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EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SELF-EFFICACY IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR USE OF CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Virginia Figueroa

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CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

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by

Virginia Figueroa

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Virginia Figueroa   Dr. Anthony Annunziato

ABSTRACT

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Researchers have demonstrated the need for teachers to have the training and preparation to meet the needs of a growing diverse student population that can include students who may present with a variety of needs. This research will explore the experience of educators teaching students who are learning English as a second language and present with a disability. While research has been conducted on the assessment and placement of language learners with disabilities there is a gap in the literature regarding teachers' experiences and self-efficacy in educating English language learners who have disabilities and their use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of the skills needed and instructional decision-making regarding teaching this rising student demographic group. Participants of the study consisted of teachers who teach English Language Learners with disabilities on Long Island and they possess a variety of teacher certification areas - General Education, Special Education, English as a New Language, Foreign Language as well as Bilingual Extensions. This study answers research questions on teachers' perceptions and experiences teaching English Language Learners with a disability (ELLWD). Through interviews, teachers' identified innate personality traits, specific pedagogical strategies, and the importance of developing relationships to include families

as participants. Participants emphasized the necessity of supporting their ELLWD students' social emotional and behavioral needs. Several respondents shared the importance of self-care to avoid burnout, the need for access to more native language support for students as well as the value of more hands-on and highly effective professional development to support CRP. The respondents all indicated an interest in CRP and wanted to learn more about it but stated that there weren't enough opportunities for them to participate in professional development. Respondents all demonstrated the components of CRP such as creating a warm welcoming environment, communicating with families, overcoming language barriers, having high expectations, and having a positive approach to their students in terms of social-emotional and behavioral needs. The findings underscore the need for districts to consider their professional development opportunities to improve teacher self-efficacy, preserve the high self-efficacy of their effective teachers and develop a joint understanding and implementation of CRP.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else." — *Former President Barack Obama*

As an undergrad political science major, one core statement made by a professor impacted me deeply: politics is about who gets a piece of the pie. When my professor made that opening statement, it rocked me and my only thought was why can't everyone have a piece? It drove my focus on social justice as I transitioned into the field of education.

My parents came to this country seeking opportunities. They have given me unlimited love and the belief that I could achieve whatever I aspire to. They fostered my independence and allowed me to be a leader to make my own path. Growing up in NYC helped me develop strong survival instincts that served me well in the military during deployments to Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. It is my hope that the work I have embarked on will help push the tide of equity for future generations.

I am thankful to my husband and three girls who provided unwavering support. I also have to thank my mother, brother, best friend, and wonderful colleagues who have supported my work by listening, reading, and providing insight.

I am thankful to everyone who helped me get to this point so that I could bring voice to passionate teachers toiling to support students across Long Island. Thank you Dr. Annunziato for helping me get to the end and to my committee for empowering me in this work. I have great hope for the field of education and the work we can do to support all children to become their best selves!

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Researchers have analyzed the impact of teacher self-efficacy with diverse populations such as English Language Learners or Students with Disabilities. Research has also been conducted on educators' use of culturally responsive pedagogy. As the demographics of our nation's students continue to shift, it is imperative that this research continue in order to be utilized to serve students who have been historically underserved or have languished in the US public school system (Samson & Lesaux, 2009). This has led to a call for educators to be responsive to various aspects of a students' identity, including culture, language, and/or disability, if applicable. The question that persists is what is the current state of teacher efficacy and use of culturally responsive pedagogy for educators of students who are classified as both English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities? In the face of increased comparisons to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the backlash to CRT, are districts, schools, and teachers able to continue best practices to support their culturally and linguistically diverse learners?

In New York State (NYS), the Chancellor's Regulation 154 identifies English Language Learners (ELL) based on parent responses to the Home Language Survey, interviews, and an initial assessment to determine whether they require English as a New Language (ENL) services. According to the NYS Data site, 10% of students were identified as ELLs and 18% of students were classified with disabilities during the 2020-2021 school year. A student with a disability (SWD) is classified as such under a Section 504 plan or an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The NYS Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages reported that of the 10% of ELL students, 22% have an IEP, in other words, approximately 1 in every 4 ELLs has an IEP. This means that a teacher with

a general education certification would likely teach an English Language Learner (ELL) who may or may not present with a disability. A 2019 EdWeek.com Twitter poll asked teachers if they had enough training to teach ELL and SWD students and out of 165 responses, 66% indicated that they did not feel they had enough training for either group (EdWeek, 2019). This informal poll illustrates the lack of preparation teachers are reporting with a growing student subgroup and substantiates the findings from the joint study by the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Understood where less than one in five teachers reported feeling prepared to teach students with mild to moderate disabilities (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to understand teachers' perceptions of their preparation and experiences in teaching a rising student demographic group, English Language Learners with Disabilities (ELLWD) to therefore promote their academic achievement. In addition to understanding educator's perceptions, the researcher wants to understand how prepared they are to meet the needs of this student population, what actions they have taken to improve their pedagogic practices for culturally and linguistically diverse students, and what instructional decisions they make to specifically support ELLWDs.

This research will explore the experience of educators teaching students who are both learning English as a second language and present with a disability. While research has been conducted on the assessment and placement of language learners with disabilities there is a gap in the literature regarding teachers' experiences, instructional

practices that incorporate Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), and their self-efficacy in educating English language learners who have disabilities.

Districts in New York State must comply with mandates under federal and local regulations that ensure students are receiving support towards English proficiency as well as required special education services. This study will seek teachers of ELLs who also have a disability that entitles them to a Section 504 plan or an Individual Education Plan (IEP) through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This research will focus on the needed skills, instructional decisions, and professional experiences that educators perceive they need to effectively teach English Language Learners with Disabilities (ELLWD).

This study will examine and describe teachers' perceptions and experiences supporting the academic achievement of ELLWDs to understand directly from the teachers how they perceive their effectiveness with ELLWDs. In terms of research regarding the merger of these two categories: ELL and SWD, very little exist that can provide quantifiable data on the performance of ELLWDs and it is very difficult to determine which factor has the greatest impact as these students could receive a variety of services in a school year. The exact number of ELLWDs in New York State (NYS) cannot be obtained by searching the NYS Data site, which provides district and school aggregate data on SWD or ELL students, there is no listed subset for students that fall under both categories on the NYS Data site. Districts and schools, however, do have access to their specific data for ELLWDs through a state repository that is typically only accessible to central administrators. There is no place for the public to know the exact

number of ELLWDs in a given district or how ELLWDs are performing on state assessments in each district or school for comparative purposes.

As student populations with language needs and disabilities continue to increase, general education teachers must be prepared to meet the needs of all of these students to ensure they can progress within the curriculum. Variability within students' functioning can affect whether the teacher feels that they can meet all of their student's needs.

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative study is based on the foundation laid by postmodernist perspectives that understand the function of schooling in America and have taken a critical look at how students of color have been treated (Creswell, 2007). The framework was informed by the fact that the teacher is the number one predictor of student success (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014). Out of all of the factors that can influence student achievement, collective teacher efficacy has the highest effect size (Hattie, 2008). Collective teacher efficacy is defined by Hattie as "the collective belief of teachers to positively affect their students." Research has demonstrated that teacher efficacy can be affected by the student's status depending on the teacher's experiences with certain student populations (Miranda et al., 2019). Research has also demonstrated that the use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy positively affects the engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse students such as ELLWDs (Gay, 2010, Sleeter, 2012). This research study is framed in the intersection between teacher efficacy and the use of CRP because it will identify how teacher efficacy impacts the perceptions and experiences of educators of ELLWDs as well as their use of culturally relevant pedagogy to support their ELLWDs.

During the review of the literature, both teacher self-efficacy and the use of CRP were often repeated as integral and valuable in the education of ELLWDs. These two theories make up the conceptual framework of this study. As McGaghie, Bordage & Shea (2001) explain, "The conceptual framework "sets the stage" to present the particular research question that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement." The phenomenon is driven by the compounding growth of ELL students in school districts nationwide who are being taught by teachers who may or may not have the training or understanding of how to properly support them (Sleeter & Owuor, 2011; Johnston & Young, 2019).

According to social cognitive theory, teachers who receive positive reinforcement, which can come from student outcomes, parent responses, or ratings from observations, have higher self-efficacy. They possess more confidence in themselves and their abilities—the positive consequences stand out in their minds, and they want to repeat the behavior. Self-efficacy is a crucial subset of Bandura's social cognitive theory and is considered a teacher's belief in their ability to exert control over a situation to achieve outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Bandura is one of the earlier researchers to identify and propose a framework for this theory. He defines collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in the conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment." High efficacy regardless of the discipline can positively affect student learning (Paneque and Barbetta, 2006), however, studies show that teacher efficacy can be impacted when teachers are outside of their comfort zone. Bandura identified four efficacy belief sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1986).

Mastery experiences are positive experiences that bring about desired outcomes. Vicarious experiences are those that are observed and the outcome is witnessed. Verbal persuasion occurs when the student is given a verbal reminder about the skills that are being developed and provided encouragement on their capability to accomplish the task. Emotional arousal is the sensation they feel or the physical state that can influence how one judges their self-mastery. Pre-service programs that provide prospective teachers with "mastery experiences" with culturally and linguistically diverse students are necessary as research demonstrates that teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness can be limited by the student's status such as that of an ELL student or a student with a disability (Miranda et al., 2019). Teacher preparation, mentorship, and access to professional development and resources are important components of teacher self-efficacy as teacher self-efficacy positively impacts student achievement (Paneque and Barbetta, 2006). Unless teachers believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to persevere in the face of difficulties.

As districts work to diversify their workforce, they must turn their attention to training new and current teachers in CRP. An awareness of the students' backgrounds is vital and a student-centered approach that recognizes the culture and experiences could further engage all students in the content (Byrd, 2016). The cultural intelligence of teachers and administrators has been shown to positively impact student achievement. Research has demonstrated that higher levels of cultural intelligence can positively affect Latino students' achievement (Collins, et.al., 2016). Culturally relevant pedagogy recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references made up of three components: student learning, cultural competence, and socio-political consciousness

(Ladson-Billings, 1994). Ladson-Billings refers to it as the "So What?" to engage students and when educators have the students see the relevance of their learning, their engagement would increase.

The New York State Education Department created the state's first culturally responsive-sustaining (CR-S) framework for districts to follow to "understand, directly challenge, and fundamentally transform the system of inequity in education." The CR-S framework defines culturally responsive-sustaining education as "grounded in a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple expressions of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability) are recognized and regarded as assets for teaching and learning." The document is not a law or a directive, but a guidance document intended to help districts, schools, educators, students, and families build connections between students' home and school cultures to engage students in rigorous learning to empower students as agents of social change through rigorous and engaging learning. The vision for this framework is grounded in Gloria Ladson-Billings' early work and criteria on CRP. As news of this framework rolled out, some school district board meetings were met with protests such as in Lakeland Central School District, in Westchester, NY. Parents claimed the curriculum would be "divisive and abusive" towards white children. Throughout the spring of 2021, school board districts across the nation dealt with arguments and protests regarding CRP in their schools. A movement labeled as "Save our Schools" even seeped into the local election of potential board members in a school district on Long Island. The idea of CRP is not to exclude or punish any group. Done correctly, it could create the space for conversation, analysis, perspective taking and possibly healing in order to lead the way

for equity and achievement of all students. CRP is meant to provide a point of moving forward, by identifying and addressing past redresses while empowering students to have their voices heard and substantiated. A student's social or racial status at birth should not predetermine their educational success and education reform has proven to not be an easy task as there are many factors working against changing the status quo in public education that date back to the 19th century. These "conspirators" have leached into our collective culture and affected thoughtful school reform (Nehring, 2007). Furthermore, a colorblind approach prohibits school leaders, teachers, and community members from recognizing the impact their practices have on children of color (Guerra, et al, 2013, Welton et al 2015). In order to address these "conspirators" that have historically hindered the achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is considered a means to that end. How this framework will be followed in districts across New York State is yet to be determined and how this impacts student achievement could be the backdrop for some powerful research in the future.

Conceptual Framework

Bandura (1995) asserted that self-efficacy is needed to succeed and one's beliefs can have a deep impact.

> People's beliefs about their abilities have a profound effect on those abilities. Ability is not a fixed property; there is a huge variability in how you perform. People who have a sense of self-efficacy bounce back from failure; they approach things in terms of how to handle them rather than worrying about what can go wrong.

Bandura (1997) found that when a group with confidence in their abilities worked together, a higher success rate existed. This term, which Bandura coined collective efficacy is defined by Bandura (1997) as, "A group's shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (p. 477).

Bandura's works (1977, 1995) underscore the importance of educators working together to towards leading instructional change as "self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of actions required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1995)."

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy can be used by teachers to reach students from culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. In addition, research indicates CRP would help all students in that it is an approach that welcomes differences, and all students can benefit from learning to see the world from other perspectives. As the number of non-white students continues to increase on Long Island, teachers' utilization of CRP along with the belief that they can truly meet the needs of their most diverse students, could positively impact the academic achievement of ELLWDs. The conceptual framework is derived from the literature review which drove the structure of this research. Throughout the review, these two concepts: Efficacy theory and CRP were identified as crucial for educators to embrace in order to effect change and transform the long history of lack of achievement by students of color in public education (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Visual Schematic of the Conceptual Framework.
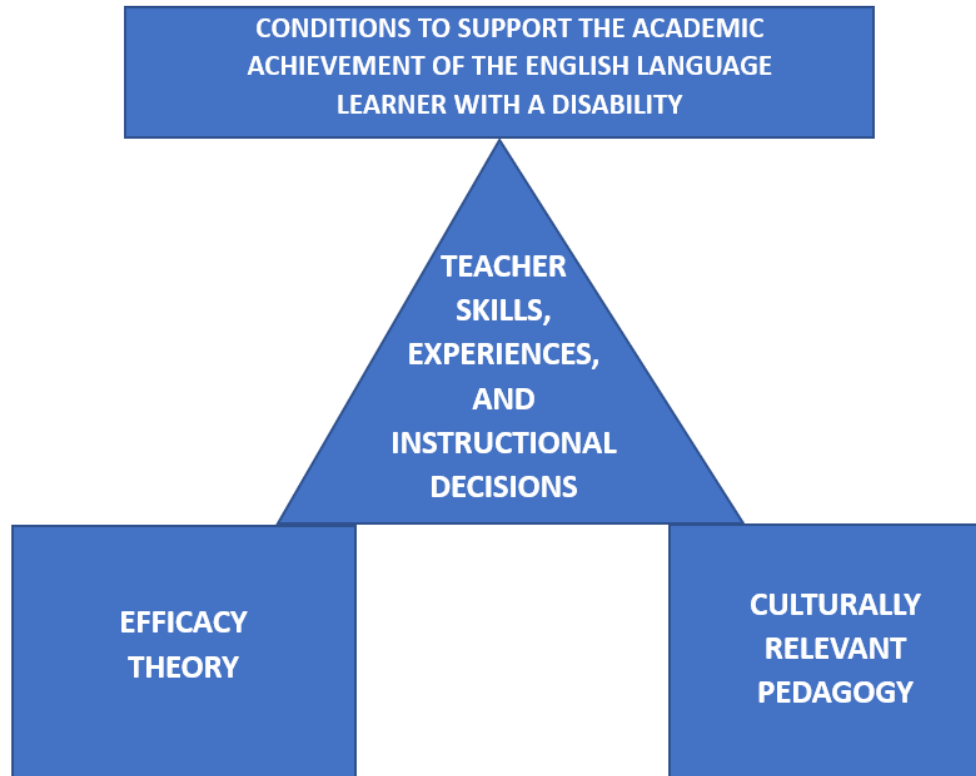
Significance of the Study

ELLWDs are a growing group of students that can come from any country where English is not the national language or are born in the United States but come from a home where a language besides English is primarily spoken (Abedi, 2014). As either an ELL or SWD, these students are considered at a disadvantage and face worse academic outcomes. Assessment data demonstrates that ELL and SWDs have underperformed compared to non-ELL or disabled peers for over a ten-year period (US Department of Education, NCES 2015). ELLWDs present specific needs and require numerous supports which means that they can be taught by a variety of teachers who may not collaborate or

unify their instructional practices. Research has consistently demonstrated the impact of effective teaching and out of all possible factors, teachers have the largest positive effect on student achievement (Opper, 2019). Yet teachers must understand the difference between language acquisition and disabilities while incorporating instructional strategies that support "students' multiple demanding needs whether linguistic, cognitive, behavioral, or social." (Kangas, 2014). When the needs of ELLWDs are not met at the elementary level, it becomes further complicated for ELLWDs in the general education curriculum as secondary teachers may not have familiarity with strategies to scaffold reading (Garcia & Tyler, 2010). This fact is startling as the majority of ELLs are served in the K-5 grade levels. According to the Pew Research Center, most English learners, two-thirds as of 2015, were in the elementary K-5 grades. The same can be said for ELLWDs, as during the 2020-2021 school year in NYS, 51.3% of ELLs with IEPs were in grades K-6, 26.1% of ELLs with IEPs were in grades 6-8, and 22.6% of ELLs with IEPs were in grades 9-12 (NYS Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages).

This study is significant as it can lend another lens to the growing research on teacher efficacy and the use of culturally relevant pedagogy for ELLWDs. Research has identified the implications, considerations, and needs for this group of students but there is limited research on the teachers' perceptions and experiences utilizing recommended strategies to support the academic achievement of ELLWDs. This study will shed light on teachers' perceptions of their efficacy with ELLWD and their actions to incorporate Critical Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). The results of this study will provide insight that can be used in classrooms, schools, districts, and by policymakers when considering the next steps to address the needs of this growing population.

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Connection with Social Justice

This study is rooted in theories that relate to equitable instruction for diverse student populations that have historically struggled in the United States public education systems such as English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. Studies indicate that ELL students are more likely to face external obstacles such as cultural mismatch, low socioeconomic status, high mobility, and limited familial or community support as they adjust to schools in the U.S. This research study can reveal what strategies teachers use to educate diverse students who in addition to the ELL and SWD label, may be dealing with trauma, language confusion and interrupted formal education. As Tucker, et.al., 2010, found in their review of the literature, teachers who are confident in their teaching and the effects of teaching agreed to retain difficult students in general education. They cited various studies that found that teachers with low self-efficacy were more likely to look for solutions outside of their classrooms thus leading to more referrals to Special Education.

This study is seeking to understand teachers' perceptions and experiences to inform and shape local policy and professional development for teachers to ensure better academic outcomes for ELLWDs. The responses and conclusions could assist districts in understanding the importance of supporting teachers with ongoing training and continued coaching to meet the needs of their diverse students.

Research Design and Research Questions

This phenomenological, qualitative study is composed of virtual interviews of teachers in various districts on Long Island. The participants possess general education, special education and Bilingual or ENL certificates. The goal was to interview teachers

who would have different perspectives and experiences but all have taught English Language Learners with disabilities. The researcher sent emails to staff at diverse districts to obtain participants. The questions were chosen to understand their perception of their self-efficacy and use of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What pedagogical and related skills do educators perceive are needed to engage and support students designated with the English Language Learner with a Disability (ELLWD) status?

2. How do they believe their instructional practices effectively support ELLWDs?

3. What are the professional experiences of educators supporting ELLWDs?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions clarify the terms and acronyms utilized in this study:

English Language Learner (ELL)

Students identified as having a primary language other than English and receiving English as a New Language (ENL) services (NYSED.gov). These students are also referred to as English Learners, English Language Learners, Dual Language Learners, and Limited English Proficient Students.

Student with a disability (SWD)

A student who meets eligibility by a team of professionals as having a disability that adversely affects academic performance and as being in need of special education and related services. (Nces.ed.gov

General education teacher

Certified to teach a specific grade level or content area with students in the typical learning environment in a regular classroom. However, general education teachers are expected to differentiate instruction and design lessons that can include ELLs and SWDs who are in mainstream classrooms.

Special education teacher

Certified or licensed to teach students with disabilities who are providing special education to a student. (NYSED Part 200)

Bilingual education

A teacher with a bachelor's or master's degree is certified in Bilingual Education in a specific language and works with students identified as English as a New Language Learner. (NYS CR-154)

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter is divided into the following sections: The theoretical framework of the study consisting of specific variables of teacher efficacy and culturally responsive pedagogy followed by a review of research that builds the understanding of how this diverse group of ELLWD students is being served in school. There will also be a review of current research specifically studying the efficacy of pre-service and in-service teachers in carrying out CRP and/or serving ELLWDs.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and teacher self-efficacy can be examined through two significant theoretical frameworks: social cognitive theory and critical race theory. Social cognitive theory is used to explore how personal, environmental, and behavioral factors influence learning (Bandura, 1986). The second framework, critical race theory, explains how systemic racism is a part of American education and can be used to dismantle structural inequities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Through embracing multiple perspectives of class, race, and gender, the researcher is guided by critical theory as this study examines the conditions that educators of ELLWDs create for their students (Creswell, 2007). In tandem, these two theories shed light on why educators must make an effort to understand cultural considerations and plan for culturally relevant pedagogy while feeling confident that they can support the academic achievement of diverse students, in this case, ELLWDs. Social cognitive theory and critical race theory serve as the roots for this research as they are the basis for two leading theories in education - teacher self-efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy.

Social cognitive theory provides the basis for how learning occurs and the interconnectedness of how constant contact with others influences how information is processed (Bandura, 2002). Bandura describes learning as an active process, people learn from their experiences, by observing the behavior around them and the consequences of the behavior. Social cognitive theory can explain complex behavior and proposes that humans are not only shaped by their environment and inner forces, but they can also share their environment and inner force. Social cognitive theory is rooted in encouraging self-efficacy by using constructive feedback. Bandura's social cognitive theory provides the background and foundation of how an increase in self-efficacy can support a teacher's persistence to support the academic achievement of struggling or vulnerable students. Social cognitive theory emphasizes how individuals learn and what drives them to persist in the face of difficulties. Teachers engage in actions on a daily basis that could affect how they view themselves and their students. Their beliefs can impact the experiences they create for their students. The potential impact of teaching students without adequate experience or qualifications could negatively affect a teacher's self-efficacy. Self-efficacy as originally coined by Bandura in 1977 is defined as the belief in one's abilities to affect a successful outcome in any given situation (Bandura, 1977). This psychological state can allow teachers to cope with stressful situations and push forward to maintain high expectations for all students (Malak et al, 2015). According to Hattie's 2016 meta-analysis of effective teacher practice, collective teacher efficacy has the highest effect size of all teacher practices that can influence student achievement (Hattie, 2016). Efficacy is what drives teachers to make more effective use of the skills they already have, the openness to try new strategies, and higher belief in their student's abilities. This

element is crucial because research demonstrates that teachers of either ELL students or students with disabilities do not feel prepared to truly meet the needs of their diverse learners, however high efficacy regardless of the discipline can positively affect student learning (Paneque and Barbetta, 2006). Bandura (1977) posits that self-efficacy is context and situation-specific; therefore, ongoing research of the perceptions of teachers in a variety of settings will provide insight as student demographics continue to shift across the nation.

Critical theory helps researchers understand the function of schools in the United States and allows for a critical look at how certain student populations have been treated. Teachers, families, students, and scholars must understand that schools have maintained power structures and acknowledge that schools today continue to reproduce social inequality (Apple, 2014). These dynamics have affected children of immigrants who were taught to be more like those of the middle class while still being willing to perform work that the middle class would not do (Apple, 2014). Before proposing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), Ladson-Billing proposed a Critical Race Theory (CRT) of Education. In 1995, she reported that "race is a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States" and coupled with property rights determines access to enriched coursework, technology, and infrastructure. Ladson-Billing also coined the phrase "the poverty of culture" in teacher education as she describes how race is attributed to culture as teachers may not understand students who are not like them and attribute aspects of their culture as deficits. Critical race theory questions the notion that a Eurocentric focused education is the end all and be all, that high standards are not only limited to middle or high-class values and history. Dixson and Rousseau Anderson point out that

after 20 years of the theory, CRT was lacking a clear direction in terms of its path and established boundaries to capture the features of CRT in education. The difficulty is working towards a theory and practice that will not exclude those who systematically oppressed and excluded others. Scholars of CRT argue that their theory can give a voice to those who were discriminated against. Dixson and Rousseau Anderson suggest a framework for CRT in education that posits that the persistence of competition logically drove racial inequity; education policy and educational practices are examined through the construct of racial inequity and the perpetuation of normative whiteness; CRT rejects the dominant narrative about the inherent inferiority of people of color and the normative superiority of white people; CRT examines the link between historical practice and contemporary educational inequity and historical patterns of racial oppression; CRT engages in intersectional analyses that recognize the ways that race is mediated by and interacts with other identity markers (i.e., gender, class, sexuality, linguistic background, and citizenship status); and finally, CRT agitates and advocates for meaningful outcomes that redress racial inequity. CRT does not merely document disparities (Dixson & Rousseau Anderson, 2018).

Critical race theory is not the same as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, as critical race theory originated in legal scholarship identifying the structural impact of racism and how it is woven into the country's laws and institutions (Bell, 1995). Critical race theory was not meant to be used for K-12 education purposes. While Culturally Relevant Pedagogy can teach all students to identify and question the causes of social inequality in their own lives and to be socially aware. CRP empowers teachers to bridge content and

curriculum with their student's heritage and lived experiences to weave together rigor and relevance (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Whether teachers, parents, students, boards of education, and districts are able and ready to move Culturally Relevant Pedagogy forward is another question. Districts have been struggling with disproportionality in suspensions and special education placements for years, these are deep-rooted systematic issues that require support from all stakeholders. Outcomes for these groups of students have not always been consistent with the number of support services they receive nor do they achieve at the same level as their non-ELL or non-disabled peers. Researchers have identified that most teachers do not have the coursework related to instructing students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Park & Thomas, 2012). In a report submitted to the US Department of Education on a study of services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and LEP students with disabilities, the authors found that many English learners "do not get the absolutely critical instruction they need because their teachers do not understand how their needs differ from those of their peers" (Zehler et al, 2003).

Another significant area of concern in the research is that of over-classification, disproportionately, and over-representation of subgroups with specific disabilities (Sullivan, 2011). ELLs are already at risk of not meeting proficiency standards and those with learning disabilities or delays are at an increased risk of not gaining access to grade level curricula. (Klingner et al. 2012). Research indicates that teachers' perceptions or beliefs can impact their view of their self-efficacy in teaching a diverse student population, however, many educators lack the cultural proficiency to address the needs of a diverse student population (Guerra & Nelson, 2007). An ELL student with a disability

can spend any part of their day in general education classes with teachers who may not be aware of the student's needs or specific supports that if put in place, help their ELL student achieve. An ELL student can interact with several teachers daily and without collaboration, ELLs may feel as if they are struggling to stay afloat for reasons out of their control such as acquiring a second language, an undiagnosed disability, and/or limited resources. Teachers need to be aware of these considerations and use research-based best practices to meet the needs of ELLWDs, otherwise, these students can continue to languish in the American school system. "It is increasingly clear that if we do not address the profound inequities in education, the disparities in learning opportunities that are behind the so-called achievement gap, our entire society will be imperiled (Blankstein, Noguera, Kelly, & Tutu, 2016)." To meet the needs of ELLs and students with disabilities, teachers must prioritize effective teaching strategies which include flexibility, use of visuals, manipulatives, and repetition to support multicultural students in Special Education (Obiakor, 2007).

Districts are faced with an increased number of disadvantaged, low-performing students who may have experienced trauma and interrupted schooling. "Students' background characteristics and conditions typically determine the schools they attend, and the neighborhood context, in turn, determines the availability of resources and the capacity of the professionals who work at the school (Nielsen, 2013)." These challenges are no longer limited to large, urban cities as several suburban districts across the United States have experienced a demographic shift over the last few years due to an immigration surge in 2014, however, these shifts have not had an impact on teacher demographics nationally or locally. To demonstrate this on Long Island, NY, Hofstra

University released a study in 2019 on "Teacher Diversity in Long Island's Public Schools" which is the first part of a three-phase study. The first phase focused on reviewing the data to create a demographic profile of Long Island's teachers and students. In order to create the demographic profile, the study reviewed 10 years' worth of student and faculty records gathered by the state Education Department from the region's 642 public school buildings ending with the 2016-17 academic year. The raw data was culled from data requests as well as information collected from the NYS Data site. The researchers checked for inconsistencies or data entry errors that create spikes. The data was cleaned to provide an accurate representation of teacher and student populations. The data from the study shows that in 2017, 45 percent of students enrolled were nonwhite, however, the teaching population has remained virtually unchanged (Mangino & Levy, 2019). There was a 12.5 percent increase in the number of Latino students, however, the Latino teacher workforce only increased by 1.4 percent. As student diversity increased, teacher demographics did not. The study revealed a one percentage point drop of white teachers who still held most teaching jobs, specifically 92 percent. The authors discuss the negative impacts of historical practices that lead to segregation on Long Island that make it possible for a student to never come across a Black or Hispanic teacher in their educational career. The findings from this study point to a pressing need in changing hiring practices across districts to better reflect teacher diversity as the authors cite studies that indicate the positive impact a diverse teaching population has on all students.

Review of Related Literature

Background on English Language Learners

Teachers who may have never traveled to a foreign country or spoken another language may find themselves teaching a student who does not speak English. Teachers may find themselves providing instruction to newly enrolled students who for the first time in their educational career are attending an English-speaking school within the United States. Historically, these students have been referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs). "ELLs are students who were not born in the United States or who come from an environment where a language other than English is dominant" (Chu & Flores, 2011). The most common labels across research and districts are Limited English Proficient, English Language Learner, Dual Language, English as a Second Language, and English as a New Language Learner.

In 2015, New York State (NYS) updated the regulation regarding the education of these students, Commissioner's Regulation (CR) 154, and referred to their services as English as a New Language (ENL). A student is labeled an ELL at entry during enrollment depending on the parents' response to a Home Language Survey the first time they register in a school in the United States. When a parent or guardian is enrolling their child in school, they must fill out a Home Language Survey which is designed to inform the district to consider if the student needs screening for ELL services. ELL students are required to receive mandated services under CR 154 in NYS based on how they score upon entry on the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) or yearly on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) as per New York State Education Department current

policy. An ELL student may receive anywhere from one daily 40-minute period to 180 minutes of daily instruction with an ENL focus. The rest of the instructional time could be with teachers who are not specifically ELL certified especially in grades 6-12 where teachers must possess content-specific certifications. Concerns on academic outcomes of ELLs linger as the 2007 NAEP test demonstrated increased deficits in both math and reading following a surge of the ELL student population in the United States (Zehr, 2009).

English language learners (ELLs) are growing steadily within the United States K-12 student population. By 2005, the number of English learners throughout the United States had risen 57% over the previous decade to approximately 5.1 million students and the growth has continued. Between 2009-10 and 2014-15 school years, the percentages of ELLs increased in more than half of the states, with increases of over 40 percent in five states. As of 2014, ELLs represented 10% or 4,800,000 of the total K-12 student population. During the 2014-15 school year, Hispanic or Latino students represented 75% of ELLs while making up 25% of all students. ELLs in US public schools speak over 400 different languages. As of fall 2017, the National Center on Education Statistics reports that 5 million public school students (10.1%) are English language learners. Spanish is the most common language spoken by English learners, however, in some states, there was more variation in the home language therefore school districts may be supporting less commonly spoken languages with variability (US Dept of Education, 2018).

There are three groups of ELLs that make up the overall population of ELLs and differ in terms of sociocultural influences as well as varying exposure to language in the home. They are categorized as "early immigrants", "recent immigrants" and "US-born

language minority". Early immigrants are those who arrive before the age of 7 and research indicates they may need up to 5 years to reach academic proficiency. Recent immigrants may or may not arrive at a US public school with schooling or literacy skills in their native language. Students who are identified with gaps in formal education are further referred to as Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). US-born language-minority students may come to school with varying levels of first language literacy or exposure to English. The differences in development or formal school in their native language or the English language can also affect their sociocultural influences and their learning (Snow & Katz, 2010).

Snow and Katz wrote that the majority of ELL students in US schools are "simultaneous" bilinguals who are acquiring two languages at once. If a student is a simultaneous bilingual student, they may have difficulty acquiring language in both languages, which may be difficult to determine and would require an assessment in both languages by bilingual evaluators who can assess their needs in each language to identify gaps, delays, or disabilities. The students who already possess proficiency in their native language, i.e. sequential bilingual students, possess proficiency in their native language which could be assessed and would indicate that the student's learning difficulties are primarily due to acquiring English. If this student is having difficulties, the teacher can find out from a family member whether the student experienced early difficulty in acquiring their native language.

The route of acquisition is consistent for all English learners with different native languages, but the rate of progress can vary considerably meaning their progression from very basic grammar and vocabulary to progressively more elaborate versions of

"interlanguage" (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006; Snow & Katz, 2010). Beginner ELLs have such limited English skills that they cannot benefit from general education instruction without support (Chu & Flores, 2011). Acquiring a second language is a gradual process that varies in the amount of time as a student may progress from simple grammatical structures to overgeneralizations to close approximations of the second language which includes increased vocabulary usage and more elaborate sentence structures (Snow & Katz, 2010) but this can depend on the age factor as well as the type of instruction they receive.

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968 was the United States' acknowledgment that students from non-English speaking countries or homes need specialized education. The Bilingual Education Act was amended in 1974 and defined bilingual education as a program that provided instruction in English and in the native language of the student to allow the student to progress effectively through the educational system. English as a second language (ESL) programs alone were considered insufficient (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). When the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) was amended in 1988, stricter protocols were put into place and provided more concrete recommendations for districts. Eventually, the BEA was discontinued as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2000 covered provisions for ELls thru Title III, a federal grant program designed to provide funding to schools for programs that support the language acquisition of English Language Learners or immigrant students. This shift impacted Bilingual Education programs as districts shifted their focus on supporting English language acquisition and development through the ELL program methodology to meet NCLB's achievement expectations. Once the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act

was passed in 2002, the BEA was absorbed into NCLB. This also signaled a significant shift as "the statement of purpose and accountability requirements make clear that the primary objective is English acquisition." (Moran, 2011). This change included penalties for districts in failing to make advancements for ELLs on achievement tests. These changes led to less support for Bilingual programs and shifted the focus instead on demonstrating progress in English and Mathematics assessments.

The instructional models for ELLs will differ depending on the number of given ELL students in a school or district. Since NCLB minimized support for native-language instruction, districts shifted to more of a supported English model. According to the law, parents can request a Bilingual class but if there aren't enough Bilingual students to build a sufficient class size, the district is not required to offer it. This impacts the study and research of these student groups to gain knowledge on how an ELL or SWD is instructed and by whom which can change from district to district because of the variability of offerings, timing, and methodology. For instance, one ELL student can be placed in full bilingual education classes receiving the majority of instruction in their native language while another ELL student may be in a stand-alone ESL/ENL class receiving the majority of their instruction in English. Under the regulation, both students will receive their mandated ESL/ENL instruction by either the Bilingual teacher or TESOL-certified teacher (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

NYS CR-154 ENL Levels and Continuum of Services Based on Proficiency – K-12

Level	Description of Level	K-8	9-12
Entering (Beginning)	Has great dependence on supports and structures to advance language skills	360 minutes of ENL per week	540 minutes per week
Emerging (Low Intermediate)	Shows some independence of the supports and structures to advance language skills	360 minutes of ENL per week	360 minutes of ENL per week
Transitioning (Intermediate)	Shows some independence in advancing their academic language skills.	180 minutes of ENL per week	180 minutes of ENL per week
Expanding (Advanced)	Shows great independence in advancing their academic language skills.	180 minutes of ENL per week	180 minutes of ENL per week
Commanding (Proficient)	Has met the State standard to demonstrate English language proficiency and is no longer considered an ENL student.	Can receive Former ELL services for up to 2 years	Can receive Former ELL services for up to 2 years

In terms of instructional planning and delivery, the English as a New Language teacher will most likely use the school curriculum infused with language support. One commonly used instructional methodology is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Research on SIOP use in mainstream classrooms has demonstrated improved performance on a writing assessment on expository essays (Echevarria, et al, 2008). SIOP is based on a learning model that can provide support in language development, vocabulary acquisition, and the use of accelerated learning activities to support the delivery of instruction to English learners.

Two factors constitute disadvantages for many ELLs. ELLs are often impacted by their economic status as many of these students are living in or near poverty. In 2014-15, homeless, Title I (free and reduced lunch eligible), and migrant students were more likely to be ELLs than the overall student population. ELLs represented 14% of homeless

children, 15% of students serviced by Title 1 programs, and 39% of eligible migrant children (US Dept of Education, 2018). In addition, for many English language learners, there may be a cultural mismatch between their home environment and the educators who teach them as the 2019 Hofstra study indicates this is the case on Long Island, NYS where the teaching population has declined from 93% white to 92% white over the last 10 years while the ELL population has surged (Levy & Mangino, 2019). Classroom practices rooted in research-based methods and culturally relevant pedagogy could mitigate some of the obstacles ELLs face.

Umansky and Dumont studied the impact of labeling English learners and found that teacher perceptions are affected when the student is labeled an English learner. They also found that the effects can be mitigated by bilingual environments. They also found that research that looked specifically at EL classified students is "sparse" but also indicated that teachers hold low or negative perceptions of EL-classified students (Umansky & Dumont, 2019).

Background on Special Education

Special Education has its roots in medical settings as students with disabilities were typically those with profound mental and physical disorders. Initially, students with mental illness or physical and/or intellectual disabilities were subject to being placed in state institutions (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, 2007). The current field of special education has continued to evolve as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act or Public Law (PL) 94-142 was passed in 1975. The act was eventually replaced by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which continues to provide the guidelines for all districts and schools to follow in regard to the education of students

with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The term LRE is student-specific but requires that districts provide as many human and environmental supports as possible to students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) within the general education setting. When a student's needs would not be met in the general education setting and they are placed in a special class that can consist of 6-12 students, districts must offer ways for them to participate with non-disabled peers as much as possible.

Instructional delivery supports that apply to students with IEPs are referred to as accommodations. These are noted throughout the IEP and include classroom supports to include the use of high and low technology, preferential seating, or extra time for testing. The principle is that these accommodations would support students in accessing the curriculum. Besides supports and accommodations, students can receive a range of services in the general education classroom such as related services, i.e., counseling, occupational therapy, or speech. If students require the support of a Special Educator to address instructional goals, they can receive Resource Room as a pull-out or push-in service that can allow them to receive goal-specific support in reading, writing, math, or organizational skills that students can then generalize in the general education classroom. Another option is the Consultant Teacher or Integrated Co-Taught program, which will be provided by a Special Education teacher for a given period in any core content class. More restrictive placements such as Special Class settings in or out of the public school setting may be recommended for students with disabilities, and students that require English language support should be able to receive those services in addition to any special education services on their IEP.

The core instructional model to be provided to students with disabilities is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), which is provided by a certified Special Education teacher, or provider that has aligned to the student's IEP goals, which may include "adaptations of the content, methodology or delivery of instruction." (IDEA, 2004). Typically, SDI is confused with differentiation, which includes planning for all learners in the general education classroom. SDI is not the modification of the content as the goal is to provide instruction as close to the curriculum/standards as their general education peers. SDI is meant to complement Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI), which can include Tier 1 intervention supported by a general education teacher in the classroom. Under NYS regulation, school districts are required to provide tiered interventions to students before referral to the Committee on Special Education and especially before a student can be classified with a Learning Disability. Additional research is needed to determine whether educators are using "evidence-based instruction and interventions with fidelity" and whether it leads to the under or over-classification of "English Language Learners and students of color for special education services" (Gartland & Strosnider, 2020).

Need for Intervention by Local, State, and Federal Authorities

States and localities have faced a transformation in their demographics, while federal and state mandates have imposed stricter expectations on student performance. This has caused stress on districts that have a growing influx of refugee or immigrant students without increasing funding to meet these mandates (Baines, 2014). Coupled with poor performance, districts are further penalized for not making progress with English Learners or Special Needs students (Baines, 2014).

To promote equity, federal interventions were put in place to offer support for educationally disadvantaged students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, initiatives for students with disabilities, and mandating programs that support English language learners (Santamaria, 2009). The Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1967 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975, which eventually turned into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1995, were both passed following the Civil Rights Movement. Both pieces of legislation established guidelines and provided school districts with federal funds to establish innovative educational programs for students with limited English-speaking ability and with disabilities. However, despite guidance from the federal government, both groups are not achieving at a level commensurate with their peers (Santamaria, 2009).

The increased mandate requiring growth in student performance has also had a measurable impact on teachers as their performance is tied to their student's achievement as well as how they are rated when being observed while providing instruction. Educators are expected to plan lessons that meet the needs of their students, adequately assess them and prove engaging to a diverse student population with various needs. For example, to be rated Effective or Highly Effective on the Danielson rating scale, the teacher either purposefully or systematically acquires knowledge from several sources about a student's interests and cultural heritages as it is acknowledged that students bring a fund of knowledge that must be included in lesson planning and delivery of instruction (Danielson, 2013). Figueroa & Haller (2015) conducted interviews with 20 English Language Learner and Student With Disability teachers to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the literacy Common Core State Standards with

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their students. Findings revealed teachers' concerns with their ability to adapt their curriculum to the CCSS to meet the needs of ELL and SWD students who need additional time for processing deeper learning. It is important to note that the CCSS did not provide the curriculum, teaching strategies, or techniques that should be used to bring students to mastery, especially with those that are not normally at grade level such as ELL and SWD students (Figueroa & Haller, 2015). This left teachers to figure out the intent of the standards as well as the best way to modify them for struggling students.

The Merger of ELL and SWD

As of the 2014-15 school year, ELLs made up 10 percent of students with disabilities. However, they are disproportionate in terms of identification as 14% of ELLs (about 718,000 students) were identified with a disability and in two specific classifications, 21% of ELLs were identified with Speech or language impairment, and 49.7% were identified with Learning Disabilities. ELLs are at high risk of over-or underrepresentation in the category of learning disability (Sullivan, 2011). A persistent trend is that Hispanics have been over-identified as having a learning disability or speech and language disorder (Klingner, J, 2012). Classification rates for ELLs with an intellectual disability, autism, and emotional disturbance were commensurate when compared with non-ELL classified students (US Dept of Education, 2018).

ELLWD is described as an intersection of two specific disciplines, Special Education and English as a Second Language (Kangas, 2017). While this study will not focus on a specific group of ELL students or a specific disability, it is worth noting that the ELL population will continue to grow. Much attention is placed on the rising number of Latino students from Central and South America because, at this time, they are the

largest immigrant group in the United States. However, as has been historically demonstrated, immigration trends can shift, and educators must be prepared to teach an immigrant child speaking any variety of languages who demonstrates a disability.

It can be a daunting task for a teacher, who is responsible for the academic achievement of an ELL student that also has a disability to identify the best way to provide effective instruction. General education teachers may find themselves responsible for implementing all or part of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan as students with disabilities require support and accommodations to benefit from the general curriculum. The teacher may need to rely on the School Psychologist and the ELL teacher to explain what the student needs to acquire information. According to the National Center on Education Statistics, while the most common classification identification for ELLs is a learning disability (LD), teachers may be presented with students who have a range of disabilities, some of which may have more or less understanding or experience with. For instance, a teacher may have ELL students who have speech delays or an ADHD diagnosis, or vision impairments. While these students all fall under the SWD umbrella, they will require different services and accommodations while taking into consideration the students' cultural and linguistic diversity. With federal legislation mandating the education of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and the national shift toward inclusive education, the number of students with disabilities served in the general education classroom has significantly increased since the early 1990s (McLeskey & et. al., 2012). Today, the majority of students eligible for special education in the United States are educated in the general education classroom for most or all of the school day (U.S. Department of

Education, 2018). Districts are under pressure to demonstrate progress with ELL students as well as students with disabilities as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) follows the ideals of the No Child Left Behind Act requiring states and local educational systems to monitor the progress and achievement of all children which can impact districts standing as well as eligibility for financial assistance.

The ELLWD will be exposed to a variety of teachers with different certifications throughout their school day. In 2002, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that "only 12.5 percent of teachers who taught ELLs had received eight or more hours of professional development related to serving ELLs during the preceding three years".

Although the research evidence is limited, teachers likely rely on their discipline-specific knowledge when they design and deliver instruction, instead of focusing on the interaction between culture, language, and disability (García & Ortiz, 2008). The different strengths possessed by teachers with a variety of disciplines can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Teacher Certification Titles, Instructional Focus, and Instructional Design

Teacher Certification	Instructional Focus	Instructional Design
Bilingual Teacher	Taught to provide content in the native language as well as support for learning the new content in English.	Instruction designed for Bilingual students without disabilities
ESL / TESOL Teacher	Taught to provide instruction toward language learning needs	Instruction designed for ELL students without disabilities
Special Educator	Prepared to design instruction that addresses needs associated with a disability but often has limited coursework or skills in native-language instruction, second language acquisition, ESL strategies, and other techniques designed to improve outcomes for ELs.	Instruction designed for monolingual English speakers with disabilities from special educators
General Education	Focused on standards-based curriculum and instruction but may have had limited opportunities to learn about special populations.	Instruction designed for monolingual English-speaking students without disabilities from general education teachers.

Note. Compiled from *Colorin Colorado and NYSED.*

Bilingual Education and Special Education are two distinct fields and certification areas within education. There are a growing number of dually certified teachers, however, not enough to meet the demand of this growing population. Considering that an ELLWD can be taught by three or more teachers who possess different certifications, experiences, strengths, mixed understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, and mindsets towards their own or the student's efficacy. These factors could result in "fragmented and ineffective instructional programming and a lack of ownership among teachers for those students who receive services from multiple programs and service providers" (Robertson, 2016). Research has focused on teachers' perceptions of either ELL students or students with disabilities and often focused on one specific disability

condition. However, with the surge of ELL students, a teacher will likely have ELL students from one or more countries as well as students who may possess one or more of the 13 disability categories (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Visual Representation of Potential ELLWDs Language Development and Disabilities

Considerations for a Teacher of an English Language Learner with a Disability

NYS English Language Proficiency Development Levels	NYS Disability Classifications for IEPs

Entering	Autism
Emerging	Deafness
Transitioning	Deaf-Blindness
Expanding	Emotional Disturbance
Commanding	Hearing Impairment
	Learning Disability
	Intellectual Disability
	Multiple Disabilities
	Orthopedic Impairment
	Other Health Impairment
	Speech or Language Impairment
	Traumatic Brain Injury
	Visual Impairment (including Blindness)

Within these classifications a student can have a range of academic, social/emotional or physical needs.

Linguistically Responsive Instruction: Bilingual Education as a Right

While CRP proposes a purposeful mindset to incorporate racial, ethnic, and linguistic connections, research has found positive effects of including native language

instruction and support. Kangas conducted an investigation of the service delivery for

ELLs with Disabilities and in her findings after cross-referencing the literature, she found

that culturally responsive pedagogy may also be one approach for targeted instruction for

ELLs (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010; Orosco & Klingner, 2010).

However, a recent 2019 study by Wang and Woolf found that ELLWDs are far less likely

to receive instructional support in their native language. Cioe-Pena interviewed LatinX

parents who reported the district decided when Bilingual support ended, even despite

their objections. She conducted an analysis of interviews with 10 LatinX parents and it

was revealed that educators recommend their children receive English-only programs to

avoid linguistic confusion. It seems to be more likely the case when the student is more

involved and requires more intense Special Education services outside of the general

environment (Cioe-Pena, 2020). Considering that in 2017-2018, Latinos only made up

9% of the entire teacher force in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2021), it could

be difficult to find a Bilingual Special Education teacher to serve severely disabled

students.

 While studies have attempted to identify and redress the issues in teacher

education, studies continue to find that teachers are not able or willing to accommodate

ELL students. The problem begins in the early years beginning in PreK program

(Rizzuto, 207). The programs that are income based such as Head Start can become

saturated with needy families that include many dual language learners or some that are

learning English for the first time. Early childhood educators typically focus on

developmental support and may ignore the native language needs or relegate them to an

assistant in the room who may speak the native language but lacks formal pedagogical

training. Typically, the most highly trained educators pursue higher-paying opportunities in school districts versus privately run centers and in light of COVID many early childhood and special education sites have dealt with instability in staffing which has impacted learning opportunities for some of the neediest and vulnerable children (Goldhaber & Gratz, 2021).

Gilmour's study on teacher certification led to a finding that the certification had less of an impact on math instruction. The study found that students may benefit from a special education teacher with a certification in a content area than just special education alone (Gilmour, 2020). In this particular study of elementary and middle school students with learning disabilities or emotional/behavioral disorders, students with less significant disabilities were less likely to be taught by a dual-certified teacher. This study does look at the need to conduct further studies on placement decisions. Overall, most students' outcomes appeared unrelated to the type of teacher certification however the achievement levels still lag. If being assigned to a special education teacher does not guarantee "explicit, intensive, cohesive, engaging, responsive, and focused teaching skills and strategies (Jones & Brownell, 2014)" then we circle back to the issue of the instructional strengths of teachers of ELLWDs.

Despite the historical underperformance or underachievement of ELLWDs, a study on ELLs and SWDs enrolled in Boston Charter schools provided promising data as the author revealed the likelihood of ELLs enrolling in four-year colleges was double and the likelihood of special education students attending a two-year college quadrupled. While it can't be said with certainty that this is the case with all charter schools in the nation, the students in the Boston Charter schools had outcomes that were more

advantageous than those who attended the Boston public schools system and received more services (Setren, 2021). The author identifies some possible factors such as a more inclusive learning environment, increased instructional time, high-intensity tutoring, and data-driven instruction (Setren, 2021). Another factor for the success of some charter schools is the difference between enrollment as public schools must accept any resident that falls within the age limits. Parents must self-select to apply for a placement in a charter school and as was the case in this study, students are often admitted via lottery.

One area to study that could provide answers is looking at the experiences of long-term, adolescent English language learners (ELLs) who experience persistent academic underachievement in spite of several years of schooling. Kim and Garcia (2014) conducted a study on 13 long-term ELL High School students to explore their perceptions of educational experiences in the context of their school history, including program placements, special education referral, and academic outcomes. Data from semi-structured interviews and documents were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. Participants viewed themselves as English-proficient, motivated learners, and described their school experience as positive but challenging. However, review of school records indicated a different reality of persistent school failure, lack of intervention and academic underpreparedness to pursue postsecondary education (Kim & Garcia, 2014). The students in the study clearly had hopes and dreams, however, they were underprepared "due to the adequacy of the general education programs, programming of Bilingual and ESL programs and lack of academic rigor" (Kangas, 2017). The study cited limitations regarding the collection or archival of data making it difficult to gather the full picture of why some of the students had struggled for so long. This study points to the need for

more research on adolescent ELL students. A narrative case study on a 6th-grade ELL student with a disability who identified himself as a "good student" whose teachers shared a deficient perspective of him academically (Brodeur, 2021). While the study may not be generalizable to the entire population, the student, Antonio perceived himself as motivated and a good student. The findings yielded that the teachers succumbed to applying deficit thinking to Antonio. While he had several designations as an ELL and SWD, neither Antonio nor his teachers seemed to recognize both or how the two intersect (Brodeur, 2021). This demonstrates why research on teacher perspectives is vital in all grade levels as studies demonstrate that the teachers' perspectives and knowledge base have huge effects on students' achievement or lack thereof. Several studies point out that teachers' perspectives of students often list the lack of progress to external factors, such as was the case with Antonio of not being motivated enough. For example, a study by The New Teacher Project (TNTP), called the Opportunity Myth illustrates that despite students doing what is asked of them they are underprepared due to not having access to "grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, or teachers who hold high expectations" and this happens mostly to poor, students of color (TNTP, 2018). The TNTP study was extensive as it occurred over three years in a partnership with five diverse school systems. Researchers observed lessons, assignments, and work samples and collected 30,000 nearly real-time student surveys. While not an empirical research article, it does create a sense of urgency, however, it places much of the blame on teachers without accounting for all of the factors that can limit student achievement. The report is extensive but does not account for all factors that can affect instructional

decision making such as a poor curriculum, ineffective textbooks, or access to professional development.

Historically studies have shown that receiving native language instruction and support can enrich English language learning (Cummins 1979, 2000). A 2014 study of Kindergarten children compared those who were in monolingual English classes to those who received bilingual instruction in kindergarten. While all of the children may have benefitted simply from attending kindergarten, these findings suggest that bilingual instruction for Spanish-speaking children was a more effective approach to enhance their school readiness as the students who received bilingual education had higher ratings in three of the five developmental domains and were nearly four times more likely to be rated as Very Ready for School in four or more domains than the group that received English only instruction. (Tazi, 2014). Supporting effective bilingual education instruction could be crucial for this young, growing population that faces several risk factors but who can succeed with the right support (Tazi, 2014). Providing native language support to emerging bilingual students who are typically simultaneously developing in both languages is supported by the research (Cummins 1979, 2000), however, research has found that bilingual services are lacking coupled with the shortage of bilingual certified teachers.

Kangas conducted a study following two ELLWDs and found that special education services trumped ESL services (Kangas, 2014). Her case study followed students who were in inclusive settings and required specific support from special education. The pull-out services or therapies both students received also placed demands on their schedules. In Kangas' study, the ESL program was still relatively new and the

staff did not have a full understanding of ESL. One teacher was able to integrate the support so his student could receive native language support as well as have his special needs attended to. However, in the following study in one school district, Kangas found that Special Education often trumped the delivery of Bilingual services and there wasn't sufficient language support in the Bilingual classes. The language use was not consistent as the teacher mostly spoke in English and seemed to be showing videos instead of actually teaching (Kangas, 2017). As both of Kangas' studies showed, educational professionals report that special education is a legal issue, and the IEP contract cannot be broken because it creates procedural issues that can cost the district and create a level of stress around a child and family. This can explain why Special Education is given more credence during scheduling a multitude of services for a student. Kangas recommends more interdisciplinary training and building the knowledge base of teachers to know about ELLWD educational needs and rights (Kangas, 2017). In Rizzuto's mixed-method study of ELLs teacher perceptions, a teacher responded that they "sometimes bring in her children's home language into her lessons at times" however, that was never observed during the classroom observations and the teacher did not allow students to use their home language in her classroom (Rizzuto, 2017). This points to the need for studies to provide a better understanding of perceptions of ELL, SWD, and general education teachers who serve ELL, SWD, and ELLWD students. Therefore, this research study seeks to gain information from a teacher of different disciplines to better understand the current knowledge base of all content educators of ELLWDs.

Are Teacher Preparation Programs Preparing for Cultural and Linguistic Needs?

The preparation of in-service teachers has been a heavily researched field, in part

thanks to the instruments created by several researchers such as Siwatu (2007) and

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). For the purpose of this study, research

articles were reviewed with the following focus:

- Teacher preparation programs inclusion of culturally relevant pedagogy

- Pre-service or in-service teacher perceptions of ELL, SWD, and ELLWDs

- Pre-service or in-service teacher self-efficacy with ELL, SWD, and ELLWDs

    In 2015, Wang and Woolf reviewed trends and issues in Bilingual Special

Education preservice models and found that programs had taken more integrated support

from both disciplines versus focusing on each separately. The researchers found the

challenge of a limited number of programs available and the limitation of finding

candidates who may see teaching as a lucrative career and have the skills needed in

English (Wang & Woolf, 2015). At the time of the article, California was the only state to

have a bilingual special education certification. In New York State, an educator can

obtain a Special Education certification with a Bilingual extension and the educator may

obtain both through attending a credentialing program or by obtaining credits through an

alternative pathway. The authors found that there are several next steps that are needed to

provide clarity on the exact number of current programs, the creation of professional

competencies for bilingual special education teachers, and an evidence base of the

effectiveness of bilingual special education teacher preparation programs. Despite a

multitude of research on the importance of preparing pre-service teachers to teach diverse

students, the research demonstrates that there is still room for progress which could be

due to the lack of consistency between programs and a lack of national standards (Wang & Woolf, 2015).

Turgut, Sahin & Huerta (2016) studied how 18 purposefully selected pre-service teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach ELLs changed positively after a semester-long course on teaching ELLs (Turgut, Sahin & Huerta, 2016). The authors relied on the pre-service teacher's pre and post-responses and found that the confidence of the prospective teachers was ignited after the course. The pre-responses indicated that the candidates did not feel they would adequately serve ELLs citing the inability to speak another language. After the course work, the preservice teachers noted that the knowledge and strategies would help them overcome the language barriers and gave them more confidence to teach ELLs. This study is solely based on the reported perspectives of preservice teachers while they were still enrolled. The authors cited the data regarding the number of ELLs in mainstream classes and recommended training for General Education teachers who may likely spend more time with ELL students than a certified ELL/Bilingual education teacher and without proper training may have the same reservations that the preservice candidates had before the coursework on ELLs. As ELLs are a growing population in American schools and the majority of the nation's teachers specifically 79% are white monolingual females (NCES, 2018), pre-service coursework for all teacher certification programs on addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of students coupled with second language coursework could build teacher understanding in language acquisition and efficacy to teach diverse students.

Making a Case for the Effectiveness of CRP

There have been challenges to the implementation of CRP in education since it was proposed. However, researchers have been investigating the effects of CRP that may be well-known in academia but have not reached the layperson or even teachers in the field. Teachers by nature will put in place what works for students, however, they need the support of their administrators and a curriculum that allows time to reflect and challenge their schema when high-stakes testing and accountability have become the norms (Young, 2010). Young's case study investigated the viability of CRP in practice. She conducted on-site research instead of working with pre-service teachers and conducted participatory research by meeting with and observing teachers and administrators over the course of 3 months. She also collected district documents, held online discussions, and kept a researcher's journal. In working with the team, she noted the lack of understanding of what CRP is and how much the staff learned during their interactions. Young's study demonstrates the importance of collaboration and the power of working in a learning community. Young's data revealed the obstacles to implementing CRP which consist of structural issues, teacher bias, lack of support for CRP, and racism in the school setting.

A case study that was conducted to describe the use of CRP by an urban bilingual special education teacher concluded that the teacher's ability to integrate culturally responsive instruction would drive their success with ELLs with disabilities at the elementary level. The author further stated that CRP should be provided to not only general education teachers but to special education teachers as well to give them access to support for their ELLs (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014). Orosco's further research with a case

study in 2017 followed a special education teacher who received professional development on solving word problems within a culturally responsive framework. The teacher provided explicit instruction and scaffolded support which helped both the teacher and the student. The study speaks to the importance of targeted professional development that is both culturally relevant and matched to the teacher's area of need to positively affect student achievement in that area (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017).

In 2016, Byrd surveyed 315 6th-12th grade students on their experience with CRP. The student demographics were racially or culturally diverse as it included 25% of the following racial or ethnic groups – white, Latino, African American, and Asian. The study revealed that elements of CRP were "significantly associated with academic outcomes and ethnic-racial identity development (Byrd, 2016)." Walker and Hutchinson conducted a study on the literacy achievement of low socioeconomic status 17 Black male middle school students in one 3rd grade classroom that was influenced by culturally responsive teaching. The mixed-methods data included reading scores from the computer adaptive interim assessment, Measurement of Academic Progress during the 2017–2018 academic school year which assessed students' reading comprehension by providing a Lexile measure that can be tied to a grade level and monitored for growth. Qualitative data included the teacher's journal of reflective field notes. The teacher utilized a "pedagogy that mirrors students' cultural values, beliefs, and lifestyles and empowered students in ways that yielded improved literacy achievement for this group." This study saw a 29% increase in the MAP and added further support for the use of such pedagogy with Black male students as well as other potentially vulnerable populations (Walker & Hutchinson, 2020).

In 2014, Paulk, Martinez, and Lambeth found that when comparing the growth in achievement in science of African American seventh-grade students, the data from the group exposed to culturally relevant practices, the culturally relevant group made higher gains (44.71) leading to the conclusion that culturally relevant teaching increased the science achievement of the tested students (Paul, Martinez & Lambeth, 2014).

While research has brought to light the benefits of implementing CRP, recent events have brought CRP and critical race theory to the forefront as hot-button issues, and those who oppose CRP, may not fully understand how it can serve as a bridge instead of causing further polarization, therefore increased teacher training coupled with coaching will be important to ensure educators understand what CRP is and what it isn't.

The Instrumentation of Efficacy and Culturally Responsive Teaching

Ever since the conception of Bandura's initial theory of efficacy, researchers have worked to establish instruments to test it. These surveys or instruments assist districts and schools that benefit from assessing the self-efficacy of their staff to target professional development and mentoring. The Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE) and Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy (CRTOE) Scale are instruments to assess a teacher's self-efficacy toward Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) (Siwatu, 2007). It was designed to elicit information from preservice teachers regarding their self-efficacy to execute specific culturally responsive teaching tasks. The Likert-type scale consists of 40 items in which participants are asked to rate how confident they are in their ability to engage in specific culturally responsive teaching practices (e.g., I can identify the diverse needs of my students) by indicating a degree of confidence ranging from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident). To assess

the Culturally Responsive Teaching Efficacy Beliefs of In-Service Special Education Teachers, Chu & Garcia used the CRTSE and CRTOE scales to conduct a quantitative study with 344 participants from three urban school districts in the Southwest. The scale was adapted to better assess actions taken by Special Educators. Chu & Garcia collected responses from 344 participants via an online survey to probe the teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy as well as outcome expectancy by the efficaciousness of their teacher preparation in educating heterogeneous students. The study found that several predictors for efficacy emerged such as whether the teachers spoke more than one language, the settings they had taught in, the certifications they held – specifically a bilingual education or English as a Second Language certification as well as their perceived quality of professional education (Chu & Garcia, 2014).

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) developed and validated The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) to measure instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Callaway, 2017 used the instruments to survey teachers from three different High Schools in a Southeastern urban school district. Callaway found a significantly positive relationship between teacher efficacy and culturally responsive teaching, instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. Her study supported findings that "teachers who possess high levels of efficacy are more likely to use higher levels of culturally responsive pedagogy which has a positive impact on student engagement and achievement (Callaway, 2017)." This instrument has been used to survey pre-service and in-service teachers in terms of general efficacy however the questions are too broad for this specific study.

The review of the research found studies that either focused specifically on special educators' self-efficacy with ELLs or perceptions of teachers to work with ELLs. Studies have reviewed teachers' efficacy to provide CRP to their students with disabilities and there are many studies that have specifically focused on the perceived efficacy of preservice teachers which continue to demonstrate that there are needed improvements to be made to support the mostly white pool of potential teacher candidates (Boser, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). As the number of diverse students has increased and will continue to rise across the United States, both high teacher efficacy and incorporation of CRP are essential for all teachers regardless of the content or discipline they teach. Studies have revealed the difficulty educators have to implement CRP. It is not an effort that can be taken on a whim during Black History Month. It is part of a mindset that requires collaboration, conversation, input from students and the community, and a willingness to be flexible instead of holding fixed Eurocentric notions. It is especially important that TESOL-certified or Special Education teachers have confidence in their abilities to teach ELLWDs as these students will specifically require their support and collaboration to meet grade-level expectations.

Conclusion

The research demonstrates how profoundly complex the education of ELLWDs can be for teachers regardless of their discipline or certification area. Educators must consider whether they are prepared to meet students' cultural, linguistic, and academic needs while creating a warm and welcoming environment that will allow students to learn as well as incorporating a high-quality research-based instructional practice that can circumvent some of the obstacles faced by ELLWDs. There are many factors that

educators must take into consideration in order to meet the diverse and varied needs of ELLWDs while having the belief that they possess the tools for highly effective instruction. This study can fill a research gap on the perceptions of teachers promoting the academic achievement of ELLWDs by examining their efficacy and use of CRP.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodological design and procedures for this study regarding educators' perceptions of their preparation and experiences teaching ELLWDs. This approach will allow for a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences working with ELLWDs and provide a way to provide qualitative data to understand their efficacy and use of CRP with ELLWDs.

Research Design

A phenomenological qualitative methodology will be used to address the research questions. A phenomenological study investigates various reactions, or perceptions of, a particular phenomenon; the researcher hopes to gain insight into the world of his or her participants (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Qualitative studies allow the understanding of lived experiences of a group of people at a specific period of time – the experience of General Education, Special Education, or Bilingual or TESOL teachers of ELLWDs, a phenomenological approach seemed the best fit (Moustakas, 1994). According to psychologist and researcher, Moustakas, the essence of phenomena is drawn from the participant's perception. The researcher strives to obtain the essence from the transcripts of teacher interviews to understand what impacts their sense of efficacy and their use of CRP. The research questions are designed to elicit a reflection on the participant's sense of efficacy and discuss which experiences impacted them and why. Participants will be asked to discuss their thoughts on CRP, how they believe it impacts ELLWDs, and how CRP is or can be implemented in their instruction. Considering the

gap within the literature that this study seeks to fill, the following qualitative research

questions have been devised:

Research Questions

1. What pedagogical and related skills do educators perceive are needed to engage

and support students designated with the English Language Learner with a Disability

(ELLWD) status?

2. How do they believe their instructional practices effectively support ELLWDs?

3. What are the professional experiences of educators supporting ELLWDs?

Methods and Procedures

Setting

This research will not be conducted in one particular setting or location nor is this

study limited to any particular district or school. The research will be limited to

participants in districts located on Long Island which consists of two counties: Nassau

County and Suffolk County. This study is set within the field of public education and is

seeking public educators from a variety of districts and disciplines to understand their

perspectives on the education of ELLWDs. During the 2015-2016 school year, Suffolk

county reported that ELLs made up 8% of all students, and Nassau county reported that

7% of their students were ELLs. There are 127 school districts on Long Island and a

search on the NYS Data site revealed several that have a substantial population of both

ELL and SWD students. The districts are coded in Chapter 4 to ensure the confidentiality

of participating teachers.

The interviews were conducted virtually or in a mutually agreed-upon location. In

order to gather data, the researcher was willing to travel to meet with teachers at a variety

of locations where the interviews can be conducted comfortably without interruption. The researcher sought to interview teachers from public schools in districts that have diverse student populations. The initial outreach survey was sent to teachers via email and the majority of the interviews were conducted via Webex, a remote meeting source that allowed the researcher to record and transcribe the interviews. Through emails sent to colleagues and teachers across districts, the researcher attempted to recruit a sample of teachers of students identified as ELLWD. The demographic survey in Appendix asked the teachers for key information to identify the teacher's years of experience overall, their license or certification area, experience with ELL/SWD/ELLWD training, and what information they know about their ELLWD students such as their NYSESLAT proficiency levels and IEP goals. As this is new research that is being conducted and considering the variability of the 126 school districts in the Nassau and Suffolk counties of Long Island, the researcher will ask respondents to answer honestly and to the best of their ability to be able to provide actionable information for educators, district administrators, and policymakers in the region.

Participants

The researcher is planning to interview teachers of ELLWDs who have agreed to participate in the study to provide insight into their perception of the preparation and effectiveness to support ELLWDs. The researcher made every effort to interview and conduct focus groups with participating teachers with a range of teacher certifications who can provide insight on how prepared they are to teach ELLWDs, their mastery experiences, their use of CRP practices as well as to identify challenges. A survey was sent out first to elicit participants and collect demographic data on teachers reporting to

teach ELLWDs. Interviews were collected from a mix of teachers in different disciplines and grade levels to identify themes. A minimum number of participants was sought to represent General Education, Special Education, English as a New Language, and Bilingual Education as well as any dual-certified teachers. The participants were purposefully selected to share common characteristics and shared experiences (Creswell, 2013). Table 3 illustrates the information that the researcher was seeking from participants to ensure that varied teachers' experiences were represented in this study based on years of teaching, teaching certification area, and grade levels. A sample size of eight individuals for the interviews and two for the Focus Group were obtained after multiple attempts to gain more participants. Within the sample size, the researcher was able to ensure some sort of pairing in terms of experience in different certification areas and grade levels to assist with any generalization of the findings.

Table 3

Research Study Participant Characteristics

Name	Years of Experience	Teaching Certification/ Teaching Area	Prior Grade Levels Taught	Current Grade Level
Pseudonyms used to not identify teachers	Variability in years of teaching	GE, SE and Bil/ENL certified teachers	Provided by the participants	Provided by the participants

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to collecting data, an application was made to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Data was not collected until full approval by the IRB was received. Upon approval, initial contact was made with the potential participants. Outreach was made via email with a short demographic survey that could be completed within 15 minutes. The email included information about the study and provided respondents with the

opportunity to indicate whether they were interested in participating further. The demographic information was used to identify the participants' years of experience, instructional settings teachers have worked in, experience with language acquisition, and their understanding of their students' ELL and IEP status. The individual teachers who responded with a willingness to participate in the study were contacted. There were 26 responses to the survey,17 responded yes to interviews and 11 responded yes to a Focus Group. Out of the 17 responses, eight responded to the follow-up email to return the informed consent and those became the final interview participants described in Chapter 4. Signed informed consent was collected from those who agree to participate (Appendix B). Participants were informed of the time commitment before consenting to participate. They were also notified that there will not be any monetary compensation for participating in this research and that they could cease to participate at any time.

While quantitative data has captured pre-service teachers' perceived efficacy in teaching diverse populations or efficacy in their use of CRP, qualitative data would capture the true experiences of a teacher of ELLWDs. In interviewing a variety of teachers who have shared experiences, the researcher was able to determine their understanding and incorporation of CRP into their current practice with ELLWDs. Table 4 demonstrates the data collection methods that were employed in the study. The considerable research on CRP and the NYS *Framework: Teacher Actions to Promote CR-S* were used to develop questions for teachers to assess how their skills, experiences, and instructional decision-making align with CRP practices, as demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 4

Data Collection Methods

Interviews	Focus Groups	Documents
Online responses via email or Google Forms	In-person or remote discussion with study participants.	Lesson plans
Independent 1-hour in-person or remote interview with each participant.		

Interviews

Table 5 describes the initial questions for in-service teachers which are aligned with the New York State Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework. Appendix F contains the specific alignment between the research questions and the interview questions on both self-efficacy and CRP that were used in the interviews.

Teachers were interviewed to thoroughly understand and study the phenomenon of teacher self-efficacy with ELLWDs and their use of CRP. Through interviews, the researcher gained insight into participants' behavior and the reasoning behind their actions (Seidman, 2006). To ensure the credibility of the instrument being used for interviews in this study, three administrators from three different districts were asked to review the interview questions. This expert panel was asked to review the questions for appropriateness and to help determine if any changes needed to be made. A pilot interview was administered to a teacher of ELLWDs to ensure that the questions flowed in an appropriate manner and also to ensure that there was a substantial amount of data collected so as to provide a rich description of the participants' experiences and explicitly identify the phenomena (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The interviews followed a list of questions with space for discussion and open dialogue. The researcher believes that this

allowed the participants to expand when needed and maintain the qualitative integrity of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The line of questioning and discussion was done in a neutral tone to avoid biasing the participants' responses. It was important to ensure that the interviewees were comfortable so that they were able to participate and share information (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The researcher approached the participants by email and asked for their availability. The researcher did not want to add any pressure on the participants and worked with whatever time and dates they indicated worked best for them. This approach was used to ensure the comfort of the participants to allow them to produce rich data for a detailed transcript and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Initial questions will focus on their perceived self-efficacy with follow-up questions to probe and identify mastery experiences to determine what effect that has had on the interviewee's self-efficacy on their instruction of ELLWDs.

Teacher Efficacy Guiding Interview Questions

The following interview questions were specifically developed for this study.

1. Describe your experience teaching ELLWDs.
2. How would you describe the strengths of ELLWDs?
3. How would you describe the needs of ELLWDs?
4. How would you describe your effectiveness with ELLWDs?
5. What is your initial thought, feeling or concern when you see an ELLWD on your class roster?
6. What personality characteristics do you feel impact a teacher's level of self-efficacy about teaching ELLWDs?
7. Have you had any mastery experiences with ELLWDs? Please describe one or two.
8. Describe any barriers to the achievement of ELLWDs?

9. How have you persisted despite these barriers?

10. What makes someone's self-efficacy in teaching improve?

Table 5

Interview Protocol Questions on the use of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Question category, based on culturally relevant and sustaining education	Skills to Assess	Questions for Teachers:
Creating a welcoming and affirming environment	• Physical environment and inclusive displays • Communication with families • Classroom Management • Participation in the greater school/district community • Address injustice or bias and encourage students to do so	• How do you ensure a classroom that is inclusive of all students you teach and their familial make up? • How often do you communicate with families? How do you work to overcome language barriers? • How do you approach discipline issues?
Fostering high expectations and rigorous instruction	• High expectations • Reflect on implicit bias • Culturally sustaining practices	• How do you communicate high expectations for your diverse learners? • How do you reflect on your practice and student outcomes?
Identifying inclusive curriculum and assessment	• Provide all curriculum materials in the student's language • Use of cooperative learning • Incorporate SEL • Use of learning styles	• How well do you know your students and incorporate that into your lessons? • Do you provide materials or support in other languages? • Do you incorporate cooperative learning to play on strengths and support areas of weakness?

| Engaging in ongoing professional learning and support | • Continuously learn about implicit bias
• Acquaint oneself with diverse communities in which students live
• Understand CR-S practices and set goals to learn more
• Participate in PLCs
• Monitor data to ID trends | • What professional learning do you seek out that ties into CR-S?
• Do you collaborate with colleagues in other departments such as ELL and SWD? Are you a member of any committees for diverse students and teachers? |

Focus Groups

Respondents to the Demographic Survey were also asked if they were willing to participate in a focus group after the completion of the survey. The focus group was conducted after all of the data from the semi-structured interviews was obtained. The purpose of the focus group was to discuss the common themes that had emerged from the responses and review them with the participants. The researcher was seeking to invite more conversation from the focus group participants and to see if they agreed or disagreed with the themes of the initial analysis. Creswell stated that focus groups are advantageous when "the interactions among interviewees will likely yield the best information, when interviewees are similar and cooperative with each other, when the time to collect information is limited, and when individuals interviewed one-on-one may be hesitant to provide this information" (p. 133). While it can be a challenge to encourage timid members of the group to speak freely (Creswell, 2007), the researcher encouraged open participation by assuring participants that the information would remain strictly confidential and the results from their participation can have an impact on moving the profession forward. Creswell uses focus groups to review his analysis of the data to obtain their views and identify any missing pieces (Creswell, 2013). As the majority of the data will be collected from interviews, the focus group will allow the researcher to

conduct checks on the emerging themes and correlations between the responses obtained from the interviews.

Focus Questions will consist of the following line of questions:

1. Describe your overall experience teaching ELLWDs.

2. How would you rate your self-efficacy in supporting ELLWDs? What impacts this rating?

3. How do you take your student's cultural and linguistic needs in mind when planning lessons?

4. Describe your experience with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

5. Are you receiving support in order to implement it?

6. What has been your experience in training, support, or development?

Data Analysis Approach

As this study is a phenomenological qualitative study, the abundance of the data will be obtained through in-depth interviews with in-service teachers of ELLWDs. Thus to truly understand their perception of their efficacy with these students as well as their use of CRP, the researcher will utilize a coding method to identify themes related to teacher efficacy and use of CRP.   The researcher will identify themes to capture the phenomenon as described by the participants which will build the essence of the findings. These themes will be significant to the study with details of the phenomena thus allowing for transparency with the data. The researcher will refer to the coding cycle described by Johnny Saldaña in his book, The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. The researcher will initiate coding on hard copy transcripts to be able to highlight themes to be organized against the research questions. The goal of coding is to find repeated

patterns of action and consistencies in the data (Saldaña, 2016). Journaling will also be used as an audit trail for the researcher to capture themes and rationale for choices that are made throughout the qualitative data analysis process. All data is stored in a password protected online cloud.

Trustworthiness of the Design

Creswell describes trustworthiness as validation of the data that serve as "equivalents that parallel traditional quantitative approaches to validation (Creswell, 2013, p245). Trustworthiness is defined as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility, or confidence in the data, will be established through triangulation and engagement with the study participants to ensure their words are being reflected appropriately. Transferability or generalizability of the data will be achieved by ensuring that the findings contain a thick description. By elaborating on the information and providing a variety of details, the writer creates a conduit for readers to assess if the details and findings can be transferred to their experiences through common features. Dependability or reliability occurs when the findings are represented through the participant interviews, member checking, as well as an outside reader who can confirm overlapping data collection methods are apparent which can be obtained through focus groups, written essays, and interviews. Confirmability or objectivity leads to results that can be confirmed by other researchers as the researcher will take extensive means to omit any opinions. This will be done in this study through interviews, rechecking with participants, and follow-up questions.

In order to establish trustworthiness in this study, the researcher will record interviews for the purpose of member checking. Feedback will be obtained after

reviewing interview notes with discussion notes to ensure the accuracy of the findings. In order to achieve trustworthiness, the data will be triangulated using individual interviews, focus groups, and document collection. Multiple forms of data collection will allow the researcher to gain more insight into the phenomena and lead to better triangulation of the data as responses from interviews may yield different information than the focus groups (Carter, et.al., 2014).

Research Ethics

Each participating teacher will be asked to read over and sign a written consent form prior to participation in an interview or focus group. Participation will be completely voluntary, with no risk of danger. The documentation and data will be kept confidential. The information will be kept on a password-protected device or a secure cloud. The information on the computer will be kept under strict password-only availability. Records will be destroyed 5 years after completion of the doctoral program. The records will not be used in the future for any other research. The participants will be given the opportunity to listen to their interviews in order to withdraw comments or erase the interviews entirely. Pseudonyms will be used for the names of the districts, schools, teachers, and any staff they mention. The reasoning behind the pseudonyms is that using the actual names could have a negative and lasting effect on the image of and the reputation of the participants and those involved. Although there are 127 school districts on Long Island, the focus will be on those districts with both high ELL and/or SWD populations. The researcher is taking measures to ensure that it would be difficult to identify the participants in the interviews or focus groups simply by context clues. A document with codes will be developed and kept since pseudonyms are utilized. This

research will be guided by truthful and honest reporting and citing while maintaining the confidentiality of the participants.

Researcher Role

While there are ethnographic components, as both a certified Special Education, Bilingual Certified Teacher and School District Administrator, the researcher is looking forward to the teacher's responses from their specific point of you to understand their experiences. While the goal is to interview several teachers to build a shared knowledge base, there is no specific outcome desired except to have firsthand knowledge from the teachers themselves. This will be explained carefully and clearly to all participants at the start of the interviews. The researcher will document her personal experience to "bracket" herself and set aside any personal experiences to be able to focus on the experiences of the participants in the study (Creswell, 2013). The researcher began her career in education in 2000, seeking a placement as a Secondary Social Studies teacher but was told it would be difficult to find such a position and her best bet would be to consider a Bilingual teaching position. Eager to land in a classroom to determine if this was a career path worth exploring, the researcher began teaching in District 13 in Brooklyn. The researcher already possessed a Master's in Public Administration and was very familiar with statistical research. It became apparent that the field did not have a strong connection between current research and practices in most classrooms. As a Bilingual education teacher providing needed support for her students, the researcher noted the irony as the two schools she began her career in were dismantling their bilingual education programs and excessing Bilingual teachers in both Spanish and Chinese although the student populations were growing in the district. This led the researcher to a

Middle School in the Bronx where she progressed from teaching to becoming an Assistant Principal in 2011. In 2015, the researcher then moved on to work in district-level administration overseeing the delivery and instruction of Special Education in a district on Long Island.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights why this study is important as students who are identified as English Language Learners with a disability often struggle and do not receive the culturally responsive support they need from teachers who are properly trained to work with diverse students (Khalifa et al., 2016; Johnston & Young, 2019). This chapter indicated how the study will provide a voice to the educators who are working closely with these students, and their families within communities that are dealing with poverty, lack of resources, and instability while they are trying to establish a foothold in the United States. Data shows that this is a growing group of students and districts must act quickly to ensure their needs will be met and that the teachers have the proper support to promote academic success for historically underserved students. Chapter 4 will include a description of the results of the study, present the collected data, and identify recurrent themes.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter contains the findings from the current study. The chapter outlines how the information from the interviews and focus groups was obtained, the participants are described in detail and their responses are included throughout. Central themes were identified and discussed below in relation to the three research questions.

Findings

Perspective participants answered a demographic questionnaire. The researcher sent the questionnaire to staff in various districts on Long Island hoping to be able to interview at least 20 participants. As the researcher indicated wanting to hear teachers' voices and experiences on a current issue, it seemed unlikely that it would be difficult to find participants. However, not being able to offer compensation or time off made it difficult to find candidates with availability in the evenings or on weekends. The researcher attempted a snowball method of finding participants and eventually found a convenience sample of teachers with enough variability in teaching experience, teacher certifications and grades taught.

Survey Summary

A total of 27 teachers responded to the demographic survey sent with the recruitment letter. Concerning the districts sought in Chapter 3, the final participants teach in four districts on Long Island, three representing Suffolk County and one district in Nassau County (see Table 6). A fifth district was identified with participants but interviews could not be set up on a timely basis to complete the study.

Table 6

ELL and SWD Demographics of Districts Represented by Participants

District	% ELL	% SWD
A	2%	12%
B	35%	16%
C	23%	15%
D	3%	17%

Out of 26 responses, all teachers had indicated knowing their student's IEPs and ENL levels. A total of eight participants agreed to in-depth interviews focusing on understanding their self-efficacy instruction ELLWDs and their use of culturally responsive pedagogy. Another three participants agreed to participate in a focus group to triangulate the data and assess the generalizability of the findings, however, only two actually participated in the focus group.

Interview Process

The interviews were conducted over Webex and all responses were recorded to ensure accurate data collection. The interviews were conducted over a series of two weeks after participants returned the informed consent. All interview participants were asked the same questions with follow-up only for clarity and to reduce generalization. For instance, if a participant indicated "they", clarification was sought on who they specifically meant to avoid any generalization. Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of the participants, their school, and their district. The interviews were all transcribed and responses were organized several times by the researcher under the research questions. The researcher also wrote the major themes of the responses to each question in a table to be able to identify similar responses between respondents better. Each interview lasted from one to one and a half hour in length.

Introduction of the Participants

The participants are described below, followed by their characteristics presented in Table 7.

Participant 1: Bernadette. Bernadette is a Special Education certified teacher who also possesses a TESOL certificate and works in district C teaching a special class and usually has ELLWDs. Bernadette is also bilingual Spanish speaking which allows her to work closely with the parents of the students she teaches. She is quite sensitive to her students needs while ensuring parents are aware of how to support their children outside of school.

Participant 2: Evangelina. Evangelina is a Special Education certified teacher from district C who also possesses a TESOL certificate and does not speak another language but commonly has ELLWDs in her class.. She has taught a variety of grade levels and and settings but currently teaches a special class setting. Evangelina speaks highly of the teacher education program she attended. She feels that her professors trained her to meet the needs of students with disabilities as well as English language learners.

Participant 3. Frances. Frances is a highly experienced teacher with a general education certification and teaches in district C. She has co-taught in Integrated Co-Taught classrooms and ELL Cohort classrooms. She has taught students who are identified as ELL, SWD, and ELLWDs. Frances uses music to ignite the student's curiosity and wonder. She works very hard to ensure students can make the most growth they possibly can. Frances is very passionate, she is always looking for new ways to

expand her skills and shared that life experiences have taught her to treat each moment like a new opportunity.

Participant 4. Julienne. Julienne began her career as a TA before completing her Masters and pursuing a teaching position as a language teacher. Julienne works in a high-performing district, District A with a small ELL population and she has taught a small number of ELLWDs. Julienne is very outgoing and charismatic, she expressed that she likes to use humor to engage with her students.

Participant 5. Monica. Monica has three teaching certifications and holds her Ph.D.. Monica worked in District A for several years and has taught a variety of settings and subjects. She has taught co-taught classes having taught general education classes with students who are identified as ELL, SWD, and ELLWD. Monica reported advocating for her students and found that led to conflict with fellow staff and her administration.

Participant 6. Lucille. Lucille has worked with a variety of settings ranging from general education to special education in her career as a Special Education teacher in district C and has worked with students who were identified ELL or come from multilingual households. Her own family emigrated from Europe and speak another language. She shared how it impacted her older sister who still feels that she suffered greatly from not receiving the support she needed in a timely manner leading her to struggle in school. Lucille uses her family's experience to understand the needs of her students and their families.

Participant 7. Patsy. Patsy is certified in Special Education and has taught for over 20 years in District B. Patsy is teaching in a high-needs district impacted by poverty,

homelessness, and a diverse demographic. The population has shifted over the last decade and Hispanic/Latino students represent over half of the student body.

Participant 8. Trixie. Trixie is a certified Special Education teacher with a Bilingual extension in Spanish in District D. Trixie has taught in the Bilingual Special Class and Resource Room settings. Trixie has also been trained in conducting culturally relevant assessments and is proficient in Dynamic Assessments. Trixie is born and raised on Long Island and describes the dynamic of never being enough - not Latina enough, not white enough. Trixie is an advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse students as well as demonstrating expertise in instructional strategies to differentiate language difference versus language disability.

Table 7

Research Study Participant Characteristics

Name	Years of experience	Teaching Certification/Teaching Area	Prior grade levels taught	Current grade level
Lucille	22	Special Education	K-8	K-8 Resource Room
Frances	23	Common Branches	K-3	1
Patsy	17	Special Education	9-12	12
Julienne	9	Foreign Language	7-8	7-8
Evangelina	6	Special Education/ General Education	3-6	1
Trixie	23	Special Education/ Bil Extension	K	9-12
Monica	11	Foreign Language/ENL/ ELA	7-8	7-8
Bernadette	7	Special Education	K-2	2

Focus Group Participants

These participants agreed to participate in the focus group and were used to test the generalizability of the interview participant statements as well as to provide triangulation of the data obtained. These teachers have all taught for many years and

represent a variety of certifications and experiences with ELLWDs, all teaching in

District C (see Table 8 and Table 9). The focus group was conducted in a hour long

session.

Jenny. Jenny is a highly energetic Bilingual elementary teacher. She has taught

for 15 years, she is a passionate advocate and often collaborates with the Special

Education teachers to discuss strategies to support students. She reported wanting more

Bilignual resources especially for native language arts as well as better ways to assess her

student's native language skills to figure out how to utilize them or what can be built

upon. Students learn English and many progress to English-only classes as they reach the

upper grades.

Cynthia. Cynthia is a Special Education teacher who works with classified

students and also provides intervention support. Over the years she has worked with

students in Bilingual and general education, allowing her to work with Special Education

only students, English as a New Language students as well as English Language Learners

with disabilities.

Table 8

Focus Group Participant Characteristics

Name	Years of experience	Teaching Certification/Teaching Area	Prior grade levels taught	Current grade level
Jenny	15	Bilingual Education	K-3	1
Cynthia	24	Special Education	K-3	K-2

Table 9

Distribution of Participants Teacher Certifications

Certification	Participants
General Education	1
Special Education	3
General Education with a Bilingual Extension	1
Foreign Language	1
Special Education/ENL	2
Special Education with a Bilingual Extension	1
ELA/ENL/Foreign Language	1

Research Questions and Themes

Qualitative researchers conducting phenomenological studies seek to collect data through in-depth interviews with participants who are able to freely share their thoughts and experiences. In this study, the researcher sought to discover and reveal the self-efficacy of current public school teachers who are currently teaching and/or have previously taught a growing student population of English Language Learners with disabilities on Long Island.

The findings and themes are organized by the research questions, and how participant responses aligned with the research questions is described below.

Research Question 1/Theme 1

What pedagogical and related skills do educators perceive are needed to engage and support students designated with the English Language Learner with a Disability (ELLWD) status?

Participants were asked questions regarding the strengths and needs of ELLWDs as well as the characteristics teachers need to possess to engage and support ELLWDs. These questions were designed to elicit responses related to self-efficacy or indicators of a teacher with mastery experiences with ELLWDs such as teachers that would understand

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the strengths and needs of their students and skills teachers need to effectively provide instruction for ELLWDs. Participants were also asked of their use of CRP aligned practices from the NYS Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Framework that require teacher skill such as creating an inclusive learning environment, approach to discipline with diverse students, communicating high expectations, and use of cooperative learning.

The following themes emerged from the responses which identified the educator's beliefs that they have been able to support ELLWDs because of the following represented visually in Figure 3:

Figure 3

Visual Schematic of RQ 1 Major Themes
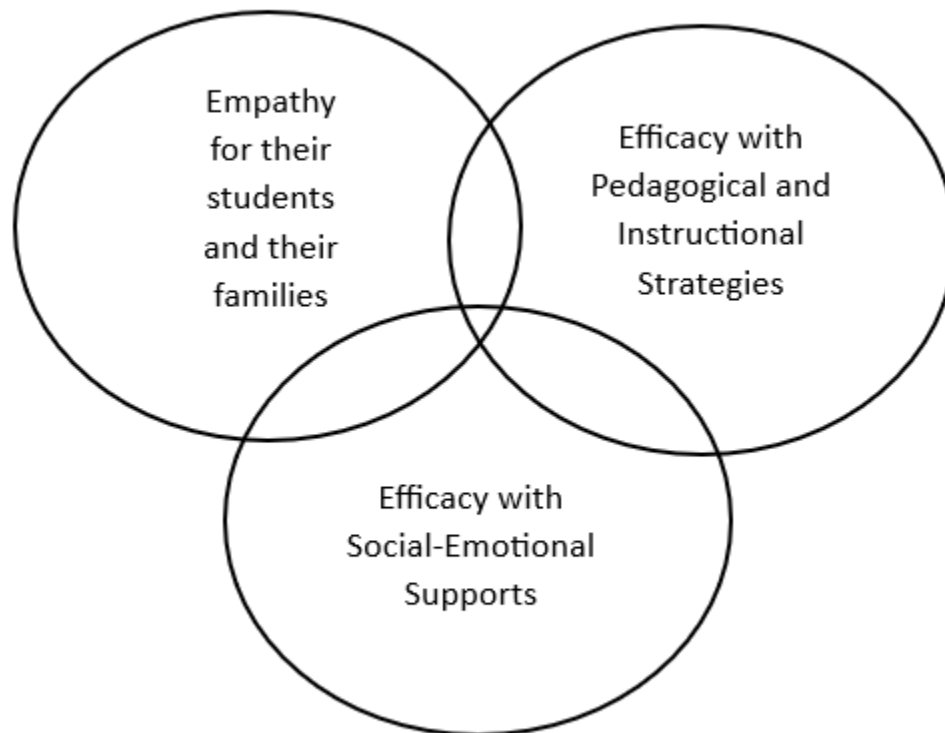
Empathy

- ○ Empathy for their Students

- ○ Persistence and Perseverance

- ○ Strength/Belief in Oneself

- ○ Faith in themselves and overall that everything will work out

- ○ Willingness to speak up and seek others for collaboration or support

The following characteristics were described most often by teachers, positive traits such as patience, empathy, flexibility, and out of the box thinking were described as necessary by those teachers who often work with ELLWDs. Consistency and patience were described as crucial traits teachers need to support students, since ELLWDs are not exempt from having behavioral needs. Monica finds that "maintaining a positive outlook, finding the positive perspectives of every day, even if they are minor and really allowing that to propel you forward to continue making an impact on your students."

Teachers indicated that their perseverance, as Patsy concluded, "to continue to try." is what helps them persist as teachers of ELLWDs. Frances relies on her faith and "self-discipline, not giving up, having hope." Bernadette shared, "it can get draining. Just the constant of all the demands from everywhere and if you're not excited with your students, then it's going to be tough, but you still have to want to learn for them." Persistence also plays a role in overcoming language barriers. All teachers discussed the importance of providing and allowing access to native language support for students and families via translators, fellow staff, or use of translation systems like Language Line and Google translate. Class Dojo is a popular application many teachers use to communicate

with parents and it has a translation feature. Parents and teachers use it to send messages back and forth. The monolingual teachers shared wishing they knew the student's native language because they feel that it helps them establish trust and really communicate more effectively. Evangelina shared that she is "jealous" of an assistant who is able to speak with one of her students with an IEP who is bilingual and responds to Spanish. She reported that it made her feel like she is missing out on their interactions because she can't communicate with him in Spanish. The student has severe deficits in communication, but he is responsive to his native language.

Monica's response mirrored others who shared that a strong sense of self is what leads to higher self-efficacy, "It's really finding strength within yourself and discovering ways to make connections with your students. Standing your ground, feeling confident with your principles that is a way to continue your self-efficacy in terms of pursuing success for your students."

Frances shared, "I think a lot goes into that, first of all experience and self-care, just take care of yourself so you can take care of others. Faith, having a real strong faith that everything I do every day is for a greater purpose. Get out of your comfort zone, don't be afraid!"

As teachers come from a variety of districts and age groups, some discussed their struggles. Julienne said, "there aren't enough hours in the day for these kids."

As the interviews pressed on, it became clear that it would be beneficial to ask respondents to indicate traits and features that can be described as positive or negative. Some respondents described previous or current colleagues who couldn't form connections with ELLWDs. Monica discussed needing to stand her ground because she

was building connections with students whom other teachers or administrators hadn't, which led to her being perceived as a threat. Evangelina stated, "You can never be stuck in your own ways of teaching and assuming everyone's family situation is the same." Unfortunately, it seems that some teachers have experienced discomfort with other teachers saying they weren't going to make any changes to their practice as staff meetings. Trixie shared that a teacher with a negative mindset towards ELLWDs can serve as a barrier especially those that believe that kids from impoverished backgrounds can't learn who may not see the strengths ELLWDs possess or fully understand how to meet their needs.

Efficacy with Pedagogical and Instructional Strategies

Throughout the interviews, the participants voiced efficacy with the following pedagogical and instructional strategies:

- Knowledge of specialized instruction strategies

- Use of visuals

- Scaffolding Instruction

- Differentiation

- Cooperative Grouping

Monica echoed a common sentiment in regard to the amount of support her ELLWDs have needed in her Integrated Co-Taught classrooms:

My experience with ELLWDs is that they do need a lot of support within the classroom. They may have deficits in English and in their native language and are missing foundational skills. They need a lot of scaffolding in order to reach the objectives of a particular lesson and they need support outside of the classroom in

order to complete their assignments such as homework or finish any assignments that they didn't finish in the classroom.

While Julienne discussed instructional traits, it was clear that her message included the teachers who don't have the patience or feel the need to provide additional support for ELLWDs:

> I go back to the teachers. They need a person who is going to sit, break down piece by piece, scaffold the material, and be positive. To give positive feedback and that feedback has to build for the kids. Nine times out of 10, you'd get this is right or this is wrong and then that's it, we move on to the next unit or topic. They don't build on anything; they expect them to know it. The pace is big, you know they go fast. Also at the secondary level, they have different subjects and each subject has different requirements.

Trixie is a native Spanish speaker who teaches Resource Room and is able to go into classrooms and consult with teachers. She states:

> If ELLWDs can have teachers that understand second language acquisition, language difference versus disability then I think we would have much more success with ELLWDs in the classroom. They need teachers that understand their development and they need teachers who are going to be able to apply that to their lessons and curriculum. Like, I didn't do any magic when I went in there in the classroom (to support another teacher) and I understand that. You know, I can't make Bilingual teachers, but what I can do is actually make someone understand second language acquisition and I was able to informally get together with that teacher from time to time, to really have discussions about her students and

actually have her understand them better. These ELLWDs just really need

teachers that understand them and are armed with the right information to catch

them.

All participants were asked about their use of cooperative learning and they all

endorsed using it regularly. Lucille responded:

I think the way the kids learn and teach each other almost makes them learn

better. I've been impressed with the way kids do things like that. You know, if I

explain something that one child gets but another doesn't, I try to say, ok, what do

you think? How else can we explain this kind of thing? I think the students love

that, I think they love learning that way and I think it's important especially for

ENL and Special Education kids to do that with other students.

These supportive instructional actions were found in the review of lesson plans.

Teachers planned for activities such as Turn and Talks, Small Group Work and others

that required students to either engage in conversation or collaborate on a task.

Efficacy with Social-Emotional Supports

The respondents answered questions about self-efficacy and their use of culturally

responsive pedagogy. The responses consistently touched up having efficacy with social-

emotional supports such as:

- An ability to provide a supportive environment

- Overcoming barriers to include families

- An ability to support behavioral needs

Respondents indicated they wanted to create a warm, welcoming environment for

all of their students. Evangelina describes actions she takes to welcome the child and

family, "Ask the kids how do you say that in Spanish and teaching other words to connect to the student and helping them that way. Whether it's things around the room that is labeled. Being inclusive when it comes up or there is an opportunity to do so." The teachers see their role as providing a variety of support for students, extending beyond academics to include social/emotional and behavioral support. Participants reported the need to understand students and what their struggles are because some have to work extremely hard to master simple skills. Bernadette shared that they may "lack self-confidence and be hesitant in English. They may be nervous and not want to fail. They want to excel but they are shy and hesitant so you have to bring it out of them." Evangelina shared the same and when she was able to use some Spanish with the student, the student's face lit up. Up until that point, "she was so uncomfortable and not saying anything."

Participants reported often encouraging effort versus results. Evangelina teaches students in the Special Class program which is one of the most restrictive programs in the public school setting.

> I think as a teacher that is my number one strength, I know my students like the back of my hand every single year. I know who is going to feel uncomfortable if they get something wrong so if I'm going to ask something I won't ask them in front of the class, I'll do that separately. I have students that need to move around, I have incidental learners. I get to know who they are and feed off of that.

All teachers shared that they not only focus on academic expectations but set high social and behavioral expectations as well. They commonly share finding that the students often have more social-emotional needs that have to be taken into account

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because of a variety of environmental or external obstacles their students face. Frances confirmed that she uses learning targets to ensure students know what is expected of them. Lesson plans revealed standards-based objectives as well as language objects for their English learners. Frances believes that day-to-day routines can reinforce high expectations, "I can statements are daily goals, they just come together on the rug, they bring their whiteboards, they just know that it's not done until it's correct so they sense it through the daily happenings."

The importance of relationships seemed a key feature in how all teachers in this study respond to discipline matters. Several indicated that not having a rapport or bond with a student can make it difficult to address behavior challenges with ELLWDs. Monica has taught English in an Integrated Co-Taught Classroom as well as English as a New Language and Foreign Language Classes and she shared that her ELLWDs needed support for social needs, "not only do they need support I should say academically, but they also need a lot of support emotionally on how to express their emotions. Sometimes they need to have other adults model how to express their emotions." She found she needed to include social-emotional learning in addition to academics in order to help her students be successful in the school environment.

Trixie often pushes into classrooms to provide her services and shared that she sometimes finds herself in between an ELLWD and another teacher, needing to serve as a mediator, sharing:

> When a kid is a repeat offender, one ENL teacher with a particular student she writes him up every day, she thinks he is in a gang, she is used to all students who came from El Salvador some traumatic way, she doesn't understand him. I

approached it like what is going on, and she was having trouble with the class and they said she writes us up all the time, she thinks we are all in a gang and drug addicted so I asked how can we change that?

Bernadette explained that several of her students are prone to behavioral outbursts. She explains how she addresses behaviors that arise:

I try not to escalate any behavioral issue, they don't need to get so upset over something. I had one student who would cry or scream, its teaching them behavior by behavior, giving them tools to use to manage their behavior. I say, "Tell me what is wrong, use your words." I try giving them a replacement, something they can do to not be in an angry state or upset. Really I try not to escalate behaviors, I try to acknowledge what they're going through, what they are feeling, upset or sad, and then it's talking through it, like, how are we going to get to a better state so that you can try to do the work or whatever it is, whatever the difficulty was. Or to go talk to a student, if the problem was with somebody else.

Research Question 2/Theme 2

How do they believe their instructional practices effectively support ELLWDs?

Participants were asked questions designed to probe them to reflect on their self-efficacy in teaching ELLWDs. Bandura's research demonstrates that self-efficacy impacts action, in this case, teacher effort and actions. Most of the responses identified self-efficacy as confidence driven by experience and achievement with students. Achievement is usually measured by meeting grade level expectations on local and State

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assessments, however, in this research, many of the teachers focused on individual student progress of their ELLWDs, especially over time.

Progress over Performance

Five of the teachers interviewed and one from the Focus Group are currently teaching Special education. They all reported assessing moment by moment in order to truly monitor the progress their ELLWDs make. Cynthia, an elementary Special Educator, spoke about a ELLWD in her Resource Room that she has worked with for two years now. She shared that she "learned to be patient and give it time while letting him grow at his own pace. Focusing on what he can't do doesn't serve the purpose. Over time, you see his growth build." Jenny is a Bilingual educator and she shared a concern echoed by the Special Educators which is the frustration between standardized assessments, report cards, and actual student performance over progress. Jenny likened the situation to an American parent moving to Japan and being told that their 4th-grade child is reading at a Kindergarten level because they were tested in Japanese. It is understood that the systems are meant to promote accountability for all subgroups and while ELLWDs are not penalized or held back, they are constantly reminded that they are not achieving on level compared to their non-ELLWD peers. This frustrates the teachers, as Evangeline reported telling parents to just focus on the progress report instead of the report card. Cynthia agreed that the report card only shows deficits.

The Paradox of Student Outcomes

When asked about student outcomes, Evangelina exclaimed:

That's hard, I'm hard on myself…that might be because I have high expectations and push them and never feel like I am doing myself. Or I feel I am putting in this

work, I find ways to navigate those things. I hate when there is a situation or a struggle I can't solve for them. I think I am hard on myself. My Teacher's Assistant will remind me that a kid did something they couldn't do before, I need to hear that or I don't notice that a lot. I try to think back to the beginning of the year when I get frustrated and remember where we started compared to where they are now. Recently, a student was reading a sentence when in the beginning she couldn't read letters. Listening to their conversation lets me see, they weren't able to do that before. My self-reflection is less about grades. It's more about observing how they've progressed. I reflect on factors other than reading levels, not that they stayed on a level A but they didn't know this sight word or they couldn't read a sentence that they could read now. I love when they stop themselves and think about it and answer correctly. The process is what makes teaching what it is.

Evangelina also reported feeling that standardized assessments did not truly capture her students' strengths, a sentiment Jenny and Cynthia echoed.

Systems Can Be a Barrier

This theme seemed to emerge amongst all interviews at some point. Interviewed teachers indicated concerns with systems that can create or further exacerbate obstacles ELLWDs can face. Frances indicated frustration with an assistant assigned to her class, created more of a challenge than the assistance it was meant to be, "I have to find ways that they can help."

When discussing where she stands as far as what affects an individual teacher's self-efficacy, Jenny stood up and said she can stand on both sides, it's up to the individual but it's also up to the school system. She stated:

I feel upset and righteous anger when I don't have the support I need and that the students need then on the other hand, I ask myself if they don't give you what you need, then what are you going to do? Honestly, I close my door. I get upset. I'm very vocal. Not shy at all, I used to be by the way. I'm very vocal going to my administrator and asking for support. It gets me angry, it's my class and they are mine. I'm going to give them the best year. The other day, I put something on Facebook, kids that are loved at home come to school to learn, and kids that aren't loved come to school to be loved.

Frances said, "The children sense what we are feeling. My job is to take all of that and filter it but I think that is the challenge. There are systems saying so much needs to get done. I have to say, this is what this child will be able to absorb today."

Some of the perceived failures include not creating programs to really meet the needs of older students who may be SIFE as well. Patsy discussed concerns that High School programs are not incorporating the student's needs or interests. "The older students came to work but need to attend school due to immigration requirements however, they are desperate to take care of themselves and their families."

These responses lead to the next research question, as they tie into how they assess their impact while reflecting on their professional experience as educators of ELLWDs.

Research Question 3/Theme 3

What are the professional experiences of educators supporting ELLWDs?

The questions that aligned with this research question focused on their experience teaching ELLWDs, including barriers or obstacles they have had to overcome to best support their ELLWDs. Questions then led to professional development offerings, collaborative efforts, and opportunities that either the teachers sought or that were made available to them.

As the teachers have various teacher certifications, their experience with ELLWDs varied in terms of the number of ELLWDs they work with regularly or the intensity of the disability. Some have worked with ELL students with severe intellectual, physical, or behavioral disabilities who came from a home that did not speak English while others have worked with students who were classified with a speech disability but were mostly dominant in English. Depending on a teacher's level of self-efficacy, the variance in the range of severity of disabilities and language needs of ELLWDs may not be as disruptive to those with high self-efficacy. For those with low self-efficacy, it can lead to burnout, loss of motivation, or avoidance of a student population that they find difficult. When asked about her initial thought when she sees an ELLWD on her roster, Julienne said it doesn't faze her. She stated, "There's no way that I can go to guidance and say, I don't want them in my class. I would have like, a heart attack before I do something like that." Julienne has high self-efficacy and demonstrated a can do, roll your sleeve up attitude when faced with a challenge.

It was clear to the researcher after reviewing all of the transcripts from the interviews, that the participants have put a lot of time, thought, and effort into supporting

their students. The respondents all shared the weight of the needs of ELLWDs. Julienne was very frank as we started and was asked about needs ELLWDs may have stating, "There just aren't enough hours in a day for these students." Jenny expressed frustration with not being able to provide the support she feels her students need the most. "Building the language pieces is so critical. We push curriculum but we aren't building language. Our kids have needs, we are classifying them Speech and Language Impaired but we aren't building their language from when they are babies."

Persisting Despite the Barriers

Many of the teachers discussed positive experiences with ELLWDs but overwhelmingly discussed the concerns and barriers their ELLWDs face. As they began to respond to the question about the strengths of ELLWDs, two out of eight teachers' responses indicated a need versus a strength. However, when asked again about the strengths of ELLWDs, Patsy responded that ELLWDs are sponges who want to take advantage of learning" while Bernadette responded that their "past experience" is a strength. Two other respondents, Frances and Lucille specifically answered motivation, while Evangelina answered that ELLWDs "genuinely care, they try hard, and they want to do well". Two respondents stated that they find their ELLWDs do better in Math than in other subjects. Trixie answered:

> I was reading about the deficit model this morning. We don't really think about
> ELLWDs in terms of strength. I believe that they come into the classroom with a
> wealth of strengths, with a wealth of knowledge that we don't tap into. Sometimes
> what we think should be the curriculum, it's not experience based, and so I think a
> lot of times in the classroom the ELLWDs don't understand our curriculum

because the curriculum is based on white culture. So I think some of the strengths are that they come with a wealth of knowledge, and they come with language backgrounds that we just need to tap into. Those are their strengths, right? And they're young, they're curious and they believe in the world but I think that they come to the classroom and they experience such a culture shock that sometimes it can turn that off really easily without us knowing.

Lucille shared:

I think that they come with a variety of strengths that we don't tap into. I think that they sometimes have more and different experiences whether it is being from another country, having different perspectives in life, or their culture is different. I think they have a lot to share and add and teach to other kids and other people, teachers as well. Just having that experience is a strength.

Although the teachers responded with positive views about their students and used affirming statements, it was clear that they had to deal with a variety of difficult situations. Patsy shared her struggle with a student who joined a gang. Evangelina shared that attendance can be a barrier to the success of her ELLWD students when they are taken out of school to travel back to their country for an extended vacation. Some of the respondents work in a district with a transiency rate of 20% and a high population of displaced students. It can lead to disappointment when staff is helping a student finally experience success and then they move suddenly leaving the staff to hope that they will get the support they need in their new school.

In terms of their participation in diverse student or professional associations, responses were mixed as some indicated participating in events versus associations specific for diverse learners.

Professional Learning and Collaboration

One teacher, Julienne, reported staying "low profile" as her district does not approve of professional development that they feel is unnecessary. For instance a request could be denied because the training may be designed for a diverse student population but the district administrators would not find it relevant to their teaching or student population.

In terms of participating in professional development on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Lucille said, "Honestly, I don't think I have ever seen any sort of professional development offered to me in that area other than my own research, reading articles and journal articles or things that I Google and read…." Lucille added, "I'd like to see more research done and more of those types of professional development and learning opportunities to help. It's getting better but not where it needs to be." The focus group participants also shared that they have seen either "very minimal" training or support for CRP. However, Cynthia shared, "we need it more as a whole district. In our building we have a lot of staff, Teaching Assistants, and Aides that would also benefit from this training." Jenny agreed, "Sometimes, I feel like we need something good. Like that Fat City movie (by Rick Lavoie), that's a good way or try on these glasses, see what it's like to have difficulty seeing."

Lucille endorsed the importance of collaboration, "You have to, it's important to. I think the teachers have to do more to prepare for it to be able to teach them and to

collaborate with other people, you know other ENL teachers to talk to them to get ideas about things that can help." Bernadette who teaches a Special Class describes how important it is for her to collaborate, "Generally, I'll have more conversation with our ENL teachers who do pull out or the bilingual teacher in our grade level, so with our ENL teachers I can see what program they are using. I'll reach out to the cohort teachers to see how they are modifying the grade level curriculum, it gives me a basis, trying to stay on par with what is going on with my grade level versus staying in my own little world."

Moving Toward CRP in Schools

Frances and Evangeline participate in Black History Month and Latino Heritage Month every year and Bernadette has participated in those events in the past but only two participants, Monica and Trixie reported being members of organizations that support diverse students. Focus group member Jenny has been taking a class that covered CRP and during the Focus Group mentioned several times that CRP is "the next big thing in education." Jenny commented that school events are a very small piece of what CRP represents for schools moving forward. She says, "it includes the books we have in the room."

Monica, Frances and Trixie point to the need for self-care as working with students who are marginalized and may need to be defended against other teachers or administrators. Self-care is vital when working closely with students or families whose lives outside of school are so difficult that teachers are doing all they can to make to help them. The participants all truly care about the students they serve and have witnessed students who may have been inappropriately classified, treated unfairly, suffered abuse or neglect or decide to leave school to join a gang or sacrifice their education in order to

work to support their families, however, they have also seen ELLWDs become valedictorians, college graduates, business owners, otherwise successful adults. While the focus of this research paper has been on English Language Learners with Disabilities, it is the researcher's belief that proactive efforts to improve teachers' self-efficacy and use of culturally responsive pedagogy would support all students from all walks of life. Teachers and students can bring voice to experiences and events we are all living through, to share a variety of perspectives allowing all students to face the shifting the future without repeating some of the practices from the past that have led to inequity and underachievement.

Table 10 presents the themes, patterns, and sub-themes that emerged from the participants' responses.

Table 10

Participant Responses Organized by Themes Patterns and Sub Themes

Themes	Patterns	Sub-Themes
Empathy	For student's experiences	Patience
	Student's comfort levels	Advocacy
	Parents who are unable to provide support due to language barrier or working long hours	Self-care
Persistence	Over barriers	Overcoming barriers
	Collaboration	Focusing on progress and strengths
	Meeting the student where they are at and what they will respond to	
Progress	Constant monitoring of student learning	Communication
	Focus on progress over performance	Pedagogy
		Achievement

Conclusion

The participants shared freely with the researcher and described their experiences with their ELLWD students. They recounted students that are now adults and families that they were deeply involved with. They shared how they doubted whether some of the

students were really disabled or were they just not given enough time or intervention prior to being referred to Special Education. The participants shared that they found their ELLWD students needed academic, social-emotional and behavioral supports in order to succeed in the academic environment. The respondents emphasized the importance of knowing their students and focusing on building upon their strengths.

The next chapter will include an analysis of the data and implications for future research and future practice.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Introduction

Findings from this study illuminated the lived experiences of teachers of English Language Learners with disabilities from various districts on Long Island regarding their perceived self-efficacy and use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. This chapter will feature an analysis of the results, recommendations based on findings from the study, and concluding statements.

The purpose of this research was to give voice to the educators teaching students who require specific learning supports and are capable of success especially when the supports are put in place at the moment when they need them most. The intersection of English Language Learners and Special Education, as referred to in Kangas in 2017, needs to be continuously studied as the dynamics can shift between the cultures of the students that are English Language Learners the languages or dialects they speak as well as the types of disabilities they can present with. Considering that the teaching population on Long Island was virtually unchanged from 2007 through 2017 (Mangino & Levy, 2019), demonstrates the need for districts to ensure their teachers are properly supported with instructional coaching, research based practices and resources to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students regardless of the percent of the population they make up.

Implications of Findings

The findings speak to a phenomena that is felt throughout districts on Long Island. Regardless of the percent of students identified as ELLWD, the participants described the considerations they believe they need to put in place in order to support their students. While research has demonstrated that the gaps between students of color

and students from culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds are shrinking (Sleeter, 2012), the gaps are still considerable to impact future attainment for these student groups. The federal No Child Left Behind law was meant to close the achievement gaps for ELLs and SWDs, however, in 2007 the No Child Left Behind Commission described that the poor achievement of these groups continued to be alarming (Fetler, 2019). There is a pressing need for teachers and other professional staff that represent and understand the best practices and ways of accelerating instruction for the growing populations of diverse students.

Research Question 1

What pedagogical and related skills do educators perceive are needed to engage and support students designated with the English Language Learner with a Disability (ELLWD) status?

The participants clearly care about their students and have indicated a commitment to do whatever it takes to support their students. Throughout the interviews, the respondents and members of the focus group discussed using strategies that align to the best practices in the research. Overwhelmingly, the respondents discussed the actions they take to understand their students and their families. They understand that some students struggle because they may not have help with their homework or that they lack many experiences outside of school. This understanding drives them to find new ways to help their students and can best be described as empathy.

There has been a growing body of research indicating the importance of empathy especially for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Warren, 2013). Wikipedia defines empathy as "Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is

experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position."

It is clear to differentiate empathy from sympathy. It is not about feeling sorry for students or pitying them. While, it's normal to feel sympathetic for student who has experienced abuse, empathy is what will support them to move past trauma. Empathy involves perspective taking and withholding judgment while providing a space that allows a teacher to better understand what is driving their students behavior (Benner, 2021).

There is a truth behind that title fo a former television series called, "Kids Say the Darnest Things" and many teachers could regale their friends and families about stories of statements and questions students have shared. A sensitive topic could come up and students will share if their parents yell at home or drink alcohol. Students have revealed their parents views on politics or race. Empathy in classrooms will help students have discussions on their divergent beliefs without belittling or negating their lived experiences.

Empathy is a vital skill for teachers to have to navigate this growing socio-cultural landscape that is becoming more and more diverse. Events around the world such as war, unrest, or natural emergencies have started to and will continue to cause shifts of student demographics in cities and suburbs. Teachers and school staff will need to be empathetic to their needs which could be further exacerbated by trauma.

Both Dweck's Growth Mindset theory and Bandura's Efficacy theory may overlap when schools have a shared belief that all students are welcome, cared for and

can achieve regardless of their socio-economic class, perceived support from home or cultural/linguistic background.

Empathy can factor into self-efficacy as low self-efficacy leads teachers to give up while those with high self-efficacy will persevere despite any challenges. Teachers who lack empathy or hold rigid views, may not understand that the child's lack of motivation can be attributed to low feelings of self-worth or be a result of trauma. Julienne shared being upset with fellow teachers who will simply state that they will not change their practice even if it is in the best interest of students.

Empathy for the students they teach and their families struggles appeared in the responses as they often added that lack of support was due to parents needing to work multiple jobs or long hours to provide for their families. The respondents followed that it wasn't that the parents didn't want to help their children, but they often didn't have much time or resources to do so. Having open lines of communication helped keep parents up to date so that they could intervene however they were able to.

In summary, review of the interviews indicated that participants will rise to the occasion because they have empathy and self-efficacy. Teacher efficacy and supporting the development of such for teachers should be a focal point for districts. All of the responses were focused on the actions and decisions they make when planning or delivering instruction. Self-efficacy is vital because the research shows that teachers are more likely to persist when faced with challenges when they have high self-efficacy. They are more likely to try new strategies, engage in more productive teacher behaviors (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006) and have a positive influence on student achievement (Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012).

Eight out of 10 respondents discussed the use of visuals, all respondents discussed the use of scaffolds and differentiation to address language or learning needs. Six of the 10 participants are Special Education certified, they are accustomed to making adjustments to curriculum, lesson and materials in order to support their students. The one General Education monolingual teacher has co-taught for both Special Education and English as a Second/New Language classes for most of her career therefore, she is used to differentiating for her students and she exhibited confidence and excitement when speaking about her experience with ELLWDs. Their training and experience has led to a joint belief in their ability to teach the material and to make the necessary adjustments that are needed to allow their students to have success while still maintaining high expectations.

All 10 participants discussed how providing social emotional supports was just as vital as the academic instruction they provide. They set the stage by creating a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment that includes the students cultural and linguistic diversity. They discussed providing native language support and materials as often as possible to assist their emerging language learners as well as those that predominantly speak another language in the home. All respondents shared partaking in constant communication in the parents' native language as often as possible to not only better know the student but to include the parent in what is happening in the classroom and enlist their support. The respondents all affirmed to using groups so that students can learn from each other, help their struggling counterparts or absorb skills from their peer models.

All participants demonstrated ownership of discipline issues and described scenarios where they resolved and avoided potential issues by developing relationships and leveraging them to support behavioral needs.

Two of the three respondents who are also bilingual, specifically shared experiences where they felt that they needed to advocate for their ELLWD students and help them navigate their specific educational environment which caused conflict with other staff. All three bilingual respondents who also teach in the general education setting shared being sought out by colleagues to support students whether or not they taught them.

Research Question 2

Research Questions 2: How do they believe their instructional practices effectively support ELLWDs?

The respondents work with students from the early grades up until the secondary level. At the lower grades, they can focus on progress but unless districts have systems to monitor progress, teachers need to ensure they are not hyper-focusing on the gaps to the point of limiting access to grade-level material. This concern was palpable for Jenny, the elementary Bilingual teacher who was concerned that her students' language needs weren't being fully met. When English Language Learners don't receive the right support, gaps grow and then oftentimes, Special Education becomes the only option. As six of the 10 respondents are special educators and three teach Special Classes, the most restrictive setting in a public school setting, they are the last stop for many of these students. They reported that their ELLWDs have gaps that need to be addressed while trying to keep them as close to the curriculum as possible.

ELLWDs have IEP goals to address academic, social and physical needs. In addition, their language acquisition is monitored by the NYSESLAT. These students may have a dually certified Special Education teacher that falls under the Special Education department and only interacts with an ENL teacher during the NYSESLAT testing period. ELLWDs may not receive any specific preparation for the yearly test measuring the proficiency in English and often become long term ELLs because they do not show proficiency on the NYSESLAT due to their deficiencies in reading and writing. As students get older and they have more content to learn, it becomes extremely difficult to address deficiencies with phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency or encoding that are typically explicitly taught in grades K-3.

Special Education teachers discussed the awareness of the least restrictive environment for their ELLWDs. One of the Resource Room teachers specifically mentioned doing what she could to help students stay on par with their General Education peers. Evangelina, one of the Special Class teachers reported that her goal was to help move whichever students she could to a less restrictive environment by the end of the school year. Her goal is to flood them with what they need so that they can move into the Integrated Co-Taught classroom with General Education peers. Unanimously, all participants discussed focusing on the progress their students have made and focusing on that versus performance on high stakes assessments as the full measure of growth a student made over the school year. The depth and breadth of what students are expected to master at each grade level coupled with intense needs mean that teachers of ELLWDs face a pressure that they do not want to place on their students.

English Language Learners must do double the work in school by learning

academic English at the same time that they study the core content areas ...They

are not given time to develop their English skills to intermediate or advanced

levels of proficiency before they must participate in high-stakes assessments

(Short et al., 2018)

While the statement above is attributed to ELLs, add the impact of a disability for

a ELLWD to understand the struggles these students can face. Jenny and Evangelina

shared the opinion that if students received more native language support in a co-taught

model, they would be less likely to be referred for Special Education. The unfortunate

reality is the unavailability of certified teaching staff to meet the needs across all of the

grade levels. NYS has had a shortage of Bilingual Education and Bilingual Special

Education dating back many years. From 2015-16 - 2017/18, three percent of new

teacher certificates were in Bilingual Education and one percent was in Bilingual Special

Education (Zweig, Lemieux, Shakman, O'Dwyer, & Schillaci, 2021)

The participants shared their disappointment with external situations that affected

the progress that they felt their students were capable of making. All respondents reported

having students who needed support with homework but didn't have any at home.

Monica and Trixie responded having to confront other staff or administration to seek

support for ELLWDs. While someone with high self-efficacy can focus on their locus of

control, continuously working in difficult conditions could impact even the most positive

person. The participants stressed that it is important to have faith, hope and Monica and

Frances emphasized the importance for teachers to prioritize self-care to avoid burnout.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What are the professional experiences of educators supporting ELLWDs?

Some participants have seen their districts change demographics in a short period of time. In Chu and Garcia's research from 2014, they used the term CLD and urban interchangeably because at that time they found that most CLD students were concentrated in inner cities and urban areas. However, 2014 marked the beginning of a large influx of young migrants to Long Island and the growth of ELL students on Long Island and in some districts, has been exponential and only continues to grow. Compared to their English proficient counterparts, ELLs are more likely to live in poverty and come from families with less formal education (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008). Patsy works in a district that felt the impact of a surge of unaccompanied minors and she discussed the difficulty the district faces as students are mandated to attend school but they are desperate to work to support their families. Most of these students may be identified as Students in Need of Formal Education (SIFE) and need to be provided SIFE strategies and intervention before being referred to Special Education. However, Patsy teaches a Special Class in a High School and sees her ELLWD students as well, some of whom may have been born in the US or have lived in the US for many years. As they grow older, they feel the need to help support their family. This is one of the factors that affects attendance for older students. For younger students attendance was also described as a barrier, as three of the teachers from the elementary level shared the impact of lost schooling when students travel back to their home country and miss school as flights are affordable when school is in session. Another frustration participants shared in a district

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with high transiency rates, is with how easily students move throughout the school year which can disrupt teaching and learning as well.

The interview responses demonstrated how immersive the teaching of ELLWDs is, the respondents shared that they constantly have to assess and consider the level of supports their students need as the school year progresses. They need to go beyond the data they receive, Individual Education Plans, evaluation reports, progress reports, grades, and benchmark assessments to really understand their students. The respondents share they seek information from the parents to better understand what drives the child. They focus on helping the child tap into their self–efficacy, however they find that ELLWD students are unfairly assessed, may have limited support outside of school and need access to resources to support them and their families.

Lucille shared a concern about the future, considering how diverse Long Island has become, she finds that there are people who are more fixed in their views and mindset. "I don't know, maybe it's more because of what's happening in politics nowadays but I feel like so many people are so much more closed minded than they ever used to be. Like they just have their one way of thought and it's like, it can't be changed." This is where CRP can come into bridge connections within schools and communities. Several respondents indicated that they would want more engaging professional development in culturally responsive pedagogy. Several recognized it goes beyond celebrating Black History Month and that it could be difficult yet, the challenge would be worth it if the outcome is equity and achievement for all students.

As the United States becomes more diverse, all individuals will be required to interact across racial and cultural lines to be successful, and even non-diverse schools can prepare students for these interactions. (Byrd, 2016)

Relationship to Prior Research

Prior research demonstrates that English Language Learners are likely to be inappropriately classified and all of the Special Education teachers corroborated that finding. Jenny, a bilingual teacher voiced being wary of bringing her students up because she feels they would end up classified due to their learning gaps which may not be due to a disability but attributed to lack of exposure. Although pre-referral intervention emerged in the 1970s to address concerns of disproportionality (Garcia & Ortiz, 2008), models of intervention to reduce referrals aren't always available to English Language Learners. Jenny shared that her students need more intervention support in their native language but it's not available and she feels like she is missing being part of a team that the non Bilingual staff have access to.

Kangas' findings in 2014 and 2017 pointed to the lack of bilingual support, it can easily be attributed to the continued shortage of certified bilingual and bilingual special education teachers. The findings from the current study points to the inconsistency of native language support for students either in terms of instruction or materials. In her studies, she found that each discipline was separate and did not know what the other was doing. In this study, three of the interviewed Special Education teachers have training in ENL and all respondents discussed collaborating with the other disciplines. Although Francis is a skilled, passionate teacher, she utilizes the support from the ENL teacher who co-teaches literacy with her students to focus on language acquisition and development

for her ELLs and ELLWDs. Two of the respondents teach Foreign Language and when they have ELLWDs they do not receive any additional staffing support unless the students have an aide on their IEP.

A theme that emerged in Kangas's studies and in this study, is the overlap between services for students. When the services of ELLWDs are provided in the classroom, also called push in, it allows for minimal loss of instructional time if done well.

In their 2014 study of Special Education teachers collective teaching efficacy and culturally responsive teaching efficacy, Chu & Garcia found that teachers' self-efficacy emerged based on the language spoken which seems to be consistent with the responses from the participants. In the current study, at least five of the participants speak Spanish which allows them to communicate closely with families and provide further connection to their cultural and linguistic needs. Seven out of 10 participants work in districts with a high population of ELLWD. Three work in districts with a low percentage of ELL students and those respondents all shared concerns about the needs of their students being fully met since ELLs and ELLWDs account for such a small portion of the overall student demographic.

The body of research on ELLs and SWDs and their teachers is extensive and this study would not be possible without the work of Jim Cummins whose expansive body of work set the stage on critically reflecting on the implementation of Bilingual Special Education and he developed a theoretical framework. His work has set the tone on understanding how culturally and linguistically diverse students learn and develop

language. His work has consistently advocated for the language minority learner and has been used around the world. We must all take heed to his words:

> Intervention becomes focused on remediating the child; and the educational system within which the child is experiencing learning difficulties generally becomes immune from critical scrutiny. The present theoretical framework takes the opposite starting point that the causes of students' academic difficulties are found in ways schools have reinforced, overtly and covertly, the discrimination that certain minority groups have historically experienced at the society at large (Cummins, 1989).

Following Cummins and Apple's work on critical educational theory, this study attempted to connect the research on teachers' perceptions teaching English Language Learners and/or students with disabilities (Sparks Kantor, 2011, Turgut, Sahin & Huerta, 2016, Rizzuto, 2017, Leonard, 2018, Umansky & Dumont, 2019, Brodeur, 2021), teachers experiences with English Language Learners with disabilities (Delgado, R, 2010, Garcia & Tyler, 2010, Greany, 2016, Applegate, 2018), the application of empathy in culturally diverse classrooms (Warren, 2013), general education teachers' self-efficacy with special education students or dually identified students (Dawson, 2008, Moran, 2015, Li, 2019), teachers' efficacy with English Language Learners with disabilities (Paneque & Barbetta 2006, Escalante Montoya, 2017), teachers' efficacy with culturally responsive pedagogy (Siwatu, 2007, Cruz, Manchanda, Firestone, & Rodl, 2020, Young, Young, Fox, Levingston & Tholen, 2019, Callaway 2017, Siwatu, Polydore & Starker, 2009), culturally responsive professional development and teaching (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014, Abdulrahim & Orosco, 2020, Orosco & Abdulrahi, 2017, Nilsson,

Kong, & Hubert, 2016, Aronson & Laughter, 2016, Sleeter, 2012, Walker & Hutchison, 2020, and Paulk, Martinez, & Lambeth, 2014), culturally responsive pedagogy & novice teacher self-efficacy (Levine Mederios, 2019), and the collective teacher efficacy and culturally responsive teaching efficacy of in-service special education teachers in the United States (Chu & Garcia, 2014). By conducting hours of interviews with current in-service teachers self-efficacy and use of CRP, this study shares their perceptions and experiences to illustrate the next steps educators, researchers, curriculum/assessment developers and teacher preparations programs have to take to support students and schools with culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities.

Limitations of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to take a deeper dive into the lived in experiences of the participants. The study consisted of eight interviews and a focus group of two participants.

The participants chose to participate voluntarily and therefore, could represent those wanted to contribute to the field of study regarding ELLWDs. Five of the total participants (interview and focus group) are white and five are of Latino descent. All five Latina teachers also spoke Spanish. All participants were female. The Focus Group consisted of two K-2 teachers and their perceptions may not capture those of teachers in the upper grades. Few males answered the survey but did not agree to interviews or focus group participation. All participants teach in public school districts on Long Island and were from districts that are diverse to each other. Results may be generalizable as many of the responses were similar lending to the possibility of results being generalizable if replicated with other teachers on Long Island.

Another limitation in this study is the potential of researcher bias. The researcher works in the area of the potential sample and all of the participants know the researcher from collegial groups. The study was focused on the teachers' lived experience and the semi-structured interview questions were designed to elicit responses from their frame of view, the participants were told there are no wrong or right answers. The researcher explained that their responses was the data and it would only be used for the purpose of this specific research study. The participants were informed that their confidential, honest responses were being sought to further the field of educational research.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research underscores the need for continued research on the perspectives of those involved in this phenomenon. A specific research study that should follow the heels of this study should be on the effects of collective teacher efficacy (CTE) across a variety of districts examining the teacher/student demographics, socio-economic levels and outcomes on the NYS assessments. Bandura (1995) stated, "Teachers operate collectively within an interactive social system, rather than as isolates. … Schools in which staff members collectively judge themselves capable of promoting academic success imbue their schools with a positive atmosphere for development" (p. 20-21). The work of Tscahnnen-Moran & Barr (2004) work on collective teacher efficacy could be vital to replicate in underachieving districts and schools to examine and strengthen their collective efficacy, i.e. "the group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Banduras, 1977, p.477). This research can include parents, guardians, family members and the community as well as research indicates the impact of parent/guardian support on student

achievement. The Tschannen-Moran & Barr study used the Collective Teacher Belief Scale and a state standardized assessment. This can be replicated in smaller scales using third party reading and math benchmark assessments that many districts use such as iReady and STAR to measure growth throughout the school year.

The participants also mentioned that the focus on curriculum and outcomes places a level of stress on ELLWDs and their teachers. ELLWD students may lose access to grade level material because so much of the emphasis becomes on trying to close gaps. Mixed methods studies comparing student outcomes along with observations and interviews across schools and grade bands would benefit teachers, administrators and districts while documenting their training on self-efficacy and culturally responsive pedagogy to run any correlative statistics.

Due to the nature of movement within each subgroup, studies following ELLWDs over time with a focus on declassification rates, exit rates from English as a New Language services and post-secondary outcomes for ELLWDs would provide the NYS Education Department and districts would provide valuable information regarding the effect of policy and implementation practices.

Further research, both quantitative and qualitative that includes former students who received ENL and Special Education would provide insight into their experiences, their outcomes, and any words of wisdom for current practitioners. Research of this nature could inform teachers, districts, and institutes of higher education to double down on best practices supporting highly effective teacher practices and interventions specific for ELLWDs.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Districts must take note of the shifting demographics and needs not only for students but for their teaching staff as well. Student demographics are changing even in districts that have not been historically subject to much change. Embracing the tenets of CRP could be helpful. Jenny said, "It's not a Hispanic Heritage Night or Black History Month that is going to make the impact. Cultural responsiveness needs to happen all the time." Regardless if a teacher has liberal or conservative view points, how confident they are on their own and as a collective to address students' needs has such a high effect size and can help all students, in many cases, the excellent students did even better in more diverse classrooms (Blankstein, Noguera, Kelly, & Tutu, 2016). All students can benefit from having teachers of diverse backgrounds and experiences regardless of their own make up as it can provide them with perspectives that can help them as they enter a global workforce.

District and school leaders need to move beyond simply being a good leader as "good leadership created and sustained unjust educational environments", social justice leadership is needed to transform school cultures to benefit all students (Theoharis, 2009). As more districts embrace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts, a deep understanding of CRP along with a commitment to implement it fully beyond surface level celebrations is needed. It is not the belief of this researcher that teachers and administrators do not want to do more to further DEI or CRP, but the lack of time and competing demands make it difficult to enact. Educators need the support of the experts to engage the school and greater community to build shared beliefs and understanding. The NYS's CR-S Framework can be obtained online and districts can download

resources to turnkey at presentations for school leaders, teachers and community members. In addition, districts can utilize equity audits "that can be used to uncover, understand, and change inequities that are internal to schools in the areas of teacher quality, educational program, and student achievement (Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., Garcia, J., & Nolly, G., 2004)." Furthermore, a colorblind approach prohibits school leaders, teachers and community members from recognizing the impact their practices have on diverse students Administrators need to understand that the perceptions of students of color or their parents may not be as they view themselves to be and should consider that when acting in their capacity (Guerra, et al, 2013, Welton et al 2015). Building trust will be a key component for any district leader, administrator or teacher who takes this work on.

While there are an abundance of programs that are available to districts to purchase, students continue to underperform. Is it due to issues with implementation, lack of fidelity or weaknesses in the instructional program? There is sufficient research on effective interventions to close gaps for struggling students, however, research documenting the large scale implementation of these practices is needed. Schools also need interventions that can work with large groups of students across a variety of grade levels especially districts on Long Island that tend to have clusters of high poverty minority students. Marcou-O'Malley (2018) reported, "Long Island is home to more than 10 of 16 school districts in New York State that have 80% or more Black and Latino students" She adds, "Not only are they racially segregated, with 93% of their students Black and Latino, they are also economically segregated with 70% of their students economically disadvantaged" (p. 2).

Several highly touted reading programs are considered most effective when done with fidelity: with one student at a time. When some districts on the island have a proficiency rate on the NYS English Language Arts test of 25% or less, how would implementing these programs be feasible? In addition, the impact of learning loss from COVID could add further stress to schools and districts.

Accelerated learning has been touted as a better way of responding to filling in learning gaps instead of remediation. Case studies across districts with similar demographics and analysis of their findings would be highly beneficial as there is an urgency to address deficiencies in reading, writing and math while students are subject to high stakes assessments.

While reflecting on the conceptual framework from the beginning of the study, it became clear that the major themes and findings from this study coupled with the countless research papers and dissertations that were reviewed, led to a revised framework presented visually below. The revised framework (see Figure 4) now includes empathy and a caring school culture that is needed from all members of a school system; district leadership, administrators, teachers, service providers, agency or contract staff, nurses, teacher assistants, aides, monitors, transportation staff, countless clerical staff and building and grounds staff who through their collaborative work efforts impart their vision and beliefs to students, family members and community leaders and stakeholders. Schools benefit from external supports, research on community support has shown improved attendance, student achievement, improved behavior and better post-secondary outcomes. As demonstrated, Long Island districts are diverse and the ones with strong community support are thriving as evidenced in the yearly U.S. News and World Report

that typically lists the same 15-20 Long Island High Schools on the yearly list of best high schools in New York State. Closing the gap for culturally and linguistically diverse students with and without disabilities is within our grasp on Long Island as we continue to provide the educational excellence that Long Island is known for.

Figure 4

Visual Schematic of the Revised Conceptual Framework.
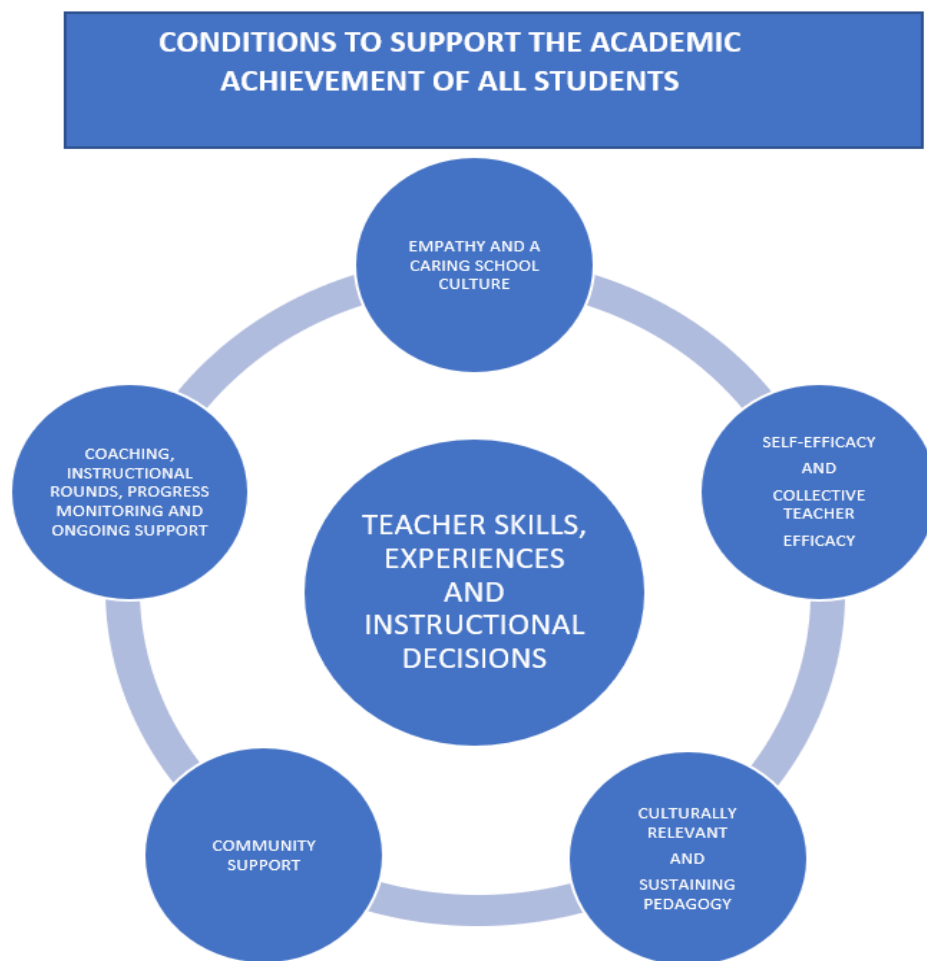
Conclusion

The goal of helping build on the path for true equity for all students is what drove this researcher. Ever since attending an introductory political science class, the seed was planted that instead of focusing on differences, philosophers, theorists, government officials and humanity in general could focus on similarities and shared needs. The review of literature included pieces from around the world and it is clear in the research, that all societies benefit from valuing all members and providing opportunities for children to learn from each other regardless of their race, culture, language or socio-economic class. These differences and working through them, could actually strengthen students' ability to think, problem solve, look for solutions, reach consensus and develop skills that are crucial in our ever changing landscape.

Embarking on this research study had illustrated the need to ensure equity for culturally and linguistically diverse students with or without disabilities so that they could take advantage of accelerated courses that require students to already have basic competencies. This study also confirmed that reform is not an easy effort.

This research aimed to identify teachers perceived self-efficacy delivering instruction to English Language Learners with disabilities and their use of culturally relevant pedagogy. The results indicated that teachers are using a variety of instructional practices that are in line with previous research but need more professional development in understanding and implementing culturally relevant pedagogy. This research answered the question on the experiences of teachers but raises the need for more mixed methods studies to connect teacher and school practices with academic outcomes for English Language Learners with disabilities. There are implications for districts to look at their

systemic and organizational structures in order to lead to the transformation that is

desired.

Date: 3-12-2023

IRB #: IRB-FY2023-96
Title: EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SELF-EFFICACY IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR USE OF CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY
Creation Date: 10-11-2022
End Date: 12-13-2023
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Virginia Figueroa
Review Board: St John's University Institutional Review Board
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Exempt

Key Study Contacts

Member	Virginia Figueroa	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	
Member	Virginia Figueroa	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	
Member	Anthony Annunziato	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	annunzia@stjohns.edu

APPENDIX B CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT FORM

Dear Educator,

I would like to introduce myself and kindly ask for your participation in a qualitative research study I am conducting. I am a doctoral student in Administrative and Instructional Leadership at St. John's University. I am in the process of recruiting educators of ELLWD students to participate in a qualitative study about Educator's Perceptions of Instruction and Support for ELL Students with Disabilities. I am writing to seek your participation in this research project.

The purpose of my study is to explore educators' understandings of ELL and SE students and educational practices in their schools. This qualitative study will help explain how educators view ELL and SE services as a federal and state policy, and it will seek to explain if and how they offer ELL and SE services in their schools. There is very little research about educators' perceptions of instruction and support for ELL students with disabilities. Specifically, I am seeking to interview educators who work in diverse schools and communities on Long Island.

The time commitment for this study would be at most two interviews lasting no more than 45 minutes each, and, depending on proximity and interest, participation in a follow-up focus group with the other interviewees. I am willing to set up the interviews at your convenience, and I will either travel to your school to conduct the interview or if it is more convenient and technologically possible, I can conduct the interview via web technology (e.g. Webex). I know that your time is valuable, and unfortunately, I cannot offer compensation.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and answers will be handled confidentially. You can choose not to participate or skip any question without penalty or loss of benefits. No person will be identified individually in any verbal or written report, including reports and publications. The risks and benefits of completing the survey are similar to responding to questions about a work-related matter. The primary benefit is to provide information in the field of study regarding the experiences of teachers of ELL students with disabilities (ELLWD) and contribute to improving the field generally.

I appreciate your time in completing the survey and hope that you will answer all the questions. Your contribution is critical.

I look forward to hearing from you, and I will follow up with an email or phone call in about a week to answer any questions you may have and, hopefully, confirm your participation. If you have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this

study, please contact Virginia Figueroa at virginia.figueroa17@stjohns.edu or the St. John's University IRB Chair at irbstjohns@stjohns.edu.

      If you are interested in participating, please click on the attached survey link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqnh64Ydit9TDxci9-OL7e-shGFYDXtscEAcyPmFuZ5byMwg/viewform?usp=sf_link

      Again, I appreciate your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

      Virginia Figueroa

      Ed.D. Candidate, DAIL

      St. John's University, NY

APPENDIX C DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

By participating in this study, you agree for your answers to be used for the purpose of scholarly study and analysis. Your personal information will not be shared and all personal or professional identifying information will be kept confidential by the researcher. *Required

Email*   Your email

Your Name (your response will remain confidential)   Your answer

Gender

- Female

- Male

- NonBinary

- Prefer not to answer

Highest Degree Earned?

- Bachelors

- Masters

- Doctoral

- Other:

How many years have you taught in total?

- 1-5 years

- 6-10 years

- 11-15 years

- 16-20 years

- Other:

School District (your response will remain confidential):   Your answer

How many years have you taught in a public school?_____

English-language learners and students with disabilities are spending more time in general education classrooms, do you feel you have enough training to teach ELLs and SWDs?
Check all that apply.

- Yes for ELL
- Yes for SWD
- Yes for both
- No for ELL
- No for SWD
- No for both

Do you teach any ELL students with a disability (504 plan or IEP)?

- Yes
- No

Have you previously taught ELL with disabilities in previous school years?

- Yes
- No

If yes, approximately how many this school year? (2022-23)_____

Approximately how many last school year? (2021-22)_____

What kind of teaching certifications do you hold?

- Special Education
- Elementary K-6
- Secondary Content Area(s)
- ENL/TESOL
- Bilingual Education

Can you speak another language besides English?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what other languages do you speak?_

_____

If so, do you have a bilingual certificate?

- Yes
- No

I am familiar with the cultural make up of my students

- Yes
- No

I use the information I obtain about their cultural make up to incorporate it into lessons

- Never
- Occassionally
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

During the 2022-23 school year, have you participated in any professional development geared towards English Language Learners (ELL)?

- Yes
- No

I know the NYSESLAT proficiency levels of every ELL I teach

- Yes
- No

I have thoroughly read the IEPs of every student I teach

- Yes
- No

During the 2022-23 school year, have you participated in any professional development geared towards students with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

Please rate how effective you feel in providing tier 1 intervention for your ENLSWD students.

- Not effective
- Somewhat effective
- Effective
- Highly effective

Please rate your effectiveness in providing Tier 2 intervention for your ENLSWD students.

- Not effective
- Somewhat effective
- Effective
- Highly effective

Would you like to participate further in the study to be interviewed for more in-depth understanding of your experience as an educator of ENLSWDs?

- Yes
- No

Would you agree to participate in a virtual focus group? The researcher will not be directly involved in your teaching or identify you or your district in the study.

- Yes
- No

Would you agree to provide a lesson plan or unit plan? The researcher will not identify you or your district in the results.

- Yes
- No

If so, please provide your phone number and best time to reach you.

APPENDIX D SOLICITATION LETTER – INTERVIEW

Principal Investigator:

Virginia Figueroa

Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership

School of Education

St. John's University

Virginia.figueroa17@stjohns.edu

Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a dissertation study exploring your perceptions of your

preparation as a teacher of ELL students identified with a disability.

Description of Procedures:

Participation is through the completion of a survey, interview, and focus group. This

survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, the interview will take

approximately one hour and the focus group meeting will take one hour.

Participation & Confidentiality:

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will

involve no penalty or loss to you. You may terminate your participation at any time. Your

survey responses will be confidential. Only the principal investigators will have access to

the information you provide. Any information obtained from this study can be used for

educational or reporting purposes, but will not identify participants in any way and no identifiable information will be used.

Risks:

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can skip any questions which make you uncomfortable. You can also completely withdraw from the study at any point.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to participating in this project. However, your participation will help provide input to the greater educational community about your experiences as a teacher to ELL students with disabilities.

Compensation:

There is no remuneration for project participation.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study, please contact Virginia Figueroa at virginia.figueroa17@stjohns.edu or the St. John's University IRB Chair at irbstjohns@stjohns.edu.

Statement of Consent:

By signing below, I agree to participate in the one hour interview with potential follow-up and review of the data.

I am willing to participate in an interview for the Educators Perceptions of Instruction and Supports for ELL students with disabilities research project. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. I further understand that all references to my school and me will be only through the use of pseudonyms. I am a willing participant and understand that there will not be monetary or material compensation other than what is described in the recruitment letter.

_____ _____

Sign Name   Date

_____

Print Name

APPENDIX E SOLICITATION LETTER – FOCUS GROUPS

Principal Investigator:

Virginia Figueroa

Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership

School of Education

St. John's University

Virginia.figueroa17@stjohns.edu

Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a dissertation study exploring your perceptions of your preparation as a teacher of ELL students identified with a disability.

Description of Procedures:

Participation is through the completion of a focus group. The focus group meeting will take one hour.

Participation & Confidentiality:

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss to you. You may terminate your participation at any time. Only the principal investigators will have access to the information you provide. Any

information obtained from this study can be used for educational or reporting purposes, but will not identify participants in any way and no identifiable information will be used.

Risks:

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can skip any questions which make you uncomfortable. <u>You can also completely withdraw from the study at any point.</u>

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to participating in this project. However, your participation will help provide input to the greater educational community about your experiences as a teacher to ELL students with disabilities.

Compensation:

There is no remuneration for project participation.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study, please contact Virginia Figueroa at <u>virginia.figueroa17@stjohns.edu</u> or the St. John's University IRB Chair at <u>irbstjohns@stjohns.edu</u>.

Statement of Consent:

By signing below, I agree to participate in this project.

I am willing to participate in an interview and focus group for the Educators Perceptions of Instruction and Supports for ELL students with disabilities research project. I understand that the focus group interview will be video and audio recorded. I further understand that all references to my school and me will be only through the use of

pseudonyms. I am a willing participant and understand that there will not be monetary or

material compensation other than what is described in the recruitment letter.

_____   _____

Sign Name   Date

_____

Print Name

APPENDIX F TEACHER QUESTIONS ALIGNMENT TO RESEARCH

QUESTIONS

Teacher Questions Alignment to Research Questions

Research Questions	Teacher Questions
What pedagogical and related skills do educators perceive are needed to engage and support students designated with the English Language Learner with a Disability (ELLWD) status?	How would you describe the strengths of ELLWDs? How would you describe the needs of ELLWDs? What personality characteristics do you feel impact a teacher's level of self-efficacy about teaching ELLWDs? How do you ensure a classroom that is inclusive of all students you teach and their familial makeup? How do you approach discipline issues? How do you communicate high expectations for your diverse learners? Do you incorporate cooperative learning to play on strengths and support areas of weakness?
How do they believe their instructional practices effectively support ELLWDs?	1. How would you describe your effectiveness with ELLWDs? 2. What is your initial thought, feeling or concern when you see an ELLWD on your class roster? Have you had any mastery experiences with ELLWDs? Please describe one or two.What makes someone's self-efficacy in teaching improve? 3. How do you reflect on your practice and student outcomes? 4. How well do you know your students and incorporate that into your lessons?
What are the professional experiences of educators supporting ELLWDs?	1. Describe your experience teaching ELLWDs. Describe any barriers to the achievement of ELLWDs. How have you persisted despite these barriers? 2. How often do you communicate with families? 3. How do you work to overcome language barriers? Do you provide materials or support in other languages? 4. What professional learning do you seek out that ties into CR-S? 5. Do you collaborate with colleagues in other departments such as ELL and SWD?

6. Are you a member of any committees for diverse students and teachers?

NOTE: Key to abbreviations:

ELLWD - English Language Learner with a disability or with disabilities

ELL - English Language Learner

SWD - Student with a Disability

CRP - Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

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VITA

Name	*Virginia Figueroa*
Baccalaureate Degree:	*Bachelor of Arts* *Adelphi University, Garden City* *Major: Political Science* *Minor: Spanish*
Date Graduated:	*May, 1995*
Other Degrees and Certificates	*Master of Public Administration, New York University, New York City, Major: Policy Analysis*
Date Graduated:	*May, 1999*
	Master of Science, Mercy College, Bronx, NY, School Administration
Date Graduated	*May, 2010*