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EXPLORING SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHING:  
STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHER PRACTICE IN L2 CLASSROOMS.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIALTIES

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

Catrina Rocco

Date Submitted: November 13, 2020

Date Approved: January 29, 2021

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Catrina Rocco

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Dr. Michael Sampson

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EXPLORING SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHING: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHER PRACTICE IN L2 CLASSROOMS**

Catrina Rocco

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the relationship between secondary English learner students' perspectives of effective teacher practices and how these practices contribute to their self-efficacy in the content area of social studies. As reported by the National Association of Education Progress secondary English learners completed high school at a rate sixty-three percent when compared to the national rate of eighty-two percent in 2017. Comparatively, in New York the statewide graduation rate for these two groups was thirty-seven and seventy-eight percent. In New York State social studies is the only content area where high school students are required to complete two history Regents exams and five social studies courses. In consideration of the commencement criteria and the unique challenges of learning content with culturally embedded terminology in a new language, instruction designed and implemented for the secondary English learner in social studies must equip the learner with the supports necessary to withstand the exacting demands placed upon them to graduate. Participants in this study were drawn from two high schools in New York State. Six students and two teachers were interviewed. The two teachers' classrooms were also observed. The data collected from student and teacher interviews and classroom observations pertained to the use

of culturally responsive pedagogy, the cognitive academic language learning approach and specifically designed academic instruction in English. This study's significance is grounded in the theory that student self-efficacy in social studies is tied to reading ability and the comprehension of subject matter placing proficiency in content-based literacy at the forefront of student motivation and achievement. This study is significant because it offers educators and researchers an account of secondary English learners' experiences learning content through approaches and frameworks specifically designed to address their needs. This study will supply researchers and practitioners with valuable insight into which practices increase self-efficacy thus increasing student motivation to succeed in this content area. This information can be used by teachers to design instruction that will lead to higher achievement in school so students are willing to endure their academic programs and earn a high school diploma.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Albert, and Catherine Rocco. The love, encouragement, and everything you taught me while you were here provided me with the foundation I needed to make my goals and aspirations a reality. I know you would be so very proud. You will both forever be my most important teachers.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to the United States Department of Education's, National Center for Educational Statistics 2015, one third of English Language Learners, ELL's enrolled in America's public schools are learning in secondary level school facilities ranging from grades six to twelve. In 2017 thirty-eight percent of ELL's enrolled in grades six to twelve were foreign born while sixty-two percent were born in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Approximately one out of every ten students in the U.S. is an ELL (Sanchez, 2017). If it were not for the fact that as a whole this group lags behind academically, these numbers would be arbitrary and meaningless (Sanchez, 2017). But they are not when we consider that only five percent of ELL's in grade eight are reading at a proficient level in comparison to thirty- eight percent of their non-ELL counter parts, according to the most recent National Assessment for Education Progress in 2017. The statistics are even more disheartening when the same study shows that sixty-eight percent of ELL's were reading at a below basic level as compared to only twenty-one percent of their native English-speaking peers. An even sadder indication of our present predicament of ELL instruction and achievement is that on a whole only sixty-three percent of ELL's graduate from high school compared to the overall national rate of eighty-two percent (Sanchez, 2017; NAEP, 2017). In New York State alone, the High School graduation rate is only about thirty-seven percent for ELL's compared to overall completion rate of seventy- eight percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Based on an analysis of the most recent educational data from NAEP,

NCES and the Department of Education, ELL's appear to struggle academically due to having limited access to quality instruction specially designed to meet their needs (Sanchez, 2017). Without access to high quality academic instruction that is designed to meet the needs of the nation's ELL's the achievement gap between ELL's and non-ELL's will only continue to remain widened. A far reaching long term effect of our inability to sufficiently address the instructional needs of our ELL's in America's primary and secondary public schools is the perpetual reinforcement of economic disparity due to the lack of qualifications and skills needed to be employed in occupations that generate higher wages.

Considering that one tenth of the school aged population has been identified as ELL's it is critical that the achievement gap be addressed urgently so as not to further perpetuate the achievement gap and income disparity between ELL's and their native speaking peers. It is also imperative that the American Education system sets forth in a full initiative to improve the quality of instruction through investment, development, and training of school leaders and teachers in researched based practices that improve performance outcomes for the ELL population. Investing in this population is also important to America's future if we are to remain a prosperous and democratic nation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Extant literature provides practitioners and researchers with ample data through summative assessment scores, retention and promotion rates, observations, case studies and teacher interviews about how ELL's perform or interact in modified instructional environments tailored to their needs but research in this field

offers limited student perspectives or otherwise opportunities to “*hear it from the mouth of the babes*” as far as knowing which teacher practices preferentially serve to bolster self-efficacy for adolescent ELL’s in the Social Studies classroom.

Assumptions can be made from what the data might suggest about the effectiveness of specific teacher practices, for instance we know that self-efficacy is linked to reading ability and reading ability is linked to motivation and motivation is linked to achievement (Gutrie & Wigfield, 2000), but we cannot know for certain which precise Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, *SDAIE*, Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, *CALLA*, or Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, *CRP*, practices make the subject matter being studied a little more comprehensible and a little less frustrating for the ELL until we question his or her experience with these practices.

In this study a closer look will be taken to examine the relationship ELL students have with the socio-cultural literacy-based teaching practices their teachers use to instruct them in the secondary level social studies classroom and how it relates to their beliefs about their own ability to succeed. The content area of social studies was selected to examine this relationship because of the unique challenges ELL’s can experience while learning this subject matter resulting from the expectation to learn new content that is heavily reliant on understanding culturally embedded meanings of terms and the disadvantage of not being raised in a culture that necessarily has the same understanding of these terms. In addition to these challenges secondary level ELL’s studying social studies are required to pass two content area examinations in New York State as a requisite for graduation. Social Studies is the only content area in which two exams are required for the completion

of a high school diploma in New York State ([www.hesc.ny.gov](http://www.hesc.ny.gov)).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is grounded in the theory that student self-efficacy in social studies is tied to reading ability and the comprehension of subject matter (Guthrie & Wiggins, 2000) thus placing proficiency in content-based literacies at the forefront of student achievement and motivation. If we are to place these factors at the forefront of student self-efficacy and achievement, we ought to know what teacher and classroom-based practices work and why they are effective. This study will offer educators and researchers an account of the secondary ELL's experience with learning content through approaches and frameworks designed specifically to address their needs.

### **Research Questions**

Driving this research is the desire to learn more about the relationship ELL students have with the socio-cultural literacy-based teaching practices their teachers use to instruct them in the secondary level social studies classroom and how it relates to their beliefs about their own ability to succeed academically in this content area. This study will seek to uncover three pertinent pieces of information through the lens of the student. The initial piece delves into what the teacher does to foster a socially supportive learning environment that makes ELL students comfortable enough to learn English and social studies and less fearful of making mistakes and as they attempt both (Sparza & Ahmad, 2007). *How socially supportive do ELL's feel their social studies learning environment is?*

The second piece seeks to uncover how students feel about how their

teacher supports their academic language development and if any of these practices are more beneficial to them than another? *How do students believe CALLA strategies improve their language development in English?*

The third piece of information sought from this study is to hear from adolescent ELL's about which sheltered instruction practices they find most resourceful, enjoyable and reduces their frustration level when learning content. *How do ELL's describe their experiences learning content with certain SDAIE strategies?*

The overarching research question guiding this study is, *How do secondary ELL's view their ability to succeed in the Social Studies Classroom?*

## **Definition of Terms**

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy-** An instructional framework that connects curriculum to the home culture of nonnative speakers as way to reduce critical barriers that hinder academic growth (Choi, 2013).

**English Language Learner, ELL-** are students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses. (Edglossary.org, 2013).

**Language 1, L1-** An individual's first language.

**Language 2, L2-** An individual's second language or additional language.

**Self-Efficacy-** A individual's confidence in their ability to complete a task achieve a

goal. (E. Hopper, 2019).

**Sheltered Instruction-** An instructional design intended to teach English Learners content material while building their English proficiency. (Nash et al. 2006)

**Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English, SDAIE-** A conceptual model for teaching ELL's that is designed to optimize access to the core curriculum by making content instruction comprehensible, (Berman et. Al., 1992; Olsen et al., 1994; Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey & Pasta, 1991; Snow & Brinton, 1997).

**Socio-Cultural Theory-** A theory that emphasizes the roles of social, cultural, and historical factors in the human experience. (Tracey & Morrow, 2012).

**Systematic Investigation-** Qualitative research that relies on verbal and visual communications to answer questions. (Litchman, 2013).



## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Secondary ELL's often encounter several unique learning challenges when studying the content area of Social Studies. An important factor that significantly contributes to these learning challenges is the demand of learning new vocabulary that is highly abstract and subject to culturally embedded meanings (Chamot and O'Malley, 2014).

Pertinent research identifies specific factors that contribute to learning academic content in English as a non-native speaker. Specific factors posed to assist in remedying the challenges many ELL's endure while learning content and languages simultaneously include varied instructional strategies such as Sheltered Instruction and the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, *CALLA*, both of which fall under the Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English Umbrella, *SDAIE* and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, *CRP*. The initial two instructional approaches are designed to promote language development concurrently with content based instruction in a way that will lead to significant gains in academic achievement while *CRP* emphasizes a classroom of mutual respect and appreciation of the non-native speaker's home culture and language in hopes of gaging the learners motivation (Dong, 2004).

### **Specific Challenges to Learning Social Studies in L2**

Contemporary second language acquisition research suggests that it typically takes from five to seven years for ordinary ELL's to achieve grade-level performance in subject area classes (Collier 1987, 1989, Cummins 1980, 1996). Yet most states have educational policies that expect ELL's to demonstrate enough

language proficiency to perform equally as well as their native English-speaking peers in content areas such as math, science, English and social studies and of course, on standardized assessments only after a year of studying English. (Cho & Reich, 2008).

Eric Dwyer (2007) found that social studies vocabulary by grade exceeded other content areas such as English when he analyzed textbook vocabulary by grade level (Cho & Reich, 2008). This reality makes learning social studies and comprehension of its related text extra difficult for ELL's simply due to the abstractness of the vocabulary words used in this subject area that are subject to culturally embed meanings (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). The decontextualized nature of social studies texts can be frustrating for nonnative speakers who have not yet fully developed their English skills as these texts can be characterized by unfamiliar context, technical vocabulary and complex syntax (Brown, 2007).

Students raised in societies with vast differences in culture and politics may understand content related words such as government, authority, and rights differently (Cho & Reich, 2008) and may have a different conceptual understanding of what history is (Seixas, 1993). ELL's are at a disadvantage in content area studies related to American history and government since their native English-speaking peers have already been exposed to the content knowledge during their earlier school years (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). The area of social studies depends heavily on the use of expository texts to transmit information to the learner. These texts assume that the reader has sufficient background knowledge necessary to make sense of the text (Brown, 2007). It is possible that an

ELL would arrive to his secondary level social studies classroom with strong prior knowledge of the content material despite limited English however, this scenario is less likely.

English language learners often arrive to their new school with academic backgrounds affected by economic hardships and cultural struggles frequently associated with immigrants of lower socioeconomic standing (Choi, 2013). Some of the circumstances they face include high levels of poverty, experiences with discrimination, and unwelcoming social, political and educational contexts of reception (Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel & Martin, 2009). Some newcomer ELL's may arrive to school with having only limited formal schooling in their native lands and are designated as having some interrupted formal schooling, and thus labeled as *SIFE*. Newcomer ELL's also experience numerous critical barriers in the social studies classroom that stifle academic achievement (Urietta, 2004). These barriers include, prejudicial representations of immigrant groups, ignored histories of non-Western cultures (Banks, 2007) and lack of connection between classroom learning, student backgrounds and their home culture due to poorly trained teachers who lack understanding meeting the learning needs of students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Reirson, 2006, Cruz & Thornton, 2009). Ironically, these barriers serve as factors that work to marginalize English Learners in a subject area that is intended to form knowledgeable citizens who will become empowered to sustain democracy and promote justice and equality (Cho & Reich, 2008). Unfortunately, the lack of culturally relevant social studies teaching and learning have contributed to high

levels of academic failures in U.S. schools for ELL's (Salazar & Franquiz, 2008).

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, *CRP***

In addressing the call for culturally relevant social studies teaching and learning particularly designed for the newcomer ELL (Cruz & Thornton, 2009) researcher Yoonjung Choi researched how an exemplary social studies teacher utilized social studies curriculum and pedagogy to encourage immigrant ELL's academic engagement in a culturally relevant way using culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as a framework. The CRP framework utilizes the classroom's students' cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives as a channel for teaching diverse students (Gay, 2000; Lee, 2010). The aim when using the CRP framework is to teach skills and academic content via the integration of the students' sociocultural experiences. This approach is intended to appeal to students' interests by making instruction more personally meaningful for them (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Choi's finding uncovered that when teachers provide a safe and open forum for students to discuss their world views and critique the status quo's official view of historical knowledge the teacher will be able to deepen the students critical understanding of history (Choi, 2013). Additionally, teachers can improve students' motivation and create an academic culture in the classroom by forming collaborative learning communities amongst students to engage in collaborative group work, reading groups, group research projects, heterogenous authentic conversations and discussions (Choi, 2013). Choi's study also revealed that embedding literacy strategies into social studies classroom instruction via means of using instructional grouping based on English proficiency testing data,

vocabulary word walls, group storytelling, and the use of visual resources and graphic organizers become powerful sources for increasing student engagement and motivation (Choi, 2013). Choi's study is indicative of how quality teacher training programs and professional development resources can develop quality teachers will contribute to the success ELL's academic achievement (Choi, 2013). Without adequate teacher training in strategies that are culturally responsive and take into the consideration the language acquisition needs of ELL's we are only then, unintendedly fostering an academic environment that is hostile to their learning needs and conducive of academic failure and further disengagement.

### **Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, *SDAIE***

In many cases, the instructional week for an English learner consists of spending a few periods a day in an English as a Second Language class or a bilingual class and then going onto spend most of their day in classrooms filled with a mixture of ELL's and native speakers (Dong, 2004). At the secondary level these students face the challenge of having to catch up to their peers in a relatively short amount of time and meeting their states secondary testing requirements to earn an academic diploma and graduate from high school (Dong, 2004). This demand entails understanding enough English so one may comprehend the content matter he or she is being tested on resulting in an immediate need for teachers to not only plan culturally responsive pedagogy but language appropriate instruction that meets the needs of the English learner (Dong, 2004). This can be successfully carried out using effective language and content integration strategies (Byrnes et. al. 1998; Dong 2002; Duff 2001; Franson 1999; Harklau 1999; Verplaetse 1998).

*Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, SDAIE* are instructional strategies that integrate language and content in a way that enables teachers of ELL's to scaffold and support their students.

Current research supports the use of varied instructional strategies to support the delivery of instruction designed to teach content while simultaneously building language development for English learners. *SDAIE* is a conceptual model that enhances the instructional program by providing access to the core curriculum for English learners (Cline & Necochea, 2003). The *SDAIE* instructional model equips monolingual English-speaking teachers with strategies to provide high quality educational experiences for English learners by enabling ELL's to gain access to content material despite the multitude of obstacles they face whether it be lack of proficiency in English, limited formal education prior to arrival in the United States or another English speaking nation, or deriving from a home environment where literacy activities in the native language were not actively pursued (Rueda, MacGillivray, Monzo, & Arzubia, 2001).

While using *SDAIE*, teachers engage in practices such as, integrating prior knowledge and new information, building schema, developing rapport and knowledge of students' native cultures, contextualization through the use of visuals and manipulatives, and metacognitive development by modifying instruction to include multiple access points enabling students to enter the unit of study regardless of their level or prior knowledge (Cline & Necochea, 2003).

The goal of *SDAIE* is to integrate the knowledge that students bring into the classroom, so it may be used in a way that new information may be acquired (Cline

& Necochea, 2003). Vygotsky (1978) might say that this would be the students' zone of proximal development, an area where students can grasp a concept most easily with necessary teacher facilitation and input (Cline & Necochoea, 2003). Krashen reiterates this point of departure with his principle of comprehensible input (1981) referring to what the student presently knows and the concepts and skills the teacher will add (Cline & Necochoea, 2003). If the teacher should fail to make a connection to the information students already know to the new material presented, the new material becomes incomprehensible to the students thus, making learning quite difficult. (Cline & Necochoea, 2003).

Teachers should strive to foster a classroom that is socially supportive (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). Meaning that the classroom environment should become a place where students feel secure and comfortable enough to learn Social Studies (or any subject area) and English simultaneously without being concerned for making mistakes while attempting to learn both (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). When using *SDAIE* teachers are equipped with a means of providing ELL's with a Social Studies curriculum that is accessible by reducing cognitive load without reducing content knowledge (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). As *SDAIE* teachers work to modify texts and concepts so the information is presented to learners in simpler terms (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007) they also initiate other strategies affecting group dynamics in ways that foster an understanding of how the class's diversity enriches their learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Nieto, 2000; Sobul, 1994; Spring, 1995; Walter, 1996). Research indicates that ELL's learn their second language best when they are provided with opportunities to interact in an academic setting with more

competent native speakers (Simich-Dudgeon, 1998).

Overall, a classroom with full-fledged usage of SADIE strategies will be a classroom that offers ELL students multiple points of entry to learning and where instruction is delivered in a format that offers numerous activities to present main points, concepts, ideas, and vocabulary using cultural artifacts, graphic organizers, visuals, manipulatives, opportunities to speak, write, read and listen in L2 (Cline & Necochea, 2003). A SADIE classroom offers an environment that has been strategically altered in a way that reduces the anxiety and discomforts around learning content in L2, thus reducing affective filter. A SDAIE classroom is a secure place for ELL's to learn new material, and share their culture, past experiences, and opinions.

### **Instructional Modifications and Assessment**

Teaching ELL's requires practitioners to modify instruction and assessments to support the metacognitive development and academic language needs of their learners. As there are few if any textbook series designed to meet the specific needs of English language learners, practitioners must adapt their own curriculum to reduce the cognitive load for each chapter or unit since grade-level textbooks are heavy in concept load and are academically and linguistically dense. (Berg, Petron, Greybeck 2012; Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). (Admittedly, there are some textbooks on the market that contain a small section with a differentiation suggestion for the teacher to use). A multiple access points strategy that enables all learners to participate fully in classroom activities regardless of their levels of English or limits in prior knowledge may be used by the practitioner. (Chamot &



O'Malley, 1994; Nieto, 2000; Sobul, 1994; Spring, 1995; Walter, 1996). In the classroom where multiple access points strategies are used the observer may notice the teacher facilitating lessons that contain a multitude of activities regardless of the learners' prior knowledge, language proficiencies or personal interests (Cline & Necochea, 2003). In the secondary Social Studies classroom these lessons may include the use of graphic organizers to indicate the relationship between historical events, political idea and philosophers, and economic systems. (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007), Other features of instructional planning that uses multiple access point strategies include, structured note taking, having some new material or vocabulary presented visually or verbally in the native language L1 for lower English proficiency level learners, inquiry and discovery, graphic illustrations, role playing and dramatizations to make historical figures come alive (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007; Cline & Necochea, 2003). Techniques that work especially well in secondary level content areas particularly in Social Studies are pairing up ELL's with bilingual or native speakers of English for think pair share activities or collaborative group work (Berg, Petron & Greyback, 2012), and jigsaw activities because it breaks up lengthy texts and assigns each student a portion of the text within a group, and holds the entire group accountable for reading and teaching their section to other groups of students in their class who are working on and preparing to do the same with different segment of the text. (Aronson, Blaney, Stephen, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978). Thematic units can be taught by chunking small pieces of information into meaningful pieces to create a "web of understanding" (Cline & Necochea, 2003). It is also very important that teachers never relay any important information without writing it down, whether it be written on the board or on a handout (Szpara &

Ahmad, 2007). Content mapping is another technique that could be used to fill in the gaps in prior knowledge related to any particular topic or event in history (Brown, 2007). The use of a content map will show students how parts of a text are related. The teacher can withdraw the main idea in a passage and place it appropriately within the content map allowing the teacher to introduce key points in simple language without eliminating essential content material (Brown, 2007). Students benefit from this technique as it helps to scaffold their reading comprehension, making the text more comprehensible because they will not become lost in pages of densely written content information and will be able to understand what they've read due to the concepts being presented and organized visually (Brown, 2007).

### **Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach**

ELL's studying secondary level content require explicit instruction in academic strategies to comprehend content using the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, *CALLA* (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). The *CALLA* approach is a model designed to teach ELL students explicit learning strategies while receiving content instruction (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). In this model learners are guided towards constructing meaning with the support of the teacher in a way that activates the thought process necessary to decode reading passages. Students may not know the meaning of certain content specific vocabulary words contained in the passage but could be able to comprehend it and answer text dependent questions pertaining to the passage if shown the proper strategies to determine what the passage is saying, and the related questions are asking (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). Helpful

strategies may include skimming and scanning techniques, looking up unfamiliar words in a bilingual dictionary, teaching students how to use a glossary, frontloading definitions prior to reading and associating the image with a related visual (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007).

Through *CALLA* practitioners are encouraged to challenge their students' intelligences by incorporating higher order thinking questions and providing the scaffolding they need to answer these questions with the limited second language proficiency they possess (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). The *CALLA* approach can be implemented in the Social Studies classroom through instructional activities that are inclusive of explicit instruction in literacy skills such as teaching the use of context clues during reading activities, emphasizing sentence structure and the use of synonyms when writing, and learning root words, prefixes and suffixes as part of vocabulary development (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007).

The *CALLA* approach was used in a South Texas school districts' *Content Area Program Enhancement model, CAPE*. This model based on *CALLA* was implemented as a means to foster a collaborative work environment amongst educators with the goal of improving instruction and achievement for ELL's (Montes, 2002). The *CAPE* model was assessed in multiple terms. These terms evaluated by whether or not the program met its goals, the critical assessment of teachers and administrators, and most importantly through student performance on a high stakes tests, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test.

During the *CAPE* initiative teachers received monthly in-service training in *CALLA* strategies, along with interdisciplinary unit training and training in the use

of technology to support the development of *CAPE* based lessons (Montes, 2002). Annually teachers participated in a weeklong summer institute to refresh and reflect on the CALLA strategies sponsored by the program (Montes, 2002). Sheltered English was a priority throughout the initiative. Teachers taught using varied approaches which included the use of graphic organizers such as *Question-Answer-Relationship, QAR, and Role-Audience-Format-Topic, RAFT* for reading and writing. 1603 students were provided with instruction using the *CAPE* model. 96.9 percent of the students were Hispanic, and 94.9 percent were economically disadvantaged. Research compared students in grades six to eight in three similar middle schools. Each school was composed of students in *CAPE* program classrooms and non-program classrooms. Data was analyzed using several paired t tests on reading and mathematics Texas Indexes. Results indicated that the program improved student scores in both domains (Montes, 2002). Results on the reading and math indexes derived from the TAAS were good indicators of whether students were making progress towards passing the TAAS at the end high school (Montes, 2002).

### **Impact of Best Practices on Instructional Planning**

Literature also provides us with several other important best practices when planning and delivering instruction for ELL's. Content area teachers should always be cognizant of the language arts component and literacy needs of their students. Social Studies and Scienceteachers should always consider their lesson's language objectives in addition to their content goals. In other words, the practitioner must think, "How will my students learn content through reading, writing, listening, and

speaking?” (Short, Vogt & Echevarria, 2011). Story-telling and personal narratives are a great starting point for both students and teachers. Many of today’s non-native speakers are familiar with storytelling as they come from backgrounds with rich oral histories (Egbert & Simich-Dudgeon, 2001). Personal narratives are a great way for teachers to assess their student’s general knowledge of social studies and present language abilities (Egbert & Simich-Dudgeon, 2001). During assessment exercises teachers can provide ELL’s completion statements with word banks so they may focus on meaning rather than form or identification questions (Berg, Petron & Greybeck, 2012). Multiple choice and true or false questions could also be used in assessment as long as the questions do not contain idioms, tricky wording, or unusual expressions (Berg, Petron & Greybeck, 2012). Most often essay type questions are out of the realm of ELL’s proficiency unless they are at an advanced level (Berg, Petron & Greybeck, 2012) this is because the complexity of the task requires students to analyze, mentally select and organize a response and turn it into a coherent whole (Berg, Petron & Greybeck, 2012). A short response question for intermediates level ELL’s may be a good place to start. However, the plan to gradually incorporate content-based writing into the curriculum may not always be feasible due to the time constraints standardized testing brings in which most circumstances ELL’s are not entirely exempt from testing and these tests often contain multiple choice, short response or document based question and answers and essay writing as they do in New York State’s Regents testing program (University of the State of New York, 2019) .

There is a great deal of research out in the edu-sphere about numerous best

practices for ELL's and what practices are tried and true that lead to the quickest gains in content knowledge or improved language arts performance. What is lacking in the field though is student perspectives of many of these practices. We know for instance what sentence starters do for our learners studying content via reading, but we do not know from the learners themselves why they feel it helps them learn. Yes, there is research about reading motivation and the practices that support it, but what about the overall phenomena of being an ELL in a classroom that employs SDAIE, CALLA or other forms of academic or cultural supports specific to their needs?

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### ***Second Language Reading and Learning in the Content Areas***

Linguistic factors, the reader's background knowledge and the level of the reader's engagement with the text directly influence the development of reading comprehension in L2 (Verhoeven, 2011). Word decoding combined with knowledge of word meanings is essential for the development of reading comprehension as it enables readers to employ reading as a tool for the acquisition of new information (NRP 2000, Perfetti, 1998 & Verhoeven, 2011).

The lexical-quality hypothesis proposes that the sheer number of available words accessible by the reader may directly affect reading comprehension (Verhoeven & van Leeuwe, 2008). Since L2 learners typically have limited sized L2 vocabularies this relationship ineffectually places L2 learners at risk (Verhoeven, 2011). This limitation imposes particular challenges to the ELL's ability to comprehend and analyze texts at the secondary level due to limiting their abilities to acquire knowledge in the content areas and by inhibiting their ability to

express themselves effectively (Taboada-Barber et al, 2018). Having limited sized L2 vocabularies translates to difficulties in using English as a medium for learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996). The ability to use English as a medium for learning, particularly in the content areas where the use of cognitive processes such as making inferences and integrating ideas across texts are critical for academic success (Taboada-Barber et al, 2018, Slavin, Cheung, Groff & Lake, 2008, Torgensen et al, 2007). Strong empirical evidence supporting the use of intensive vocabulary instruction and the integration of oral and written language instruction as a means of remedying deficiencies in L2 and support adolescent EL's who are at risk have been emphasized in a recent Institute of Education Sciences guide (Baker et al, 2014).

Most of today's research pertaining to adolescent ELL's revolves around reading interventions, mostly reading interventions that prioritize vocabulary instruction although the quantity of research available for specific academic interventions for adolescent ELL's is scarce (Lessaux, Kieffer, Falley, Kelly 2010). In particular, most content area research for adolescent ELL's pertain to the areas of science (August et al., 2014) and English language arts (Denton, Wexler, Vaughn & Bryan, 2008). If we are to propose that English literacy skills are vital for comprehending social studies and that the purpose and intention of social studies education is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as members of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world, then it would only make sense to examine how certain practices used to support English language development while enhancing content area instruction in social studies are perceived as being

useful by the learner. In *Exploring Social Studies Teaching: Student Perspectives of Teacher Practice in L2 Classrooms* a closer look will be taken at how certain strategies and teacher practices designed to enhance language development and promote literacy engagement while teaching content in a socially supportive classroom environment are received by the students. Considering that adolescent ELL's are deemed potentially as at-risk learners and that research shows that the type of learning environment and teaching methods used can improve self-efficacy in the classroom (Bandura, 1996) it would be useful to investigate the students' perspectives of how they experience SDAIE, CALLA and CRP in their social studies classroom through the lens of being an ELL. This study seeks to determine if any of these practices increase their self-efficacy in social studies thus increasing their motivation to succeed in this content area.

### **Related Research**

English learners at the secondary level face numerous critical barriers that can potentially hinder academic growth in the content areas (Urietta, 2004). This is why the today's strategies for teaching ELL's emphasize sheltered instruction, increasing academic language and the development of culturally responsive pedagogy as opposed to using the previously taught English as a second language curriculum of the 1980's that focused mainly on grammar, syntax and vocabulary (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996). In *Teaching Social Studies for Newcomer English Learners: Toward Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, Choi acknowledged the lack of connection between the ELL's home culture and the social studies curriculum contribute to academic failure and that these issues and concerns did not receive the warranted attention it deserved in the world of social studies scholarship (Salazar &



Franquiz, 2008). In his research he sought to explore the question of how an exemplary social studies teacher utilized curriculum and pedagogy to encourage immigrant ELL's academic engagement in a culturally relevant way (Choi, 2013). Using CRP as a framework and focusing on the sociocultural experience of the students. Choi used Mr. Moon's class as a case study to collect data from. Mr. Moon was nominated by his administrators and previous student teachers as an exemplary and ESL and social studies teacher. The data collected from his class included observations interviews and artifacts from his ninth- grade global history class over six months. His study concluded that his students' academic success was a result of creating a learning community that utilized collaborative learning experiences through the use of reading groups and research projects, enabled heterogenous and authentic conversations amongst the students in an environment where students felt safe to share their experiences, imbedded literacy strategies to include teaching new vocabularies, limited transitional bilingualism to encourage thought sharing and enhance collaborative learning and ample visual resources such as charts, diagrams, graphic organizers to make learning more comprehensible.

Present research suggests that it takes on average of five to seven years for typical ELL's to achieve grade level performance in subject area classes (Collier 1987, 1989; Cummins 1980: 1996). Present day linguistic research consistently shows that ELL's learn English remarkedly better and faster while simultaneously learning academic content (Cho & Reich, 2008). Scholars believe this phenomenon occurs because the English language presented in content areas is more meaningful and authentic than language presented in language alone classes (Chamot & O'Malley 1994; Echevara, Vogt, & Short 2004; Gabons, 2002). The complexity of

certain intrinsic factors serving as critical barriers to the attainment of content knowledge in L2 is an area that practitioners seek to remedy. These factors such as ELLs' limited verbal skills in English during the initial five to seven years of learning in an L2 environment coupled with potentially limiting prior education experiences and possible cultural barriers that may deter the ELL from attempting to speak their viewpoint in the classroom, possess a great challenge to secondary ELL's learning under the constraints of the clock, that is being able to benchmark adequate scores on standardized assessments in a limited amount of time. These constraints demand of the practitioner to reflect on how their practices can achieve in preparing secondary ELL's to succeed on their Social Studies assessments that are required for a timely graduation while maintaining full fidelity to goals of social studies education which includes the teaching and learning of problem solving skills that presuppose students' critical and independent thinking (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007). Researchers Carrasquill and Rodriguez (1996), Cummins (1997) Genesee (1993), and Mohan et al. (2001) spoke of the necessity of equipping subject area teachers with the training necessary to successfully work with linguistically and culturally diverse students (Dong, 2004). Dong an associate professor in the Secondary Education Department at Queens College explored how twenty-six of his preservice teacher graduate students enrolled in his Language, Literacy and Culture in Education course critically examined how ELL students home culture, language and previous education impact their learning of English and curriculum content in L2 (Dong, 2004). Through course readings, discussions, twenty-five-hours of field observations and reflections students in his course found that it was necessary to establish empathy towards ELL's and the experiences and

potential isolation they may feel while learning content in L2 (Dong, 2004). This empathy led to a newfound awareness of ELL's presence in the classroom and led these pre service teachers to consider the ways they can better involve ELL's in the class despite any preconceived notions about the quality of learning that could take place in a classroom consisting of new comer ELL's (Dong, 2004). It was noticed that these students were capable of participating in intelligent discussions and thinking when their teacher displayed a sincere interest their beliefs and opinions and used multiple strategies to involve them in classroom discussions (Dong, 2004). These strategies consisted of extending time for ELL's responses to questions, not taking certain prior knowledge including the understanding of American phrases for granted and fusing language learning with content instruction (Dong, 2004). The later consisted of three very important instructional modifications that were to be made in order to meet the ELL's linguistic and cultural needs.

These modifications involved establishing language objective to accompany content area objects for each lesson, anticipating English learner related difficulties with vocabulary and in areas related to the cross linguistic transfer and building schema and background knowledge in American culture (Dong, 2004). If teachers were to modify their instructional practices with consideration to the specifications previously mentioned, ELL's would have wider access to the core curriculum thus enhancing their odds at successfully completing their high school program. The SDAIE conceptual model addresses the essential instructional components that mainstream content area teachers need to employ as part of an effective pedagogy (Cline & Necochea, 2003). Effective SDAIE strategies incorporates theories of first and second language acquisition into highly effective instructional strategies already

used by teachers in mainstream educational settings (Cline & Necochea, 2003). Research shows that when teachers proactively design, modify and initiate instructional strategies that allow for a low affective filter with high comfort level, (Cline & Necochea) students are more successful acquiring language and content due to learning in an environment where their strengths are affirmed as ELL's (Cline & Necochea, 2003). Student success in a SDAIE classrooms rests in the teacher's ability to facilitate instruction that provide opportunities for language negotiation and the social construction of knowledge through lessons that are cooperative and interactive (Cline & Necochea, 2003 Teaching social studies content in an environment that supports dialogue, argument and discussion is ideal and almost expected within the content area of social studies. SDAIE instruction demands this type of learning be facilitated by the practitioner as SDAIE classrooms are expected to be linguistically rich and socially active (Cline & Necochea, 2003).

In Szpara & Ahmad's 2007 study that focused on approaches to developing an effective instructional environment for teaching secondary ELL's social studies, their findings emphasized the importance of the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, *CALLA* within the sheltered instruction social studies classroom. This study took place in an urban suburbia outside of New York City working with five high school social studies teachers and The results of this study concluded that in addition to providing social and cultural support during the acculturation process (Szpara & Ahmad, 2007) teachers needed to explicitly teach academic skills through *CALLA* while incorporating approaches for reducing cognitive load while increasing the accessibility of complex knowledge (Spzara &

Ahmad, 2007). Techniques such as skimming and scanning, identifying important phrases, using a glossary and decoding are important skills teachers should develop in their students. Using *CALLA* teachers would provide students with the necessary scaffolding to develop answers to higher order thinking questions.

These scaffolds would make higher order thinking questions accessible for ELL's and prevent the oversimplifying of material in an attempt to reduce the cognitive load.

### **Relationship Between Prior Research and Present Study**

Choi & Reich 2008, sought to investigate how Social Studies teachers accommodated ELL's in their classrooms by inquiring about the their experiences and particular challenges they face teaching ELL's. Their study also inquired about the types of supports and trainings they felt they needed to teach content area instruct to ELL's more effectively. The study found that about 65.6% percent of teachers indicated that they allowed their ELL students extra time, 90% felt that they needed more support in regards to cultural understandings and 78% felt they needed additional training in the use of ESL instructional strategies (Choi & Reich, 2008).

Dong's research indicates that secondary subject area teachers should strive to create a classroom climate that displays empathy and an increased awareness towards ELL's. This increased awareness enabled the practitioners to reflect upon ways to involved non-native English speakers into classroom discussions. Pre service teacher's in his study who were enrolled in his Language, Literacy and Culture in Education course at the City University of New York, Queens College

gained an increased confidence in their abilities to design instruction that integrated language and content instruction in ways that incorporated second language learners in higher-level classroom discussions (Dong, 2004). Upon conclusion of the course and study the pre service teachers felt empowered to and more confident in their ability to establish empathetic learning environments where ELL students were receptive to their sincere interest in their views and used a variety of strategies to engage them as learners (Dong, 2004). Protacio's research of what motivates upper elementary ELL's to read, findings touched upon the various types of motivational factors that are at play. In addition to the sociocultural environment and perceived competence factors, her study found through student interviews, that this population of ELL's was motivated to read English so they could form bonds with their American peers and learn more about the culture in which they are living (Protacio, 2012). This finding can lead us wondering, what value would it be to discover which teacher practices enabled ELL's to do more of this? And what can students tell us about their experience of learning content in English and what makes them feel successful as students? *Exploring Social Studies Teaching: Student Perspectives of Teacher Practice in L2 Classrooms* will build upon these previous findings and seek to uncover which teacher practices utilized by the secondary social studies teacher and lead to greater student self-efficacy through the lens of secondary ELL students.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Researcher and author of *Qualitative Research in Education, A Users Guide*, Marilyn Litchman, (2013) found herself struggling to define what exactly qualitative research is all about. Knowing that qualitative research is not too concerned with statistical techniques but rather is interested in data pertaining to a small group of respondents in search of uncovering the “why” through the analysis of phenomena. (Litchman, 2013). She then later resolved to defining qualitative research according to this definition, Qualitative research is a general term. It is a way of knowing in which a researcher gathers, organizes, and interprets information obtained from humans using his or her eyes and ears as filters. It often involves in-depth interviews and /or observations of humans in natural, online or social settings, It can be contrasted with quantitative research, which relies heavily on hypothesis testing, cause and effect, and statistical analysis (Litchman, 2013).

In contrast to a quantitative research analysis design that is reliant upon gathering hard numerical data, employment of the scientific method and testing hypothesis, a qualitative research design analysis is more concerned with examining humans in their natural setting as opposed to experimental environments (Litchman, 2013).

In *Exploring Social Studies Teaching: Student Perspectives of Teacher Practice in L2 Classrooms* I will engage in a systematic investigation of the phenomenology of being a secondary level English learner enrolled in a high school social studies course. This systematic investigation will include data collection through classroom observations and in-depth student and teacher interviews. The

purpose of this is to achieve a clearer understanding of how secondary English Learners view their ability to succeed in the social studies classroom and what instructional practices and experiences serve to foster or hinder their self-efficacy in this content area.

## **Research Questions**

This study is designed to explore the following questions,

- How socially supportive do ELL's feel their Social Studies learning environment is?
- How do secondary ELL's believe Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, CALLA, strategies improve their language development in English?
- How do ELL's describe their experiences learning content when their teacher uses certain Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, SDAIE, strategies?
- How do students' responses affirm teacher practices as to how they make learning Social Studies in L2 accessible?

These questions were selected to explore to examine how three critical components, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy or CRP, SDAIE, and CALLA play a supportive role in fostering a positive academic learning environment for ELL's that lead to their success from the lens of the learner. This research is designed to probe how certain practices impact the secondary ELL's belief in their ability to succeed in the Social Studies classroom? In other words, Do the students feel these practices increase their self-efficacy? If so, which ones and why?



## **Research Design and Data Analysis**

The phenomenological study design is the qualitative research method that will be used throughout this dissertation. A phenomenological study will seek to uncover the common meaning for several individuals in their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Cresswell, 2013). As a researcher I will assume the role of a phenomenologist and seek to describe what all participants have in common as secondary level English learner students learning social studies. I will collect data from classroom observations in social studies and in-depth interviews consisting three students and a secondary social studies teacher of EL's in each school. Data will be collected from two public high schools, one located in a semi-rural community located in Putnam county, and the other is located within a small city in Westchester county. Both schools are located in New York State.

### **Sample of Participants**

**Student participants-** Six secondary level English learner students enrolled in a high school social studies course in New York State will be selected to serve as participants for this study. This population was chosen as participants because the study's purpose is to gain insight into the psyche of secondary EL's learning social studies content and to explore their perception of their teacher's practices and determine whether certain practices or characteristics of the teacher led to their greater self-efficacy on the presumption that greater self-efficacy in this content area would increase student motivation to succeed and remain in school until the completion of their high school diploma. Considering that the cohort of EL's who entered the ninth grade in 2014 only had a high school completion rate of 34% and a

dropout rate 27% (data.nysed.gov, 2020), the information sought from the participants in this study may provide us with valuable insights as to how secondary school leaders and teacher can keep this population motivated and feeling positive about their accomplishments through the use of the proper strategies and tools. EL's who are students of this content area will interviewed because this particular subject is not only difficult because of the content area's distinct nuances but because this is the only content area in which they must pass two Regents exams in order to commence.

### **Instruments**

In consideration upon how the learning environment and teaching methods used can increase student self-efficacy, this study will use interview questions that were developed to probe teachers for responses about the practices they use and the student's beliefs towards these practices. Students will be provided with a paper copy of the guiding questions to refer to during their interview. Should a student be more proficient in Spanish, he or she will receive the guiding questions in Spanish as well as in English. A voice recording device will be used to audio record the interviews.

**Table 1**

#### ***Guiding Questions for Teachers***

**Guiding Questions for Teachers:** Researcher will label SDAIE, CALL, CRP next to each response).

1. Describe some of the instructional strategies you use to teach content while simultaneously building language development?
2. Describe any challenges that may have risen while teaching

content related words? For example, do your ELL students have a different concept or understanding of certain words such as government, authority, or rights?

3. How do you “catch up” students who may not have been exposed to certain content knowledge in the same way native English-speaking peers have? (Consider how native English speakers may have been exposed to more concepts in American history and government than their nonnative peers? How do you equalize this?
4. What do you frequently do to make content more accessible to ELL’s?
5. What measures do you take to teach skills and academic content via the integration of students’ socio-cultural experiences? Please describe.
6. Reflect upon the techniques or strategies you use to build your students’ academic language?
7. Have you been trained in any specific approaches for teaching ELL’s? If so, which ones

Teacher responses will be used to formulate student interview questions.

**Table 2**

***Student Interview Questions***

Teacher Investigates Students backgrounds, histories, prior knowledge and student interests. (*Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*)

- Q1. Has your teacher ever taken the time to learn about your interests, cultural heritage, worldview, or opinions on social studies related topics or current events? If so, please describe.

Q2. In class have you ever had opportunity to engage in collaborative group work or projects? If so, please describe the activity and your experience participating in the activity.

Q3. Does your social studies class have opportunities to celebrate the cultural diversity of its students? Does your teacher plan for celebrations, or special learning experiences to learn about the different cultures represented in your class? If so, please describe? If not, does your teacher provide opportunities to learn about diverse perspectives in the classroom? If so, please describe.

Instructional Modification & Assessment (*Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English*)

Q4. Does your teacher provide you with readings only from the textbook or does he/she provide readings that distill the key concepts in a few short pages with features such as outlines, word banks or glossaries? (Reducing Cognitive Load)

Q5. When you are studying a new unit does your teacher provide different types of activities to help you learn the material? For instance, have you been given assignments that enable you to (Multiple Access Points)

\* Summarize      \* discuss      \* demonstrate      \* tell a story

\* complete a project

\* reenact a historical event      \* illustrate      \* present

Q6. Have you ever learned something in English, science or math class that helped you understand what you are learning in social studies? Do you know if your teachers ever worked together to design units of study that would enable you to learn the same concepts across the different academic subjects? If the answer is yes, did it help you understand the content or vocabulary more clearly? (Chunking & Webbing)

Learning Content in L2 (*Cross Linguistic Transfer & Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach*)

Q7. In social studies class have you ever, completed a timeline, created a content map or used any other type of graphic organizer to learn a concept?  
If so, what were you learning about and what are your thoughts about the activity? (CALLA Model)

Q8. In your social studies class do you have access to a bilingual dictionary and are you permitted to use it while complete your

assignments? (Cross Linguistic Transfer)

- Q9. Has your teacher ever provided you with an outline of the text prior to studying a unit? If so, was it helpful? Why? (CALLA)
- Q10. On most days in social studies class do you have the opportunity to read, write, speak, and listen? If not, how often are you able to do all these actions in a class period? (SDAIE & CALLA)
- Q11. What can your teacher do to help you learn Social Studies better? How can he/she make learning the material easier? What makes Social Studies confusing or difficult?
- Q12. When teaching a new topic, does your teacher frequently make connections to what you already know? If so, describe how this happens? (SDAIE & CALLA)
- Q13. Has your teacher ever brought attention to any linguistic features about your native language in comparison to English? For example, has he/she taught cognates/false cognates? (CALLA & Cross Linguistic Transfer)
- Q14. In social studies class has there ever been any activities, methods or assignments that you feel did not contribute to your learning? If so, please describe?

**Table 3**

***Student Interview Questions in Spanish***

**Preguntas de la entrevista del estudiante**

El profesor investiga los antecedentes, las historias, los conocimientos previos y los intereses de los alumnos. (Pedagogía culturalmente sensible)

- P. ¿Tu maestro se ha tomado el tiempo de aprender sobre tus intereses, herencia cultural, visión del mundo u opiniones sobre temas en torno a los estudios sociales o eventos actuales? De ser así, describe.
- P. En clase, ¿alguna vez has tenido la oportunidad de participar en proyectos o trabajos de colaboración en grupo? De ser así, describe una de esas actividades y la experiencia de participar en la misma.
- P. ¿En tu aula de estudios sociales se celebra la diversidad cultural de los estudiantes? ¿Tu profesor coordina celebraciones o eventos en torno a

las diferentes culturas representadas en la clase? De ser así, por favor describe; si no es así, ¿tu maestro te brinda oportunidades de aprender sobre diferentes perspectivas en el aula? De ser así, por favor describe.

Modificación y evaluación de la instrucción (instrucción académica especialmente diseñada en inglés)

P. ¿Tu profesor solamente te proporciona lecturas del libro de texto o también ofrece lecturas que resumen conceptos claves en unas pocas páginas con características tales como esquemas, “bancos de palabras” (*word banks*) o glosarios? (Reduciendo la carga cognitiva)

P. Cuando estás estudiando una nueva unidad, ¿tu maestro proporciona diferentes tipos de actividades para ayudarte a aprender mejor el material? Por ejemplo, te ha dado asignaciones que te permiten (múltiples puntos de acceso)

\* resumir      \* discutir      \* demostrar      \* contar una historia \* completar un proyecto

\* dramatizar un evento histórico      \* ilustrar      \* presentar

P. ¿Alguna vez has aprendido algo en la clase de inglés, ciencias o matemáticas que te haya ayudado a comprender lo que estás aprendiendo en tu clase de estudios sociales? ¿Sabes si tus profesores han trabajado en colaboración para diseñar unidades de estudios que te permitirían aprender los mismos conceptos en distintas materias? Si la respuesta es sí, dichas lecciones, ¿te ayudaron a entender mejor el material o el vocabulario? (Chunking & Webbing)

Contenido de aprendizaje en L2 (transferencia lingüística cruzada y enfoque de aprendizaje cognitivo-cognitivo-lingüístico)

P: En la clase estudios sociales, ¿alguna vez has completado una línea de cronológica (*timeline*), un mapa o utilizado algún tipo de gráfico para aprender algún concepto? De ser así, ¿qué estabas aprendiendo y qué piensas sobre dicha actividad? (CALLA)

P. En tu clase de estudios sociales, ¿tienes acceso a un diccionario bilingüe que puedes utilizar mientras completas tus deberes escolares? (Transferencia lingüística)

P. ¿Alguna vez tu profesor te ha dado el resumen de un texto antes de estudiar una unidad? De ser así, ¿te fue útil? ¿Por qué? (CALLA)

P. En general, ¿en tu clase de estudios sociales tienes la oportunidad de leer, escribir, hablar y escuchar? De no ser así, ¿con qué frecuencia puedes realizar todas estas acciones durante una hora o período de clase? (SDAIE & CALLA)

- P. ¿Qué puede hacer tu profesor de estudios sociales para ayudarte a aprender mejor? ¿Cómo puede él /ella hacer más fácil el material? ¿Qué hace tu clase de estudios sociales sea confusa o difícil?
- P. Cuando enseña un nuevo tema, ¿tu maestro hace conexiones frecuentes con lo que ya sabes? De ser así, describe cómo sucede esto. (SDAIE & CALLA)
- P. Alguna vez, ¿tu profesor ha hecho referencia a alguna característica lingüística de tu lengua materna en comparación al inglés? Por ejemplo, ¿ha enseñado cognados / cognados falsos? (CALLA & Transferencia Lingüística)
- P. En tu clase de estudios sociales, ¿ha habido alguna actividad, método o asignación que consideres que no contribuyó a tu aprendizaje? De ser así, describe, por favor.

Classroom observations will occur so I may connect student responses to real life learning. Anecdotal notes will be taken during this time. An observational protocol will be used to look for evidence that corroborates classroom practices and student-teacher interactions to the responses supplied by them during their interviews. Evidence will be cross referenced to the corresponding interview questions. I will write the notes and insert the corresponding questions that the notes correlate into the appropriate box.

**Table 4*****Classroom Observation Protocol***

| Observation Protocol |            |                              |              |            |
|----------------------|------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| School               |            | Classroom                    |              |            |
| Teacher              |            | Date                         |              |            |
| Time                 | Question # | <i>CALLA</i>                 | <i>SDAIE</i> | <i>CRP</i> |
|                      |            | Description of<br>Activities |              |            |
|                      |            |                              |              |            |
|                      |            |                              |              |            |
|                      |            |                              |              |            |

**Procedures**

Outreach was made to a variety of school secondary schools in the Hudson Valley that have a sizeable amount of ELL's. Two school districts responded that they would like to participate in the study. Teacher and student consent forms were then sent to the school principals after district administration's approval. The first sample of data will be collected from a high school located within a semi-rural Central School District in Putnam county, located approximately fifty miles north of Manhattan. The community would be considered a rural bedroom community of



New York City.

After meeting with the principal, the teacher Janet Farrell will be interviewed followed by student interviews using the guiding questions and a voice recorder. Interviews will occur in a conference room outside of the principal's office in the school's administration building.

Classrooms will be observed during fifth and seventh period during United States History and Government courses.

The second set of data will then be collected from a small city high school during its summer school program. This high school is located suburban Westchester county, approximately twenty-three miles north of Manhattan. After meeting with the summer school Assistant Principal, the teacher Ronaldo Vasquez, will be interviewed followed by student interviews using the guiding questions for each and a voice recorder. Interviews will occur in a conference room within the library complex and students will be accompanied by a staff person during their interviews. Classroom observations will occur during a two-hour block economics class.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected from audiotaped interviews will be listened to and transcribed for accuracy. If a student should respond to guided interview question in another language such as Spanish a qualified interpreter will assist in translating the responses that will be transcribed. Observational data will be recorded in note form during the classroom observations using an observation protocol that will be used to categorize observable artifacts and practices into SDAIE, CALLA and CRP categories. The transcribed interviews and notes taken from the observations will be

analyzed to arrive at common themes after they are coded. (Litchman, 2013).

Through the process of reading and reflection, codes will emerge from the data (Litchman, 2013) by means of dissecting and categorizing data one by one, after each interview and observation (Litchman, 2013). After each interview is transcribed and observation is completed, I will work at the “microlevel” and read the text data line by line to code text chunks (Litchman, 2009). Afterwards, I will write these codes within the right-side margin of the paper of the text that is being analyzed. This process will be repeated by a second reader and derived codes will be recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. Keeping the “three C’s” of data analysis in mind (Litchman, 2013) each code will then be organized into categories on as they potentially correspond to the research questions. The categories will then be organized into a smaller number of concepts ranging from four to seven. Through this generic approach to qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2009, Saldana, 2009) supporting evidence will be extracted from the raw data to provide salient answers to the research questions.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship ELL students have with the socio-cultural literacy-based teaching practices their teachers use to instruct them in secondary level social studies and how these practices relate to their beliefs about their own ability to succeed in this content area. The questions that have guided this inquiry are: 1. How socially supportive do ELL's feel their learning environment is? 2. How do secondary ELL's believe CALLA strategies improve their language development in English? 3. How do ELL's describe their experiences learning content when their teacher uses certain SDAIE strategies? 4. Are student responses in agreement with their teacher's responses as to how they make learning assessable in L2? The overarching question that guides this study is, how do secondary ELL's view their ability to succeed in the Social Studies classroom?

The data that has been analyzed and presented in this chapter includes transcribed data from student interviews given by six secondary ELL's learning social studies, two transcribed teacher interviews, and anecdotal data taken during classroom observations. Each research question is addressed via a qualitative analysis of each type of data. Some student responses will contain tense or word changes that do not lead to any substantial changes in the meaning of the word or response. The names of the students and teachers who participated in this study are fictitious.

### **Overarching Research Question**

Main Question: How do secondary ELL's view their ability to succeed

in the Social Studies Classroom?

The main research question focused on identifying students' attitudes and perceptions of their own ability to succeed in the high school social studies classroom. Although present day research suggests that ELL's learn English remarkably better and faster while simultaneously learning academic content (Barber, Buehl, Beck, Ramirez, Gallagher, Nuland & Archer 2018; Cho & Reich, 2008; Choi, 2013; Krashen & Terrell, (1983); Sparza & Ahmad, 2007), the complexity of certain intrinsic factors serving as critical barriers to the attainment of content knowledge in L2 is an area that practitioners seek to remedy. For instance, many strategies used in TESOL programs create significant improvements in ELL's language learning and subject matter understanding (Salazar & Franquiz, 2008) but research is still scarce in regards to the efficacy of these practices (Barber, Buehl, Beck, Ramirez, Gallagher, Nuland & Archer, 2018; Choi, 2013) especially through the lens of the learner. This is why it is of interest to both the researcher and practitioner to uncover the students' true feeling in regard to their beliefs in their ability to succeed in the secondary social studies classroom. This information would serve to be advantageous to the practitioner wondering about what they are already doing and what they could be doing to build schema and support language development in a relatively short amount of time so their ELL students may benchmark adequate scores on standardized assessments required for a timely graduation.

Data derived from student responses indicate that students thrive in a

classroom environment when they perceive the teacher as being genuinely concerned with their achievement and wellbeing by arranging for the following learning supports, offering extra time for review and clarification during and beyond the class period or block, helping them organize their ideas and concepts especially in writing, providing ample opportunities to learn from one another through project based learning, and are given supports or instruction that support language development such as being provided with vocabulary lists and bilingual glossaries or software.

During teacher interviews each teacher provided ample explanations regarding the supports they provide for their students. Ms. Farrell of the high school located in Putnam County spoke of some of the extra supports she provides in addition to teaching strategies.

Rocco: What do you frequently do to make content more accessible to ELL's?

Farrell: I always offer extra help at the end of the day, after school. I tutor my kids during my prep so if they have a prep and I have a prep I'll work with them to do 1:1's. I also use the Chromebook as a lifesaver. We have technology here where they can do the snap and read. It can read it to them, translate it to them, breaks down vocabulary words for them. So, they can use that as well. They have all been trained in that.

Ms. Farrell also explained that her beginner class students have a bilingual teaching assistant available to them as an additional support and that the school has shifted social studies courses that do not conclude with a Regents exam as the initial social studies course English learner students take. these courses are Economics, and

Participation in Government which are typically taken during grade twelve and the first year of Global History and Geography is typically taken in grade nine.

Rocco: How do you “catch up” up students who may not have been exposed to certain content knowledge in the same way that their native speaking peers have? For example, native English- speaking students may have been exposed to more concepts in American history and government than their non- native peers have. How do you equalize this?

Farrell: So, what we try to do when they come in is place them in my Economics/Participation in Government class. This is a foundation course. So, this is a chance for me to really go over those terms we are discussing at a slower pace and it’s a lot of literacy. I’m trying to build up their reading and writing skills in this class as well. I try to fill in some of the gaps there, so I do a lot of intensive United States History there.

Rocco: And you’re building up their US history especially since in Participation in Government there are overlapping concepts in that course with the United States History and Government course.

Farrell: Yes, Yes. And from there they go to Global one, so they get kind of that sixth grade background that they never had either. And again, it’s intensive in trying to get their language skills up, their reading and writing skills up and the content into them before they enter a Regents level class. So, I’m trying to give them two years of foundation before they get to US and at the time there’s a little more of an equal playing field, but still not equal, but they do have background knowledge.

When asked the same question regarding “catching up” students, teacher Rodrigo Vasquez of the high school located in Westchester replied, ‘Yeah it’s the same thing I do in all my classes you know, I always sort of build a background anyway. If it’s something they have to know because it relates to something in the past, we all need review anyway whether you’re an ELL or someone else because kids who have been here forget. It’s just sort of reviewing the information and in that review the ELL’s are getting it for the first time.

During the interview Mr. Vasquez was also asked the following question,

Rocco: What do you frequently do to make content more assessable to ELL’s? You did mention vocabulary and separate readings, is there anything else?

Vasquez: Yeah, you know I try to use leveled readers as well. I was able to find books in Spanish and English. We’re big into technology here, so there is lots of games that could be played, review games. You will see one of them when you come in, (during) the second half of the period. Anything that makes it more interactive and engaging. I use videos a lot too. Just really presenting the materials and information in a variety of ways.

Both teachers were asked about the measures they take to teach skills and academic content via the integration of the student’s sociocultural experiences. Mr. Vasquez indicated that he starts the academic year with an activity called circles of my multicultural self. The activity explores, heritage, identity, and cultural biases whether positive or negative. The activity also builds empathy as Mr. Vasquez explains, “Kids share parts of it. The biases that people have, positive or negative, and we share that out the way everybody feels included, like you’re not the only one

going through those experiences. When asked the same question Ms. Farrell said that when she teaches current events, she tries to make them realize how what they are studying is relevant to them mentioning that “my TA’s are very useful because they’ll bring up stuff they are aware of as well to jog kids memories. They will bring up connections they know they have, that maybe I am not aware of”.

During classroom observations in Ms. Farrell’s fifth period United States History and Government course it was evident that her ELL’s students were confident and comfortable during their landmark Supreme Court cases presentations. This classroom consisted of a mixed population of general education students and ELL’s and it was apparent that both populations were motivated to succeed as all eighteen students were participating fully by either presenting their court case or by taking notes on the case and evaluating the presentation. It was observed that all students were using an outline for note taking and a rubric to evaluate their peer’s presentation. The outline asked students to identify “What the case was about and how this affects us”? The reason students were taking a simplified summary for each case was the fact that class was in Regents preparation mode and landmark Supreme Court cases is an essay topic that frequently appears on the examination in either the thematic essay or document based essay portion of the exam. The same scenario was also observable in Ms. Farrell’s seventh period class of fifteen ELL students. Most were highly engaged in presenting and note taking for landmark cases such as *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Tinker v. Des Moines*. The students were not hesitant to ask for clarification from the student presenter



or the teacher. Ms. Farrell clarified further questions pertaining to the presentations content information if the presenter needed further assistance in responding. In both class periods there was little to no downtime and all students seemed intensely focused on mastering their understanding of each case.

In Mr. Vasquez's two-hour block period class economics class only two of the seven students were native speakers. Initially six of the seven students were working diligently. The class began with students writing their content and language objectives for the period on a teacher prepared worksheet. The day's lesson concluded a unit on supply and demand with five of seven students answering questions related to the demand curve placed on the overhead. However, when it was time to engage interactively all students were ready and appeared eager to show how much they knew. Mr. Vasquez refreshed their economics vocabulary through Quizlet.live. Students rushed to enter the code to participate. Afterwards the class played an interactive game on a program called Kahoot. This activity captured each student in the class's attention. Students who may have had difficulty pronouncing certain content vocabulary such as good, services, demand curve, surplus, equilibrium, were clearly able to demonstrate their knowledge of what each term meant within the context of a sentence.

**Table 5**

*Frequency of Codes Referenced for Main Research Question*

| <b>Codes</b> | <b>References in student interviews (6)</b> | <b>References in Teacher interview (2)</b> | <b>Noted in classroom observation (4 class periods)</b> |
|--------------|---|--|---|
|              |   |  |   |

|  |    |   |   |
|--|----|---|---|
| Teacher takes the time to learn about students' backgrounds, <u>world views or opinions.</u>   | 8* | 4 | 3 |
| Students feel they enjoy working collaboratively and learn from one another.   | 12 | 4 | 3 |
| Techniques that reduce cognitive load are beneficial.  | 8  | 3 | 2 |
| Students enjoy completing tasks that offer multiple access points towards learning.  | 9  | 5 | 5 |
| Students appreciate the benefit of interdisciplinary units and the learning of concepts that enhance their understanding of other disciplines. | 4  | 0 | 0 |

|  |    |   |   |
|--|----|---|---|
| Students are more confident when provided with the tools and information needed to apply cross linguistic transfers of word knowledge and attention is given to the linguistic features of a text.                   | 14 | 5 | 4 |
| Students feel supported and are appreciative of when their teachers provide instruction in the use of graphic organizers and uses graphic organizers in instruction.   | 12 | 2 | 4 |
| Teachers can help their students learn social studies better by helping them organize their ideas.   | 9  | 3 | 4 |
| Students would like for their teachers to provide additional after class supports to help them learn concepts. During this additional time they learn more effectively through dialogue and discussion using them to | 6  | 2 | 2 |

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| organize a sequence or form a concept map.  |   |   |   |
| Students need to feel the teacher cares about them.   | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Students aren't intimidated about learning unfamiliar concepts.                               | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Students prefer it when the teacher uses a steady set of reliable practices to instruct them. | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| Students feel that learning activities prepared for them are worthwhile and beneficial.       | 6 | 4 | 5 |

### Research Question 1

Question 1: How socially supportive do ELL's feel their learning environment is?

This question is relative to the questions presented to students regarding their teacher's integration of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, *CRP* into the social studies classroom. During the interview students were asked the following question,

- Has your teacher ever taken the time to learn about your interests, cultural heritage, worldview, or opinions on social studies related topics or current events?

- In class have you ever had the opportunity to engage in collaborative group work or projects? If so, please describe the activity and your experience participating in the activity.
- Does your social studies classroom celebrate the cultural diversity of its students? Does your teacher plan for celebrations or special learning experiences about the different cultures represented in your class. If so, please describe? If not, does your teacher provide opportunities to learn about diverse perspectives in the classroom? If so, please describe?

Student interview data suggests that the teacher investigates students' backgrounds, histories and interests to a limited degree while investigating prior knowledge a little more extensively. All students indicated that their teacher inquires about their view points or opinions and only half of students responded that their teacher acknowledges their cultural heritage and incorporates celebrations or plans for special learning experiences enabling them to learn about the different cultures represented in their class.

Students Ramon, Jesus, and Ismael in Ms. Farrell's class all responded positively when asked, "has your teacher ever taken the time to learn about your heritage, interests, your likes and dislikes, worldview or opinions? However, when responding to this question two of the three students only mention how their teacher has asked them for their opinion or judgement of a historical outcome or event. Only one student, Jesus mentioned partaking in a cultural celebration in class. Students Ramon and Ismael were eager to elaborate with examples of how their teacher asks them about their own views and learning about diverse perspectives.

Rocco: Did she ever ask you for your opinion on any topics that you learn about?

Ramon: Opinions like?

Rocco: (Referring to today's court case presentations) Did she ask you if you agree or disagree with the court's decision and why? Did she ever ask you for examples about how maybe in your own life you could relate?

Ramon: Yeah, she asked me if I agree with what the court is talking about.

Rocco: Okay, Do you learn about diverse perspectives? For example, people in one county may have a particular viewpoint and then in another country their attitude or opinion is different about the same topic?

Ramon: Yeah, in Global. We learned about religions. You have different religions in different countries. So yeah.

### **Ismael's Responses**

Rocco: Has your teacher ever taken the time to learn about your interests?

Ismael: Yes. We talk about goals and things like that. Yeah, so, when I talk to my teacher about my goals they're like- yeah, you can, you know, you can do everything. It's just you have to try and stuff like that because I told her I want to be a state trooper.

While all three students in Mr. Vela's economics class responded their teacher inquires about their opinions and world view, only one student in Mr. Vela's class responded positively when being asked about his interests or heritage.

Diego: We talked about war in countries. Whereas my teacher was from Colombia. Diego: So, I'm from Peru and other students are from other countries. So, we share our customs and experiences about our countries (in class).

Rocco: Okay, so you've had opportunities to share experiences. Did you do any comparisons of words, customs or traditions?

Diego: Yeah. Between friends, classmates.

When students were asked, "In class have you ever had the opportunity to engage in collaborative group work or projects? If so, please describe the activity and you experience participating in the activity". All six students responded yes and could fully describe their experience participating in such activities. All students felt these opportunities significantly contributed to their learning experiences and were eager to talk about how beneficial the opportunity was to their understanding of what they were learning.

### **Ms. Farrell's Students**

Ramon: Sometimes in the group, we talk if we don't know something. Maybe the other person knows.

Ramon: If you work by yourself, it's going to be a

long finding. Rocco: All the work by yourself?

Ramon: Yeah

Rocco: Do you feel you learn more in a group? Do you ever have discussions with your classmates?

Ramon: Yeah, we discuss things like the cause of the civil war or when we make a project who will do what responsibility.

Jesus another student in Ms. Flannigan's class mentions the following,

Jesus: In history, I work with groups of four people usually. We worked on projects for the Civil War, World Wars and immigration. Sometimes we do map projects. We find the states, regions, lakes, rivers.

Jesus: I didn't have a particular role in the group, everybody pretty much had the same activity.

Rocco: Do you ever turn and talk to the person next to you to discuss something you've read?

Jesus: Turn and talk, yeah sometimes. We have discussions. Sometimes with the group (or pair) and sometimes with the teacher. Both are helpful.

When Ismael was asked about his experience with collaborative group work in Ms. Flannigan's class he replied,

Ismael: We do lot's of projects. My friends in the class help me know what to do. So, if I don't know how to do something, I ask them.

Rocco: How do you know what the expectations are for the project or how you will be graded? Does your teacher give you the requirements for the project about what your score will be if you follow the requirements? Do you receive a rubric?

Ismael: She always gives out samples. So, you know we can think, we can get ideas. Rocco: Are the examples helpful?

Ismael: Oh yeah, very helpful.



Rocco: Do you like working on projects or participating in a group?

Ismael: Yeah, when I work on a project with my classmates I don't have to worry about knowing everything. I can ask for them to explain to me if I didn't understand the teacher. We help each other. I learn more because of the group.

### **Mr. Vasquez's Students**

Deigo, a student in Mr. Vasquez's economics class mentions how he enjoys working in groups especially when his team is expected to teach another team new or review information through presentation. Diego further mentions that he prefers it when his group has leader and a designated presenter.

Jessica, a beginner ELL speaks to engaging in numerous group work activities in other history courses. When asked about her experience learning in a group she replied, "Estudio con mis amigos y aprendo. Cada vez que aprendemos sobre una guerra, la guerra revolucionaria o mundial, tenemos un proyecto. Aprendí cosas que no sabía sobre la guerra revolucionaria hablando con mis amigos en un grupo". Here, Jessica refers to her peers as friends and mentions that whenever she learned about an event in American history such as war there is always a project that follows. She explains that she gains new knowledge by conversing with her peers about the topic they are studying.

Juan, the third student interviewed in Mr. Vasquez's economics class mentions that he works in small groups sometimes in Mr. Vasquez's class but had done more so in American and Global History class. He said his favorite group activities happen when he can interact with his peers to make an illustration on

chart paper (which he calls paper on the wall).

Rocco: When was the last group project you did this way? Juan: 1938 Hitler, Appeasement.

Rocco: What was your role in the activity?

Juan: To make an illustration about appeasement and man, the prime minister England.

Rocco: How did you feel about doing this activity?

Juan: Good. I can use my skills. What I am good at to show I've learned something new.

Ms. Farrell's students utilized all the technologies she specified in her interview that took place prior to the classroom observation. Students were highly engaged in reading, writing, speaking and listening during and after each presentation about landmark Supreme Court cases. Students were engaged in asking questions to the student presenter and teacher for clarification as they completed their review outline. Students also participated in the peer evaluation process by providing verbal and written feedback for each presentation. The teacher supported her students by providing them with an outline that would be used for their note taking and stopped frequently to pause after each presenter's slide to speak and highlight text on the Smart board so students would not be deficient in their notes.

Multi-cultural flags, student made concept maps written on chart paper were located around the classroom. The concepts maps noted were for historical events such as the Black Death, Golden Ages, Renaissance, Reformation, and a comparison

of world religions. There were also two large timelines posted on the center back wall for the Cold War and Arms Race. It was noted that all students were engaged in either listening, speaking, reading or writing and appeared to be dedicating all their energy towards passing the US History Regents exam three weeks into their future.

The classroom where Mr. Vasquez's summer school economics course was held was not the regular classroom used to teach this subject throughout the academic year. As a result of this course being held in a temporary location there appeared to be a lack of student made artifacts to reference to. During classwork, the teacher perambulated around the class to formatively assess students understanding of the material presented speaking to the individual student in Spanish when necessary. The teacher also checked in with each student to see where they were in regard to their stock market project that was soon due. Students in the classroom were supported through the use of interactive technologies. It was noticed that one student had his head on the desk in the beginning of the two hour block but when it came time to review economic terms and prepare for the test they were eager to take out their phones and begin Quizlet.live and Kahout. It was apparent that all students used their phones to engage in the activity because their participation was observable on the Smart Board once they logged in. The class was divided into two teams during review with Quizlet.live.

### **Research Question 2:**

Question 2: How do secondary ELL's believe *CALLA* strategies improve their language development in English?

This question was designed to explore students' experiences and interaction

with instructional planning designed to assist them with learning content and language through CALLA and practices designed to build their language skills through support with a cross linguistic transfer of word knowledge.

Students were provided with a series of questions pertaining to the instructional supports offered to them that would help them become independent and self-regulated learners (Chamot & Robbins, 2005). In addition to learning about the strategies and tools used within this instructional model students were also asked about what their teacher could do to make learning in this subject more enjoyable and if they felt any assignment given to them wasn't worth their time or perceived as being not beneficial to them.

**Table 6**

**Tools Provided to Students to Help Regulate Learning**

| Student | Use of timelines, content maps and graphic organizers | Access to bilingual dictionary | Provided with outline of unit prior to studying unit. | Brings attention to linguistic features | How teacher can make learning easier.  | Activities, methods or tasks that did not contribute to learning. |
|---------|---|--------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Ramon   | Yes, for all except timelines.                        | Yes                            | Yes   | Yes, emphasis on cognates               | Make students comfortable enough to ask teacher for clarification and explanations. Support with making revisions. | Everything presented in class is helpful.                         |

|         |                                |     |                |                          |  |  |
|---------|--------------------------------|-----|----------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Jesus   | Yes, for all except timelines. | No  | Yes            | Yes                      | Nothing. Likes history class as is.  | Everything the teacher has tried to do has helped. |
| Ismael  | Yes                            | Yes | Yes            | Yes                      | Comprehending maps. Extra time to ask questions.                                     | Everything presented in class is helpful.          |
| Diego   | Yes                            | Yes | Yes            | Yes                      | Assistance with remembering dates. More time to study. Show more videos and visuals. | Everything presented in class is helpful.          |
| Jessica | Yes                            | Yes | Yes            | Yes                      | Extra help with writing.   | Everything presented in class is helpful.          |
| Juan    | Yes                            | Yes | Yes, Sometimes | Yes, cognates and idioms | More help with English, vocabulary and writing. Help with recalling dates.           | Everything presented in class is helpful.          |

### Teacher Responses

When teachers were asked to reflect upon the techniques or strategies, they

use to build their students' academic language while teaching content both mentioned frequently providing students with bilingual vocabulary lists as a way of developing language awareness and critical literacy (Chamot & Robbins, 2005). Ms. Farrell mentioned the frequent and almost daily use of some type of graphic organizer. She also mentioned how she programs cooperative learning tasks to be done mostly during class time so her ELL's can keep up. In her class she always plans for projects to have a strong visual element by matching an image with concept so students can have a visual to help them understand a concept that may be too "wordy" for them to comprehend, especially if they are newcomers. In addition to front loading vocabulary at the beginning of a unit, Mr. Vasquez admittedly relies on visual interactive learning formats to help teach concepts.

When students were asked "In Social Studies class have you ever completed a timeline, created a content map, or used any other type of graphic organizer to learn a concept? If so, what were you learning about and what were your thoughts about the activity? They responded as follows,

Ramon: I used a graphic organizer to compare the north and the south in the Civil War. The diagram with the two sides (referring either to a Venn diagram or a T Chart) makes it easy. Jesus: To make an outline for writing. A writing graphic organizer to write an essay.

Ismael: We did a timeline last week about the Mayas and Incas. I got to put illustrations on the timeline

Diego: I made a diagram (with many bubbles) about the alliances and World War I. I have them in a folder to study. Easier than reading my notebook.

Jessica: Used it when we learned about World War I in history and for Economics to write, monopoly, competition (meaning perfect competition or monopolistic competition), oligopoly. Makes it understandable.

Juan: To compare and contrast Sparta and Athens. It made me think about the differences and wonder who I would want to live amongst.

### **Research Question 3:**

Question 3: How do ELL's describe their experiences learning content when their teachers uses certain SDAIE strategies?

Students and teachers were asked questions pertaining to their experience with instructional modification for ELL's known as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English. Students were asked a variety of question ranging from, Does your teacher assign readings only from a textbook? Does your teacher present readings to you on a separate sheet that instills the concepts being taught over a page or two of reading? Are you provided with a prewritten outline, word bank or glossary? All students in Ms. Farrell's class responded positively that they receive their reading material via a teacher revised format that includes shortened pages, word banks and a bilingual glossary.

Ramon: Yeah, we have she gives it to us in Spanish and English, so, we learn these things a little better.

Ramon: We get our readings in a few paragraphs and we have to summarize. We also do a lot of projects. Sometimes I have to draw an image for the

project. I did this for our Civil War projects.

Jesus: It is not like here is the book. Read. Yeah, that would be hard.

Ismael: So yeah, she is very helpful. I mean- she gives me different papers to try to help us.

Two of the three students in Mr. Vasquez's class responded they are provided with reading materials beyond the textbook to learn social studies concepts. All three of the students mentioned that their teacher directs them to highlight and underline specific terms or concepts when notetaking and the teacher specified that he instructs students in "closed notetaking" during his interview. Students in this class indicated that they were heavily reliant upon accessing and retrieving content related information from the internet. This fact was observable during the classroom observation as technology was used for one hundred percent of the double block duration and students accessed three different internet based instructional programs, Brainpop, Kahoot, Quizlet.live during the duration of Economics class. All students indicated that their teacher frontloaded vocabulary terms that were necessary to understand the unit they were studying.

Another segment of the interview questions probed students for their opportunities to learn through multiple access points. Students were asked "When you are studying a new unit does your teacher provide you with different types of activities to help you learn the material? For instance, have you been given assignments that enable you to do any of the following?" On the interview question sheet provided to students in both English and Spanish the following options were given to them to help them answer this question. These options were, summarize, discuss, demonstrate, tell a story, complete a project, reenact a



historical event, illustrate, and present.

**Table 7**

***Students' Experiences Learning with Various Multiple Access Points in Social Studies***

| Student's Name         | Summarize | Discussion | Demonstrate | Tell a story | Complete a project | Reenact a historical event | Illustrate | Present |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------|
| Ramon (Brewster)       | Y         | Y          | Y           | N            | Y                  | N                          | Y          | Y       |
| Jesus (Brewster)       | Y         | Y          | Y           | Y            | Y                  | N                          | Y          | Y       |
| Ismael (Brewster)      | Y         | Y          | Y           | N            | Y                  | N                          | Y          | Y       |
| Diego (White Plains)   | Y         | Y          | Y           | N            | N                  | N                          | Y          | Y       |
| Jessica (White Plains) | Y         | Y          | Y           | N            | Y                  | N                          | Y          | Y       |
| Juan (White Plains)    | Y         | Y          | Y           | N            | Y                  | N                          | Y          | Y       |

Data indicates that students frequently engage in learning activities that allow them to summarize, discuss, demonstrate, illustrate, and complete projects that would include a variety of these features. In Mrs. Farrell's class students were observed being directly engaged in all of the mentioned activities except illustrating. Yet, there was illustrations that demonstrated student learning from previous tasks about the Reformation, Renaissance, Black Death, and world religions posted on chart paper throughout the classroom. During Mr. Vasquez's double blocked class period students were observed summarizing, discussing, and

demonstrating their knowledge of supply and demand curves. Interestingly, five out of six students interviewed indicated that they never had the opportunity to tell a story pertaining to a historical event or other social studies related concept and all six students responded that they have never had the opportunity to participate in a re-enactment or role play related to a historical event for any of their social studies classes.

#### **Research Question 4:**

Question 4: How do students responses affirm teacher practices as to how they make learning Social Studies in L2 accessible?

#### **Making Content Accessible and Supporting Language Development**

Teachers were asked to describe some of the instructional strategies they use to teach content while simultaneously building language development. Mr. Vasquez responded,

Vasquez: Um, I think teaching Social Studies there is not much of a distinction because I'm always teaching language no matter what. I sort of build it into my subject anyway. What I heard of when working with ELL's when I first started working with them was to start off with lots of vocabulary work at the beginning of the unit reinforcing vocabulary.

Rocco: Do you front load the vocabulary?

Vasquez: Yeah I do that for all of my classes. They don't have a lot of academic or content vocabulary. You know the ELL's still have the challenge of learning social vocabulary as well, especially for a newcomer who might not speak any

English, so you know I use a lot of strategies from the SIOP program. I like the way it showed me how to provide instruction via meaningful input and trying to make information relevant to their daily lives so they have some background information to retrieve from.

During Ms. Farrell's interview she indicated that in addition to ensuring that all of her students had access to a 1:1 device she also sought to ensure that her ELL's were receiving ample language support in addition to the materials her general education students were receiving. Although both teachers mentioned that they provide vocabulary lists to ELL students in Spanish and English, Mrs. Farrell mentioned that the list she provides also contain the words definition.

Mr. Vasquez recalled how he differentiates instruction for his ELL's in the classroom. He mentioned that he will sometimes provide his ELL students with a shortened separate reading as a way of providing additional background knowledge to the student before reading. He also, mentioned that when he is teaching history rather than social studies, he will incorporate leveled readers and bilingual reading material into the classroom's instruction.

Both teachers were also asked about what they frequently do to make content more accessible to ELL's and the steps they take to level out any deficiencies in background content knowledge the students may have. Ms. Farrell mentioned how her district's programming of ninth graders in Participation in Government class rather than waiting until twelfth grade when the course is traditionally taken serves to support students by providing them with some

background knowledge that would be useful to them two years later in United States History and Government class, a Regents level class where the stakes would be much higher. Ms. Farrell then went on to explain the extra support she provides,

Farrell: I always offer extra help at the end of the day, after school. I tutor: my kids during my prep so if they have a prep and I have a prep I'll work with them to do 1:1;'s. We have technology here where they can do the snap and read. It can read it to them, translate it to them. They've all been trained in that.

Farrell: Time's extremely valuable if they can give it to me. I help them with their essay writing at times. That's one of their biggest weak links is their being able to write. They can't write. So having that extra time means everything.

Mrs. Farrell continued to mention how she assists students with organizing their ideas. Her students are heavily reliant on outlines to organize their writing in a cohesive fashion and graphic organizers to organize conceptual information and its corresponding details.

Mr. Vaquez shared his experiences with building and extending upon students' prior knowledge. He mentioned that he frequently has to plan instruction, so it revisits previously learned material with native speakers to reactivate their prior knowledge while simultaneously building new knowledge amongst his ELL students.

Vasquez: You're building kind of like prior knowledge without it being prior knowledge.

Vasquez: And if I need to and it's something the other kids know; I might just have a separate little reading for them to do that might be short. Just to get them

caught up with some basic information so it helps them understand.

Mr. Vasquez continued to mention how his district is big into instructional technology and how he utilizes instructional games that could be played.

Vasquez: Anything that makes it more interacting and engaging. Just really presenting the materials and information in a variety of ways. I use videos a lot. Discovery Education and Brain Pop are my two big go to's.

When teachers were asked about the measures they frequently take to teach skills and academic content via the integration of students' sociocultural experiences their responses varied. Ms. Farrell response indicated that her instruction was heavily focused on the students' native languages as a mean of connecting with them while Mr. Vasquez elaborated upon the multi-cultural activities he uses as an icebreaker in the beginning of the school year.

Rocco: What measures do you take to teach skills and academic content via the integration of students' sociocultural experiences? Please describe.

Farrell: Presentations are done in the classroom. Sometimes my ELL's can't keep up, so they'll be able to see it. I have them work in pairs. I have four languages in the classroom. When we do group work I give it in all languages. English, Spanish, French ect.

Vasquez: Yeah, So I like to start the year with an activity called Circles of My Multi-Cultural Self. We explore where you're from, and students write about traits that are a part of their culture and share it out. Then we get into some of the biases that people have, positive or negative and we share that out in so everybody feels

included a feel like you're not the only one going through this. We all bring our experiences to the classroom. One of the things we have to say is that I'm this but we don't do this. One of the things for me is that I'm Puerto Rican but I don't know how to Salsa dance, but everybody assumes you're Puerto Rican and you know how to dance. I'm like, I don't know how to dance, and the kids laugh. Okay, and when you bring those experiences and it gets posted around the room and then I know whose from where, so when I cover Mexico I can have those students bring in their history so they can explain what they know about it so we get those different perspectives.

### **Students Responses**

Throughout the interview's students made frequent references to their teachers' efforts to reduce cognitive load, provide them with the tools and information needed to apply cross linguistic transfers of word knowledge, and help them organize their ideas and writing. Some students also made references to how they would like their teachers to provide additional after class supports to help them learn.

**Table 8**

#### *Frequency of Codes Referenced for Research Question Four*

| <b>Codes referred to during student interviews</b>   | <b>No. of times mentioned</b> |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Mentions techniques that reduce cognitive load.  | 8                             |
| Enjoys completing tasks that offer multiple access points towards learning.  | 9                             |
| Confident when provided with tools and information needed to apply cross linguistic transfers of word knowledge and attention is given to the linguistic features of a text. | 14                            |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Feel supported when teachers provide instruction in the use of graphic organizers and utilizes graphic organizers in instruction. | 12 |
| Would like teachers to provide additional after class support to reinforce concepts and assist them with organizing concepts.     | 6  |

All six students responded that their teacher utilizes or arranges for them to participate in learning activities that incorporates the use of timelines, content maps or other graphic organizers. Interview data suggests that students prefer it when a steady set of reliable practices are used to instruct them. They see instructional tools such as Venn diagrams, T-Charts, timelines, concept maps and essay outline organizers as valuable scaffolding tools that help them organize their own understanding of concepts further enabling them to articulate ideas and write.

Five of six students said they had access to a bilingual dictionary whether it was electronic or paperback and all students confirmed that their teacher introduces a new unit by providing them with an outline of what they are studying and the important vocabulary words that will be used during the new unit. Admittedly, one student, Juan, says that his teacher does this sometimes but not all of the time. All six students spoke of how it was helpful when their teacher brings attention to the linguistic features of the text. Two students Ramon, in Ms. Farrells's class and Juan in Mr. Vasquez's class spoke directly of how their teacher will emphasize cognates and idioms.

During the interview students were asked "Does your social studies classroom celebrate the cultural diversity of its students? Does your teacher plan for celebrations, or special learning experiences to learn about the different cultures represented in your class? If so, please describe. If not, does your teacher provide

opportunities to learn about diverse perspectives in the classroom? If so, please describe.

Rocco: Does your social studies classroom celebrate the cultural diversity of its students? Ramon: No, she doesn't.

Jesus: No

Ismael: Never. I would like for that to happen, but never. We did that when I was at Carmel High School. We would bring different foods and items from our county to celebrate and learn about each other. Here, not so much.

Diego: No. I have been given a paper that has questions about what I like and where I am from.

Jessica: No. We have talk about different cultures. Juan: No. No celebrations of different cultures.

Students were all provided with additional examples of what celebrating cultural diversity in the classroom may look like. They all stood fast to their initial response expressing that they have not had much opportunity to participate in learning activities that celebrated an awareness of each other's cultures. Although, one student, Diego mentioned that he completed a questionnaire that was designed to get to know him better. This makes one wonder if the students have experienced minimal opportunities to share their heritage in subtle ways.

When students were asked "Does your teacher plan for celebrations, or special learning experiences to learn about the different cultures represented in your class?"



If so, please describe. If not, does your teacher provide opportunities to learn about diverse perspectives in the classroom? If so, please describe.” Their responses were as such,

Ramon: No

Jesus: Only one teacher has. When we talked about Independence days of different countries.

Ismael: The teacher has asked me about my heritage. Not for an assignment or a project. She asks me about my goals.

Diego: So, I’m from Peru and other students are from different countries. So, we share our experiences or customs about our countries. We make comparisons between friends.

Jessica: Only one time in Economics. When we were learning about economies. The different types some countries have.

Juan: In this class we learned about the different choice people make and why they make those choices.

Rocco: Do you get to learn about different perspectives?

Ramon: Of people's opinions? Yeah. In Global Studies. When we learn about religions. Jesus: When we spoke about immigration.

Ismael: The teacher asks me about what I think about thing. She asked me what I think about the court case and she asks other students the same. We sometimes have different opinions.

Diego: Well, I think so. When we talk about war in different countries.

Jessica: Yes. Perspectives and opinions. Especially when we work on projects, we find out what others think, believe, and know. For one assignment in last year's class we had to ask our teachers of their opinions. Not now in Economics class.

Juan: Different opinions. I like to be asked about mine. It makes me realize that other people think differently, and I wonder why. I think, you know, they have a different experience.

Student responses indicated that they have participated in little special learning opportunities where learning pluralism and diversity was the main focus, but rather they learned about multiculturalism in less subtle and casual ways. Their responses indicated that they have had opportunities to learn about the beliefs, values, and opinions of others throughout their career as students taking various social studies courses.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a summary and discussion of the qualitative findings from this study. Qualitative finding that derived from this phenomenological study will be discussed according to the themes that emerged after data from transcribed interviews and observation notes was coded. Through the generic approach to qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2009, Saldana 2009) supporting evidence was extracted to provide salient explanations to the research questions.

### **Summary of Findings from Interviews and Classroom Observations**

Overarching Research Question: How do secondary ELL's view their ability to succeed in the social studies classroom?

Upon the transcription of teacher and student interviews, themes that emerged from the codes revealed that secondary ELL's feel positive about their ability to succeed in their social studies classroom environment when they perceive the teacher as being genuinely concerned with their achievement and wellbeing. Manually coded themes derived from the students' interview responses were coded and numerated to calculate the frequency of their responses that supported this notion. During student interviews all six students indicated that they were appreciative of what their teacher does to help make learning social studies manageable.

Students' expressed some of the ways their teacher does this and how important it was to them "staying the course". All six students felt empowered when their teacher would provide after class supports to help them learn concepts.

Referenced codes also revealed that during this time students expected their teachers to reclarify and reteach concepts through dialogue, discussion, and some form of instructional tool to help them organize their ideas. This expectation was referenced twenty-seven times in student interviews and thirteen times during teacher interviews.

Research also suggested that students feel confident they can succeed when their teacher provides them instruction in the use of a few steady tools or strategies to help them regulate their own learning rather than providing them with a large variety of tools sparsely be used. The increase in student confidence when provided with the tools and information needed to apply cross linguistic transfers of word knowledge and attention to identifying the linguistic features of a text was referenced during student interviews fourteen times and by the two teachers a total of five times. Instruction and frequent use of graphic organizers and assistance with organizing ideas was referenced by students twenty-seven times and by teachers, ten times. These references support previous work that encourages the inclusion of teaching English to speakers of other languages, TESOL, strategies such as targeted vocabulary instruction and the use of graphic and visual organizers in the social studies classroom (Brown, 2007, Choi, 2013, Cruz & Thornton, 2009) During interviews students also expressed how they are not intimidated by learning new concepts when provided with this assistance.

### **Socially Supportive Environment**

Four questions guided this inquiry. One question posed was designed to determine how socially supportive ELL's felt their learning environment was. A

socially supportive classroom provides ELL's a learning space where they feel secure learning English and Social Studies and less stress when making mistakes while learning both (Cho & Reich, 2008, Choi, 2013, Sparza & Ahmad, 2007). Students were presented with a number of questions about how culturally responsive they felt their Social Studies learning environment was. Findings from student interview data indicated that the students' teachers investigated student's backgrounds, histories, and interests only to a limited degree while they investigated students' prior knowledge a little more extensively. When teachers were asked what measures they take to teach skills and academic content via the integration of the students' sociocultural experiences their responses indicated that they have taken the time to learn more about the students prior educational experiences but were unable to elaborate too extensively about how they incorporate their student's heritage and traditions into the learning environment. Students were asked if they participated in cultural celebrations or special learning experiences about the different cultures represented in their class and their response was no, with one student responding that he'd like to see these types of activities in his class. All students however, felt that their teachers cared about their opinions and world views. This was referenced eight times throughout student interviews. In Ms. Farrell's classroom multicultural flags that represented the student's home countries were on display as well as student artifacts that were completed collaboratively while in Mr. Vasquez's classroom students were provided individual assistance by the teacher in English and in Spanish if needed.

## CALLA

The second question guiding this inquiry probed students for their belief in how CALLA strategies improved their development in English while learning content. Students were asked a number of questions pertaining to how their teacher assists them learning the content knowledge and gaining language skills that are crucial to their success in social studies (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996, Chamot & Robbins, 2005, Cummins, 1994). During the interview students elaborated about their uses of graphic organizers which include use of timelines, concept maps, essay outline organizers, T- charts, Venn diagrams etc. and also about their instruction in the usage of tools and strategies needed to apply cross linguistic transfers or learn about the text's features. An increase in student confidence when they were provided with the tools and information needed to apply cross linguistic transfers and identify linguistic features of a text was referenced to fourteen times by students, five times by teachers and noted four times during classroom observations. All six students interviewed felt the use of graphic organizers was a necessity and critical to their learning. Five out of six students responded that they are provided with a bilingual dictionary or translation service. All six students felt it was beneficial and necessary to have an outline provided to them prior to being introduced to a new unit. All six students' responses indicated that it was especially important that their teacher bring linguistic feature of the text alive. They desired to know more about cognates, tenses, and desired assistance in understanding anything that assumed some type of social knowledge, for example slang and idiomatic expressions. These findings extend upon previous research central to

cognitive learning theory (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996) which asserts that learning occurs during dynamic mental processes through a symbiotic relationship between procedural and declarative knowledge (Gagne et al. 1993). Student responses show us that students' desire specific tools and instructional strategies to acquire language and content through procedural and declarative knowledge gains.

### **SDAIE**

Five student interview questions were designed to probe students' perceptions of their experiences learning content while their teacher used certain SDAIE strategies. Five of the six students interviewed mentioned that their teacher provided them with content related readings via a teacher modified version and were appreciative of the condensed format. All six students indicated that their teacher frontloaded vocabulary terms that were crucial to comprehending the unit of study. All students interviewed responded that they provided with instruction through the use of a variety of multiple access points. All six students specified that they frequently participated in learning activities that required them to summarize, discuss, demonstrate, illustrate and present. Five of six students replied that they frequently participated in project- based learning and all spoke favorably of their experiences. However, all students mentioned that they never participated in a reenactment or role play of a historical event.

During classroom observations students were highly engaged in a variety of learning processes and activities such as closed note taking, presenting, evaluating, and interacting with a range of instructional technologies. Although there were numerous student created charts, graphs, timelines and other

illustrations in the classrooms, collaborative group activities requiring students to illustrate such work was not directly observed during my visit.

Student responses agree with the argument that all ELL's should be involved in verbal collaborative activities (Egbert & Simich-Dudgeon, 2001, Nieto, 2000, Cline & Necocchea 2003, Chamot & O'Malley, 2004). The finding also extends on previous research that declares teachers implementing SDAIE must proactively must initiate instructional and social strategies through the modification and design of learning activities that shifts group learning dynamics in a way that enriches the learning process of ELL's working alongside their native speaking peers (Cline & Necocchea, 2003, Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, Nieto, 2000, Sobul, 1994, Spring, 1995, Walter, 1996).

### **Responses Affirm Teacher Practice**

Student and teacher interview data agree in all areas regarding the frequency and usage of *SDAIE* and *CALLA* strategies and practices used in the classroom. Interview and observational data affirm students' positive experience and high levels of engagement learning through the use of these strategies and practices. Student and teacher interview data agree on the limited and in one category, lack of *CRP* practices used in the classroom. Student and teacher interviews agree on the limited opportunities offered to the students that include celebrations or special learning experiences to learn about the different backgrounds and cultures represented in the classroom. Observational data also supports these findings.



## Interpretation of Results

The data collected and analyzed from this study suggest that students need to feel their teacher cares about their well-being and aspirations to thrive in the classroom. The willingness of the teacher to provide time to clarify, re-explain and help them become self-regulated and organized learners are the desired features for what a caring social studies teacher embodies. Data from both interviews and observations suggest that teachers require a few steady, tried, and true *SDAIE* and *CALLA* practices in their instructional “tool belt” to support their ELL’s and that students appear most comfortable and ready to learn when using a familiar and reliable practices. Students felt that certain *CALLA* practices such as having access to a bilingual dictionary or translating device, explicit instruction in identifying linguistic features of a text, and social knowledge of a text, enhanced their understanding of content and aided in their cross linguistic transfer. Students also felt very supported when their teacher used a variety of *SDAIE* practices that helped to reduce cognitive load and allowed for them to discuss, illustrate, present and participate in collaborative group work through an assigned role. *CRP* practices used in the classroom solicited students for their worldviews and opinions on social studies related topics and current events. During interviews students expressed that their teacher didn’t plan for special learning experiences or celebrations that focused on bringing attention to the specific cultures represented in their class. However, students’ responses to this fact ranged from encouraging such activities to an indifference as to whether or not their teachers programmed these celebrations or learning experiences.

### **Limitations**

This study only included student interview subjects who originated from countries in the Western hemisphere. Classroom observations and student interviews did not discriminate as to what the English proficiency status of the English Learner was, being either a newcomer, Intermediate or Advanced ELL. This study included participants from two high schools in the Greater New York area and the interviews were limited to eight participants. Secondary ELL's in grades seven and eight were not represented in this study. Since this study is limited in its sample size and geographical scope, findings should be generalized with caution.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Students' perceptions are consistent with research on the use of SDAIE, CALLA and CRP practices with the exception being that some students held an indifferent attitude towards learning experiences that focused specifically on an appreciation of the students cultures represented in the classroom. This indifference however may simply be due to the fact that many of the ELL's students' families originated from Spanish speaking countries that share several similarities and that as students originating from cultures in the western hemisphere they do not feel particularly lost in American culture but rather, consumed by it. Future research may wish to explore this relationship further by sampling ELL student populations whose families originated from countries beyond the western hemisphere. Also, it is important to point out that although this area of CRP was sparsely implemented in the classrooms that did not necessarily mean that there was a total lack of

connection between the ELL's home culture and the social studies curriculum (Choi, 2013, Dong 2002).

Further research may also want to extend into areas of student assessment and how our ELL students give preference to certain practices over others depending on how these practices prepare them for the standardized tests they are required to take. This information would provide researchers with a measurement of how favorably aligned student responses are to the practices that are driven to increase test scores as compared to practices that may just enable genuine learning. Future research, in other words, may examine whether students prefer a particular teacher practice because it helps them achieve on a measured outcome versus what they truly enjoy working with.

### **Implications for Future Practice**

This study affirms the use of a steady reliable set of practices to be used by the teacher during instruction for secondary ELL's. These practices include activities that scaffold students' skills so they may participate fully and become self-regulated learners who are able to contribute to their own learning and the understanding of those they collaborate with. Most importantly, this study affirms that one of the most important attributes secondary ELL's expect their possess is a genuine concern for their well-being. Students believe a genuinely concerned teacher addresses their questions, re-teaches concepts, assists them in organizing their ideas, offers extended time beyond the class period for assistance and patiently sets up an environment where mistakes can be made.



# ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

## Appendix A- IRB Approval Memo

### MEMO

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Institutional Review Board  
Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066 Date:

May 20, 2019

Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe  
Chair, Institutional Review Board Tel 718-  
990-1955 [digiuser@stjohns.edu](mailto:digiuser@stjohns.edu)

To: Catrina Rocco

CC: Dr. Michael Sampson  
Dr. John Spiridakis  
Dr. Mary Beth Schaefer

Dr. Marie Nitopi IRB  
Coordinator Tel 718-990  
[nitopim@stjohns.edu](mailto:nitopim@stjohns.edu)

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**Protocol # 0319-277**

**Approval Date: May 20, 2019**

**Expiration Date: May 19, 2020**

**Protocol Title: Exploring Social Studies Achievement in L2: A Study on the Relationship Between Student's Perspectives of Effective Teaching and Self-Efficacy**

Please be advised that your human subject protocol has been approved as expedited by the IRB. You may begin your study.

IRB approval of research projects is valid for **one year** only from the original date of approval. This study expires on **May 19, 2020**. Approval of the continuation of the research is possible on a yearly basis. A new proposal must be submitted upon request for renewal.

You **will** not be permitted to collect data more than twelve months from the date of approval without an extension granted by the IRB. Mark your calendar today for April 20, 2020. You should submit your request for continuation on that date and no later.

It is imperative that you keep this memo and the email on file where it can easily be accessed. You will need to provide copies of this document when involved in further correspondence with the IRB.

Best wishes for successful pursuit of this research.



Appendix B- Teacher Interview Consent Form

Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Dear Fellow Educator,

My name is Catrina Rocco and I am a doctoral student at St. John's University. I am writing you to inquire of your permission and willingness to take part in a research study on *Students' Perspectives of Teacher Practice in L2 Classrooms*. This research study is a part of my dissertation project.

This study is intended to learn more about your students' experiences learning social studies at the secondary level in his/her non-native language. If you should consent to participate in this study you'd be involved in brief pre-study conversation and interview to learn more about your teaching practices. I would then observe two to three of your social studies class periods either in the morning or afternoon at your discretion. Throughout the one day visit I will interview four to six of your English Learner's (whose parent's provided consent) to inquire about how his/her academic instruction in Social Studies motivates, encourages, or inspires him/her to believe that he/she can be successful in learning Secondary Social Studies. The interviews will be tape recorded but only anecdotal notes will be during classroom observations.

There is a small possible risk that your students may feel as if there are gaps in their Social Studies education at the secondary level after the study has been completed. However, if this should be the case, identifying these instructional deficiencies may serve to benefit the wider Secondary English Learner community at a later point and positively influence your own teaching practices in the near future.

Your decision to take part in this study is completely voluntary and you may omit questions that you prefer not to answer. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my adviser Dr. Michael Sampson at

[Catrina.Rocco16@stjohns.edu](mailto:Catrina.Rocco16@stjohns.edu)

518-331-9759

or

[sampsonm@stjohns.edu](mailto:sampsonm@stjohns.edu)

718-268-1515

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Marie Nitpoi at [nitopim@stjohns.edu](mailto:nitopim@stjohns.edu)

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information and I consent to my child participating in the study mentioned above.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C- Student Interview Parental Consent Form

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Dear Student,

My name is Catrina Rocco and I am a doctoral student at St. John's University. I am writing you to ask for your permission to take part in a research study on *Students' Perspectives of Teacher Practice in L2 Classrooms*. This research study is a part of my dissertation project.

This study is intended to learn more about your student's experience learning Social Studies at the secondary level in his/her non-native language. If you should consent to your teen's participation in this study he or she would participate in a forty-five-minute interview to inquire about how his/her teachers' academic instruction motivates, encourages, or inspires him/her to believe that he/she can be successful in learning Secondary Social Studies. The researcher will tape record the interview and conduct a classroom observation to see learning in action.

There is a small possible risk that you may feel as if there are gaps in their Social Studies education at the secondary level after the study has been completed. However, if this should be the case, identifying these instructional deficiencies may serve to benefit the wider Secondary English Learner community at a later point.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and he/she may skip questions that he/she doesn't want to answer.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my adviser Dr. Michael Sampson at

[Catrina.Rocco16@stjohns.edu](mailto:Catrina.Rocco16@stjohns.edu)

or

[sampsonm@stjohns.edu](mailto:sampsonm@stjohns.edu)

518-331-9769

718-268-1515

For questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Marie Nitpoi at [nitopim@stjohns.edu](mailto:nitopim@stjohns.edu)

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information and I consent to participating in the study mentioned above. Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature x \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D- Student Interview Parental Consent Form in Spanish

Estimado padre/tutor:

Mi nombre es Catrina Rocco y soy estudiante doctoral en la Universidad de St. John. Por medio de la presente quiero solicitar su consentimiento para que su hijo/a participe en un estudio de investigación en tomo *perspectivas de los estudiantes sobre las practicas docentes*. Dicho estudio de investigación es parte de mi trabajo de tesis.

Mi estudio aspira entender mejor la experiencia de estudiantes de escuela secundaria que aprenden estudios sociales en una lengua que no es su lengua materna. Si Ud. acepta que su hijo/a sea parte de mi investigación, él/ella participará en una entrevista de cuarenta y cinco minutos, en la que se le harán preguntas sobre cómo sus profesores ---durante la enseñanza---lo/a motivan, alientan o inspiran a aprender estudios sociales. En el transcurso, yo grabaré la entrevista y realizaré una observación en el aula con tal dver en acción el proceso de aprendizaje.

Una vez se haya realizado el estudio, existe la posibilidad de que su hijo/a sienta que existen deficiencias en la instrucción que de estudios sociales recibe. Sin embargo, si tal fuera el caso, la identificación de dichas deficiencias educativas podrían servir, en un futuro, para beneficiar a estudiantes de secundaria que aprenden ingles.

Si su hijo/a participa en este estudio, su participación es completamente voluntaria y él/ella puede negarse a contestar preguntas que no desee responder. Si tiene alguna pregunta, no dude en comunicarse conmigo o con mi director de tesis, el Dr. Michael Sampson, a:

[Catrina.Rocco16@stjohns.edu](mailto:Catrina.Rocco16@stjohns.edu)

o

[sampsonm@stjohns.edu](mailto:sampsonm@stjohns.edu)

518-331-9760

718-990-1305

Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante de investigación, puede comunicarse con la Junta de Revisión Interna de la Universidad, St. John's University, Dra. Marie Nitopi en [nitopim@stjohns.edu](mailto:nitopim@stjohns.edu)

### Declaración de consentimiento

He leído la información anterior y presto mi consentimiento para que mi hijo/a participe en el estudio mencionado anteriormente.

El nombre de su hijo \_\_\_\_\_

Firma del padre/tutor: x \_\_\_\_\_ fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

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