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No Habla Espanol: Are Monolingual Teachers Getting the Support They Need?

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Abstract

For this Capstone Project, the researchers investigated how monolingual teachers view the support and resources they received to teach English Language Learners (ELL) and what they thought could be done to improve their teaching effectiveness. An evidence based argument is offered that monolingual teachers were not being provided with effective support and resources. More specifically, three themes emerged from an analysis of the data obtained from interviews of monolingual teachers and administrators. Based on the emergent themes, an action was undertaken to help monolingual teachers better address the needs of ELLs. This is an important issue for monolingual teachers because the research provided options that the district could implement in order to increase their ability to successfully work with ELLs.

No Habla Espanol: Are Monolingual Teachers Getting the Support They Need?

Growing up I was never aware that everyone had a particular race that they belonged to. I would like to think this was because my parents ensured that we did not see people for their skin color, but instead for who they were as a person on the inside. I grew up in a very middle to upper class family, in a small agricultural town where the population was split between Mexican and White people. I knew I was a part of the “darker” half, but I did not know the significance of that in relation to peers around me who were primarily a part of the “lighter” half. One of the main reasons I was so oblivious to this difference was because of the kids I went to school with from the beginning of kindergarten to the end of eighth grade. Just like many other school districts, Hollister was divided into zones and the zone a student lived in decided which school they would attend. With that being said, a lot of the schools in the Hollister School District seemed to be segregated by ethnicity because there were certain neighborhoods which were predominantly Mexican and others that were predominantly White. With the segregation of schools, I found myself, a brown student, in a school with primarily white peers.

My mother worked as a secretary in the district office my entire life and with this job she was able to make a lot of connections with administrators and teachers alike. As a result, my mother was able to place my siblings and I into the schools that were seen as the best in terms of their academic standings among the other schools in the district. Even more so, she was able to place us in specific teachers’ classes that were well into their teaching career and respected in the district. Since my mother was able to make a lot of decisions with the placement of my siblings and I, we were always in the higher achieving schools where the majority of the White population could be found. So, as a child I did not notice that I was surrounded by lighter skinned people while being one of the few darker complected kids, I just knew them as my friends. Now that I look back, I realize that I did not have a single friend who looked like me until I got to high school where everyone had to go because there was only one in the entire town.

Being surrounded by primarily white peers my entire elementary and middle school education did not allow me to develop an awareness of my own Mexican culture from other people outside my family. I suppose that since my parents chose not to teach us to recognize

people's race, they also taught us not to recognize our own. With this came the lack of my own ability to learn anything about Mexican culture, including the Spanish language. With the absence of Spanish acquisition, I have always considered myself to be stuck in this rut of not being Mexican enough for my own people. This was not a problem that I was able to recognize growing up. However, now that I am an adult and in the educational field, I feel as though I am a dishonor to the large number of English Language Learning students I have encountered in my service learning hours and the ones I am learning about in my advanced inquiry courses.

One encounter I recall vividly that made a lasting impression on me was my inability to communicate with someone from my very own culture. Even though Kayla and I came from the same cultural background we had different languages. She spoke only Spanish while I spoke only English which made it difficult for me to be her program leader. My job was to help the students in my group with various activities during our time together in the after school program. However, with the lack of communication between Kayla and I, she was not able to receive the same experiences as the other students who spoke English. The time Kayla and I had together while trying to navigate our language barrier has stuck with me, because I always wished I had the resources to give her a better experience while at the YMCA. I feel as though with the inability to communicate, I was not able to have the same relationship with her that I had with the English speaking students.

This experience opened my eyes to the issues that a great number of monolingual educators face when working with English Language Learners. The barriers that are present establish a disconnect between students and teachers that can be detrimental to the students' academic achievements in an unequal way compared to their English speaking peers. The only way to combat this issue is to provide monolingual teachers with the appropriate resources and support they need to ensure all students, regardless of language acquisition, the opportunities to excel in their educational endeavors. When teachers are able to support their students, it creates a more positive learning environment that will in turn benefit everyone, especially English Language Learners.

Literature Synthesis & Integration

In roughly ten years, the number of English Language Learners in the United States will have grown to approximately 40% (Schneider, 2019). With this drastic increase in students who will be learning English as a second language, there should be adequate resources and support available for the monolingual teachers that will be working side by side with them. In order for these monolingual teachers and their students to succeed, more professional development and proper certification should be implemented for teachers who only speak English. In addition, an understanding of student's backgrounds should be evaluated in order for monolingual teachers to have an understanding of the differences they have with their students who come from a different cultural background. With these combinations, and the Roadmap Policy which focuses on the efforts to improve the educational system for ELLs by improving the quality of teaching and learning (California Department of Education, 2019), monolingual teachers will have the ability to enhance and enrich an English Language Learners' educational achievements.

What is the Issue/Opportunity?

The number of English Language Learners, also known as ELLs, is quickly skyrocketing in our public school systems. This category of students start their educational journeys with various levels of proficiency in English and make up 30% of the school population (Mungia, 2017). ELLs face challenges that their English speaking counterparts do not because of the need to master school content in English while also striving to learn a foreign language. This paper will look to address the problems associated with the lack of support and resources that are available for monolingual educators who work with ELLs.

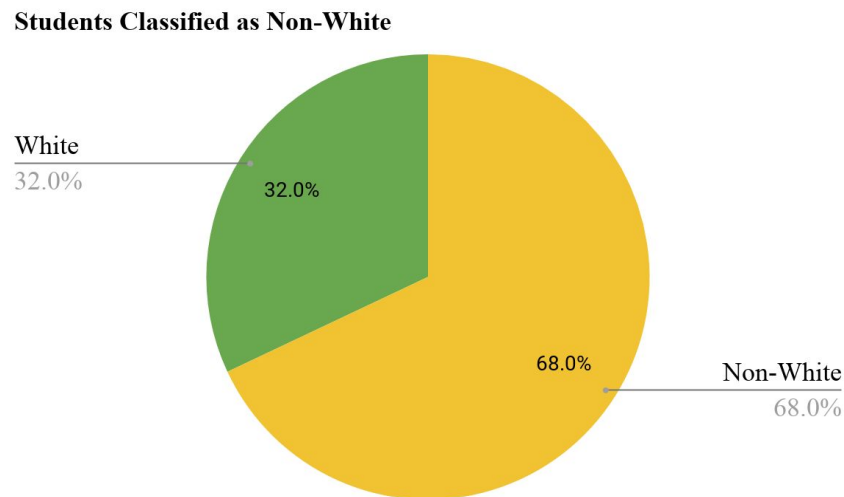
A high ranking problem that corresponds to monolingual teachers who work with linguistically diverse ELLs is that some educators are not receiving the proper certification that should be required to work with these students. According to Olivos and Sarmiento (2006), "Due to the high number of teachers who lack proper certification, high attrition rates found in the teaching profession, and the high turnover of teachers in underperforming schools, teacher effectiveness has become a prime focus for education reformers and policymakers" (p. 72). Trends in educational history showcase that teacher quality can directly relate to student achievement (Olivos & Sarmiento, 2006). Therefore, if teachers are not receiving the proper

certification, or training, to work with ELLs they will not be knowledgeable about effective ways to instruct these students.

Closely related to Olivos and Sarmiento's (2006) perspectives, Hallman and Meineke (2016) also suggest that teacher education programs, "...have yet to adequately address the needs of ELLs throughout the curriculum" (p. 69). This can be related back to the problem which is the lack of knowledge and support given to monolingual educators when it comes to working with culturally and linguistically diverse students in the classroom.

Why is it an Issue/Opportunity?

Figure 1. Students Classified as Non-White



Note. Based on research from Olivos, Edward M., & Sarmiento, Lilia E. (2006). Is there room for biliteracy? Credentialing California's future bilingual teachers. *Issues in Teacher Education, 15*, 69-84.

According to Olivos and Sarmiento (2006), "Over 68% of students in public schools are classified as non-white, and over 1.5 million are classified as non-English speaking" (p. 69). This showcases how the majority of students in many public schools are English Language Learners and, therefore, should have teachers with adequate support and resources available in order to educate appropriately. Arias, Garcia, Murri, and Serna (2010) points out that diversity in the teacher corps is lacking with 83% of educators being non-Hispanic and having white

backgrounds. This can explain the growing concern over the racial and linguistic differences between monolingual educators and their English Language Learning students.

The use of a one size fits all method can be an issue linked to why monolingual teachers are struggling with the support and resources to work with their ELL students. Pritchard (2012) recollected how some teachers felt, “resistant to the idea that they needed to reconsider some of their teaching methods (supplementing word walls with pictures of concepts to support their EL’s language acquisition) in response to the demographic shift in the district” (p. 198).

Although significant shifts in student demographics has changed in almost every district, these teachers, continued to showcase the mentality of a one size fits all system. Like many other experienced teachers, they also felt as though students needed to adapt to their ways of instruction, regardless of being an English Language Learner, because they felt they had been successful thus far with their teaching methods. Teachers with this type of mindset can make ELLs less likely to want to achieve mastery in not only their academic achievements, but also in their English language acquisition. This relates to the Behaviorism Theory which reinforces positive behaviors and in turn encourages students to continue with it. On the other hand, if a teacher thinks a student should fit their one size fits all model, then it can be seen as a negative reinforcement which may make students push away from the learning material all together.

When monolingual teachers do not have the correct support or resources available to them, when teaching English Language Learners, it can be seen through the student’s coursework. This is an issue because the ELLs are then receiving lower scores on the work they are doing in comparison to their native English speaking classmates. According to Gilmetdinova, Oliveira, and Pelaez-Morales (2016), “...Latino/a children score below their English-speaking peers on most of the measures of kindergarten readiness, and their preparation in the areas of language and literacy development is particularly lacking” (p. 22). Furthermore, it is expressed that this rationale can be directly linked to the difficulty the students are facing by being the linguistic minority in a majority English-speaking classroom. Similarly, Manthey and Telez (2015), share that the lack of monolingual educators confidence in teaching ELLs hinders these groups of students and results in a standard deviation lower on academic achievement tests when compared to their white peers. It is important to remember that without teachers who can

confidently teach ELLs, there will be little to no change in the academic success of their linguistically diverse students.

What has and/or should be done?

In order to best suit the ever changing demographics of the public school system in the United States, a few things should be analyzed, implemented, and changed in order to ensure the success of both English Language Learners and their monolingual teachers.

One appropriate action that monolingual teachers should be aware of before teaching English Language Learners is to understand their ELL students' cultural backgrounds. This understanding will promote positive attitudes and welcoming environments in classrooms for ELL students. Kelly (2017) expresses that preservice teachers begin their educational journeys with their own beliefs that affect the way they take on the role as a teacher, however, sometimes these beliefs are not beneficial to ELL students. However, what is true is that beliefs impact teachers' classroom environment and their relationship with students. And because of this monolingual teachers should comprehend ELL students' backgrounds so they ensure their relationships with ELLs and English speaking students are the same. Similarly, Campbell (2013) shares how, "Educators need to identify and draw upon students' existing literacies, or funds of knowledge to 'open a window to students' multiple language and literacy abilities' as a means to assist ELL students in developing academic literacy" (p. 261). A monolingual teacher has a different cognitive and social literacy background from their ELL students and therefore if a teacher does not recognize this it can in turn negatively impact ELL students' development in English.

One of the best ways to make certain monolingual teachers are ready to work with ELLs would be to have all teachers have appropriate preparation. These preparations can typically result in the proper training specifically for monolingual teachers working with English Language Learning students. Currently in California, different ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) Master degrees and/or certifications are in place for teachers (Schneider, 2019). However, the United States has frequently faced a shortage of experienced ESOL certified teachers. Linked to this shortage is a low rate of retention for ELLs in the public school system. One way to alter this occurrence would be to hold teachers accountable with completing

the training and certification needed to work with ELLs. Hopkins (2011), shared that only 18% of teachers can confidently say they have obtained an English as a Second Language (ESL) certification. While this number is low, the number of teachers who have completed a bilingual credential is only 11% (Hopkins, 2011). Shockingly, a recent survey of 5,300 California teachers reported they had not received, "...much, if any, professional support related to improving their instruction of ELLs, and the training they received was often inappropriate or not directly applicable" (Hopkins, 2011, p. 9). Holding teachers accountable for clearing all certifications and trainings needed to work with ELLs before they get into the classroom is a much needed change in the public school system which can in turn result in academic success for their ELL students.

Conclusion

With the rapidly increasing number of English Language Learners present in many districts throughout the United States, the resources and support for monolingual teachers should be a top priority to be considered in hopes of raising the academic achievements of ELLs. Although much research still needs to be conducted, the outcome will be life changing to ELLs.

Method

For this Capstone Project, the researchers investigated how monolingual teachers view the support and resources they receive to effectively teach ELL students and what they thought could be done to improve them. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, the researchers formulated an action that responded to the focus issue in a way that inspired, informed, or involved a particular audience.

Context

Six schools were used as the community partners across four different school districts.

Greys Elementary¹. Greys Elementary is located in Rose, California and is within the De La Rosa Unified School District. Greys Elementary is home to about 400 students with close to 50% being Hispanic/Latino. The students who identify as two or more races make up 16% of the student body and Caucasian students are 14% of the student body. Other ethnicities that can be found within Greys Elementary are African Americans (6%), Asians (5%), Filipinos (4%) and

¹ Pseudonyms have been used in all people, places, and things to protect anonymity.

Pacific Islanders (2%). The main language spoken by the students classified as ELL was Spanish (14.9%). The English language Acquisition Status within Greys Elementary shows that in the 2017-2018 school year 21.1% were considered English Learner while 4.5% were considered Fluent English Proficient. Performance wise the English language arts/literacy results indicated that 39.58% of the students scored at Level 1, 26.04% were Level 2, 24.48% were Level 3 and 9.9% of the student body were considered Level 4.

Stars Hollow Elementary. Stars Hollow Elementary is a public TK-5 elementary school in Stars Hollow. It is one of four elementary schools in the district. Its goal is to teach students resilience, perseverance, kindness and good intentions, as well as the importance of academics. During the 2017-2018 school year there were 492 students enrolled at Stars Hollow Elementary. According to the Schools Accountability Report Card for Stars Hollow Elementary, the school consisted of a diverse group of students. The school was made up of students who were Hispanic or Latino (90.2%), White (4.5%), Asian (2.6%), Filipino (0.8%), Black or African-American (0.6%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.2%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.2%), Two or more races (0.2%), and there were 0.6% of people who choose not to share their ethnicity (Patronik, 2018). During the 2017-2018 school year, there were a variety of languages that were spoken by English language learners at Stars Hollow Elementary school. There were two students who spoke Arabic, three Filipino speaking students, one Hindi speaking student, one Mixteco speaking student, 224 Spanish speaking students, and four students who spoke a different language (Patronik, n.d.). According to Education Data Partnership, there were 238 English language learners at Stars Hollow Elementary school in 2017-2018 (Patronik, n.d.). There were also 65 students who were Fluent English proficient, meaning that they were English language learners but they passed their English acquisition test. Once they pass the test, the district labels the students as Fluent English Proficient.

Sharks Elementary. Sharks Elementary is one of the K-5 grade public elementary schools in the Waves school district. Waves school district can be found in Starfish County in the state of California. The unique location can be found inland of Monterey County and Silicon Valley. This small community is rapidly growing, making room for potential growth in school

institutions (About Us., n.d.). According to Sharks Elementary school profile, the school serves 631 students. With so many students, a diverse group is formed. Based on the information given by California's Department of Education Sharks Elementary's student body is made up of Hispanic/Latino (62.6%), White (30.9%), Asian (1.4%), African Americans (1.1%), Pacific Islander (0.5%), Filipino (0.3%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (0.2%). Two or more races (1.3%), and there was about 1.7% that did not report their ethnicities (Education Data Partnership, n.d.). In connection to the diverse population a variety of languages come about. 95.7% of the population speaks Spanish, 2.15% Punjabi, 1.08% Urdu, and 1.08% Filipino (Education Data Partnership, n.d.). With this information, we also find that 93 out of the 631 students are considered to be English Language Learners, each scoring at different levels of proficiency. According to ELPAC test results, 21.43% of the students scored at Level 1. For Level 2 none were reported. Level 3 there was 28.57% of the students at this level. Level 4 had the highest percentage as overall scores which was 38.1%.

Sydney Elementary. Sydney Elementary is located in Tormund, California which is located in the Tormund City School District. The district is located inland from the Monterey Peninsula being about 20-30 minutes from the coast. The school district in which the school resides has almost 9,000 students (ED Data, 2017-18). The majority of the student population is Latino at 90%. The next highest category are white students at 5.46%. The next is Asian and Filipino at 1.93%. The next is Pacific Islander at 0.13%. The next lowest is American Indian at 1%. And the lowest percentage is African American at 0.73% (Tormund City School District, 2015). At Sydney Elementary, there are a total of 933 students. The student body is 98.8% Latino. The next highest category is white students at 0.4%, American Indian at 0.4%, and then Asian at 0.2 percent. Additionally, about 80.3% of school are English Language Learners and 97% of the student population is socioeconomically disadvantaged (CA Dept. of Education, 2017-18). Additionally, 54% of the student population are English Learners with 34% being English-only. Also, 80% of the population are socioeconomically disadvantaged (Tormund City School District, 2015).

Cougar Elementary. Cougar Elementary School is located within the small agricultural region known as Cougar County. In particular, Cougar Elementary resides within Cougarville, California and is a part of the Cougar School District. Cougarville provides the comfort of a small town with its surrounding hillsides and open meadows, however, short drives both North and West allow convenient escapes to much more hustle and bustle with the city views of San Jose, California and the beautiful beaches in Monterey, California. According to the California Department of Education (2019), Cougar Elementary School serves nearly 500 students ranging from kindergarten to eighth grade with 96.3% Hispanic students, 1.6% White students, 0.4% African American students, 0.2% Asian students, 0.2% Pacific Islander students, and 0.8% of students identified as two or more races. Cougars is also considered a Title I school with 53.5% of students being English Language Learners and 72.2% receiving free or reduced lunch (California Department of Education, 2019).

Sea Breeze Elementary. Is located in Ocean, California in the Sea Breeze School District. The school is home to 413 students this year ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade. Sea Breeze Elementary is not a Charter school, but a public school. Sea Breeze elementary does however fall under the Title I bracket. Of the 413 students, 91.0% receive free and reduced meals. The number of English Language Learners are 64.9% of the student body (California Department of Education, 2019). Students typically speak Spanish at Sea Breeze, but there are a few that speak Arabic as well. There was one child that spoke Tongan (EdData, 2018). The student body was made up of 85.0% Hispanic or Latino students, 6.5% White students, 3.6% had two or more race students, 1.7% African American students, 1.5% Pacific Islander students 1.0% Filipino students, 0.7% Asian students.

Participants and Participant Selection

We interviewed six teachers from the Sea Breeze, De La Rosa, Stars Hollow, Tormund City, and Cougar School Districts. This group of prospective participants provided insight into different methods provided throughout the districts, as well as other resources that teachers have found on their own that they deemed relevant and/ or important to help ELLs succeed with language acquisition. This group provided knowledge on both a district and classroom level, that

gave us a broader idea of the issue at hand.

Researchers. The research group consisted of six different individuals in order to have a broader understanding of the resources that are being provided to monolingual teachers throughout the tri-county area.

Rosa. I believe that I am not the only one that can solve providing monolingual teachers with resources to help English Language, but I feel that I would be able to use my personal experiences coming from a predominantly Latinx community and being an English language learner. I remember having teachers that could not help us because they did not know the language or they themselves can not understand what I am asking or struggling with. I think that myself, as an upcoming teacher, would be able to use my previous experiences to help other current teachers and new upcoming teachers to have the appropriate tools to help English language learners. With the majority of the population changing dramatically, all teachers will encounter an ELL at some point in their careers. My experiences within the educational system has provided me with real connections that I experienced first hand being an ELL. The first couple of years in school I was in the ESL program. I feel that as a future educator it is important that I draw from these real connections that will allow me to be a more knowledgeable educator. Not only from an experience standpoint but resource wise, acknowledge that their students come from different ethnicities and have different language repertoires within my future classroom will allow me to make better connections with my students that will also help them succeed throughout their academic experiences and overall future lives. That is why I think that it is important to learn about the resources that are already being used in classrooms to help ELL students. I am different from the targets because I am not an educator yet. In addition, I am also different because I am not a primarily English speaking teacher. Growing up my parents always made sure to imprint in us that we should not judge someone based on their race, ethnicity, social class, education. I have also worked with children for over 4 years in different communities such as those considered “middle/upper class,” as well as working with students who are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. This allows for me to have a diverse community

understanding having worked with different communities.

Alisha. I personally find this topic meaningful because when I enter the educational field I will be going in as a monolingual teacher. I feel as though being monolingual will challenge me in many ways especially depending on the area I begin my career in and whether that community has a substantial number of ELL students. For this reason, I would like to be knowledgeable, beforehand, about the resources that are available and also ways I can help support other educators who may be monolingual as well. By teaming up with Bendy Well at Cougar Elementary School, I hope to learn about the resources and support she has found helpful to her as a monolingual teacher who works with English Language Learning students. If at the end of this research there are few resources available, I hope our group can be knowledgeable enough to help establish new ways to aide monolingual educators in their classrooms with ELL students. In the past, the only personal experiences I have with this topic is when I worked in an after school program and was given a new student who only spoke spanish. It was very difficult to build a connection with such a large language barrier, however, we used a lot of body language, as well as received help with translations from other students in order to communicate. I feel as though this experience closely aligns with the research question and, therefore, will give me motivation to find the resources and ways I could have gone about the situation so the student had the best outcome. Currently, I am different from the “targets” because I grew up as a monolingual student who did not have to overcome language barriers within my educational process. I am different from the “influentials” because I am going to also be a monolingual educator and will have to overcome the language barriers with future ELL students.

Selena. This project connects to me on a very personal level due to the fact that I will become a monolingual teacher within the next couple of years and will have students in my classroom that do not speak English. Current monolingual teachers face many challenges when it comes to teaching students who are ELLs and these challenges are ones that I will soon face myself. As a future educator I would like to feel secure, supported, and prepared before entering my classroom. The students I will have, I will be

responsible for their understanding of several concepts throughout the school year. There have been several times in my life where I have seen or been put into situations where I am the monolingual individual having to communicate to an ELL. You see, in my community I am more than just a resident, I am a coach and an active volunteer within the school district. There have been times where I have experienced difficulty communicating with ELLs in the community and with no support other than relying on technology to help translate my words. The lack of resources and support given to me now as a noneducator can reflect to the current monolingual teachers. Being an active volunteer in the schools has allowed me to witness a few monolingual teachers deal with an ELL; the teachers become irritated with the student but more so with the lack of resources/support they had to deal with while trying to teach that particular student. Outside of my community and in another, as a YMCA after school leader, I have also had difficulty helping my ELL students understand their homework or enrichment concepts I was trying to teach. These situations were difficult, uncomfortable, and also left me feeling unaccomplished. Aside from the “targets” and “influentials” existing with this issue, I am different because I am a monolingual Latina who hopes to become a 4th grade elementary school teacher. Being an English only speaking Latina itself has its own challenges with how society sees me. I have worked with youth groups/ youth sports in my community and others for about 10 years. The experiences I have had working with people who struggle to support ELLs at all ages allows me to have an open perspective; being a monolingual Latina makes me eager to see how to develop skills and gain resources that will help support others.

Megan. This topic is personally meaningful because I am a monolingual future teacher and I have always wanted to be able to speak different languages so that I do not have a barrier with my students. I want my students to be in a safe environment where they can express themselves. So, finding out what resources or support is out there can give me an idea what may be lacking or what I change in the classroom. My experiences back up the topic because I have grown up in an area with ELLs who speak Spanish and I have wanted to speak Spanish in order to communicate and relate to them. Knowing the

language would break down another barrier. I want my students to be able to come to class and have no barriers when I teach, I try to be open-minded so that I can help ELL students in my class. While some teachers try to cut out a student's home language, I believe in additive bilingualism. I want to try to encourage students to use their home language in their writing and reading. Throughout my college career I have become more aware of what my biases are because I have self-reflected and saw what I need to change. Social media has also helped me reflect on how to change my biases. I have also been a person who is open-minded and tries to understand people's points, I think I can welcome students' differences, especially students who are ELLs because I understand that English is a hard language to grasp.

Natalie. I found this topic meaningful because I grew up in a predominantly Latino community where the majority of my classmates, along with myself, were English language learners. At my elementary school I remember that there were some teachers who did not speak Spanish and struggled with communicating and understanding their students. This caused some stress for the students when they were trying to learn, because their teachers were not able to understand them and help guide them. When students felt supported, they did better in school and had motivation to continue studying. Being an ELL student myself, I felt the support from my teachers which encouraged me to keep studying. That is why I want to know what resources are available for monolingual teachers to help their ELL students. I hope to gain insight as to what resources my interviewee's school provides her with in order to support her when teaching her ELL students. What makes me different from the "target" is that I am a bilingual individual and have a bit of insight of what ELL students need because I was one. What makes me different from "influential" is that I am able to separate/accept someone's beliefs and not use them against them. I am able to set those beliefs aside from who they are in order to just view them as an individual. I think that this ability will help me teach students no matter what background they come from to be successful.

Cristina. This topic is personally meaningful to me because I am currently attending college to become an elementary teacher. I want to be as prepared as I can be

when I enter a classroom with a variety of students. I feel like this topic will allow me to see what materials and techniques are offered to teachers now in an elementary setting. I have done service learning for the elementary school that I am going to be interviewing my teacher at and have seen first hand that ELL students have a difficult time communicating in the classroom. I feel it is important to include ELL students in the classroom. For me, being a future bilingual elementary teacher, I feel like I have an added quality because I will be able to understand ELL students if they are struggling in an area in the classroom. My group and I are qualified to take on this topic because we are all future teachers and we are all trying to bridge the gap between ELL students and teachers. I feel that I am different from “targets” because my physical appearance does not match my racial background, for that reason I do not feel like I am a target. I feel that I am different from the “influentials” because as a future teacher I have been taught to look past race, social class, education, sexual orientation and gender identity. When I have my classroom full of students I need to be able to teach them and not judge them on their appearance. I need to be able to help them succeed in school. As a result of my appearance not resembling that of most Mexicans, it has often been assumed that I do not speak Spanish or know any of the Spanish traditions. I now have a better understanding of not judging people by the way they speak, look, or act. This Capstone will allow me to better connect with English Language Learnings in my future classroom.

Informants.

Rosa. Meredith Shepard is a second grade teacher at Greys Elementary School in Rosa, California. During her 9 years of teaching, she has had to implement many resources and skills to help the ELLs she has had.

Natalie. Angela Merici is a third grade teacher at Stars Hollow Elementary school. She has been teaching for 17 years. She is also bilingual which makes working with ELL students easier.

Selena. Cody Dawson has been a teacher at Sharks Elementary for 12 years. He is a Caucasian man who has picked up some Spanish from his years of teaching, but not enough to where he would consider himself bilingual.

Megan. Heather Hopkins is a first grade teacher at Sydney Elementary. She has been teaching for 24 years. She has worked at the school she is currently at for two years. She is a Caucasian woman. Though she only speaks broken Spanish, she can understand Spanish pretty well.

Alisha. Bendy Well is a third grade teacher at Cougar Elementary School in Cougarville, California. During her 13 years of teaching she has had to overcome working with ELLs as a Caucasian monolingual educator.

Cristina. Emma Smith is a kindergarten teacher at Sea Breeze Elementary School in Ocean, California. She has been teaching for 25 years as a monolingual Caucasian teacher.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

1. What kind of support and/or training is given to monolingual teachers who need to interact/teach ELLs?
2. What do you see as the problem with the support or training that is provided to monolingual teachers who need to interact/teach ELLs; or What are you concerned about when it comes to the support/training given to monolingual teachers who teach ELL student(s)?
3. What is currently being done to improve the interactions between monolingual teachers and ELLs - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad, or indifferent? Why?
4. What do you think can be done to provide better support for ELLs and their monolingual teachers?
5. What obstacles prevent providing more support or training to monolingual teachers teaching ELL students?
6. Besides what is already provided by your school (if there is anything), are there outside resources that you have found to be useful? Is there a personal preference or order you follow in the situation of helping monolingual teachers teaching ELL students?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to say about supporting/training monolingual teachers who have ELL students and/or the improvements that could be made to support their efforts?

Procedure

Participants were interviewed. All interviews were done individually. When it was not possible to interview participants in person, they were invited to complete a phone interview or paper and pencil survey of the same questions. Face-to-Face interviews took less than one hour, be audio-recorded (with participant consent), and took place in Ocean School District, Tormund City School District, Stars Hollow School District, and De La Rosa School District. A semi-structured interview was used for face-to-face interviews, to allow for follow-up questions to unclear, interesting or unexpected responses. All interviews/surveys were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

Results

For this Capstone Project, six monolingual teachers were interviewed to see what they thought could be done to improve the educational experience for English Language Learners. This is important because teachers who do not speak another language can have a hard time communicating effectively with their students. In addition, students with language barriers, who are categorized as ELLs, are less likely to achieve academic success or have the ability to master the English language. Due to the inability of the English language learner to fully master the language, all other subject areas are affected. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature three themes emerged (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: time, cost, and effectiveness. Based on the evaluation of each action option an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1 *Evaluation of Action Options*

	Time	Cost	Effectiveness
Professional Development Day(s)	Moderate	High	Moderate

Language Classes for Teachers (the predominant language of ELLs)	Low/Moderate	High	Moderate/High
Instructional Aide Specifically for ELLs	Low	High	High

The table above represents the three options that emerged after interviewing six monolingual teachers. After thorough consideration and extensive research on the resources that monolingual teachers would need to support English Language Learners, we found that teachers would benefit from EL focused professional development days, language classes for teachers based on the predominant language within their districts/schools, and having a bilingual instructional aide per grade level who is there to primarily focus on ELLs.

All three options will be evaluated based on time, cost, and effectiveness. The amount of time taken for each of the options will be at the discretion of each district’s academic calendar. Additionally, the cost of all options will need to be based on the specific school’s budget. Lastly, effectiveness will be based on the participation that is given from all teachers and can help determine which action will be the most successful.

Professional Development Days

After extensive review of our interviewees’ responses, we noticed that English Learner professional development days for teachers would be an appropriate option for schools to consider when looking for new ways to support both English Language Learners and monolingual teachers. Our interviewees Heather Hopkins and Angela Merici (personal communication, November 2019) both shared how they wanted to learn different strategies to teach their ELLs. According to Molle (2013), “In the past decade, U.S. schools have become increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse and there is no indication that this trend will change in the near future” (p. 206). Therefore, providing professional development days in order

to prepare teachers to work with students of all linguistic abilities is beneficial for the teachers and English learning students. When evaluating this option it is important for school personnel to take into consideration the time that will be required for this, the cost of the personal development, and the effectiveness of the development day.

When evaluating the action option based on time we found that it was a moderate aspect on Table 1. That is due in part to busy school days and not having enough time to have more training. Teachers get a lot of training in a short amount of time (E. Smith, personal communication, November 2019). There is simply not enough time in the school day or academic year to provide multiple professional development days focused on helping teachers learn how to teach their English Language Learners effectively.

Cost was the next criteria examined when evaluating our options. Most teachers will do whatever they can to improve their student outcomes, but the perennial shortage of money for programs, and the time to properly implement them are always going to be an impediment to success (C. Dawson, personal communication, November 2019). Districts are given a budget and often times there is not enough money to do multiple professional development days because they are very costly, and therefore, do not happen often.

After looking at the time and cost of professional development days, we also looked into the effectiveness of the professional development days. Although very costly and moderately time consuming professional development seems to be moderately effective, as many of the interviewees stated, teachers were open to attending professional development days to learn more. According to Karabenick and Clemens Noda (2004), the need for teachers to acquire more knowledge related to the use of the home language and its effect on school achievement in academic content areas is very important and with a professional development day this could be accomplished. Hiring well-qualified teachers with a diverse background who have a skill set that can provide essential strategies to help our ELLs succeed in the classroom and beyond would be ideal. However, that may not always be an option, therefore, providing professional development days for teachers can be a great alternative for schools to consider.

Language Classes for Teachers (predominant language of ELLs)

In order to have strong relationships between monolingual teachers and English Language Learners, there should be some common ground between the two parties. One way to establish a good relationship is by sharing a common language with one another. Emma Smith, who has been a teacher for 25 years, highlighted that, “Having basic communication skills in the ELLs home language can be very helpful” (personal communication, November 2019). With that being said, one option that can be taken into consideration for monolingual teachers is the use of language classes, in the predominant language of their students, for teachers who work with English Language Learners.

One aspect of this option that should be taken into consideration is the amount of time that the option may take in order for all teachers to access and complete the language classes. Heather Hopkins (personal communication, November 2019), who has been teaching for 24 years, mentioned how she was required by her school district to take High Intensity Language Trainings, also known as HILT, before being able to work in a classroom. Through this program, individuals are given the opportunity to take a weeklong immersion day camp throughout the summer. This program would be a reasonable option and ranked as low to moderate, in terms of time, since it is 30 hours over the course of five days (San Joaquin County Office of Education, 2017). Since the program is also taken over the summer, the number of teachers that are able to attend a program like HILT is raised significantly seeing that most teachers have summers off. As a result, this option can be completed by many teachers in a reasonable amount of time. As noted above, the program is only a week long and, therefore, is not strenuous on a teacher’s schedule outside of the classroom environment. However, this option can also be considered moderate because not everyone will be able to absorb the information as quickly as others and may have to repeat, or take additional, programs in order to fully master the language.

Another criteria that language classes can be evaluated by is the cost of the class or program the teachers would be taking. Emma Smith (personal communication, November 2019) noted that teachers should be allowed to have the language classes paid for since it is specific training for teachers in order to work with diverse student populations. With the approval by the district, this option could be considered high since there would need to be significant amounts of

funding provided for all monolingual teachers to complete the classes or programs. Similarly, if the district is not willing to pay for these programs and classes for their teachers, it would still be a large financial responsibility for the teachers to complete on their own. Regardless of the type of class that is provided for teachers, such as Rosetta Stone or online classes, the cost can be a great deal for districts and teachers alike.

The last criteria that language classes can be evaluated by is the effectiveness that would be seen through the program or classes teachers complete. All six monolingual teachers that were interviewed shared that they would like to see some kind of language class be provided to them in order to be able to confidently work with English Language Learners. Meredith Shepherd, a teacher of nine years, stated, “Honestly, I feel like the best thing for me to do would be to enroll in Spanish courses through a university” (personal communication, November 2019). This option can be considered moderate to highly effective because the classes would be directly related to learning the foreign language. However, the effectiveness does depend on the individual teacher’s willingness to put in the effort to learn the language. If a teacher is pushing for language classes to be provided, then s/he is hopefully willing to put in the effort that comes with learning a new language. These teachers know that bilingualism will help them form a deeper relationship with the English Language Learners they work with by being able to help the students’ academic successes.

Instructional Aide Specifically for ELLs

The interviewees expressed a need for instructional aides specifically for ELLs. Some schools have an instructional aide, but the instructional aide may not work a lot with them because they have to help other children in different classrooms. Therefore, teachers have to try to help ELLs as best as they can even though some students may sometimes need more one-on-one help. The teacher Megan interviewed had a large number of ELLs in her class. But the school only provides one aide to work with the students for 20 minutes every day. The aide comes and helps the lower performing students with their math skills in the morning (J. Gabber, personal communication, November 2019). As the research was conducted there was sufficient evidence found that there was a need for an English as a Second Language (ESL) aide within the classroom (J. Gabber, personal communication, November 2019). Having an ESL aide to

provide additional assistance for the cognitive development of the English learner would contribute greatly to their language acquisition. Not only would the student be getting additional resources to work on language acquisition it would also provide the teacher with a different approach on how to better facilitate learning for the student. In addition, according to Ferlazzo (2017), “Depending on the race of the ESL aide, they may be able to provide relevance in the materials such as local content or issues, as a result contributing to the use of the child’s native language to further their cognitive development” (p. 1) While having an ESL designated aide per grade level would benefit English Language Learners, the cost would be one to consider.

After analyzing the evaluation of the action options, the time aspect of the table indicates that having aides within the classroom would be low on the spectrum. In fact, having ESL/ELL aides in the classroom would not take away any time from the teacher, but instead would help the teacher with the children who are not performing well in English Language Arts. If the aides can help with that then the teacher does not have to worry about the student.

The next aspect that we need to examine is how much money it would cost to hire an instructional aide or multiple aides within the school. The salary of an aide is different within some school districts. The cost would be high because they have to pay them salary plus benefits. We recommend multiple aides per school in order to help the students as much as they can. According to GlassDoor (2017), the average cost of an ESL instructional aide is \$31,000 per year. On top of that many districts give aides benefits, like medical and dental, so the cost would be high for the school.

Effectiveness would be the final aspect that would need to be considered when pushing to have an instructional aide within the classroom. Based on the interviewees’ responses, as shown in Table 1, they would be considerably higher on the action option based on our criteria. As mentioned by Heather Hopkins, “The only obstacle there is not having enough people to help in the classroom. Having an extra set of hands would help a lot in the classroom with ELLs” (personal communication, November 2019). Therefore, bringing up the need to have an instructional aide that could focus on supporting the learning of those working on language acquisition is highly needed. Furthermore, having instructional aides to focus on the English learner would make the effectiveness of the action option high.

Conclusion

This section will justify the action we recommend to improve the resources monolingual teachers receive in order to work with English Language Learners. We will also discuss some of the concessions, limitations, and possible negative outcomes of our recommendation.

Recommendation. Of all the three action options that became apparent from interviewing the monolingual teachers, we strongly recommend that school districts increase the number of professional development days in order to provide additional resources and strategies to monolingual teachers who work with English Language Learners. We are confident that this will work because it is something that the majority of the teachers stated would help them be more successful in their classrooms.

Concessions. The two other options, language classes and having an instructional aide, are also good options because they both help the teacher in the classroom with ELLs. The language classes specifically help the teachers' knowledge of the language so they can better communicate with the students. However, if the school does not offer those language classes aides can be helpful in the classroom. Having multiple aides can benefit the teacher in terms of time management because an aide can help students who are falling behind in certain content areas then give them the support they need. In addition, teachers can use more of their time helping the other students or many other things they have to do around the classroom. Therefore, providing aides or opportunities to take language classes supports ELLs in the classroom.

Limitations. The professional development option also comes with a few limitations. One of the biggest limitations with this option is having access to the funds that would support this. When organizing a professional development day it is important for administration to consider the cost of paying all teachers and staff members involved with the event, as well as the supplies, location, and the trainer/guest speaker that will be in attendance. Another limitation would be finding resources specifically aimed towards teaching monolingual teachers how to teach the different levels of ELLs. The topic at hand deals specifically with monolingual teachers and this could limit what type of professional development workshops can be implemented. Along with budgeting and establishing appropriate workshops for these developmental days, finding the time in the school year can be a constraint. Within the 365 days of the year, 180 of

those days are spent in a typical public school. During those 180 days, one school year, teachers are not only teaching but have to participate in other school activities, achieve state standards/exams, complete parent teacher conferences, make lesson plans, attend meetings, and so much more. In order to gain insight and knowledge from a professional development day teachers may have to step away from their normal teacher duties and add on a workshop. Although this option comes with limitations, professional development days could highly impact both teachers and students, as well as the academic outcomes for the entire school.

Potential negative outcomes. Professional development days may cause teachers to spend less time with their students and or their own family. Due in part to professional development days being planned before school is back in session but, in some cases there are some professional development days conducted during the school year. If teachers begin to miss class time to attend the professional development days, their students will begin to feel a disconnect from their teachers and can eventually lead to behavior issues. Teachers and staff may also be overworked which leaves teachers drained and without energy to teach. In addition, the financial aspect of how these programs will be funded should be something to consider. Although schools are state funded, in recent years there have been budget cuts that have impacted the access to resources that administration can provide to their staff.

Conclusion. Despite the limitations stated, we strongly recommend that school districts implement or increase the number of professional development days which would provide different strategies, prepwork, language training, and professional development workshops in order for monolingual teachers to support their ELLs. Hiring qualified teachers to teach ELLs is ideal, but can sometimes be unattainable. Providing monolingual teachers with professional development days would allow them to have the basic skills they need to teach ELLs. Another option would be requiring teachers to take language classes to allow them to have a common understanding of the language. This can also allow for teachers to connect with their students on a deeper conceptual level. However, the time it would take for teachers to master the language and the cost of putting the teachers through the language classes led us away from this option. In addition, having an instructional aide in the classroom can be beneficial for the students that need extra support, but requires substantial financial resources. This is an unrealistic option as most

school districts would not have the funding to allocate instructional aides to classrooms. Overall, teachers receiving training on how to teach ELLs is the best option because it allows the teachers to learn new skills and support their students in their own classrooms. This option allows for multiple teachers to gain the needed skills at once, cutting back on time while still maintaining effectiveness.

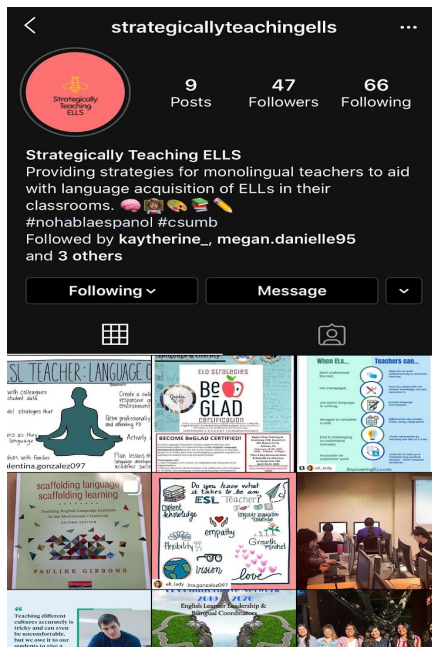
Action Documentation & Reflection

English language learners are the fastest-growing population within the state of California (Hopkinson, 2017). Due to this growth, teachers are tasked with helping them learn English as their second language. This may be overwhelming, especially for monolingual teachers, because they may not know the best way to support their students. After assessing our options, we decided to create an Instagram page in order to help monolingual teachers with ELLs. We chose to name the Instagram page *StrategicallyTeachingELLs*. We decided to use Instagram as our platform in providing resources for monolingual teachers because a lot of people, including teachers, use this as a tool in navigating their classrooms. In addition, Instagram has a large teacher community that commonly shares ideas with one another. We researched different strategies from a book called *Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning* (Gibbons, 2015), on how to teach ELLs in the mainstream classroom. After reading *Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning*, we were able to reference strategies that could be helpful to ELLs. One of these strategies included using a student's native language to introduce a topic or key concept (Gibbons, 2015). Another strategy we researched is using pictures, diagrams, and graphic outlines in order to illustrate complex ideas (Gibbons, 2015). In addition, we looked at various tools that teachers had access to in a multitude of subject areas but found that professional development opportunities are available statewide.

In order to accomplish creating a social media platform, there were several components we had to consider. The most important consideration was identifying a name that represented what our goal was; to provide strategies for monolingual teachers, as well as bringing awareness to ongoing professional development days. After several deliberations, we decided to continue with the name *StrategicallyTeachingELLs* because we felt that it represented the purpose of the page the best. One alteration that we decided to make was a name change. We found that there

was no substantial interest in our page due to it being named *BridgingGaps*, since no one knew what our goal was. Changing the name to *StrategicallyTeachingELLs* helped by getting other pages similar to ours, or with the same goals, to follow us. In our first post we found that our reach was not significant with just a caption. As a result, decided to incorporate hashtags such as #nohablaespanol, #teachingells, and #monolingualteachers. As we reflected on how to have the biggest impact on our communities we decided to primarily focus on the community closest to us, which was Monterey County. By doing so, we were able to determine professional development days focused on English language learners within the tri-county area.

Our Instagram page, @strategicallyteachingells, is still in its beginning stages and has not made a huge impact on the public to measure the outcomes just yet. We posted an introduction about ourselves, another post that gave information about an EL Collaborative Network event, and a supporting quote. On our first post we had two different comments, which was great. One was from another user who is a science teacher and looks forward to seeing what else we have to share. One great surprise for us was seeing how our friends, fellow peers, and other teacher/education instagram users were so quick to follow us and show their support. It is with high hopes that our numbers in followers grow. With growth comes more outreach opportunities that can arise from this social media platform. The important next steps would be to continue to post about different strategies and informationals that EL teachers can use or attend.



I now have a clear picture of just how many English Language Learners I will, most likely, have as my own students in the future. Since I worked in after school programs, I always knew there was a large number of students who are emerging bilinguals, but I never knew the exact statistics behind them, and just how high they were. I now know just how inevitable it is, especially in the region I am in, to work with English Language Learners in the future. I personally believe that the most important next step is to begin taking learning Spanish very seriously.

I learned just how much my own upbringing was different than many English Language Learners in America's school systems. I was very fortunate to have a mother who worked in the school district and had many close connections. This allowed me to have an extremely good education because I was able to be in classrooms with teachers that were highly recognized in the district. However, the teachers who I commonly had were not bilingual and did not have as many English Language Learners in their classrooms compared to teachers now. Since I will be working in a different time than my own teachers, I think it is my own responsibility to break the potential language barriers down that might be present between students and myself. I will make it my own mission to attend workshops that I know will benefit my English Language Learning students.

Synthesis and Integration

Based on the first Liberal Studies MLO, Beginning Educator, I feel as though I have been able to learn about a lot of various responsibilities that California public educators take on when choosing to be in the teaching profession. I was able to learn about, not only my own, but also my fellow peers' projects which ultimately gave me a greater knowledge about what I can look forward to as a future educator. Additionally, through my own project, I was able to better understand the different backgrounds that students and teachers come from and the ways we are similar and different. I think it is important, as an educator, to be aware of the diversity that is in your own classroom and be able to confidently work with the differences because then stronger relationships can be built between teacher and student. Also, by understanding students' backgrounds, teachers can plan lessons accordingly to include more diverse cultures.

Although I have previous experience with researching information for projects, I feel as

though this project has allowed me to expand on that skill more in depth. With this project I was able to meet with Kathleen Hansen and get guidance from her on new search engines and tools to try. She was able to make me aware of new tools I was not previously aware of which ultimately helped me gather more information to use. My group and I were able to become more ethnically and socially knowledgeable about communities that surround California State University Monterey Bay by going out into those communities and interviewing teachers who were monolingual. They were able to share their concerns that they have about being monolingual teachers who work with large numbers of ELLs. It was nice to know what to expect when I enter the field because I can start collecting resources that I can use as of now, instead of waiting until I am in the classroom.

In order to become the best educator I can be, and that my future students deserve, I believe I need to enroll in more Spanish classes. I feel as though this is the best option for me, personally, to learn the language. Learning the Spanish language will help me in many areas of my life both personally and professionally. In addition, I think it would be smart to continue researching different resources available for both monolingual and bilingual teachers when working with English Language Learners. Learning more ways to help ELL students can only benefit me in the classroom and make me a more confident teacher.

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