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Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of English Learners' Instructional Needs For Reading

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**ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS'
INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS FOR READING**

A research paper submitted to the College of Education
of the University of Mary Washington

Elizabeth McMullen
December 2016

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Elizabeth McMullen
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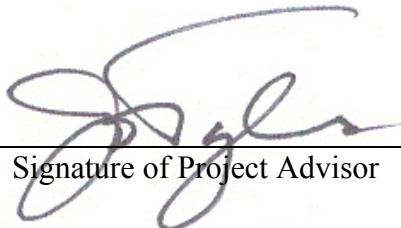
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**ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LEARNERS'
INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS FOR READING**

ELIZABETH MCMULLEN

EDCI 590 INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

DECEMBER 10, 2016

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Jo Tyler', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Project Advisor

Dr. Jo Tyler
Professor of Linguistics and Education

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Literature Review	6
Methodology	21
Results and Analysis	23
Discussion	30
Conclusion	32
References	35
Appendix: Procedural Documents	39

Introduction

It was an exciting but nerve-wracking day for Miss Smith as she entered her second grade classroom for the first time. She had been preparing for this day for the last four years. She looked at her class roster, which was made up of a very diverse group of students. Among her 22 students were five English learners (ELs), all at varying language proficiency levels. Miss Smith's teacher training did not provide many techniques or background about working with ELs, so she was a little anxious, especially when it comes to literacy, which can be very abstract. Her first few weeks of teaching, Miss Smith used a lot of the same strategies with her ELs as she used with the rest of her class in hopes that they would show the same kind of progress. Unfortunately, she found that her ELs were not meeting their goals and were falling far behind the other students. Although she had taken into consideration various levels of learning and had prepared her lessons well, her confidence in her ability to teach began to falter.

The situation described above is certainly not a unique one. Like Miss Smith (a pseudonym), many teachers entering the teaching profession feel unprepared and inadequate due to the lack of training available to teach such a diverse group of students. In addition, many general educators are not familiar with how an EL acquires a second language and the challenges he or she may face when learning to read in that language. The perceptions teachers have of students and on their own abilities to provide sufficient instruction can have a huge impact on student success (Morgan, 2008; Griffin, 2008).

This EDCI 590 project explores the topic of mainstream teachers' perceptions of ELs and their instructional needs relating to reading development and how those perceptions relate to teachers' sense of self efficacy. In order to address this topic, I utilized a teacher survey to

explore teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs and the challenges they are currently facing in regards to teaching reading to the ELs in the classroom. An English learner (EL) is a student who is learning English as a second or other language and may receive support from a language program (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008, p. 2). These students are often times referred to as English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) students; however, ESOL refers to the instruction that an EL receives in the language program. Since my research focuses on students and teachers in the K-12 school system, I will be using the term EL to identify the students learning the language and I will use ESOL to refer to the instruction they receive and the highly qualified staff trained to teach them.

I became interested in this topic because I am personally aware that it is an area that classroom teachers are very unprepared for. In my own undergraduate studies, I received zero special training for how to effectively teach the ELs in my classroom. Ideally all teachers, not just ESOL teachers, should be given explicit training on meeting the linguistic and cultural needs of this growing population. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2015), ELs made up an estimated 4.4 million students, about 8.8 percent, in the public school system in 2012-2013. The population of students who speak a language other than English is accelerating. The number of public school students participating in ESOL programs in the state of Virginia increased from 36,799, or 3% in 2002 to 97,169, or 7.5% in 2014 (Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), 2014). With inclusion, these students spend the majority of their school day in the mainstream classroom where they receive much of their reading instruction; however, mainstream classroom teachers are not being adequately trained to meet the literacy demands of this population of students. English learners do not have the same knowledge of the language that a native speaker does, but due to a minimum of research in

second language reading, they are unfairly being instructed and tested using strategies designed for students who already speak English (Alderson, Haapakangas, Huta, Nieminen, & Ullakonoja, 2015).

A lack of sufficient training can produce a low sense of efficacy among mainstream teachers in regards to ELs' academic achievement. Teacher efficacy is defined as the belief about one's own abilities to successfully provide instruction and how it affects student performance (Morgan, 2008, p.4). Research shows that the more specialized training a teacher receives, the greater the impact on their overall efficacy (Morgan, 2008; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005; Lo, 2009). In a survey administered by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2000), out of the 417 institutes of higher education surveyed, fewer than one sixth required any preparation for mainstream elementary and secondary education teachers in regards to supporting ELs (as cited in Menken & Antunez, 2001, p. 17). According to NCES (2002), 42% of teachers indicated having ELs in their classroom but only 12.5% of these teachers received more than eight hours in professional development directly related to ELs. However, research shows that teachers need an average of 49 hours of intensive professional development in one year on a topic in order to increase student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009, p. 9).

According to the Virginia Department of Education (2006), ELs reside in all eight regions of Virginia, speak over 118 different languages, and represent over 72 countries. Nevertheless, mainstream teachers are expected to provide ELs with the knowledge and skills to succeed academically, as well as in society. These students will enter school with varying degrees of English proficiency and a wide range of academic skills based on their prior knowledge and learning experiences. Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), elementary ELs are

required to become proficient in English while attaining high academic achievement in reading and math (VDOE, 2006). They are also required to take annual reading and math assessments, which are used to determine adequate yearly progress for schools and districts (VDOE, 2006). On the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress, fourth grade ELs scored an average of 36 points below non ELs in reading. In eighth grade, the gap was even greater with a 42-point difference (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). For these reasons, it is imperative that all teachers who have interaction with ELs be equipped to teach literacy skills to help improve students' English proficiency and academic achievement.

The goal of my research project is to examine elementary teachers' level of self efficacy and perceptions of ELs' needs for reading instruction. Research shows that mainstream classroom teachers are not being adequately trained to meet the needs of this population of students, resulting in misguided perceptions of ELs' instructional needs and lower self efficacy (Morgan, 2008; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Gandara et al., 2005). My research project will provide teachers and school administrators with an understanding of the attitudes mainstream teachers carry in regards to ELs with the goal of presenting suggestions for training teachers to improve their reading instruction of ELs and their self efficacy.

On the following pages I present a literature review of the current research focusing on the following themes: second language acquisition, teachers' perceptions and assumptions of ELs, implications for teacher preparation, and best practices for literacy instruction for ELs. The literature review is followed by my research questions and methodology explaining how I collected and analyzed the survey data. The results are then presented and discussed according to their implications for teacher training in the areas of EL reading instruction, teacher perceptions, and teacher efficacy.

Literature Review

Second Language Acquisition

Ortega (2009) describes second language acquisition as “the scholarly field of inquiry that investigates the human capacity to learn languages other than the first, during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood, and once the first language or languages have been acquired” (pp. 1-2). But what does it mean to acquire a second language and how does one know when a learner has become proficient in that language? Cummins (1994) distinguishes between two aspects of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to the language used in everyday conversation and social situations; whereas CALP refers to the academic language used in school for teaching content such as math, science, literature, and history. There are two key differences between BICS and CALP. One difference relates to the context in which the language is used. BICS consists of short utterances that rely heavily on contextual cues to understand the message. Additionally, a listener can ask for clarification or request repetition to aid comprehension. On the other hand, CALP consists of longer utterances that are decontextualized. This means that a learner must rely on linguistic cues and knowledge of the language to make meaning. These linguistic cues include grammatical, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge of the language (Wong Fillmore, 2005). Another difference is that BICS is typically acquired within two or three years of exposure to the language; however, CALP takes at least five to seven years to acquire fully because it is much more cognitively demanding than BICS (Cummins, 1979).

Age is a crucial factor that can influence the acquisition of a second language. One theory that evolved when the area of second language acquisition was emerging supported the idea of a critical period for language learning (Ortega, 2009, p. 13). Brown (2007) defined this

period as a “biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire” (p. 57). According to this early theory, once a learner reaches the end of this critical period, which typically corresponds to the individual’s physical maturation, the ability to acquire a native-like stage in the second language (L2) significantly declines (Baker et al., 2008, p. 318). However, this critical period incorrectly assumes that learners will only reach proficiency in a second language if they are exposed to the language during a narrow window of time. Some research shows that the gap between young children and older late starters eventually evens out. In a review of 23 studies of L2 learning, Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1979) found that while older learners learn at a faster rate initially, younger learners will catch up and do better in the long run (p. 574). The difference in the rate in which a learner learns an L2 could be due to the cognitive load and metalinguistic skills that are needed, which adults are able to utilize much faster than young children (Ortega, 2009, p. 17).

Research debunks the critical period hypothesis for L2 acquisition as a whole. Brown (2007) found that learners beyond the age of puberty (12-13 years old) do not acquire native-like pronunciation in the target language (p. 62). Although there may be exceptions to this rule, they are isolated instances that are not scientifically supported (p. 63). After reviewing numerous studies of foreign accent detection, Scovel (1988) consistently found that native-speaking judges were able to accurately detect non-native speaking samples.

All L2 learners, by definition, have knowledge of an L1; thus, language transfer can also impact a learner’s acquisition of a second language. *Transfer* in the ESOL field is defined as the ability to transfer literacy and other knowledge and skills learned in one language to other languages (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 15). An example of literacy skills transfer would be if a student

learns principles of decoding in their native language, they most likely could apply them in the new language or have an easier time learning it (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 15). However, teachers must be responsible for providing instruction that identifies what does and does not transfer to English and must not assume that it is automatic which is why it is important for teachers to know what students are capable of producing in the first language (Goldenberg, 2008, pp. 15-16).

Research consistently shows that teaching students to read in their first language contributes to higher levels of reading achievement in English (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 14). As reported by Goldenberg (2008), a panel of literacy and second language scholars conducted a meta-analysis of 17 different studies that compared reading instruction in English only with reading instruction in English and Spanish. In one study, first through third graders received all of their academic instruction in Spanish, their first language, and slowly transitioned to English, their second language. A second study consisted of a control group where students received no instruction or support in Spanish, their first language. A third study included second and third grade special education students who received English only instruction or Spanish and English combined instruction for one year, then gradually transitioned to more instruction in English over the next two years. The meta-analysis concluded that the use of both the first and second languages during instruction positively impacted a student's reading achievement on multiple facets of reading in English (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 15).

An example of literacy skills transfer that can negatively impact a learner's literacy skills in the L2 was found in a study conducted by Rolla (2003) that focused on the segmentation of pseudowords consisting of diphthongs, vowels that consist of two sounds in the same syllable. Diphthongs are one example of literacy skills transfer in phonological awareness that can

negatively impact Spanish speakers acquiring English (Rolla, 2003, p. 7-8). For example, the diphthong /ai/ is perceived by English speakers as one phoneme; however, Spanish speakers perceive it as two phonemes. This negative transfer can pose many challenges in second language literacy, especially in regards to phonemic segmentation, one of the most crucial phonological awareness skills required to be able to read. Phonemic segmentation is defined as “the ability to take a word and break it into its constituent parts, that is, to sound out the number of phonemes or sounds in a word” (Rolla, 2003, p. 8-9). When segmenting the phonemes in the word *fine*, which has three phonemes according to English phonology, an EL whose native language is Spanish might sound out four phonemes because they perceive the diphthong /ai/ as being two separate phonemes, /a/ and /i/ (p. 9). In her study of 102 bilingual and monolingual kindergarten and first grade students, Rolla (2003) individually tested the students using 20 target and 20 control items (p.11). The target items were pseudowords containing the diphthongs /ai/ and /ei/, whereas the control items were pseudowords that contained control vowels. She hypothesized that the bilingual children would insert a phoneme in the target pseudowords. She used a difference score to subtract the number of phonemes children segmented on control items from those on target items. This score measured the number of times there was negative transfer (p. 14). From her study, Rolla (2003) concluded that there is negative transfer from Spanish when children perform phonemic segmentation in English, particularly with those children who have a higher level of Spanish language proficiency (p. 23).

A negative affect on a learner’s literacy skills in the L2 can also be seen in the transfer of phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is defined as “the ability to perceive and manipulate the sounds (phonemes) that make up words in oral language” (Freeman & Freeman, 2004, p. 75). It is a type of phonological awareness that involves being able to manipulate sounds by adding or

deleting phonemes or substituting one phoneme for another. Freeman and Freeman (2004) describe phonemes as perceptual units because they can differ in how they are produced but can still be perceived by speakers of the language (nonnative speakers may perceive them as different phonemes) as instances of the same phoneme (p. 55). Since different languages use different sets of phonemes to communicate, language teaching and testing that requires students to distinguish between sounds could be problematic for ELs because they may perceive the sounds differently in their native language than they do in English (p. 93).

Teachers' Perceptions and Assumptions of ELs

Teachers' perceptions towards ELs can greatly affect their academic progress. Griffin (2008) conducted a study of 14 elementary schools in Tennessee to determine mainstream teachers' perceptions of ELs. The methods of research included a teacher survey and open-ended questions which allowed participants to expand on their responses from the survey and to address any perceptions that were not mentioned (Griffin, 2008, p. 64). The study focused on six themes regarding teachers' perceptions of ELs: second language acquisition, class modifications, time constraints, professional training and support, educational environment resulting from EL inclusion, and attitudes toward EL inclusion (Griffin, 2008, pp. 74-75). The results indicated that mainstream teachers had positive attitudes towards all of these themes except second language acquisition (Griffin, 2008, p. 138). The participants of the study strongly disagreed that teachers should allow ELs to use their native language in the classroom and strongly disagreed that teachers should provide materials for ELs in their native language (Griffin, 2008, p. 110). Griffin (2008) suggests that teachers take a specific course on language acquisition to become more familiar with the process; therefore, improving teachers' attitudes towards second language acquisition (p. 139).

There is an assumption that ELs' language development is the sole responsibility of the ESOL teacher and not that of the mainstream teacher. In a study of 129 preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards ELs, Lo (2009) found that more than half, 54%, believed it is unfair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach ELs due to their lack of training (p. 136). Similarly, Creese (2006) conducted a study of classroom discourse between ESOL specialist and subject specialist teachers. She observed and interviewed 26 teachers during the 10-week study. An interview with a geography teacher revealed that the teacher assumed responsibility for providing students the subject curriculum and to answer general questions but was not to get involved with one-on-one support for ELs (Creese, 2006, p. 443). Creese (2006) also collected data through classroom transcripts between a language learner and the subject and language teachers. The analysis from this data revealed that the subject teacher asked questions that required the student to display their knowledge using closed one-word answers, whereas the language teacher provided multiple opportunities for the student to build on their knowledge using facilitative talk (Creese, 2006, pp. 446-449). Creese (2006) concludes that this facilitative talk is an important skill that should be utilized in all classrooms with a range of language abilities (p. 451). Even though subject teachers are under the pressure of delivering the curriculum, it is imperative that they use this skill with the ELs in their classroom to improve their learning, regardless of whether or not the language teacher is present.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

Numerous studies have shown that mainstream teachers lack sufficient training to meet the needs of ELs in their classroom. As of 2010, only three states required licensed general education teachers to have some knowledge in educating English learners (Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010). Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) state that professional development must be

intensive, ongoing, and directly correlated to practice in order to be effective; however most teachers do not have access to training that meets these criteria (p. 5). In a national study, they found that teachers often receive trainings through daily workshops that focus on topics such as classroom management or computer instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 9). In 2003-2004, 92% of teachers attended workshops or conferences compared to only 36% who took a university course and 22% who did some sort of observational visit to another school (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 19). Additionally, more than two-thirds of the teachers in their study reported not even one day of training in teaching special education and ESOL students, compared to the minimum eight hours of training that is recommended (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009, p. 20). In a similar study performed by Gandara et al. (2005) of classroom teachers from 22 school districts within California, they found that 43% of teachers with 50% or more ELs in their classroom received at most one in-service training in the last five years that targeted instruction of ELs (p. 13). Multiple teachers stated that the quality of the in-service was insufficient because the presenter had very little knowledge and experience with ELs (Gandara et al., 2005, p. 13).

Teacher efficacy can greatly impact a teacher's thoughts and feelings towards ELs, the learning activities that are used, and the amount of effort that is put forth (Morgan, 2008, p. 4). According to Morgan (2008), a teacher with high efficacy will have more positive attitudes towards student learning, use an assortment of teaching methods, and encourage student participation, whereas teachers with low efficacy perceive a student's language or ethnicity as being key components that interfere with learning (p. 4). Morgan (2008) conducted a study of mainstream classroom teachers from Texas to determine what method of teacher preparation for working with ELs had the most positive impact on the teachers' efficacy. The four trainings

investigated included: (1) professional development in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, (2) teachers who have earned ESOL certification without SIOP training, (3) ESOL certification and SIOP training, and (4) neither ESOL certification nor SIOP training. Morgan (2008) utilized a two-part survey to collect data for the study. Part one of the survey measured teacher efficacy in the following criteria: overall efficacy, efficacy of student engagement, efficacy of classroom management, and efficacy of instructional strategies. Part two addressed the teachers' demographics. The results from the survey concluded that teachers who received SIOP training and/or an ESOL certification had the highest teacher efficacy scores in all measures of efficacy examined compared to those who had neither ESOL certification nor SIOP training (Morgan, 2008, p. 100).

Effective training regarding ELs can expand a teacher's knowledge base and alter their perceptions of L2 learners. In a study conducted by Torok and Aguilar (2000) of 33 preservice teachers, the teachers underwent an intensive three-week multicultural education course that fulfilled a teacher education requirement. The course focused on culture, ethnicity, race, class, gender and sexual orientation, religious diversity, disabilities, and language diversity. Torok and Aguilar (2000) collected data from course assignments, which included daily journals, a mid-semester and final essay, a scholarly project, and self-reflections on cross-cultural experiences. They also used various survey methods before and after the course to identify demographics, students' knowledge about diversity issues, and their personal and professional beliefs regarding diversity in the classroom and in their personal lives. Results from these measures demonstrated that the education course increased the teachers' knowledge and understanding of language issues, including bilingual and ESOL education programs (Torok & Aguilar, 2000, p. 24-25). One student's journal entry addressed their experience attending a

Russian mass and the challenges they faced due to the language barrier (Torok & Aguilar, 2000, p. 28). This experience helped the student understand the challenges that ELs face when entering a U.S. school for the first time. The research concluded that multicultural education courses may be a critical component in teacher education programs in order to increase a teacher's knowledge about languages and positively alter his or her perceptions (Torok & Aguilar, 2000, p. 30). Similarly, Youngs and Youngs (2001) found that teachers should be continuously exposed to diversity through multicultural education and foreign and EL-related courses, so they have better attitudes towards ELs, are more prepared, and obtain more effective instruction to teach ELs (Youngs & Youngs, 2001, p. 117).

In order to effectively address the cultural needs of the students, teachers of diverse classrooms must understand their own cultural identity and assumptions that guide their instruction (de Jong & Harper, 2005, p. 111). Thevenot (2012) makes note in her research that foreign language education or cultural immersion through a study abroad program are very effective ways to raise cultural awareness among teachers; however, not all teachers have access to these programs (p. 2). She presents an alternative path for teachers through an ESOL methods and techniques course that enables preservice teachers to look at their own cultural awareness and understand their perspectives on diversity through various course assignments: class discussions, literature, and field research (Thevenot, 2012, p. 37). Thevenot (2012) concluded that these assignments helped change the cultural awareness of the preservice teachers and helped them to acquire cultural knowledge that they could apply to the ESOL classroom environment (p. 114).

In addition to understanding one's own cultural identity, teachers should also provide learning that is applicable to their students. When cultural experiences are integrated into the

learning process it can improve student achievement by making the learning more meaningful and interesting (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Even though the population of students is becoming more diverse, the certified teachers in our schools remain predominantly European-American, middle class, and female (Ward & Ward, 2002, p. 532). Because of these cultural gaps, Gay (2002) emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive teaching. The term *culturally relevant teaching* was first described by Ladson-Billings (1995) as “a pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment” (p. 160). Ladson-Billings (1995) continues by stating that it must depend on three criteria: “students must experience academic success, students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (p. 160). Based on these principles, Gay (2002) describes several key factors that teachers should possess or be able to do that would aid in the implementation of culturally responsive teaching: obtaining a diverse knowledge base, designing a curriculum that reflects the diversity of the students, creating a caring learning environment, being able to communicate effectively with students, and matching instruction to the various learning styles present.

Best Practices for Literacy Instruction of ELs

Alderson et al. (2015) found that most research in the area of literacy has been conducted on L1 reading (p. 70). As a result, the teaching methods and assessment criteria used in schools for L2 reading are based on this research. Children who are learning to read in their L1 already have knowledge of the spoken language, the grammar, and some vocabulary. When learning to read, an L1 learner applies this knowledge to the written form of the language (p. 70). However, the same assumption is not true for learners learning to read in a second language. The L2

learner does not know or understand the second language and may or may not be able to read in their L1 (p. 6). Alderson et al. (2015) found that in order for a second language learner to be able to read in their L2, he or she must reach a threshold of oral proficiency in the target language. Once the learner has reached this threshold, L1 reading skills (if any) can transfer to the L2 (p. 71). However, this threshold is different for every learner depending upon certain factors such as the reader's purpose or their knowledge of the world. Due to the unfair assumption that L1 teaching strategies can also be applied to L2 reading, reading achievement gaps between ELs and non ELs are significant.

Oral language is a major component in learning to read because learners can expand on their understanding of a topic as they talk about it (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007, p. 108). According to the National Council of Teachers of English (2006), students that engage in authentic interactions with their peers and use content language in meaningful contexts develop academic oral language that supports reading development (as cited in Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007, p. 108). Helman and Burns (2008) found a strong correlation between a learner's oral language proficiency and their sight word acquisition rate. Sight word recognition is key to reading development because readers can spend more energy on comprehension of a text rather than on decoding the unknown words (Helman & Burns, 2008, p. 14). In their study of 43 Hmong-speaking ELs, Helman and Burns (2008) measured the learners' oral proficiency in English using the Language Assessment Scales-Oral which measures speaking and listening skills, including vocabulary, listening comprehension, and verbal proficiency (p. 15). They then measured the acquisition rate of English sight words using a method in which students were taught one unknown high frequency word with every eight known high frequency words. Once the learner made three errors with an unknown word, the acquisition rate was calculated (p. 16).

Based on their results, learners with the highest oral language proficiency had the highest mean acquisition rate (Helman & Burns, 2008, p. 16).

Another key component in learning to read is knowledge of phonemic awareness. Freeman and Freeman (2004) discuss two models of reading instruction that define the role of phonemic awareness very differently. In the word recognition model, researchers believe phonemic awareness plays a crucial role in relating print to sound (linking graphemes to phonemes in alphabetic languages) (Alderson et al., 2015, p. 69; Freeman & Freeman, 2004, p. 78). In order to change the written forms into sounds, a reader needs to understand that words in oral language are made up of individual phonemes (Freeman & Freeman, 2004, p. 74). For an EL, they must also have knowledge of the phonemes that make up the language in which they are learning to read. As described earlier, these phonemes may be different than the phonemes in their L1. Researchers who support the word recognition view of reading believe that phonemic awareness is a conscious activity that requires direct instruction in phonemic awareness tasks (Freeman & Freeman, 2004, p. 78). Teaching methods that support the word recognition view would include instruction of phonemic awareness skills such as counting the number of phonemes in a word or picking out a word that starts with a different phoneme from others in a group. After these skills have been taught, students would be tested on reading ability. Pressley and Allington (2015) describe this approach as “skills emphasis” instruction which requires teachers to explicitly teach various skills in order for a learner to become a reader (p. 19). Several studies of children learning to read a second language have found a correlation between phonological awareness and word decoding ability (Comeau, Cormier, Grandmaison & Lacroix, 1999, pp. 30-31). Durgunoglu, Nagy, and Hancin-Bhatt (1993) found a positive correlation

among first graders whose phonological awareness in Spanish and Spanish word recognition corresponded with word and pseudoword recognition in English (p. 461).

The other model of instruction identified by Freeman and Freeman (2004) is the sociopsycholinguistic model. Researchers who support the sociopsycholinguistic model view phonemic awareness as a less significant criterion in learning to read. Supporters of this view claim that phonemic awareness is a subconscious, natural part of a learner's oral language development before learning to read (Freeman & Freeman, 2004, p. 82). As a learner is being read to he or she connects their knowledge of sounds to the letters in the text and uses that knowledge to understand the meaning (p. 81). Pressley and Allington (2015) define this approach as "meaning emphasis" instruction where teachers introduce a whole story and only teach skills in the context of the reading, not in isolation (p. 19). Learners become readers and acquire reading skills through multiple exposures to reading practice (Pressley & Allington, 2015, p. 19). One particular study conducted by Neumann (1999) found that children learning to read in their native language who are exposed to read-aloud activities performed better on phonemic awareness tasks than children who were not read to (Neumann, 1999, as cited in Freeman & Freeman, 2004, p. 81). Teachers were given high-quality children's books and trained on how to effectively read them aloud. After six months, they administered two tests of phonemic awareness. The first test was a rhyme test in which students were asked to determine which of three words did not rhyme with the others. The second test was an alliteration test in which students were asked which of three words did not start with the same sound. The experimental group performed better than the control group on both tests, indicating that these skills were a result of exposure to books and read-alouds (Neumann, 1999, as cited in Freeman & Freeman, 2004, p. 81). However, Neumann's (1999) research focused on L1 reading and did not

take into account students who do not have knowledge of the second language. Nevertheless, based on the research by Durgunoglu et al. (1993) and Comeau et al. (1999) of the correlation between first and second language phonological awareness skills, the sociopsycholinguistic model holds promise for L2 reading instruction.

While both the word recognition model and the sociopsycholinguistic model possess valid components for reading instruction, a balanced approach may be more effective. Early explicit instruction on reading skills in kindergarten and first grade produces better decoders in reading initially whereas a more whole language approach leads to more motivation, better comprehension, and a better understanding of the reading process (Pressley & Allington, 2015, pp. 53-54). Effective reading instruction involves the development of skills, when necessary, and opportunities to apply and practice those skills in meaningful contexts (Pressley & Allington, 2015, p. 453). Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) conducted a study of early elementary school teachers who were nominated by their supervisors as being highly successful in educating students to be good readers. The researchers administered two questionnaires to obtain information about the teachers' literacy instruction and the practices they utilized in their classrooms (Pressley et al., 1996, p. 367). The researchers found that all of the teachers in the study integrated features of a whole language approach, as well as explicit skills instruction (Pressley et al., 1996, p. 379).

Acquiring a strong vocabulary base also plays an important role in ELs' learning of English as well as in school achievement (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005). August et al. (2005) note that students who are learning to read in their first language come to school with a vocabulary base of about 5,000-7,000 words, whereas English learners have a significantly lower vocabulary in the target language before they begin formal reading instruction (p. 51). Alderson

et al. (2015) distinguish between two elements of vocabulary knowledge: breadth and depth. Breadth refers to the size of one's vocabulary while depth refers to word knowledge, which entails its spelling, pronunciation, meaning, register, collocations, and morphological and syntactical properties (Alderson et al., 2015, p. 102). Both of these elements are essential in order to have full knowledge of a vocabulary word. Chung (2012) suggests that effective vocabulary instruction that is rich in language and word experiences and applies direct word teaching is necessary for increasing an EL's vocabulary knowledge. She describes a rich language environment as one which consists of a variety of diverse reading materials that include topics at the students' appropriate reading levels (Chung, 2012, p. 107). Other strategies that would provide students with meaningful experiences include teacher read-alouds that involve thorough explanations and discussions of new vocabulary, repeated readings of the same text, and opportunities for students to participate in small-group discussions (Chung, 2012, pp. 107-108). Direct word teaching includes providing new vocabulary in meaningful contexts, allowing for multiple exposures to the vocabulary, and teaching of the basic and tier 2 words (Chung, 2012, pp. 109-111). Basic words are words that native English speakers already know but that ELs need to learn such as *squirrel* or *walk* (Chung, 2012, p. 109). Goldenberg (2008) suggests that an effective way to teach these basic words is with a visual representation in addition to a language-based explanation (p. 19). Using pictures as well as explanations is especially helpful for students with lower levels of oral English (Goldenberg, 2008, p. 19). Tier 2 words are high frequency words that are found in a variety of academic domains (Chung, 2012, p. 109). Examples of tier 2 words include *measure* and *solution*.

Although much research has been conducted on L1 reading instruction, further research is needed to explore the instructional needs of students learning to read in a second language. In

addition, research on the factors that influence teachers' perceptions and sense of efficacy in regards to teaching reading to ELs is necessary. This research would help provide school administrators with suggestions for training teachers to meet the instructional needs of ELs in reading and improve teachers' overall reading instruction and sense of efficacy.

Methodology

I conducted my original research on elementary school teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs for reading through a teacher survey. I conducted the survey by posting an invitation discussion on the member forum for a national professional organization for teachers, as well as on various education related pages on social media sites. The invitations were specifically directed to elementary school teachers. This message included a link to the consent form and survey. The survey was conducted within a two-week time frame. After one week, I sent a follow-up reminder with the survey link. The invitation post and survey questions can be found in the Appendix.

The teacher survey was designed to target the factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards ELs in their classroom and their perceptions of ELs' instructional needs for reading, as well as the teachers' sense of efficacy. Surveys are usually administered to describe, compare, or explain an individual's knowledge and feelings about a certain topic (Fink, 2009, p.1). I utilized Fink (2009) to create my own survey questions as well as modified versions of the questionnaires used by two other researchers. Lo (2009) designed a questionnaire targeting teachers' perceptions of their professional training and attitudes towards ELs. I modified this questionnaire by rewording the questions so they focus on teachers' perceptions of instructional needs related to reading rather than general education practices. Sture's (2009) questionnaire focused on teacher efficacy for literacy instruction of struggling readers. I modified this

questionnaire by rewording the questions so they pertained specifically to teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction of ELs. The following research questions were tested through analysis of the survey data:

1. What are elementary education teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs for reading?
2. What training and work experience factors influence teachers' perceptions and self efficacy of ELs' instructional needs in reading?
3. How do teacher's perceptions of ELs' instructional needs correlate with their sense of self efficacy?

The survey was divided into two sections. The first section consisted of a set of questions with forced-response choices to obtain teachers' demographic and career information (such as age, gender, ethnicity, area of certification, EL/ESOL training, school and student demographics, and their level of experience with ELs in their classroom). The second section consisted of questions that focused on elementary education teachers' attitudes toward and perceptions of ELs' instructional needs, particularly relating to reading, as well as questions related to teacher efficacy. Participants responded to this section of the survey using a Likert-type scale in which they specified their level of agreement or disagreement using a five point system of (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, or (5) Strongly Agree (Fink, 2009, p. 25).

The participants of the survey included practicing elementary education teachers of varying ages, ethnicities, gender, and levels of teaching experience. Participants completed the survey online, and in order to maintain anonymity of the data, they were not required to provide their names.

After data was collected, I analyzed the results using descriptive statistics to address my research questions. Descriptive statistics provide a simple summary of the sample using simple

percentages and averages (Fink, 2009, p. 78). Descriptive statistics were calculated in the first section of the survey to classify participants based on teacher characteristics. I also used this statistical method to explore comparisons between characteristics of teachers in section one of the survey, such as their EL/ESOL training, and the perceptions addressed in section two, such as the teachers' opinion about ELs in the mainstream classroom and teachers' sense of efficacy. These comparisons were done to identify factors that tend to influence teachers' perceptions.

Results and Analysis

The purpose of the current study was to explore mainstream teachers' perceptions of ELs and their instructional needs relating to reading development and how those perceptions relate to teachers' sense of self efficacy.

The participants of the study were 38 elementary school teachers from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with varying levels of teaching experience who responded to the teacher survey. Table 1 shows the demographic and career information for the survey participants, including their ethnicity, the number of years they have been an elementary school teacher, the largest number of ELs they have had in a class that they have taught, and their training related to ESOL in their teacher education program. The numbers and percentages presented in Table 1 only reflect the participants who answered the particular questions. In addition to the information reported in Table 1, of the 38 participants who completed the online survey, 24% are certified in ESOL and/or bilingual education.

According to NCES (2016), 81.9% of teachers nationally identified as White, 6.8% identified as Black, and 7.8% identified as Hispanic in the 2011-2012 school year. The percentages shown in Table 1 for my survey respondents' ethnicity are similar to the percentages

Table 1

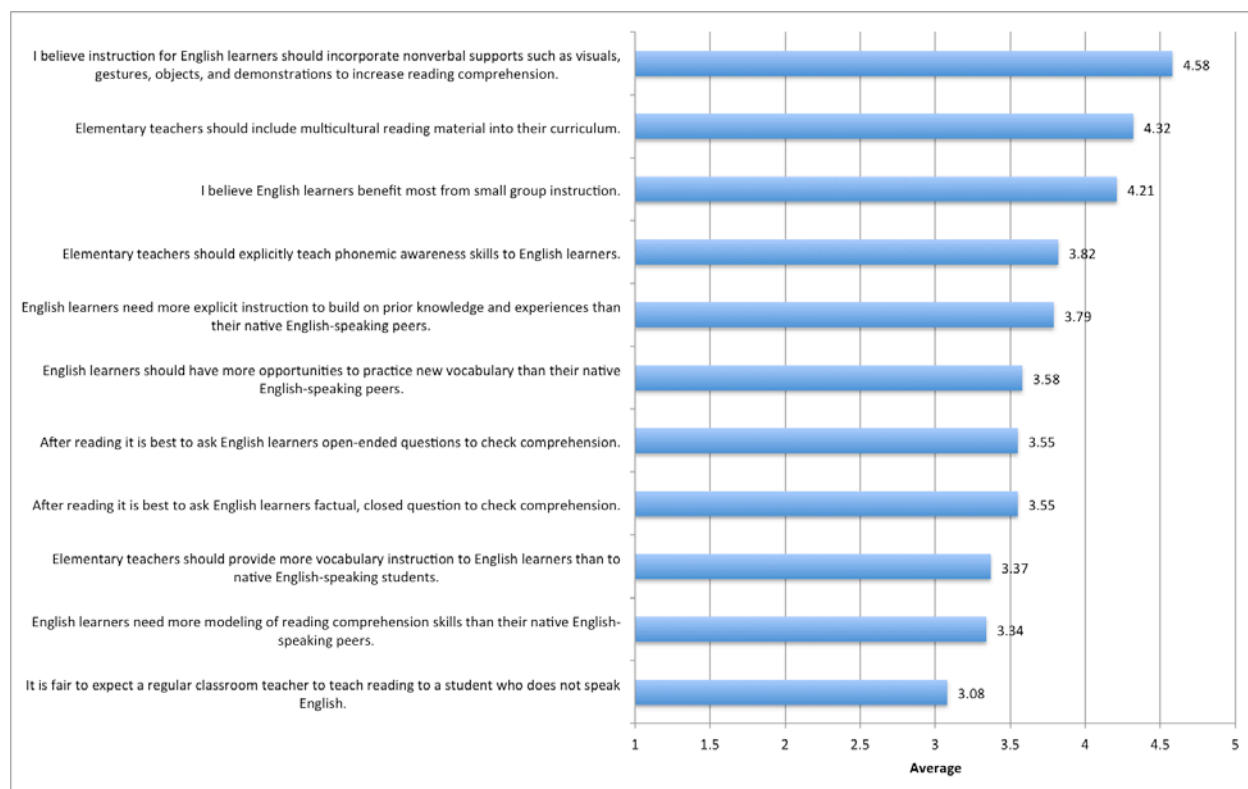
Demographic Information of Survey Participants (N=38)

Characteristics	% of Participants
Ethnicity	
White/Caucasian	84%
Black or African American	5%
Hispanic or Latino	8%
Other	3%
No. of years teaching	
Less than 10 years	60%
10 – 20 years	32%
Greater than 20 years	8%
No. of ELs in class	
Less than 5	58%
5 – 10 ELs	12%
11 – 20 ELs	27%
21 – 30 ELs	3%
Training in ESOL	
Yes	53%
No	47%

found on the NCES website. Since the percentages of teachers in the non-White categories of the current study are so small, I decided not to use ethnicity in my analysis of the teacher survey. Therefore, when I refer to “demographic information” throughout this section, I am only referring to the number of years the participants have been an elementary school teacher, their experience with teaching ELs in their classroom, and their training related to ESOL.

To determine elementary education teachers’ perceptions of ELs’ instructional needs in reading (Research Question 1), the responses to the perception questions in part two of the survey were collected and assigned a rating: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly Agree = 5. The average was then calculated for each question. Table 2 displays these averages, in descending order, for each question related to teachers’ perceptions of ELs’ instructional needs in reading.

Table 2

Teachers' Perceptions of ELs' Instructional Needs in Reading (N=38), Average Ratings

The questions related to the use of nonverbal supports to increase reading comprehension, the inclusion of multicultural reading material, and the use of small group instruction had averages greater than 4, showing good agreement on these questions. The remaining questions related to teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs had averages ranging from 3.82 to 3.08, showing disagreement on these questions.

To determine what factors influence general education teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs for reading (Research Question 2), the questions in part two of the teacher survey were analyzed and compared with the demographic information. For all questions regarding teachers' perceptions, participants were asked to answer using a Likert-type scale by

indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. In the following discussion, the “agree” and “strongly agree” responses have been collapsed into an overall “agree” category; and the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” responses have been similarly collapsed.

On the question that stated “It is fair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach reading to a student who does not speak English,” 39% indicated that they agree with this statement and 32% indicated that they disagree with this statement. However, no correlations were found when comparing this question to the demographic information. This suggests that these factors of training and teaching experience do not influence teachers’ perceptions on whether or not they believe it is fair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach reading to ELs.

According to the literature review, ELs need explicit vocabulary instruction in order to attain a vocabulary base comparable to their native English-speaking peers (August et al., 2005; Alderson et al., 2015; Chung, 2012; Goldenberg, 2008). On the question of the teacher survey that stated “Elementary teachers should provide more vocabulary instruction to English learners than to native English-speaking students,” 53% indicated that they agree with this statement, whereas 32% indicated that they disagree with this statement. On the question that stated “English learners should have more opportunities to practice new vocabulary than their native English-speaking peers,” 71% indicated that they agree with this statement and 24% indicated that they disagree with this statement. The results of these questions were analyzed to determine if there was a correlation between participants who agreed/disagreed with these statements and the demographic information. There was no correlation found between participants who agreed/disagreed with these statements and the demographic information. However, when

comparing these two questions, data shows that 86% of participants who indicated that they disagree to both of these questions had either zero training related to ESOL or have never taught ELs in the classroom. This correlation suggests that teachers' training in their teacher education program and their experience teaching ELs influence their perceptions on ELs' instructional needs related to vocabulary instruction.

On the question that stated "English learners need more modeling of reading comprehension skills than their native English-speaking peers," 53% indicated that they agree with this statement, whereas 24% indicated that they disagree. When comparing this question to the demographic information, there is no correlation to the participants who agreed with this statement. However, 78% who stated that they disagree with this statement had no training in their teacher education program related to ESOL. This correlation suggests that a teacher's training may impact their perception of English learners' needs for more modeling of reading comprehension skills.

In order to explore factors that may influence participants' self efficacy, their responses to efficacy questions on part two of the survey were compared to the demographic information. For all questions regarding teachers' sense of efficacy, participants were asked to answer using a Likert-type scale by indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. In the following discussion, the "agree" and "strongly agree" responses have been collapsed into an overall "agree" category; and the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" responses have been similarly collapsed.

On the question that stated "I believe my methods of instructing English learners on phonemic awareness are very effective," 39% agreed that their methods are effective and 8% disagreed. The data shows no correlation between the participants who agree with this statement

and the demographic information. On the other hand, the 8% of participants who indicated that they disagree with this statement have had little experience teaching ELs, with less than five ELs in a class that they have taught. This correlation suggests that experience teaching ELs may influence teachers' sense of efficacy on teaching phonemic awareness skills. There were also a large number of participants, 45%, who answered neutral to this statement, suggesting that these participants were unclear whether or not their methods of teaching phonemic awareness to ELs are effective.

On the question that stated "I believe my methods of instructing English learners on new vocabulary are very effective," 45% agreed with this statement, whereas 11% disagreed. Of the 45% participants who indicated that they believe their methods of instructing ELs on new vocabulary are effective, 65% have also had training related to ESOL in their teacher preparation program. Additionally, on the question that stated "I believe my methods of modeling reading comprehension skills are very effective with English learners," 58% indicated that they agree with this statement and 8% indicated that they disagree. Of the 58% participants who agreed that their methods of modeling reading comprehension skills are effective with ELs, 64% have had training related to ESOL. There was no correlation found between participants who indicated that they disagree with these statements and the demographic information. These correlations suggest that teacher training may influence a teacher's sense of efficacy in regards to teaching ELs new vocabulary and modeling reading comprehension skills.

To determine whether there was a correlation between teachers' perceptions and their self efficacy of ELs' instructional needs in reading (Research Question 3), the questions pertaining to teachers' perceptions in part two of the survey were compared to the questions related to teachers' sense of self efficacy in part two of the survey. For all questions regarding teachers'

perceptions and sense of efficacy, participants were asked to answer using a Likert-type scale by indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. In the following discussion, the “agree” and “strongly agree” responses have been collapsed into an overall “agree” category; and the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” responses have been similarly collapsed.

The questions “Regular classroom teachers should modify instruction for English learners” and “I believe my methods of differentiation are effective with English learners” were compared to determine if there was a relationship between participants’ responses to these two questions. Data shows that 79% of the participants agree that classroom teachers should modify instruction for ELs. Of the 79% that agreed with this perception question, 77% also agreed that their methods of differentiation are effective with ELs. This correlation suggests that participants who believe that modifications for ELs are necessary in the general education classroom also feel as though their methods of differentiation are working.

On the question that stated “English learners need more explicit instruction to build on prior knowledge and experiences than their native English-speaking peers,” 71% of participants who responded to the survey agreed with this perception, whereas 13% disagreed. This question was compared to the efficacy question that stated “I believe my methods of instruction effectively provide English learners with opportunities to apply their prior knowledge to reading tasks.” Out of the 71% that agreed with the perception question, 63% also agree that their methods of activating prior knowledge are effective, suggesting that there is a correlation between teachers’ perceptions and their sense of efficacy in regards to effectively building on ELs’ background knowledge to complete reading tasks.

Similarly, on the question that stated “English learners need more modeling of reading comprehension skills than their native English-speaking peers,” 53% of the participants agreed with this question and 24% disagreed. When compared to the efficacy question that stated “I believe my methods of modeling reading comprehension skills are very effective with English learners,” of the 53% that agreed with the perception question, 65% also agreed that their methods of modeling reading comprehension skills are effective. This comparison shows a correlation between teachers’ perceptions of ELs’ instructional needs in regards to modeling reading comprehension skills and their sense of efficacy in modeling these skills effectively.

The question that stated “Elementary teachers should explicitly teach phonemic awareness skills to English learners” was compared to the question that stated “I believe my methods of instructing English learners on phonemic awareness are very effective” to determine if there was a relationship between teachers’ perception of phonemic awareness instruction with ELs and their sense of efficacy teaching these skills to this group of students. The questions “Elementary teachers should provide more vocabulary instruction to English learners than to native English-speaking students” and “I believe my methods of instructing English learners on new vocabulary are very effective” were similarly compared. Data shows that there is no significant correlation to how participants responded to these two sets of questions.

Discussion

This research project explored teachers’ perceptions and sense of efficacy of ELs’ instructional needs for reading. With the increasing diversity in schools today and the increasing trend for inclusion of all students in the mainstream classroom, it is imperative that all teachers receive specialized training to meet the needs of their diverse learners and to help boost a

teachers' overall sense of efficacy (Morgan, 2008; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Gandara et al., 2005; Lo, 2005).

The first question addressed by this research was: *What are elementary education teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs for reading?* Teachers who responded to the teacher survey generally agreed that English learners benefit most from small group instruction, that teachers should include multicultural reading material into their curriculum, and that nonverbal supports should be incorporated into reading instruction to increase ELs' comprehension. On the other hand, data shows disagreement among teachers' responses in the following areas: phonemic awareness instruction, building background knowledge, vocabulary instruction, reading comprehension questioning techniques, teacher modeling of reading comprehension skills, and teachers' overall perception on teaching reading to ELs. The question that stated "It is fair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach reading to a student who does not speak English" had the lowest average of 3.08. This finding supports the prior research on teachers' perceptions of ELs. Due to a lack of training, mainstream teachers feel under prepared and lack the knowledge to effectively teach ELs, resulting in more negative attitudes toward instruction for ELs (Griffin, 2008; Lo, 2009; Creese, 2006; Torok & Aguilar, 2000).

The second research question was: *What training and work experience factors influence teachers' perceptions and self efficacy of ELs' instructional needs in reading?* The results of the teacher survey showed that teachers' work experience and training influence teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs in reading. These factors also have a huge impact on teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching reading to ELs. The data showed that most participants who disagreed with the questions related to self efficacy also had little to no training or experience teaching ELs, resulting in a lack of efficacy in regards to teaching reading to ELs.

This data supports previous research for self efficacy being influenced by the amount of training a teacher receives. Morgan (2008) concluded that the more specialized the training, the higher the teachers' sense of self efficacy.

The third research question that was addressed was: *How do teacher's perceptions of ELs' instructional needs correlate with their sense of self efficacy?* This was done to determine if there was a relationship between participants' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs and their efficacy on teaching reading to ELs. A large percentage of participants who agreed that classroom instruction should be modified for ELs, that ELs require more instruction building on prior knowledge, and that ELs need more modeling of reading comprehension skills also felt that their teaching methods were effective in these three areas. On the other hand, no correlations were found between teachers' perceptions and efficacy related to phonemic awareness instruction or vocabulary instruction.

On five of the seven questions in part two of the survey related to teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching reading to ELs, more than 30% of the participants responded with *neutral*. This is an important point to note because a neutral response could be interpreted as a lack of efficacy. With this interpretation, the percentage of participants who feel unprepared or that their methods of reading instruction are ineffective would increase significantly.

Conclusion

While this research identified teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs in reading and showed some correlations between teachers' perceptions, sense of efficacy, and work experience and training, it did have some limitations. First, the sample size was small. One problem that was encountered was that some participants missed the entire part two section of the survey. There may have been issues with the website that prevented participants from getting

all the way through the survey. As a result, these participants' responses were not included in the data. Another limitation of the study was the Likert-type scale used in part two of the teacher survey. Since participants had a "neutral" choice on these questions, it was difficult to draw a conclusion on these teachers' perceptions and sense of efficacy.

Teachers and administrators looking to positively affect teachers' perceptions and self efficacy in regards to reading instruction for ELs can apply the findings of this research study to their classrooms and professional development courses. All teacher preparation programs should include multiple courses related to ESOL. In addition, administrators should consider providing ongoing professional development in courses such as multicultural education, second language acquisition, and second language teaching methods. This would help to increase a teacher's knowledge about languages and the process of acquisition, as well as positively alter his or her perceptions of ELs (Torok & Aguilar, 2000; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Griffin, 2008). Furthermore, specialized training related to ESOL will increase a teachers' sense of efficacy and improve student learning (Morgan, 2008; Durgunoglu & Hughes, 2010; Gandara et al., 2005; Lo, 2005).

The findings of this study suggest a question for further research. The current study surveyed elementary teachers' perceptions of ELs' instructional needs in reading and teachers' sense of self efficacy in teaching reading to ELs. However, teacher training could be giving a false sense of self efficacy. Further research could be done to determine whether there is a correlation between teachers' sense of efficacy and actual improvement of ELs' achievement. This could lead to a better understanding of the effectiveness of the teacher training that is provided regarding teaching ELs. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) suggest that teachers need a

substantial amount of training in a given area (close to 50 hours) to improve their skills and student achievement (p. 5).

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Appendix

Procedural Documents

This Appendix contains originals of all of the documents used in gathering data for this research project, which was conducted in Fall 2016. These include, in order of appearance:

Online Survey Invitation Email

Online Survey Consent Form

Online Survey Questions

Each item is an accurate reproduction of the document developed and used to collect data for this research project.

Online Survey Invitation Email

Subject: Please Respond to Short Survey

Dear Colleague,

I am completing my Master of Education degree at the University of Mary Washington. I am also a member of [name of national professional teachers association]. As part of my degree requirement, I am conducting a research project on elementary school teachers' perceptions of English learners' instructional needs for reading. For the purpose of this study, an English learner (EL) is defined as a student who is learning English as a second or other language and may receive support from a language program.

I am writing to request your responses to a brief online survey that is part of my research. Participation in the survey is voluntary and anonymous, and should not take more than 15 minutes of your time. The survey is available through Survey Monkey at the link provided below. The survey will be available online until September 26, 2016. You may receive a reminder email before then.

Click [HERE](#) to open the survey website. More information is provided on the website.

If you have any questions before taking the survey, or would like to receive a copy of my research when it is completed, you may contact me by email at emcmulle@umw.mail.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth McMullen

Online Survey Consent Form

The purpose of the survey that follows is to gather information from elementary teachers about their perceptions and attitudes of English learners' (ELs) instructional needs for reading, and about teacher efficacy. For the purpose of this study, ELs are defined as students who are learning English as a second or other language and may receive support from a language program. This survey is being conducted as part of a research project required for completion of a Master of Education at the University of Mary Washington.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a member of Kappa Delta Pi which has given me permission to use its member discussion forum. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Respondents are invited to answer all questions, but are free to skip any questions they choose not to answer for any reason, and free to stop and not complete the survey for any reason whatsoever.

All responses are anonymous, which means that not even the researcher will be able to determine your identity. Clicking the "Consent" button below signals consent that your responses can be used for the purposes described here. In any reports about this research, only aggregated data will be presented or used in order to prevent potential identification of individual survey respondents.

There are minimal risks, and no direct benefits to taking this survey. The only possible risk of participating in this survey would be discomfort you might feel about answering particular questions. But since the survey is voluntary and anonymous, this risk is extremely minimal. On the other hand, the research may produce great benefits for you, your students, and your colleagues. Hopefully the results of this study will provide a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of ELs and lead to better ways to train teachers to support this group of students and improve their sense of efficacy related to ELs.

Questions about this survey can be directed to the researcher, Elizabeth McMullen at emcmulle@mail.umw.edu. This research has been approved by the University of Mary Washington Institutional Review Board which is a committee responsible for ensuring that research is being conducted safely and that risks to participants are minimized. For information about the IRB review of this research, contact the IRB chair, Dr. Jo Tyler, at jtyler@umw.edu.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth McMullen

Statement of Consent (to appear at the beginning of the Survey instrument)

I understand that this survey is being conducted as part of a research project to learn about elementary teachers' perceptions and attitudes of ELs' instructional needs for reading. I have read the information describing this study. I am 18 years of age or older and agree voluntarily to participate in the study. I hereby grant permission for my survey responses to be used anonymously for research purposes. I also understand that I will NOT be personally identified in

any manner in any reports or other written materials associated with the research.

After reading the Statement of Consent above, select one of the following options:

I grant my consent

(Check this box to continue with the survey)

I DO NOT grant my consent

(Check this box to close the survey website; no information about you will be provided to the researcher)

Online Survey Questions

Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of English Learners Instructional Needs in Reading

Survey Part I: Demographic Information

Please check or fill in the blank with the answer that best describes you or your school.

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male

2. What is your age?
 - a. 18 to 24
 - b. 25 to 34
 - c. 35 to 44
 - d. 45 to 54
 - e. 55 to 64
 - f. 65 to 74
 - g. 75 or older

3. What is your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)
 - a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - b. Asian or Pacific Islander
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Hispanic or Latino
 - e. White/Caucasian
 - f. Other (please specify)

4. Are you fluent in another language other than English?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, what other languages do you speak?

5. Have you ever lived for a year or more outside of the United States?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, please specify where.

6. What are your areas of teacher licensure?

7. How many years have you been an elementary school teacher (including this year)?

8. In your teacher education program, did you take any courses related to ESOL, such as Multicultural Education, Second Language Acquisition, Second Language Teaching Methods, Bilingual Education?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, please specify courses.

9. Approximately what percentage of your total school population do you think is English learners?
10. What has been the largest number of English learners in a class that you have taught?

Survey Part II: Perceptions of English Learners and their Instructional Needs in Reading

Please answer the following questions by checking the answer that best describes you: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree.

1. It is OK for English learners to speak their native language in class to communicate with others.
2. It is OK for English learners to speak their native language during instruction to aid in understanding.
3. It is fair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach reading to a student who does not speak English.
4. Regular classroom teachers should modify instruction for English learners.
5. I believe my methods of differentiation are effective with English learners.
6. My professional education courses included techniques for effectively teaching reading to students whose languages, cultures, and backgrounds differ from my own.
7. My professional education courses have made me more aware of the cultural needs in education.
8. Elementary teachers should include multicultural reading material into their curriculum.
9. Elementary teachers should explicitly teach phonemic awareness skills to English learners.
10. I believe my methods of instructing English learners on phonemic awareness are very effective.
11. Students who can read in their first language are able to transfer literacy skills when learning to read in English.
12. Elementary teachers should provide more vocabulary instruction to English learners than to native English-speaking students.
13. English learners should have more opportunities to practice new vocabulary than their native English-speaking peers.
14. I believe my methods of instructing English learners on new vocabulary are very effective.
15. English learners need more explicit instruction to build on prior knowledge and experiences than their native English-speaking peers.

16. I believe my methods of instruction effectively provide English learners with opportunities to apply their prior knowledge to reading tasks.
17. I believe English learners benefit most from small group instruction.
18. I believe my methods of instruction provide multiple opportunities for classroom interactions.
19. I believe instruction for English learners should incorporate nonverbal supports such as visuals, gestures, objects, and demonstrations to increase reading comprehension.
20. I believe the nonverbal supports I use during reading instruction are effective with English learners.
21. After reading it is best to ask English learners factual, closed questions to check comprehension.
22. After reading it is best to ask English learners open-ended questions to check comprehension.
23. English learners need more modeling of reading comprehension skills than their native English-speaking peers.
24. I believe my methods of modeling reading comprehension skills are very effective for English learners.