. There was no significant variance between high- and low-incidence districts or K-6 or 7-12 teacher responses. Most teachers (90%) specifically indicated they would like to have more strategies at their disposal to implement when they see what they are using is not working. One teacher shared when this happens, she focuses on strengthening the relationship with the student. Four teachers noted they feel they may not be implementing the strategies with fidelity.

Interview question number seven. How confident are you in applying the English learner training/professional development you have received in your current teaching role?

Two (22%) said they only felt "fairly" confident. Six (67%) teachers explained they felt very confident in the strategies they knew, but added they desired more knowledge to support English learners. One teacher did not feel confident since she had received no professional development.

Interview question number eight. How do you measure or assess the strategies you use to know if they are successful?

All nine teacher respondents described a type of formative assessment. Only one high-incidence 7-12 participant responded specifically about tracking academic and language growth. Teacher participants shared there was no single avenue for assessment. Formative assessment responses came in a variety of observations, exit slips, quick checks, and verbal feedback from students. One teacher shared she depends on her English learners' daily writing to gauge progress.

Interview question number nine. What other resources are needed to provide equitable access for English learners to the content in your classroom?

There was no exceptionality between high- and low-incidence teacher responses. There was a slight variation between the responses from teachers who represented the K-6 and 7-12 categories. A total of six teachers mentioned having more bilingual resources would help to provide equitable access. Specifically, four of the five K-6 teachers representing both high- and low-incidence school districts requested more bilingual materials. Two 7-12 teachers representing the low-incidence category requested more

bilingual resources. All nine K-6 teachers stressed the need for more training specifically for the English learners in their classrooms.

All four 7-12 teachers stated the need for additional time and personnel. The emphasis was on the need for paraprofessionals in their classrooms. All four 7-12 teachers also indicated the need for more English learner teachers in their districts.

Interview question number 10. Is there anything you would like to discuss that I did not ask?

Only four teachers responded to this question. Two respondents were from high-incidence districts, and two were from low-incidence school districts. The strata category did not seem to have an impact on the variance of responses. Of the two high-incidence participant responses, one teacher took the opportunity to reiterate that her district English learner teacher is overwhelmed. She reported the English learner teacher in her district faced an insurmountable task serving a large number of English learner students in multiple buildings. In contrast, the other high-incidence teacher participant used this opportunity to express her gratitude that her district had one English learner teacher per grade level.

One teacher from a low-incidence district shared her best experience in learning to support English learners in her classroom came from some co-teaching lessons with the district English learner teacher. She explained it helped her see where and how to monitor and adjust when the English learner teacher was not there. A second low-incidence teacher respondent commented she would like to have more training and an arsenal of strategies to implement in her classroom for English learners. Another K-6

teacher from a high-incidence district reported she was grateful her district had one English learner teacher per grade level.

Conclusions

In this section, research conclusions are discussed and compared with the literature in Chapter Two. A convergent mixed-methods design was implemented for this study. In a convergent design, the researcher orchestrates simultaneous quantitative and qualitative data collection with individualistic focus, but a final convergence of data results for a more comprehensive understanding of that which is being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015). Conclusions are categorized with the research questions; however, some results are connected to present a more complete perspective.

Research question one. How are school districts supporting English learners as reported in the following areas: regulatory policies, instructional program models, professional development, and instructional strategies in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri?

There was no significant variance found between high- and low-incidence school districts. First, conclusions are discussed in relation to district regulatory policies. Second, the instructional program models are addressed. Finally, the effect of professional development on instructional strategies is described.

Regulatory policies. A whole-school approach yields the most success when addressing the academic needs of English learners (Calderón & Slakk, 2018). Not all program directors were TESOL certified. The TESOL certification reinforces the understanding of second language acquisition and its role in the academic achievement of English learners (Mozayan, 2015; Zwiers & Soto, 2017).

The findings reveal districts with a higher population of English learners did not necessarily provide higher quality services for English learner students, nor were they more consistent in upholding policy. Hence, the percentage of English learner students does not seem to affect the challenges of the regulatory obligations outlined by *Lau v. Nichols* to sustain relevant services (USDOE, 2016a). A district Lau plan serves as a handbook for policy and procedures to ensure guidelines are in place and understood by all stakeholders (MODESE, 2018a; USDOE, 2016; USDOE, OESE, 2017).

Consideration for English learners receiving the same academic standards and opportunities are articulated in state and federal law (MODESE, 2018a). Adopted by Missouri as the English language proficiency assessment, WIDA's ACCESS for ELLS meets the ESSA requirement to assess English learners annually (MODESE, 2018a, 2018b). Although a high percentage of program directors indicated WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores were distributed to mainstream classroom teachers, a small percentage indicated they were additionally used for instruction and development of language objectives. Less than half (45%) distributed scores to building principals and administration.

Results point to the possibility of over-identification of English learners with disabilities. A high percentage (80%) indicated scores were distributed to IEP case carriers. The question guided respondents to answer only if they had English learners with IEPs. Zacarian (2011) identified a trend of over-identification of English learners with disabilities. Other researchers pointed to a disproportional number of English learners incorrectly identified as having learning disabilities due to a misunderstanding of the language development process (DeMatthews, Edwards, & Nelson, 2014). Ineffective

instruction or English language development programs may be contributing factors to over-identification (MODESE, 2019b).

Instructional programs. Policies and procedures include a district's decisions on appropriate program models to deliver equitable education to English learners (MODESE, 2018a). High- and low-incidence school districts relied on the pullout model for English language development. Research reveals remaining in class and engaging with peers can be more conducive to English learner academic and linguistic achievement (Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017). For this reason, along with the disproportionate number of English learner students to certified English teachers, indicates districts are not implementing the most effective models for achievement.

Pulling English learner students from the classroom can have a variety of negative impacts. First, it can imply to the students they are not capable or welcome to interact with their peers (Gass, 2017). Secondly, when English learners are taken outside of class for instruction, it can set the tone that the classroom teacher is not responsible for English learners' language growth (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018). The ESSA frames the standard that all teachers are called to be teachers of language (USDOE, OESE, 2017). Appropriate scaffolds for English learners can occur within the mainstream classroom; therefore, improving classroom instruction may be the best way for English learners to flourish (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Gibbons, 2015).

Resources for classroom teachers should support district delivery of services to English learners (MODESE, 2018a, 2018b). The findings indicated the content-based model was frequently utilized. Zwiers and Soto (2017) supported English learners remaining in the classroom. In fact, when certain competencies are utilized by the

mainstream classroom teacher, they can be effective with English learner students (Master et al., 2016). According to Missouri English language development program model descriptions, content-based program models for English learners require content to be delivered in a comprehensible manner to English learners (MODESE, 2018a). However, it is important to note the findings in this study indicated a discrepancy. This discrepancy is evident in the number of schools implementing content-based instruction (75%). The teachers interviewed admitted they were not adequately trained to deliver academic content to English learners.

Effects of professional development. Language objectives are a crucial step to making content accessible (Echevarría et al., 2017). Language objectives articulate to the teacher and the learners the linguistic skills needed to participate in the lesson (Echevarría et al., 2017). Program directors largely reported English learner proficiency scores were delivered to mainstream classroom teachers. Only a small portion of the English learner program directors reported classroom teachers use proficiency scores to drive instruction and develop language objectives. The lack of reference to these tools in the interviews supports the breakdown in distribution and training on how to use proficiency scores as a scaffolding aid for classroom instruction for English learners.

District program directors from high- and low-incidence school districts reported their mainstream content teachers were trained in various strategies to support English learners. The teachers reported having some knowledge of a few of these strategies. The participants also described needing more training on how to implement the strategies they are familiar with and expressed the need for additional strategies.

Research question two. How do supports vary in programs and instructional strategies for English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts in Missouri as reported by English learner program directors?

Research-based strategies heighten achievement levels for English learners (Helman, 2016; TESOL, 2018). English learner program directors from high- and low-incidence school districts reported professional development on research-based strategies to mainstream classroom teachers. Graphic organizers, cooperative learning, and pre-teaching vocabulary were the most frequently indicated. Although these strategies are research-based strategies effective for English learners, they are also common classroom strategies for other student populations (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

Comprehensible input and connecting to student background knowledge are highly effective strategies to support classroom instruction for English learners (Herrera, 2016; Krashen, 2017). These strategies were the least indicated from both high- and low-incident school districts. The sparse use of research-based strategies like comprehensible input (30%) and connecting to student background knowledge (50%) indicates that while districts are comfortable in their professional development offerings of research-based strategies, there may not be enough focus when it comes to strategies specifically for English learners. While teachers may be trained on research-based strategies, they may be lacking knowledge of how to integrate language acquisition into the content (Adger, Snow, & Christian, 2018; Pereira & de Oliveira, 2015).

Research question three. How do mainstream classroom teachers perceive teaching practices promoted to support English learners in high- and low-incidence school districts?

In the qualitative interviews, nine mainstream classroom teachers provided perceptions. There was a total of five teachers from high-incidence school districts including three K-6 teachers and two 7-12 teachers. There was a total of four teachers from low-incidence school districts including two K-6 teachers and two 7-12 teachers.

Findings from the interviews conjured familiar categories in relation to how mainstream classroom teachers perceive teaching practices promoted to support English learners. From the interview data, teachers named vocabulary strategies as the most frequently used. Also frequently mentioned were the lack of strategies and the lack of training to implement strategies with fidelity.

All teachers believed it was necessary to have continued professional development designed specifically for instruction to English learners. The teachers desired strategies for vocabulary development. Teacher input on the professional development they receive can equate to positive gains for students (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016).

The final item of the quantitative survey and the final question of the qualitative interview were open-ended questions for participants to add input on issues not specifically addressed in the direct questions. In both instruments, the responses were focused solely on the need for more professional development for mainstream classroom teachers in strategies to support instruction for English learners. For both quantitative and qualitative data, the label of high- or low-incidence school district did not seem to have any bearing on district services or policies. However, there was a discrepancy between effective instructional practices offered and effective instructional practices perceived. Ultimately, professional development to support the instruction of English

learners in the mainstream classroom is a pertinent factor in the advancement of services for English learner students.

The conceptual framework that guided this study was grounded in Missouri's *Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success* (MODESE, 2013). There are three frames: Professional Learning Commitment, Professional Learning Practice, and Professional Learning Impact (MODESE, 2013). Missouri guidelines are a plan to support the belief that increased professional learning leads to increased student success (MODESE, 2013).

English learner program directors from high- and low-incidence school districts expressed concern for the depth of current English learner-focused professional development and the lack of extended offerings. Mainstream classroom teachers from K-12 grade levels representing high- and low-incidence school districts stated they do not feel adequately prepared. The district decision makers on English learner policy and the teachers who are on the front line of English learners' daily education are in agreement on what is lacking in services. The disconnect between the need and the lack of professional development or training to support the classroom teacher is in further need of investigation.

Implications for Practice

This study was designed to determine the need for professional development for mainstream classroom teachers to meet the influx of diverse learners. According to Quintero and Hanson (2017), support for English learner instruction in the mainstream classroom is not adequately met. The implication for practice is to identify components

of a comprehensive professional development plan for mainstream classroom teachers for English learners.

As reported by English learner program directors and mainstream classroom teachers, professional development to support instruction of English learners in the classroom is lacking. When researchers examined classroom preparedness for English learners, many found effective practices are not in full effect (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016; Helman, 2016; Russell, 2016). According to the NASEM (2017), schools are not providing adequate instruction for English learners and should adapt professional learning to meet this need. Therefore, a comprehensive professional development plan that addresses instructional practices key to English learner success should be woven into district professional development plans. That being said, administrator stakeholder involvement is key (Dormer, 2016).

According to Alford and Niño (2011), building principals are predominant forces in influencing the use of instructional strategies in the classroom for English learners. Administrators serve as district leaders in diagnosing and determining the implementation of best practices. For this reason, not only should administrators be the catalyst that promotes training for the specific needs of English learners, but they should also act as participants in the learning. As promoted by Dormer (2016) and Deussen (2015), administrator understanding of English learners can transform schools.

Obstacles faced by many districts include the time and space for added professional development. A collaborative coaching model teamed with the district English learner teacher would not be an added time constraint on an already taxed schedule. In addition, this type of professional development meets research-based

recommendations that professional development should be ongoing and job-embedded (Learning Forward, n.d.). Training in instructional practices, geared toward the specific needs of English learners and embedded in professional learning communities, reinforces the idea that all teachers are language teachers (Gándara & Santibañez, 2016)

Similarities in strategies offered were not only noted in the survey, but also by interview participants who stated graphic organizers, cooperative learning, and pre-teaching of academic vocabulary were the most often used. These similarities could be attributed to strategies that are not necessarily viewed as specifically for English learners, and most likely are strategies reinforced by districts for all learners. Districts could consider strategies schools have in place and amplify those strategies to address the needs of English learners. Additional learning opportunities could be created by expounding on familiar strategies and demonstrating the scaffolding application for English learners.

Program directors surveyed also indicated similarities in distributing WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores to mainstream teachers. WIDA ACCESS 2.0 proficiency scores are meant to determine supports necessary in the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (WIDA, 2019). If scores are being distributed to teachers, but teachers are not trained how to use the scores to support instruction, it may be reasonable to accommodate this need in professional development as well. Perhaps if mainstream classroom teachers had more involvement in the language acquisition and proficiency process, the strategies learned would lend better support to English learners in the mainstream classroom.

If strategies are implemented without the knowledge of how proficiency is developed, then teachers do not know what to do if they view the strategy as “failing.” It

could be possible the knowledge of these processes would alleviate stress of classroom teachers. Reducing teacher stress can contribute to higher student achievement in the classroom (Klusmann, Richter, & Lüdtke, 2016). Furthermore, the knowledge of how language is acquired and how students should utilize the pertinent domains would strengthen the use of existing strategies (Cook, 2016).

Recommendations for Future Research

The literature supports the notion school districts are facing unique challenges with the growing number of English learners in the classroom (Albers & Martinez, 2015; Quintero & Hanson, 2017; Rutherford-Quach et al., 2018). Another facet to this challenge is the new accountability for English learners' academic and language achievement under the ESSA (USDOE, 2016a). In order to understand how the two phenomenon intersect, it is helpful to look at why these challenges exist.

This mixed-methods study focused on Missouri public and charter schools that reported 10 or more English learners during the 2017-2018 school year. Quantitative survey participants were district English learner program directors. Qualitative interview participants were mainstream classroom teachers from K-6 and 7-12 school buildings, representing high-incidence and low-incidence English learner populations.

Recommendations for future research as a result of this study include the following:

1. Survey, interview, and analyze school district personnel from other states and compare results to Missouri to determine similarities and differences.

2. Replicate this study but include WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores from participating districts to determine if professional development or strategies employed by teachers have an effect on proficiency scores.

3. Conduct research to analyze the perceptions of English learner students and the effects of instruction on their academic and language growth.

4. Future research should include elicitation of additional teacher perceptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Asking more teachers about their perceptions could facilitate a deeper understanding of what specific needs are present when attending professional development specifically for English learners. This could include case study observations of teachers implementing strategies in the classroom.

5. In this study, English learner program directors were surveyed to see how their districts currently serve English learners through policy, programs, and professional development. Participant voice and choice of words add value to what is being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A qualitative study, through interviews with program directors and mainstream classroom teachers, may give a deeper perspective on how the two entities view professional development and its success once implemented in the classroom.

6. This study focused on Missouri school districts reporting 10 or more English learners. Future research could include replicating this study with a larger population in the study (Fraenkel et al., 2016). Gathering responses from more English learner program directors could heighten the understanding of existing programs and practices in place.

7. To gain more insight into professional development, a mixed-methods study in conjunction with a training is recommended. Specifically, a pre- and post-survey could be administered to mainstream classroom teachers at a training and then after implementation.

Summary

As described in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to gain information from English learner program directors about English learner program practices and professional development specific to the needs of English learners in Missouri school districts. In addition, mainstream classroom teachers from different-sized schools with high and low incidence of English learner students were interviewed to gather the perceived level of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom. This mixed-methods study was guided by three research questions.

Two quantitative research questions were designed to determine how school districts support English learners through regulatory policies, instructional program models, and professional development. The second question was designed to see how districts vary in instructional strategies and programs. The third research question was qualitative and was designed to determine how mainstream classroom teachers perceive teaching practices promoted to support English learners.

A review of literature relevant to the study comprised Chapter Two. First, an overview of Missouri's *Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success* was presented as the framework for this study. The review of literature continued with

various pertinent aspects of English learners, the teaching of English learners, and professional development.

In Chapter Three, the methodology of the study was explained. A convergent mixed-methods design was implemented for this study. The convergence of the synchronic quantitative and qualitative data collection transpired into a more comprehensive understanding of that which was being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In Chapter Four, a detailed analysis of the data collected was presented. First, quantitative survey data were described. The results of the survey data were presented in table, percentage, and narrative form. Qualitative analysis was then presented. Mainstream classroom teachers with English learners in their classrooms were interviewed for the purpose of answering research question three. Results of the individual interviews were described, and two emerging themes were addressed. The first theme explored was the desire for professional development, and the second theme explored was the role of the district English learner teacher.

Finally, in Chapter Five conclusions were explained within the context of the literature from Chapter Two. In response to research questions one and two, programs and practices in Missouri public and charter school districts were described. Research question three was investigated through teacher interviews. Mainstream classroom teachers from high- and low-incidence school districts were interviewed to gather knowledge on their perceived effectiveness of strategies for English learners in the classroom. The findings revealed there was no notable difference between high- and low-incidence school districts. The findings further revealed English learner program

directors and mainstream classroom teachers agreed additional professional development to support teachers of English learners is needed.

Implications for practice were connected to the conceptual framework. Primarily, professional development should be an exhaustive structure of teaching and learning to promote the success of student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; K-12 Education Team, 2015; Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). Additionally, district leadership plays a vital role in the portrayal and implementation of effective professional learning (Crow, 2017).

Recommendations for future research included ideas to expand or replicate the study. Suggestions for further research on strategies and recommendations to specifically explore professional development for teachers of English learners were also discussed. The implication for practice will provide school districts, English learner program directors and teachers, and mainstream classroom teachers a foundation to explore professional development as it relates to supporting mainstream classroom teachers in their instruction for English learner students.

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Appendix A

English Learner Program Director Survey

Screen 1

WELCOME SCREEN

Welcome and thank you for participating in the survey. Please answer the questions on the following screens. For the survey and interview, each participant will receive an Informed Consent Letter, which describes in detail the purpose of the research, any possible risks, and the opportunity to opt out of the study at any time without negative effects. The data will be used to help determine what professional development opportunities should be offered to mainstream classroom teachers for English learners (ELs).

Please read the informed consent letter and acknowledge the terms and conditions.

Screen 2

This part of the survey is to learn about your role as an English learner program director.

1. **Which of the following best describes your primary role?**

   ___ English Learner Director/Coordinator

   ___ Bilingual/English Learner Teacher/Specialist

   ___ Principal/Assistant Superintendent

   ___ Title I Coordinator

   ___ Federal Programs Director

   ___ Special Services Director

   ___ Other (Please specify) _____

2. **Are you TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certified in Missouri?**

   ___ Yes ___ No

3. **How many years have you been working in education, including this school year?**

   ____

4. **How many years have you worked in English learner education, including this school year?**

   ____

5. **Approximately when was the last time you received professional development or training specific to the education of English learners?**

___ Never

___ Less than 1 year

___ 1-2 years

___ 2-3 years

___ 4-5 years

___ More than 5 years

Screen 3

This part of the survey is to learn more about your district's status regarding serving English learner students.

1. **My district has a district-approved Lau Plan on file.**

   ___ Yes ___ No ___ I do not know

2. **My district is (Please choose just one):**

   ___ K-8 ___K-12 ___Other

3. **Please provide your district's total student population.**

   _____

4. **Please provide your district's total number of English learner students.**

   _____

5. **In my district, the language MOST represented by English learners is:**

   ___ Spanish

   ___ Arabic

   ___ Vietnamese

   ___ Bosnian

   ___ Somali

   ___ Chinese

   ___ Russian

   ___ Korean

   ___ Burmese

   ___ Swahili

   ___ Other (Please specify) _____

6. **In my district, WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores are used in the following areas (Check all that apply):**

___ Scores are placed in student perm files.

___ Scores are distributed to mainstream classroom/content teachers.

___ Scores are distributed to counselors.

___ Scores are distributed to parents.

___ Scores are distributed to IEP case carriers (only if student has an IEP).

___ Scores are distributed to building principals.

___ Scores are distributed to the administrative team.

___ Scores are used by mainstream classroom/content teachers to drive instruction.

___ Scores are used by mainstream classroom/content teachers to develop language objectives.

7. **In my district, the following are used, in addition to WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores, to monitor the language and academic progress of English learners (Please rate the following):**

____ Course grades	always	sometimes	never	not applicable
____ Content assessments	always	sometimes	never	not applicable
____ Grade-level reading assessments	always	sometimes	never	not applicable
____ District benchmark assessments	always	sometimes	never	not applicable
____ Input from parents	always	sometimes	never	not applicable
____ Input from classroom teachers	always	sometimes	never	not applicable
____ RTI	always	sometimes	never	not applicable
____ Portfolios	always	sometimes	never	not applicable

____Other (Please specify)_____

8. In my district, the following Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-described English language development instructional models are currently used (Check all that apply):

___ **Structured English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) immersion.** All students are English learners and receive specialized English-only instruction in all core content areas.

___ **Content-based ESOL.** Content-based ESOL recognizes that language is a means to an end and focuses on delivering curriculum content through English in such a way as to make the content understandable (i.e., comprehensible) to English language learners.

___ **Pull-out ESOL.** The pull-out ESOL method is to periodically remove, or pull out, English learner students from the classroom.

___ **Bilingual education.** Two language groups are combined, and instruction is delivered through both languages.

___ **Team/Co-teaching.** The model pairs a TESOL certified teacher with a mainstream teacher to deliver effective instruction to all students in the classroom, with specific attention given to ensure English learners can access the curriculum.

___ **Sheltered classrooms.** Sheltered classrooms are used to make academic instruction in English understandable to English learners to help them acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas.

___ **Resource classrooms.** A secondary variation of the pull-out model is the resource classroom. The resource classroom is not limited to one content area, and a TESOL-certified teacher focuses on English skills across multiple disciplines.

___ **Newcomer centers.** Newcomer centers provide a safe and supportive context for students who are new to both school and the United States before they move into a regular school. The centers could provide assessment and initial English instruction and classes to help students adjust culturally, socially, and academically. Instruction is typically in English, but the first language is used when needed.

___ **English Language Development (ELD) coaching.** English Language Development coaching is an approach to train all teachers over time to deliver

effective instruction for English learners. Districts cluster students into specific classrooms, and the ELD Coach assists individual teachers or grade-level teams with designing, delivering, and assessing effective instruction for English learners.

___ Other (Please specify) _____

9. **My district uses the following resources to support English learner education (Check all that apply):**

___ eBooks

___ Bilingual books

___ Bilingual dictionaries

___ Free online resources

___ Video and audio resources

___ Apps

___ Textbooks adapted for English learner education or equipped with English learner scaffolds

___ Adaptive learning software

___ Publisher-provided curriculum

___ Other

___ None of the above

Screen 4

This part of the survey is to learn more about support and training for mainstream classroom teachers with relation to English learners in their classrooms.

1. **In my district, professional development for mainstream classroom teachers to support English learner students in the mainstream classroom is provided**

   ___ Twice a year

   ___ Once a year

   ___ Every 2-3 years

   ___ Every 4-5 years

   ___ I do not know

   ___ No professional development provided

   ___ Other (Please specify) _____

2. **In my district, mainstream classroom teachers have been trained in the following research-based strategies to scaffold instruction for English learners (Check all that apply):**

   ___ Introduce new concepts by linking them to what English learners already know

   ___ Pre-teach academic vocabulary

   ___ Use graphic organizers to make lessons more visual

   ___ Use sentence frames

   ___ Determine content and language objectives for each lesson

   ___ Connect content to student background knowledge

   ___ Provide comprehensible input

   ___ Make lessons auditory, visual, and kinesthetic

   ___ Use cooperative learning strategies

___ Modify vocabulary instruction

___ Other (Please specify) _____

3. **In my district, mainstream/content teachers who have English learner students in their classrooms are trained on the following (Check all that apply):**

___ Missouri English learner entry and exit criteria

___ WIDA English language development standards

___ Interpreting WIDA ACCESS proficiency scores

___ Stages of second language acquisition

___ Culturally responsive teaching practices

___ Incorporating language objectives with content objectives

___ Scaffolding instruction for English learners

4. **In my district, the following support or training would assist in better serving English learners:**

_____

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. How has training or professional development supported your teaching in the classroom for English learner students?
2. In what ways has the English learner professional development provided by your district changed your understanding of the challenges English learners face in the classroom? Explain, and can you give me two examples?
3. Which research-based instructional methods or strategies for English learners have been introduced through professional development provided by your district? [If a prompt is needed:] For example, have you used strategies to activate background knowledge or increase academic language?
4. Which of these strategies have you implemented in the classroom, and how often do you use them?
5. What effect do the strategies you use have on the language and educational growth of English learners in your classroom?
6. Have you experienced a time when you implemented strategies for English learners and did not get the desired outcome? Please describe the experience(s).
7. How confident are you in applying the English learner training/professional development you have received in your current teaching role? Please explain.
8. How do you measure or assess the strategies you use to know if they are successful?
9. What other resources are needed to provide equitable access to the content in your classroom for English learners?
10. Is there anything you would like to discuss that I did not ask?

Appendix C

Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Approval

Apr 1, 2019 1:28 PM CDT

RE:
IRB-19-203: Initial - Teaching English Learners: A Study of Procedures and Perceptions of Missouri Program Directors and Mainstream Classroom Teachers

Dear Merica Clinkenbeard,

The study, Teaching English Learners: A Study of Procedures and Perceptions of Missouri Program Directors and Mainstream Classroom Teachers, has been Exempt.

Category: Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

The submission was approved on April 1, 2019.

Here are the findings:

- This study has been determined to be minimal risk because the research is not obtaining data considered sensitive information or performing interventions posing harm greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

Sincerely,
Lindenwood University (lindenwood) Institutional Review Board

Appendix D

Superintendent Invitation to Participate

Dear District Superintendent:

My name is Merica Clinkenbeard, and I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. I am conducting a mixed-methods study on the use and implementation of resources and professional development specifically for English learners.

I will be sending a survey to the English learner program directors at districts who reported 10 or more English learners during the 2017-2018 school year. This survey will be delivered via electronic mail. The survey will be formatted in Qualtrics, and the results of the survey will be anonymous and in no way tracked back to a district.

In addition, I will be asking program directors, via a format separate from the survey, to send names and email addresses of classroom teachers who are potential interview participants. If selected, the teachers will be notified and asked to participate. Interviews will be conducted in person or through video teleconferencing.

I request your permission to send a survey to the designated English learner program director in your district and to interview classroom teachers if selected and willing to participate. If you agree, please sign and scan the attached permission form and email it back to me.

I sincerely appreciate your time and cooperation. I hope my study helps to form a greater understanding of how to serve English learner students in Missouri.

Merica Clinkenbeard
Lindenwood University

Appendix E

Superintendent Permission Letter

As superintendent of the _____ School District, I, _____, grant permission for Merica Clinkenbeard to administer a survey to the district's English learner program director and to interview one to three educators to investigate the impact of professional development focused on learning strategies for English learners.

By signing the form, I understand the following safeguards are in place to protect the participants:

1. Participants answering the survey will not be linked to a school district, and all responses will be kept anonymous.
2. Participants in the interview may withdraw consent at any time.
3. The identities of the interview participants will remain confidential and anonymous in the dissertation and any future publications of this study.

I have read the information above, and any questions I have posed have been answered to my satisfaction. Permission, as explained, is granted.

Signature Date

Appendix F

Letter of Introduction to English Learner Program Directors

Dear English Learner Program Director:

My name is Merica Clinkenbeard, and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Lindenwood University. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about English learner programs in Missouri. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are included in the most current Missouri EL contacts list. I obtained your contact information from Shawn Cockrum, Director of Migrant, EL, Immigrant and Refugee Education.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will help me to determine current resources and supports in place for English learners in our state. I will use the information to describe current resources and support mechanisms currently in place, so as to strengthen future decisions on support needed for English learners. Participation in the survey is voluntary, but the result of your participation will be greatly appreciated and helpful to the future of English learners in Missouri.

Following this email, you will also receive an additional electronic form, *NOT associated with the survey*, requesting recommendations of mainstream classroom teachers whom you would consider good candidates to interview for the qualitative portion of my study.

Sincerely,

Merica Clinkenbeard

Appendix G

Survey Research Information Sheet

LINDENWOOD

Survey Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a survey conducted by Merica Clinkenbeard at Lindenwood University. We are conducting this study to gain information from English learner program directors about EL program practices in school districts in Missouri. It will take about 15 minutes to complete this survey.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or closing the browser window.

There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Merica Clinkenbeard [redacted]

Dr. Kathy Grover kgrover@lindenwood.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

The survey is conducted online. By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided I will participate in the project described above. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be required to do, and the risks involved. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time by closing the survey browser. My consent also indicates I am at least 18 years of age.

Appendix H

Mainstream Teacher Interview Recommendations

Please list the name(s) of regular classroom teachers who are willing to be considered for an interview for the qualitative portion of the EL study.
* Required

Name of School District *
Your answer

Teacher Name #1 *
Your answer

Teacher Name #1 Grade Level *
K-6
7-12

Teacher Name #1 School Email Address *
Your answer

Teacher Name #2
Your answer

Teacher Name #2 Grade Level
K-6
7-12

Teacher Name #2 School Email Address
Your answer

Teacher Name #3
Your answer

Teacher Name #3 Grade Level
K-6
7-12

Teacher Name #3 School Email Address
Your answer

SUBMIT

Appendix I

Mainstream Classroom Teacher Participation Recruitment Letter

Dear [Mainstream Classroom Teacher]:

My name is Merica Clinkenbeard, and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Lindenwood University. Your name was given to me by [Program Director's Name], the English Learner Program Director for your district. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about English learner programs in Missouri. I want to conduct interviews with mainstream classroom teachers about the use of research-based strategies for English learners in the classroom.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will help determine what current resources and supports should be in place for English learners in our state. I will use the information to describe the use and perceived effectiveness of research-based English learner strategies. Pseudonyms will be used to protect identities of interviewees.

The interviews will take place in person or via videoconferencing software. If you consent to be selected for an interview, a purposive stratified sampling will be applied to determine participants. If you are selected, you will be sent a notification and options for interview date, time, and location. Please respond with a YES or NO for participation.

Thank you,

Merica Clinkenbeard

Appendix J

Mainstream Classroom Teacher Interview Participant Date Selection Letter

Dear [Mainstream Teacher Name]:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study of English learner support in Missouri. Your name was selected as an interview participant. Please click on Link A for the Letter of Consent and Link B to initiate the process for an interview date, time, and location. I look forward to meeting you.

Link A [Informed Letter of Consent]

Link B [Link to Google Form]

Sincerely,

Merica Clinkenbeard

Appendix K

Research Study Consent Form

LINDENWOOD

Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a research study. We are conducting this study to learn about perceived level of understanding of best practices for the implementation of research-based strategies for English learners. During this study, you will answer 10 questions about teaching practices you perceive as supportive for English learners in the classroom. It will take about 45 minutes to complete this study.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time.

There are no risks from participating in this project. There are no direct benefits of participating in this study.

We will not collect any data which may identify you.

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data include members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, and representatives of state or federal agencies.

Who can I contact with questions?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Merica Clinkenbeard [redacted]

Dr. Kathy Grover kgrover@lindenwood.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

Appendix L

Teacher Interview Scheduling Form

Please indicate your availability for the interview below. Supply three options. Please allow approximately one hour.

* Required

Your full name. *

Your answer

Your school district. *

Your answer

Available date and time #1 *
Date

Available date and time #2 *
Date

Available date and time #3 *
Date

Location of Interview (your classroom, etc.)

Your answer

If interview must be conducted via videoconferencing, please indicate below.
Yes, my interview must be conducted via videoconferencing.

Please provide the best phone number to reach you.

Your answer

SUBMIT

Appendix M

Teacher Interview Confirmation Phone Script

Hello, is this _____? This is Merica Clinkenbeard, and I am calling to confirm our interview date and give you a few reminders.

First, I have our interview scheduled for _____ at _____ at the _____ location. Is this correct?

Second, I want to remind you that I will be recording the interview. I will need the transcript to analyze the data at a later time.

And third, I want to confirm that our time together will be as secure as possible with no interruptions. I will ask that your cell phone be turned off and that the interview location has a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door.

Thank you, and I look forward to speaking with you!

Vita

Merica Clinkenbeard currently serves as a Missouri Migrant and English Language Learner (MELL) Instructional Specialist. She works at the Agency for Teaching, Leading, and Learning at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. Merica holds her Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She received her Master of Arts in Education from Drury University in Springfield, Missouri.

Prior to her current role, Merica taught high school Spanish. She also served as an English Learner Coordinator for a Missouri school district. In her current position, Merica is active in state and national policy and education issues for migrant and English learners. She serves on the professional development committee for the National Association of State Title III Directors.