

Investigating the New Phenomenon of English Language Learner Coaches

by

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ABSTRACT

It is estimated by the year 2025, ELLs will make up one-quarter of the student population in the U.S. (Baecher et al., 2012). Simultaneously, literature has repeatedly demonstrated a lack of preparation for preservice and Inservice teachers to meet the needs of ELLs (e.g. Ballard, 2016; de Jong, 2013; Lucas et al., 2013; Villegas et al., 2018; & Weedle et al., 2021). As Fillmore and Snow (2003) argue, too few teachers understand the challenges inherent in learning to speak and read Standard English.

Coaching is an educational trend that has emerged to support teachers as they improve their practice. However, “we know little about the nature of EL-focused instructional coaching” (Russel, 2015, p. 28). Consequently, examining the role of the ELL coach as they help teachers develop the knowledge and skills to support the growing population of ELLs is of vital importance. As such, this research is guided by the question, how do ELL coaches define, describe, and interpret their role in supporting teachers of linguistically diverse students?

This descriptive phenomenology is grounded by the Linguistically Responsive Teaching (LRT) framework, conceptualized by Lucas and Villegas (2013), and phenomenological interviewing by Seidman (2021). Data was collected from five ELL coaches across districts in Tennessee. These coaches were interviewed twice to gain their stories and understanding of their unique coaching roles.

The findings are framed as vignettes to highlight coherent stories of ELL coaches’ experiences and interpretations. Findings were further categorized into themes of role creation, unclear roles and responsibilities, request to interview, and shifts of the role. Additional themes around common coaching activities included learning opportunities,

observations with feedback, modeling or coaching cycles, planning, and collaboration. Furthermore, the ELL coaches described two major challenges of the work which were serving multiple schools and working with stakeholders that lack Linguistically Responsive Teaching practices. The stories described ELL coaches' orientations towards coaching including their beliefs about equity for ELLs and challenges to individualize orients and pedagogical skills.

Keywords: English Language Learners, ELL coach, Linguistically Responsive Teaching

Dedication

First and foremost, I never envisioned the ability for myself to achieve a doctoral-level degree. As the first in my family, I hope this alludes to further educational development within my family, generations to come, and to anyone else that has ever encountered barriers to the idea. Be brave to be the first! This process required ambition, sacrifice, commitment, and dedication to balance all the demands of life.

Inevitably, I dedicate this milestone to God for allowing me to persevere and strengthen my resilience. His strength has guided me throughout this long journey, Romans 8:18. Additionally, I dedicate this to my father, Alfred, in Heaven. I would have never continued this educational path if it was not for you. I value the time we had when you were here on earth. I thank you for teaching me to advocate for people like you. I miss you and love you. Rest in Heaven, 21413.

Furthermore, I dedicate this to my friends and family, and most importantly my mom. You have sacrificed so much to get me where I am today. Thank you for everything you have done to support me, I love you! To my fiancé Juan, soon-to-be husband, words would never be adequate to describe the amount of gratitude and love I have for you. You have been an unwavering support system since the beginning of this journey. I appreciate your patience, understanding, and encouragement. Mi esposo, te amo.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview and Context

It is estimated that one English Language Learner (ELL) student is accounted for in every classroom across the country (Ballyntine et al., 2008; & Quintero & Hansen, 2017). Furthermore, the student population of ELLs exhibits a continuous upward trend as a growing community of students in public education. In 2018, five million students in public education were identified as ELLs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019) compared to the total student population of 50.7 million students (Coe - Public School enrollment, 2021). This continuous upward trend in the number of ELL students has remained consistent across the 2000 and 2010 decades (Pandya et al., 2011; & Wortham et al., 2002), and it is further estimated that by 2025 ELLs will make up about one-quarter, 14.1 million, of the student population (Baecher et al., 2012; & Sua'rez-Orozco et al., 2008) compared to the projection of public-school students reaching 56.5 million (Hussar & Bailey, 2017).

Statement of Problem

While the ELL student population continues to increase, Fillmore and Snow (2003) argue that “few teachers share or know about their students’ cultural and linguistic background or understand the challenges inherent in learning to speak and read Standard English” (p. 3). This lack of understanding has been well documented in the research literature among both preservice teachers (e.g. de Jong, 2013; Freeman & Riley, 2005; Harper & Mendoza, 2003; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Lucas et al., 2013; Samson & Collins, 2012; & Villegas et al., 2018) and Inservice teachers (e.g. Ballard, 2016; Beches,

2021; Beck, 2017; Butcher, 2020; Fairchild, 2019; Francheschini-Kern 2016; Hopkins et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017; Stairs-Davenport, 2021; & Weedle et al., 2021). The increasing ELL student population has outpaced teacher capacity to meet their needs, thereby creating a critical problem of practice that negatively impacts academic achievement for ELLs (Custodio and O'Loughlin, 2020). Thus, while all teachers are called upon to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students, research has shown they are not adequately prepared, and do not have the knowledge and skills needed to do so.

Coaching is a trend in education that has emerged to support teachers as they improve practice for all students. Simply defined, an instructional coach is a “partner with teachers to help them incorporate research-based instructional practices into their teaching” (Knight, 2009, p. 30). The role of coach was developed about 40 years ago and in that time has become transformative to implementing and sustaining improvements in teaching and learning (Neumerski, 2013), helping teachers to improve pedagogy, providing professional development that targets knowledge and skills, and supporting student achievement. Furthermore, coaches can help schools navigate through academic and instructional challenges (Marzano et al., 2013). Unfortunately, literature thus far is inconsistent in conceptualizing the coaching role, as well as determining the impact of coaching on student outcomes (e.g. Campbell & Malkus, 2011; Gallucci et al., 2010; Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Marsh et al., 2010; Neumerski, 2013; & Ramey & Ramey, 2008), thereby presenting a problem of clarity regarding the role of coach (Aguilar, 2013; Beane et al., 2010; & Poglinco et al., 2013).

Simultaneously, “instructional coaches are on the rise in core subjects like mathematics

and literacy, but we know little about the nature of EL-focused instructional coaching” (Russel, 2015, p. 28). Consequently, examining the role of the ELL coach as they help teachers develop the knowledge and skills to support the growing population of ELLs is of vital importance.

Conceptual Framework

One framework from the literature that holds promise to make sense of the emerging role of the ELL coach is Linguistically Responsive Teaching (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). This framework includes two distinct indicators for practice which includes orientations/knowledge and pedagogy/skills. Orientation/knowledge include (a) sociolinguistic consciousness, (b) values for linguistic diversity, and (c) an inclination to advocate for ELLs. Pedagogy/skills are described as (a) strategies for learning about the linguistic and academic background of ELLs in English and their native languages, (b) an understanding of and ability to apply key principles of second language learning, (c) the ability to identify the language demands of classroom task, and (d) a repertoire of strategies for scaffolding instruction for ELLs. These two indicators provide a foundation of Linguistically Responsive Teaching and thus a concrete focus for the work of the ELL coach as they support teachers in developing an understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to support their ELLs.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study explored and gained understanding of the ELL coach in the field of education. In this study, I uncovered educators’ previous experiences around supporting ELLs and the ways ELL coaches

interpreted their role. Additionally, I further inquired how the ELL coaches made meaning of their experiences in the specific field of supporting teachers of ELLs.

Research Question

How do ELL coaches define, describe, and interpret their role in supporting teachers of linguistically diverse students?

Nature of Study

To address my research question, I utilized a phenomenological interviewing approach as defined by Seidman (2019). Phenomenology is both the theoretical perspective and the methodology in this study as I encouraged participants to be both detailed and reflective when describing their experience of the phenomenon being an ELL coach (Bhattacharya, 2017). This aligned with the purpose of the study to understand both the phenomenon of ELL coaching and what that meant to the participants. The ultimate purpose described the lived experiences of ELL coaches. Seidman's (2019) interview protocol was adapted to two interviews and provided guidance in the interview topics and sequence. The sequence of interviews investigated various topics with each participant: their history of working with ELL students, their history of becoming an ELL coach, and their detailed experiences and reflections in the coach role. In addition, I used iterative questioning that encouraged participants to elaborate on their responses. Narrative phenomenology in combination with adaptations to Seidman's (2019) two-interview series captured the voices of the participants and gained insight into the coaching position.

Significance of the Study

For nearly two decades, the empirical literature has repeatedly demonstrated the lack of preparation and learning opportunities for both preservice and Inservice teachers. The ELL student population has steadily increased yet little progress has been made in building teacher capacity to meet the needs of ELLs. Therefore, the investigation of ELL coaching as innovative support is critical. This study interpreted the perceptions of those currently in the role of an ELL coach, investigated how the coaches described the role, and made meaning of their work supporting teachers in the field. By the investigated experiences of the ELL coach, recommendations can be applied to districts attempting to create, sustain, and progress the role of an ELL coach.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a brief background regarding the growing population of ELLs, the lack of preparation for teachers, and the potential for the ELL coach to bridge this gap. I further provided an overview of the conceptual framework of Linguistically Responsive Teaching that guided this study, as well as an introduction to the methodology, and significance of the study. In the next chapter, I will synthesize two bodies of current literature relevant to the role of the ELL coach: 1) teacher learning to support Linguistically Responsive Teaching and 2) conceptualizing instructional coaching.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I define key concepts that guided this study, as well as provided a systematic review of literature that aligns with the aims of this study. Within this chapter, this sequence will guide the review: (1) Linguistically Responsive Teaching, (2) increasing learning opportunities for Linguistic Responsiveness, (3) recommendations of learning opportunities, (4) Linguistically Responsive learning opportunities, (5) outcomes of learning opportunities, (6) conceptualizing coaching, (7) literature on general coaching, and (8) coaching as support for ELL of Linguistically Responsive Teaching.

Defining Terms

There are a variety of terms developed throughout the years to describe and identify multilingual students with varying English language proficiency. Terms consist of English Learners (ELs), English Language Learners (ELLs), English as Second Language (ESL), Dual Language Learners (DLLs), English New Language (ENL), Multilingual Learners (MLs), and more. To align with most policy and Tennessee state guidelines, as well as the most utilized term in search engines, I chose the term ELL for the purposes of this study. The Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA, (2015) used the term English Learners (ELs). However, more recently, key stakeholders have adopted the term Multilingual Learners (MLs) to foster a more asset-based approach. For example, WIDA defines multilingual learners as “all children and youth who are, or have been, consistently exposed to multiple languages” (Wida English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020, p. 11). It is my preference to utilize the most recently

updated term, Multilingual Learners, provided by WIDA to sustain an asset-based perspective as well.

Furthermore, there are a variety of interchangeable terms used in the field of education to describe the roles of teachers. This section serves to provide clarity of terms for comprehensibility in this study. The literature presented in this chapter describes teachers as content, general, mainstream, and ELL-certified. These teacher titles presented from the literature can be described within two categories. Content, general, and mainstream teachers are described as non-ELL-certified teachers based on the literature. These are teachers that are specifically tasked to instruct the content of the grade-level standards without an ELL certification. For example, content instruction can include English Language Arts, math, science, social studies, and more. The titles of these teachers are also accountable for teaching ELL students in a general education setting.

However, districts and other literature may use terms such as content, general, non-ELL-certified or ELL-certified to classify the types of teachers. In caveat, this can cause confusion to the role of the titles. For example, a content or general education teacher is still responsible for teaching grade-level standards. Furthermore, a content or general education teacher can be ELL-certified as well. In this section, I will explicitly describe the teachers by the literature and merge of other terms for clarity of understanding.

Linguistically Responsive Teaching

Lucas and Villegas' (2013) framework describes fundamental elements of Linguistically Responsive Teaching. These elements were developed through the work of Lucas and Villegas (2011) and Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) through the specific lens of teaching ELLs. Additionally, Linguistically Responsive Teaching parallels Feiman-Nemser's (2001), a framework of *central tasks* for teacher development, which include (a) analyzing beliefs and forming new visions, (b) developing subject matter knowledge for teaching, (c) developing understandings of learners and learning, (d) developing a beginning repertoire, and (e) developing the tools to study teaching.

The elements of Linguistically Responsive Teaching are organized into two indicators: orientations/knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and skills. Orientations and knowledge are described as (a) sociolinguistic consciousness, (b) values for linguistic diversity, and (c) an inclination to advocate for ELLs. Drawing a parallel to Feiman-Nemser's general framework for teacher development (2001), understanding and belief systems are further explored to develop an orientation that best supports the unique needs of ELLs. The pedagogy and skills section describes Linguistically Responsive actions. Those indicators are described as (a) a repertoire of strategies for learning about the linguistic and academic background of ELLs in English and their native languages, (b) an understanding of and ability to apply key principles of second language learning, (c) ability to identify the language demands of classroom task, (e) a repertoire of strategies for scaffolding instruction for ELLs. These indicators support effective instructional scaffolding for ELLs.

As part of the systematic literature review, I defined the search criteria for identifying articles based on Lucas and Villegas (2013), *Preparing Linguistically Responsive Teachers: Laying the Foundation in Preservice Teacher Education*. I utilized the “cited by” function of Google Scholar search engine to identify articles that included Lucas and Villegas (2013) in their citations. From there, I found and extracted 444 articles that cited their work. To assure appropriate tracking of the 444 articles I transferred the authors, titles, and years published to an excel sheet. Once the information was transferred to the excel document there was a total of two rounds of inclusion criteria to determine whether to include the articles in the review.

The criteria for the first round eliminated articles that did not include Inservice teachers, were not available in the English language, or were not empirical studies. After this round of review, 94 total articles remained. The second round provided further criteria to extract articles that more closely related to the purpose of the study. Criteria for exclusion in the second round eliminated articles that focused on bilingual instructional contexts, contexts outside the United States, or failed to describe the learning opportunities for Inservice teachers. This ultimately led to the 26 articles included in this literature review. In the sections that follow, I will synthesize the findings from my systematic review of the literature to explain 1) the need for increased professional learning opportunities to increase teachers’ linguistic responsiveness and 2) the relationship between professional learning opportunities and teacher development of various dimensions of linguistic responsiveness.

Increasing Teachers' Opportunities to Develop Linguistic Responsiveness

Over seven years ago, Hopkins and colleagues (2015) argued that there is a lack of teacher-learning opportunities to support ELLs. Since 2015, further studies have demonstrated greater evidence of the need for more opportunities for teachers to learn how to support the needs of ELLs. The studies in my systematic review of the literature that addressed the need for increased opportunities for teachers to develop linguistic responsiveness can be separated into three detailed categories of findings: studies that include mainstream or content teachers who are not ELL-certified (Beches, 2021; Franceshini-Kern, (2016); Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017; & Stairs-Davenport, 2021), studies that include heterogenous groups of both ELL-certified and non-ELL-certified teachers and administrators across multiple disciplines (Ballard, 2016; Beck, 2017; Butcher, 2020; Fairchild, 2019; Hopkins et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; & Weddle et al., 2021), and studies that center the limited opportunities in mathematics instruction for ELLs by both the non-ELL and ELL-certified teachers (Hopkins et el., 2015 & Kane, 2020).

Furthermore, findings detail the limited opportunities for professional learning for teachers serving ELLs within various features of cultural competence, instructional practices, and linguistic knowledge. The most common pattern in findings demonstrates limited learning opportunities in the topic of instructional practices that best support ELLs (Ballard, 2016; Beches, 2021; Beck, 2017; Butcher, 2020; Fairchild, 2019; Francheschini-Kern, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017; Stairs-Davenport, 2021; Weedle et al., 2021).

Limited Learning Opportunities for Content Teachers

Four studies examined the limited learning opportunities about ELL instructional practices with content or mainstream teachers, non-ELL certified (Beches, 2021; Franceshini-Kern, 2016; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017; & Stairs-Davenport, 2021). Research on non-ELL certified teachers suggests both limited preparation and few sustained learning opportunities for ELLs (Burr, 2017; Chin et al., 2016; Hadjioannu et al., 2016). “Most mainstream teachers are not sufficiently prepared to provide the types of assistance that English Language Learners (ELLs) need to successfully meet this challenge” (Lucas et al., 2008, p. 98). Furthermore, “most general education teachers have at least one ELL student in their classes” (Ballyntine et al. 2008, p. 27). The section serves to explore research explicitly linked to learning opportunities with content or mainstream teachers.

Consistent findings regarding limited learning opportunities for content or mainstream teachers that are non-ELL certified emerged from studies such as Beches (2021), Franceschini-Kern (2016), Lowenhaupt and Reeves (2017), and Stairs-Davenport (2021), which studied Inservice trainings, relevant workshops, and professional development. Teachers reported feeling unprepared to teach ELLs, “I needed more training to confidently say that I am equipped” (Beches, 2021, p. 75). Stairs-Davenport (2021) found teachers were concerned about differentiation in the curriculum, assessments, community building, determining language differences from disabilities in language, and other concerns. Other studies revealed the paucity of learning opportunities teachers received. “20 teachers (38.46%) stated they had zero to three ELL professional language development-training sessions, this is a major concern for ELL student

education” (Franceschini-Kern, 2016, p. 91). Lowenhaupt and Reeves (2017) also revealed only certain groups of teachers had access to learning opportunities. “We found that professional development was not consistently available to all teachers in many schools, which offered such opportunities to a small subset of teachers” (Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017, p. 64). In sum, these studies describe the limited learning opportunities for content or mainstream teachers who work with ELLs.

Limited Learning Opportunities for Content and ELL-Certified Teachers

Other studies focused on heterogenous groups of participants, including non-ELL certified content or mainstream teachers, ELL-certified teachers, or administration (Ballard, 2016; Beck, 2017; Butcher, 2020; Fairchild, 2019; Hopkins et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; & Weddle et al., 2021). These studies align with previous findings regarding limited opportunities for sustained learning about best instructional practices for ELLs. “While teachers should be afforded quality professional development, the reality is that some teachers are not” (Fairchild, 2019, p. 183). Among the studies, teachers and administration expressed concerns about their limited preparation in topics such as cultural barriers, background knowledge, accommodations, knowledge of a second language, and more. Teachers further expressed frustration at their limited learning opportunities on how to teach ELLs (Beck, 2017).

In Butcher’s study (2020), most participants shared “that ESL training did not exist during the teacher certification process nor during school or district-based PD” (Butcher, 2020, p.84). Likewise, Hopkins (2019) found that teachers had limited accessibility to advice or information to teach ELLs. “93% of teachers did not have

access to EL related advice or information via their interactions” (Hopkins et al., 2019, pg. 2307-2308). Other studies have documented how budget cuts constrained the professional learning opportunities provided across the district (Weedle et al., 2021). Teachers expressed concerns about reduced support and ELL-focused workshops. A teacher stated, “the people who are harmed the most, I think, are the EL kids” (Weedle et al., 2021, p. 9).

Limited Learning Opportunities in Mathematics

Other studies revealed limited learning opportunities specifically in the content area of mathematics (Hopkins et al., 2015 & Kane, 2020). Some teachers revealed that no adjustments were made to support ELLs in mathematics instruction. One teacher stated “...it can become frustrating because students that don’t understand the language, and also don’t understand the English, don’t understand the language of math, and sometimes don’t even, can’t read their own language. They can become disruptive because they just don’t understand” (Kane, 2020, pg. 94-95). Some teachers believed the school and district did not provide learning opportunities to develop essential skills and beliefs to successfully teach ELLs (Kane, 2020). Furthermore, Hopkins et al., (2015) found the content of English Language Arts had more opportunities for learning or support in collaboration with an ELL teacher than the content of mathematics.

Recommendations for Learning Opportunities

A repeated refrain across the literature included in the review was the need for ongoing access to professional learning opportunities on best instructional practices for ELLs (Ballard, 2016; Beches, 2021; Beck 2017; Burr, 2017; Chisholm, 2020; Fairchild,

2019; Franceschini-Kern, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017; Lucas et al., 2018; Marichal, 2020; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; Nelson-Cheesman, 2019; Russel, 2014 & 2015; Weedle et al., 2021).

“School districts need to offer job-embedded professional learning in cultural competency, SLA (speech language acquisition), and teaching ELL students” (Fairchild, 2019, p. 183). This finding was consistent across geographic regions, within rural and urban schools, and across grade-level bands. In addition to this general finding, I located five specific recommendations for increasing learning opportunities to support Linguistically Responsive Teaching: increasing the frequency of professional learning opportunities, expanding professional learning opportunities to rural areas, making professional learning opportunities mandatory, direct focus on training for non-ELL-certified content or mainstream teachers, and tailoring learning opportunities based on student data.

The first guideline and most common among the studies expressed the need for continuous and ongoing opportunities of learning for ELLs overall (Ballard, 2016; Beck, 2017; Chisholm, 2020; Fairchild, 2019; Franceschini-Kern, 2016; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017; Lucas et al., 2018; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Nelson-Cheesman, 2019; Peercy et al., 2015; Russel, 2014). Franceschini-Kern (2016) recommends that schools “increase professional development on ELL instructional strategies to increase teacher effectiveness to teach ELLs” (2016, p. 92). Ballard (2016) argues that the “most important recommendation ... based on this research is that teachers need to be given resources” (Ballard, 2016, p. 117). Teachers need frequent learning opportunities and resources to support the learning of ELLs.

The second recommendation provided reference to learning opportunities for ELLs in rural areas. “Findings suggest PD opportunities for rural teachers to reflect on TK (teacher knowledge) dimensions to illuminate the ways in which these shape teachers’ work with ELLs in a particular rural community” (Marichal, 2020, p. 14). This study took place in a rural county and found that learning opportunities were needed for teachers that serve in rural communities as well.

The third recommendation described learning opportunities should be a mandatory requirement for teachers. Beches (2021) stated, “The development of a mandatory professional development for all content teachers related to teaching ELs can support the instruction for ELLs” (p. 71). This specific study believes that learning should be a requirement for non-ELL-certified content or mainstream teachers. The fourth recommendation suggests that the non-ELL-certified content or mainstream teachers should be the targeted group to support with opportunities to learn instructional practices for teaching ELLs (Beches, 2021; Burr, 2017; & Lucas et al., 2018). Burr (2017) believes that learning opportunities can support teacher proficiency in knowledge and practices.

The fifth and final recommendation provided by these studies included tailoring opportunities for learning based on student data. These findings were consistent across studies with participants in various grade-level bands and areas of the country (Ballard, 2016; Fairchild, 2019; Kane, 2020; & Weedle et al. 2021). In an urban study, an elementary teacher stated, “We had one, one hour in-service and that was about it and it wasn’t really a good in-service. We have not been professionally developed. I do what I do to survive to have the kids thrive” (Ballard, 2016, p. 94). Participants of an elementary

study in Louisiana described a learning opportunity around practices for ELLs as worth attending again and recommended to their colleagues (Fairchild, 2019). The teachers expressed wanting to learn more in-depth around the content. Kane (2020) adds to the findings of a study from a middle school perspective of urban California, which “identified teacher’ pressing needs for additional support at their school and district level to continue to develop skills and knowledge to improve their teaching for English Learners” (Kane, 2020, p. ix). Across studies, teachers wanted the learning opportunities to support their students. “Teachers expressed a desire for district-provided workshops, as well as ongoing support from other EL teachers, coaches, and mentors” (Weedle et al., 2021, p. 3).

Thus far, the literature review has demonstrated a clear need for learning opportunities for the non-ELL-certified mainstream or content-area teachers (and in rural areas in particular) that is extended, mandatory, and data-driven. Many of the studies described suggested that coaching can be used to support the teaching and learning of ELLs and recommend providing mainstream teachers with increased access to coaching with ELL professionals (Beches, 2021; Burr, 2017; Kane, 2020; Morel, 2019; & Weedle et al., 2021). However, the specific objectives of instructional coaching varied across the studies. In the next section, I will explain the relationship between learning opportunities described in the studies and outcomes relevant to Lucas’ and Villegas’ (2013) Linguistically Responsive Teaching framework.

Supporting Various Dimensions of Linguistically Responsive Teaching

Several studies in the systematic review of the literature described how professional learning opportunities supported teachers' development of linguistically responsive teaching (Alvarez, 2020; Beck, 2017; Chisholm, 2020; Burr, 2017; Fairchild, 2019; Morel, 2019; Nelson-Cheeseman, 2019; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Neumayer DePiper et al., 2021; Peercy et al., 2015, Russel, 2014 & 2015;). This section serves to provide a detailed context of studies that used practices of Linguistically Responsive Teaching for learning opportunities (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). There are three themes of learning provided in these studies. Those topics include Culturally and/or Linguistically Responsive Teaching, SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol), and specific learning targets presented in the learning opportunities.

The first set of studies I will synthesize focused on learning opportunities to build knowledge around Culturally and/or Linguistically Responsive Teaching (Alvarez, 2020; Chisholm, 2020; Neumayer DePiper et al., 2021; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; & Russel 2014 & 2015). These studies explored learning opportunities through diverse implementations such as collaborative groups, workshops, coaching cycles, or professional development. Collaborative learning groups were found common among Martin-Beltran and Peercy (2014), Peercy et al. (2015), and Russel (2014). The non-ELL-certified content or mainstream teachers collaborated with a certified ELL teacher or an ELL facilitator who served as a coach. This provided further learning opportunities for teachers to support students, identify difficulties, conduct coaching cycles, or continuously collaborate. Other studies focused on the content of key

principles for ELL instruction, second language acquisition, content-based instruction, culturally responsive teaching, or knowledge of cultural backgrounds (Chisholm, 2020 & Alvarez, 2020). However, one study embedded Linguistically Responsive Teaching practices in the lens of mathematics instruction in problem-solving and discourse (Neymayer DePiper et al., 2021).

Other studies delivered learning opportunities focused on instructional strategies supported by SIOP, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, (Beck, 2017; Burr, 2017 & Morel, 2019). SIOP outlines specific teaching strategies for ELLs and is commonly used among K-12 grades (Echevarria et al., 2017). These learning opportunities were delivered via professional development sessions, within PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), or through the ESL (English as Second Language) department. However, the learning opportunity was only offered to specific teacher populations. Some learning opportunities were only offered to teachers holding certifications in ELL (Burr, 2017). Others focused on supporting non-ELL-certified content or mainstream teachers in the subject's areas of science or social studies (Morel, 2019). Likewise, while SIOP has been effective in implementing specific instructional strategies, it can fall short in helping teachers develop the appropriate orientations to be responsive to ELLs needs in the moment (Daniels & Conlin, 2015).

In addition, two studies of teachers' learning opportunities targeted specific instructional strategy outcomes, rather than relying on the Linguistically Responsive Teaching framework or SIOP (Fairchild, 2019 & Nelson-Cheeseman, 2019). Fairchild (2019) attended to second language acquisition, identity wheel, privilege walk, critical reflection definitions, readings, case studies, stand and deliver, and critical motivation

and agency thinking. Nelson-Cheeseman (2019) provided learning objectives for second language acquisition, social vs. academic language, oral language development, academic language overview, discourse, educational equity, talk moves, goal setting, and classroom application. While several studies included in the systematic literature review described learning opportunities, a subset of those studies also provided further information about the outcomes of the learning, allowing for a richer understanding of which learning opportunities may be most effective for developing linguistic responsiveness.

Outcomes of Learning Opportunities

In this section, previously explored studies such as Martin-Beltran & Peercy (2014), Morel (2019), Nelson-Cheeseman (2019), Neumayer DePiper et al., (2021), Peercy et al. (2015), and Russel, (2014 & 2015) describe specific outcomes of the learning opportunities. Other studies also list a variety of outcomes based on the learning opportunities provided (Chisholm, 2020; Franceshini-Kern, 2010; Lucas et al., 2018; & Wnuk, 2021). The findings include four themes: developing self-efficacy in teaching ELLs, a statistical relationship of trainings with a state assessment, content or mainstream teachers' development of teaching strategies to support ELLs, and increased collaboration among stakeholders.

The first set of findings suggested teacher self-efficacy as an outcome of the learning opportunities. In Chisholm (2020) and Neumayer DePiper et al. (2021), researchers found a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy with instructing ELLs in math or ELL instruction. One participant wrote, "Prior to taking the course, I was aware that I knew very few strategies that support EL students... During the course I have not

only learned of many others, but have also gotten the opportunity to try them out myself at workshops and with my students... At this point, I feel comfortable with utilizing many of the language access and production strategies we have learned about” (Neumayer DePiper et al., 2021, p. 499).

One study connected teacher learning opportunities to outcomes on state achievement testing. Franceshini-Kern's (2016) quantitative casual comparative study found a statistical relationship between teacher learning opportunities and Georgia achievement test data. “The findings show that there is a relationship between the amount of ELL teacher language development trainings teachers receive and the achievements levels that ELLs have in the GMLA (Georgia Milestones Language Arts) ...through the investigation of the number of teacher ELL training and ELL GMLA (Georgia Milestones Language Arts) scores showed a statistical difference” (Franceschini-Kern, 2016, p.88).

Other studies found the non-ELL-certified content or mainstream teachers developed instructional strategies for teaching ELLs in response to professional learning (Lucas et al., 2018; Morel, 2019; Russel, 2014 and 2015; & Wnuk, 2021). The content or mainstream teachers developed and gained knowledge of students to provide suitable instructional methods. One teacher explained, “what we learned about meeting the needs of mainstreamed ELL students was very meaningful” (Wnuk, 2021, p. 18). Other studies found that teachers felt that their knowledge grew deeper and their understanding of how to instruct ELLs improved. The content and mainstream teachers both built capacity in effective instruction for ELLs.

Increased collaboration was also identified as an outcome of multiple studies (Lucas et al., 2018; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Nelson-Cheeseman, 2019; Russel 2014 and 2015; Wnuk, 2021). Teachers, administrators, English Learner facilitators, and even a researcher described an increase in collaborative opportunities to support the teaching and learning of ELLs. Lucas et al. (2018) explored 28 studies and found that collaboration was a key feature for many. “Participants in the interventions worked together in different configurations and for different purposes, but collaboration was a feature of many of them and was recognized by participants as key to their learning” (Lucas et al., 2018, p.167). Teachers were able to participate in collaborative learning opportunities that allowed teachers to acquire further knowledge. Other researchers acknowledged, “we quickly realized that we were not familiar with even the most basic language supports for ELL students” (Wnuk, 2021, p. 118). A collaborating researcher stated, “This collaboration has been invaluable to my process and has continually reinforced both the interest and need for oral academic discourse at all levels of instruction” (Nelson-Cheeseman, 2019, p. 60).

In sum, this systematic review of peer-reviewed articles that cite Lucas’ and Villegas as they study Inservice learning opportunities for U.S. K-12 teachers serving ELLs suggests 1) professional learning opportunities can lead to improved outcomes such as increased collaboration among educators, increased self-efficacy, improvement in enacting specific instructional strategies and improvement on student achievement data and 2) there is an acute need or sustained professional learning opportunities among mainstream teachers to support their development of linguistic responsiveness.

One possible means of meeting this need is the introduction of instructional coaches that are focused on knowledge and strategies for ELL. However, limited research addresses the role of the ELL Coach, specifically. Therefore, in the section that follows, I will provide a broad overview of the literature on instructional coaching in K-12 public school contexts before describing the small body of literature dedicated to ELL coaching as a concept.

Conceptualizing Coaching

Educators face many challenges and changes in the field of education. Coaching support can help teachers sustain and improve their instructional performance (Marzano et al., 2013). The idea of instructional coaching emerged in the early 1980s (Neumerski, 2013). However, more recently the term coaching has emerged and gained popularity in school systems nationwide (Killion & Harrison, 2016). “Coaching done well may be the most effective intervention designed for human performance” (Gawande, 2011, p. 9). Coaching has been developed over the years to support instructional improvement for teaching and learning. Coaching additionally emerged as a support for district initiatives, curriculum adaptations, effective teaching skills, sustaining educational changes, data analysis, and many more.

The pioneers of peer coaching, Joyce and Showers (1996) found that coached teachers take a higher risk in properly practicing new skills in classroom instruction compared to teachers without coaches. The development of coaching has continuously transformed throughout the years. Cognitive, sociocultural, and situational learning

theories have all informed the vision of and practices associated with coaching. Coaching is also recognized to be a developed partnership with educators (Knight, 2009).

Additionally, coaching gained popularity as a resource to augment professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). Coaching supports teachers as they embody and enact emerging ideas as part of their learning development. However, research on coaching is nascent, and a lack of conceptual clarity about the concept adds to the confusion when interpreting various findings. In the next sections, I will discuss definitions of coaching as well as issues in the coaching identity.

Defining the role of Coach

About 40 years ago coaching was initially leveraged as a professional learning tool within the field of education. However, current research regarding what and how a coach improves instruction or student achievement remains inconclusive (Campbe & Malkus, 2011; Campbell & Malkus, 2011; Gallucci et al., 2010; Gibbons, & Cobb, 2017; Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015; Marsh et al., 2010; Neumerski, 2013; Ramey & Ramey, 2008). The lack of clarity regarding the efficacy of coaching is further complicated by the lack of conceptual clarity about the term. Taylor (2008) argues that there is not an established definition of coaching. Indeed “the title *coach* has been loosely and widely applied in the field of education” (Aguilar, 2013, p. 18). This causes further confusion about the roles and responsibilities of coaching.

Literature on coaching documents several types of coaches currently present in U.S. K-12 schools. Mangin and Dunsmore (2015) identify several different categories of coaches, including titles such as cognitive-, clinical-, data-oriented-, peer-, informal-,

formal-, mixed model-, student-oriented- coaches, and among others. Galluci et al. (2010) further defines the idea of instructional coaching as content-based, including subjects such as mathematics or literacy. Aguilar (2013) further adds to the list of coach categories with the description of “school improvement coaches.” However, the term instructional coach can be used interchangeably across disciplines (Beane et al., 2010). This lack of clarity is not only present in the research literature but also in the practical application of the coaching role. In interviews with instructional coaches across the country, Poglinco et al. (2013) found that instructional coaches themselves felt unsure about their job descriptions, and that job descriptions across schools varied widely. While the literature on general instructional coaching is nascent, research on ELL instruction more specifically is scantier. In the next section, I will summarize the small body of literature describing EL coaching in U.S. K-12 schools.

Coaching as Support for ELLs

According to Russel (2015), “instructional coaches are on the rise in core subject areas like mathematics and literacy, but we know little about the nature of EL-focused instructional coaching...” (p. 28). I identified 12 studies that described either the role ELL coach or the coaching expectations of ELL specialists whose primary responsibility is direct instruction with students (Beeches, 2021; Beck, 2017; Burr, 2017; Hopkins et al., 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; Martin-Baltran & Peercy, 2014; Morel, 2019; Peercy et al., 2018; Russel, 2014 and 2015; & Weedle et al., 2021). As the literature on coaching more generally, I found inconsistent terminology describing the coach-like roles that were specific to supporting ELLs.

Coaches and Coach-like Roles to Support ELLs

Of the studies specific to instructional leadership roles that support teachers' professional learning about linguistic responsiveness, only two studies specifically used the word *coach* to describe the role (Beches, 2021; Weedle et al., 2021). Weedle et al. (2021) researched site- and district-based ELL coaches in an urban California school district. In the past, the district provided site-based ELL coaches that helped teachers build capacity for the teaching and learning of ELLs. Site-based ELL coaches were responsible for supporting one school. However, due to a district budget cut the site-based coaches were transitioned to district-based ELL coaching, in which one coach was assigned to multiple schools in the district at once. Both coaches and teachers who participated in the study expressed frustration that this reorganization put a strain on efforts to make instruction more linguistically responsive. "The transition from site-based coaches to a smaller team of centralized coaches decreased teachers' access to EL-specific knowledge and resources, constraining their development of social capital" (Weedle et al., 2021, p. 8). A content teacher further added that the ELL students were harmed the most by the transition of job titles. This study suggests that site-based coaching is a valuable support for promoting linguistic responsiveness among teachers.

However, the logistic demands of budgeting for site-based coaches may present challenges to the sustained implementation of a site-based ELL coaching model. Beches (2021) utilizes the term ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) instructional coach to describe a district-level role that supports the teaching and learning of ELLs. Although this study was not focused on the coaches exclusively, the findings included implications for the work of coaches in the ELL category. As stated previously,

content or mainstream, teachers were found less prepared to teach ELLs. The study suggested that “leaders in the ESOL programs, including professional development coordinators and ESOL instructional coaches can use the findings to develop better ways to engage content teachers in meaningful training on instructing ELs effectively and efficiently” (Beches, 2021, p. 76). However, the role of an ELL coach is not clearly defined in this study.

In the other three studies, the terms used to describe instructional leadership that supports professional learning towards greater linguistic responsiveness do not use the term coach, but rather terms use specialist, coordinator, linguistic specialist, or director (Beck, 2017; Burr, 2017; Hopkins et al., 2015). Beck (2017) lists two roles responsible for district-level learning opportunities: a linguistic specialist and the director of the ENL (English New Language) department. In addition to administrative duties, the director of the ENL department also provided instructional support. However, the linguistic specialist was not a role developed within the school district, rather, was an outside expert visiting the district. One teacher participant in the study stated, “I would really like that one expert in teaching ELLs to come into my classroom, give me sustained feedback in the course of a year would be optimal” (Beck, 2017, p. 163). The study describes the potential role of an ELL coach, and the idea was deemed possible by the outside linguistic specialist expert visiting the district. In addition, “Teacher Q described a data analysis process that she was experiencing monthly with the director of ENL as helpful.” (Beck, 2017, p. 126). ELL coaches could also support teachers in analyzing and interpreting data about ELL students.

Hopkins and colleagues (2015) identify the term ESL (English as Second Language) coordinator within their study. They interviewed the ESL coordinator and found the ESL coordinator's job description was like the role of a coach and that she was responsible for providing professional learning opportunities for classroom teachers who lacked adequate preparation to meet the needs of ELLs. She explained that a "central focus" of her work included "developing general education teachers' capacity" (Hopkins et al., 2018, p. 425) through trainings on the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) model.

Burr (2017) does not provide detailed descriptions, roles, or titles within the district context of her study, but rather describes how members of the ESL (English as a Second Language) department provided learning opportunities for the schools in addition to their administrative and instructional responsibilities with ELL students. For example, one member of the ESL department reported that "a math teacher told me that she loved the strategy sessions that are presented by the district ESL department during PLC (Professional Learning Community) time" (Burr, 2017, p. 57). However, Burr suggests that one implication of her work is the need for increased opportunities for teachers to work alongside coaches that are knowledgeable in the teaching and learning of ELLs.

Existing literature fails to fully define the work of an ELL coach. However, the most common responsibility ascribed to ELL coaches is building capacity for teachers in the teaching and learning of ELLs. Tasks related to capacity building include working one on one with teachers in modeling, coaching cycles, providing resources, or lesson planning. Other tasks include providing professional learning opportunities through trainings, PLC (Professional Learning Community), collaborative meetings, and among others. Based on the literature previously mentioned, the role of the ELL coach is

specifically developed to support the instructional practices for the ELL student population.

ELL/ESL Teachers as Leaders

The previously listed studies used a variety of terms such as coach, coordinator, or specialist to describe individuals who support classroom teachers' development of linguistic responsiveness. However, many studies that describe site-based work of Inservice capacity building for general education teachers list ESL/ESOL/EL teachers as the expert or the leader (Hopkins et al., 2019, Martin-Beltran and Peercy, 2014; Morel 2019; Peercy et al., 2015; & Russel, 2014 & 2015). Russel (2015) notes a trend of ESL specialists moving beyond direct instruction to ELL students to "be the experts in their buildings" (Russel, 2015, pg. 27-28) and suggests that "ESL teachers are often an untapped resource for mainstream teachers' learning" (Russel, 2015, p.30).

Two studies used the term ESOL instructional specialist to describe professionals whose work is primarily direct instruction with ELLs but who also take on a collaborative and supportive role of non-ELL-certified mainstream teachers within their buildings, occasionally providing professional learning opportunities (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy, 2015). Two studies used the term EL facilitator to describe a role that involves both direct instruction with ELL students and "guiding and facilitating teacher professional learning to meet the instructional needs of ELs in mainstream content classes" Russel, 2015, p. 33). In addition, two studies simply used the term ESL teacher (Hopkins et al., 2019 & Morel, 2019), but acknowledged that non-ELL-certified mainstream educators viewed the ESL teachers in their building as the experts. Hopkins

et al. (2019) described how ESL teachers were responsible for facilitating monthly professional learning opportunities on instructional strategies of ELLs and providing ELL-related information for teachers. As such, “the ESL teacher was an influential provider of EL-related advice or information” (Hopkins, et al., 2019, p. 2313). Morel explained that the district-level Bilingual/ESL supervisor hired two full-time ESL teachers as additional facilitators of professional learning. Both studies describe the role of ESL teachers viewed as experts who provided resources and learning opportunities for the districts.

Summary

While several studies draw implications that ELL coaching would be an effective model for providing learning opportunities to ELL and non-ELL-certified mainstream or content area teachers who serve ELLs, the overarching literature on ELL coaches suggests there is currently a lack of conceptual clarity regarding the responsibilities associated with the role. Coaching is a term developed about 40 years ago. However, ELL coaching is a more recent concept compared to other types of coaching such as literacy or mathematics coaches (Beches, 2021 & Weedle et al., 2021). This prompts the need for further investigation into the phenomenon of ELL coaching.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose statement

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to explore and understand the role of the ELL coach in the field of education. In this study, I reconstructed educators' previous experiences around supporting ELLs and uncovered the ways ELL coaches interpreted their role. Additionally, I further inquired how ELL coaches made meaning of their experiences in supporting teachers of ELLs. This exploration of the ELL coaching role allowed insight into this unique position in the field.

Research Question

How do ELL coaches define, describe, and interpret their role in supporting teachers of linguistically diverse students?

Subjectivity Statement

As this is a qualitative study in general, and a phenomenological study in particular, it is vital to be transparent about my experiences and background with the topic of this study. Therefore, I begin this chapter by sharing my experiences with my family history and structures. I am a daughter of a first-generation immigrant through my father. Although my story is aberrant, my father was born and raised as a child in Germany speaking the German language. However, my family's last name, Spaziani, is of Italian origin. My father's mother was German, and father was Italian. Thus, my bloodline is

multicultural although I am currently monolingual. However, I do not intend to remain monolingual as I understand the value in being linguistically gifted.

My father along with his family moved to America during his transition as a child. I have learned stories of my father's academic experiences in public education before ELL policies and regulations were established. His stories have remained within my memory as daunting and challenging experiences. Since his passing in 2014, I am dedicated to improving equity and academic success for multilingual learners. To elaborate further transparency, I am a fiancée to a first-generation Cuban immigrant. This further merged an expansion of multiculturalism that composes our family dynamics. The concept of a multicultural family is embedded as a deeply rooted identity that is acknowledged and celebrated. We take pride in our diverse mix of cultures.

Next, I share my experiences as an educator working with ELLs. Building a career in the topic of ELLs was not my original plan when I first received my teaching license. I graduated with a bachelor's degree and general certification to teach grades kindergarten through sixth. My desire at that time was to embrace the opportunity to teach a classroom full of students and improve myself as an educator. However, after my first year of teaching, I realized I was not prepared to teach the demographic of students in my classroom. My first teaching position was at a Title I public school with a high multilingual student population. The school had a rich cultural diversity, and students spoke many different languages and dialects. Unfortunately, I was not able to fully support, understand, or teach the ELLs that were in my classroom. More precisely, the first degree I earned back in 2014 was a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies. That degree prepared me for general education and did not focus on the student

population of ELLs. This led me to seek more knowledge on how to support that student population.

Two years later, I sought an additional endorsement to teach ELLs. I received a fully funded scholarship based on a grant to pay for tuition, textbooks, and even test preparation classes to receive my certification. The program included observations from my professors and feedback to strengthen my teaching practices related to supporting ELLs. After completing all course work, I took and passed the Praxis test in 2017 to receive official certification in teaching ELLs grades kindergarten through 12th.

During my coursework to add an ELL endorsement, I was able to learn about past court cases, laws, and regulations. I was exposed to the evolving changes and the progression of teaching ELLs throughout the years. However, I was not content and wanted to dive deeper.

In 2018, I went back to school to further my education in the realm of ELLs. I was still teaching at the same school I was hired my first year. At that point, I had taught for five years. I took a short break from school after my certification so I could afford my master's degree. I continued in a master's program titled "Teaching English Language Learners, TELL." During this transition of completing my master's, I focused on research practices. I wanted to know more, read more research, and understand the information provided by research.

The education I received for my certification in 2017 and master's completion in 2019 led to many opportunities in my career. I was able to mentor first- and second-year teachers. I led Professional Learning Communities, PLCs, for the ELL Team. I was identified as the school's ELL team lead. However, I wanted to do more than read about

what others had researched, I wanted to contribute to the knowledge base about teacher learning to support ELLs. This further led me in my interest to pursue a doctorate degree in 2020. A year later in 2021, I became a District Level EL Instructional Coach.

Currently, I am responsible for supporting four schools in the district with a high ELL student and teacher population. My work is to build capacity and knowledge of ELL teaching and learning for the educators at the schools I support.

Throughout my career as an educator, I have witnessed school initiative changes within the realm of ELLs and the history provided in texts or classes. Though the progression of support for ELLs has improved, I believe there are gaps evident in specific areas. Educators today need continuous support and appropriate coaching to scaffold and accommodate linguistic responsiveness. As an EL coach, I have had the ability to observe the need for capacity building among various stakeholders: not only is this necessary for ELL teachers, but also non-ELL-certified content teachers, administration, school psychologists, counselors, and other stakeholders.

Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study explored the role of the ELL coach in the field of education. Furthermore, I investigated how coaches made meaning to the ELL coach position. For nearly two decades, the empirical literature has repeatedly demonstrated the lack of preparation and learning opportunities for both preservice teachers and Inservice teachers. The ELL student population steadily increases yet little progress has been made in building teacher capacity to meet the needs of ELLs. Therefore, the investigation of ELL coaching as innovative support is critical. This study

interpreted the perceptions of those currently in the role of an ELL coach and investigated how the coaches described and made meaning of their work supporting teachers in the field.

Qualitative Research

I chose qualitative research for this study because the purpose was to investigate the daily work of an ELL coach. “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Thus, in this work, I explored how ELL coaches constructed meaning about their role as well as interpreted and assigned meaning to it. Qualitative research intends to dive deeper into the details, feelings, words, and meaning of a specific topic. Hence, the similarities, differences in the experiences, and interpretations of those enacting the ELL coach role was examined.

Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective

The specific epistemology for this study is referred to as constructivism. Bhattacharya (2017) describes constructivism as grounded in the belief that people construct meaning based on interactions in the world. This research explored the ways coaches made meaning about supporting educators as they engaged in the teaching and learning of ELLs. This research further explored the interactions of coaches in the school, with teachers and students. Based on Bhattacharya (2017) recommendations, I solicited the meaning made by multiple coaches, rather than relying on the perceptions of one coach. This guaranteed more than one voice was represented in the data.

The theoretical perspective for this study thrived from phenomenological philosophy. The purpose of the phenomenological perspective is to “engage with phenomena in our world and make sense of them directly and immediately” (Crotty, 1998, p. 79). Thus, it was important to gather information from the coaches as I explored their descriptions of their experiences being an ELL coach and the subjective meaning they made of this phenomenon.

Methodological Approach

Phenomenology is both the theoretical perspective and the methodology in this study as I encouraged participants to be reflective about their experiences and share as much detail as possible when describing the phenomenon of being a coach to ELLs (Bhattacharya, 2017). This aligned to the purpose of the study because I gained understanding to the shared phenomenon of ELL coaching and what that meant to each participant. The ultimate purpose was to describe the lived experiences of ELL coaches. Therefore, I used narrative phenomenology to investigate the new phenomenon of ELL coaching.

Participant Selection

The selection of participants included specific criteria to assure the purpose research question was addressed. Purposeful sampling is used to focus on what “the investigator wants to discover, understand, or gain insight” into and “therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p .96). Purposeful sampling was used to “highlight what a typical, normal, and average” among the ELL coaches (Patton, 2015, p. 268). One of the criteria of purposeful sampling

included the job title of ELL coach. The alteration of English Language Learner or English as Second Language coach, for example, qualified for the study. However, the participants' roles required full-time coaching as aligned with both the job description and title. The participants selected in this study had a variety of diverse titles for his or her role. However, to protect the identities of the selected participants, all titles were merged to ELL coach.

The second criteria of participant qualification were at least one completed year of experience in the ELL coaching role. This also aligned with purposeful sampling of the study to depict accuracy. The last criteria of purposeful sampling included participants that serve districts with monolingual English education systems. In 2003, the state legislation indicated that 23 states declared English as the official language (de Jong, 2011). This criterion aligns to the current practices of educational systems in Tennessee. Therefore, a total of five participants were selected for this study. The five participants represent different districts in Tennessee.

The discovery and confirmation of participants occurred in diverse, yet systematic ways. For example, once the IRB approval was submitted for a particular district, I emailed the supervisor of the department to locate potential participants for the study. Several supervisors were able to recommend an ELL coach from the district. Other participants were recommended by the ELL department within their districts. In another district, the participant was identified through the supervisor of another department.

Below, *Table 1*, describes the five ELL coach participant's standard information. This table provides the names, amount of experience, quantity of the schools ELL coaches are assigned, grade-level band assignments, and the different types of assigned

stakeholders. The first column provides pseudonym names to protect the participants identity. The second column provides the amount of experience. Experience is categorized into two terms which are novice and experienced. Novice ELL coaches have at least one to three years of experience. Experienced ELL coaches have four or more years of experience within the role. The number of school assignments are listed in the next column. On average, an ELL coach is assigned to 10 schools based on the five participants data. The final column provides which grade-level band an ELL coach is assigned to and the stakeholders they are assigned support. Furthermore, the assigned stakeholders are specific to ELL certifications. Michelle Andrews, Danielle James, and Gabriela Hall are assigned to work with all teachers, including ELL or non-ELL-certified. Mike Carter is only assigned to non-ELL-certified teachers, while Maria Jackson is assigned to only support ELL-certified teachers.

Table 1

Name	Experience	Number of schools assigned	Grade level band/stakeholders
Michelle Andrews	Novice	13	Elementary Schools/All Teachers
Maria Jackson	Novice	12	Elementary Schools/ELL Certified Teachers
Danielle James	Novice	4	Elementary Schools/All Teachers
Mike Carter	Experienced- Building & District Level	12	Title I schools/Elementary, Middle, and High/Non-ELL Certified Teachers
Gabriela Hall	Experienced	12	Priority Elementary, Middle, and High/All Teachers

*Table 1: Overview of ELL coaches experience, number of school assignments, and assigned stakeholders***Data Collection**

Once participants were identified, I conducted two interviews. The interviewing process was adapted from Seidman's (2019) three-interview protocol. Interview one included topics such as the history of working with ELLs as teachers and the transitions to the ELL coach role. Interview two included follow-up questions, as well as experiences and reflections on being an ELL coach. Each topic in the interview was essential to the understanding and construction of the participant's experiences and thus supported answering the research question.

I conducted interviews using Zoom and the interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews on a virtual platform allowed for flexibility in scheduling and

regional locations of Tennessee. The virtual platform also allowed for an audio recording of the interviews. The two interviews permitted a sequential exploration of the history of working with ELLs and a reflection and interpretation of the ELL coach role. This allowed broader patterns to be uncovered while further investigations of how each ELL coach made meaning of their work in supporting teachers were further revealed.

To understand the context of each participant, artifacts were also gathered. The artifact collected from the study included documentation that provided guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of the ELL coach position. The purpose of this artifact explored the guidance from the district and the outlined details of the work. In addition, as a qualitative approach was used to review the data once it was collected, the opportunity to analyze verbal responses, tones, and emphasis of words across the data sets was possible.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I utilized an inductive process of data collection to identify trends. Inductive data analysis began with the data and was merged to codes and patterns of meaning which stands in opposition to beginning with a hypothesis that was then proved or disproved from the data collection (Bhattacharya, 2017). I conducted data analysis in four iterative phases that included: (1) cleaned and reviewed recorded interview transcripts, (2) read and re-read the interview transcripts and the coaching artifacts, (3) developed codes and clusters of meaning, and (4) created narratives and vignettes that illustrated identified patterns and answered the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2019).

The first phase included a review of the recorded audio interviews. This was used for two reasons. First, it was an additional layer that provided accuracy in the recorded audio for transcripts. Second, it provided a review and additional opportunity to observe participants' tone of voice, pauses, and questioning that may add nuance to my interpretations of the transcripts. "A detailed and careful transcript that re-creates the verbal and nonverbal material of the interview can be of great benefit to a researcher" (Seidman, 2006, p. 114). Based on Seidman's (2019) recommendation, transcribing and cleaning up transcripts gives the researcher a well-developed knowledge base for the interview. I pulled the transcripts created by otter ai from the virtual recordings and further cleaned up the transcripts for accuracy. I eliminated words such as uhm, or repeated phrases to enhance the clarity of meaning. Furthermore, a close read of the transcripts allowed a deeper dive into the data presented from interviews and artifacts gathered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The second phase of data analysis included reading and rereading the transcripts gathered from the interviews and coach roles and responsibilities document. As recommended by Hatch (2002), I asked questions of the data that included: What ELL coaching is? and What does ELL coaching mean? I then reorganized the transcripts and read the data I identified that answered each question. In addition, I pulled in vivo codes (Saldana, 2012) to highlight the participant's words that answered these questions. *Table 2* provides an image of the process by cutting the transcripts of participants and identified trends of what ELL coaching is and means.

Table 2



Table 2: Participant's transcripts color-coded and cut into what ELL coaching is and means categories

The third phase of data analysis included the identification of codes from phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that align with the conceptual framework and answered the research question (Bhattacharya, 2017, & Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I then merged the codes to build categories or clusters of meaning that illustrated patterns of meaning from the participant's experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017; Seidman, 2019). These categories were then labeled with a term or phrases which illustrated the pattern of meaning.

The fourth and final phase included moving from the categories to the creation of stories or vignettes. This phase allowed the reduction of the texts provided by transcripts. Additionally, it bracketed the information into pieces of data that were interesting or relate to the research question (Seidman, 2019). The inductive data analysis synthesized a large number of categories into approximately five or six categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This provided an additional layer of organization of the data for synthesis. For comprehensibility, articles and duplicate words or phrases were removed for meaning making. Furthermore, specific words or phrases were added to support the clarity of the

vignettes. Some vignettes of individual participants were merged into alike stories to integrate details of experiences. For example, a participant, Gabriela Hall shared *“During the time I had an ELL coach reach out to me. I don’t know what the capacity was.”* However, the vignette for reader clarity shifted it to *“During the time [as an ELL teacher in the district] I had an ELL coach reach out to me. I don’t know what the capacity [of an ELL coaches work] was.”*

Trustworthiness of Study

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is supported by recommendations proposed by Guba (1981). There are four basic criteria that developed trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Based on Shenton (2003), there are various strategies embedded within the four criteria to support trustworthiness.

This first criterion developed by Guba (1981) is referred to as credibility. Credibility is the concept of assuring the study measures or tests what it is designed to capture. It withstands the “true picture” of a study (Shenton, 2003, p. 63). Merriam (1998) adds the goal of credibility seeks to find equivalent or congruent reality. There are seven strategies provided by Shenton (2003) that are utilized to support credibility within this study. The seven strategies to support credibility in this study are participant refusal to consent, adoption of recognized research methods, iterative questioning, triangulation, debriefing after interview sessions, peer feedback, and member checks.

The first prerequisite strategy used to support credibility is developed within participation selection. Participants were allowed to refuse participation throughout the

study including the opportunity to refuse to respond to specific interview questions, refusal to allow audio recordings, or provide artifacts. Participants also had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. This was stated in the verbal consent prior to the conducted interviews.

The next strategies that were embedded throughout the process of the study included adoption of recognized research methods, iterative questioning, and triangulation. This study implemented the work of Irving Seidman's (2019) interview structure series. Interviews were developed into three different sections but executed into two adapted interviews. Those three sections gathered data on history working with ELLs, details of experiences being an ELL coach, and reflections on coaching. Furthermore, the research methods provided by Seidman (2019) elicit iterative questioning. A list of follow-up questions was developed between interviews prior to the next session of interviews to clarify confusions and miscommunications that occurred during the first round of interviews.

Lastly, I adopted three strategies for triangulating data. The first strategy included the selection of participants from various regions in Tennessee. This provided a wide range of data collection from coaches and their experiences are verified among other coaches in the study. Another strategy for triangulation included collecting the ELL coach roles and responsibilities artifact that described the official position alongside interview data with participants. This served as a blueprint, as well as authenticating data collected through interviews. Finally, the last strategy for triangulation included the identification of follow-up questions within the interview structure based on Seidman (2019), as described previously.

In the final stages of the research, three more strategies were utilized within this study to provide credibility. Those three strategies were confirmed questions with participants during the second interviews, peer feedback during data collection and analysis, and conducted member checks at the conclusion of data analysis. One, questions that confirmed initial interpretations by the researcher occurred during the second interview. Two, peer feedback from committee members provided opportunities for critical reflection on any disconfirming evidence that was in the data. Three, member checks were developed and provided to each participant to assure the findings in transcripts matched the intended meaning expressed by the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Each of these strategies supported credibility in the data collection process.

The member's check process was conducted after the completion of all data analysis and finalized vignettes. This process occurred by emailing individual participants their sections. Within the email, participants were asked to thoroughly read the document to assure the interpretation of their experiences and meaning making of the ELL coach role was captured accurately to the artifact and interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The member's check process provided three different responses. The three responses included approval with no revisions, approval with revisions, and approval after virtual meetings. Maria Jackson and Mike Carter approved after their review via email. Danielle James and Gabriela Hall approved after clarification and revision requests via email. For example, Danielle James clarified she works with some content teachers that are ELL certified, however, those teachers do not provide ELL services. Michelle Andrews requested two virtual Zoom meetings to clarify and expand on portions of her vignettes. For example, she wanted to elaborate more on her interpretations of justice and equity.

After the two virtual meetings to clarify and expand, Michelle approved via verbally in the final meeting. Furthermore, prior to the process of member's check, Michelle did not have formal documentation of her roles and responsibilities as an ELL coach. By engaging in this process, she now has developed roles and responsibilities document provide by her district.

The second criterion developed by Guba (1981) is referred to as transferability for the trustworthiness of a study. The purpose of transferability drives with the intention to apply findings from one study to the next. As stated previously, one strategy that supported transferability is the participant selection of five ELL coaches ranging from various locations in Tennessee with an ELL student population. Furthermore, there was a requirement for participants to have completed at least one year of experience as an ELL coach. This restricted entering-level ELL coaches to contribute to data collection. The last aspect of transferability included the methods provided by Seidman (2019). The interview protocol called for three different interviews at 60 minutes for each individual participant. Although this protocol was adapted to two interviews for this study the approach of sequence and timing remained in the same ranges.

The third criterion for trustworthiness in qualitative research based on Guba (1981) is dependability. This criterion focused on the ability to repeat the results of the study with comparable context, methods, and participants. This research enhanced dependability through the use of a detailed research design based on recognized methods. The description and design are delivered in a manner that can easily be replicated. Additionally, it allowed the reader to assess appropriate research practices based on the thorough descriptors provided. Lastly, the overlapping of methods provided the context

of dependability. As stated earlier, overlapping methods included individual interviews, interview protocol developed by Seidman (2019), iterative questioning, and artifact of roles and responsibilities.

The fourth and last criterion developed by Guba (1981) is confirmability. Confirmability is the exposure to potential preferences or biases of a study. It allows a researcher to express and elaborate personal experiences with transparency. Previously in this methodology section, I provided my subjectivity statement explaining my family dynamics and the roles in my career. I have also included the strategy of triangulation as another avenue to support confirmability. This included the selection of participants from various areas, collecting an artifact of ELL coaches' roles and responsibilities, and utilizing Seidman's (2019) interview protocol for data collecting purposes. Additionally, I maintained an audit trail and reflective journal throughout the entire study. This provided a glimpse of step-by-step decision-making and reflections across the duration of the study.

Summary

In this chapter, I explained the research design used in this study. I first provided a subjectivity statement to share the personal connections for this study. I further provided the phenomenological structure of this study that explored the role of an ELL coach. I briefly provided the context of the research participants and requirements developed to determine authenticity of the ELL coach role. Furthermore, I provided a systematic structures of data collection and analysis to support the findings revealed in

Chapters 4 and 5. Finally, I provided a variety of techniques aligned to trustworthiness of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

In Chapter 4, I present the individual stories of each coach based on the data analysis as described in the previous chapter. Each ELL coach story is followed by an explanation of themes expressed as learning that was relevant to their work. The participants' stories are shared from the least to most years of experience regardless of their district placement.

Michelle Andrews' Story and Themes

Michelle Andrews is a novice ELL coach. The role was created to support the increase of the ELL student population in her district. She supports all teachers in 13 schools of the elementary grade-level band. Her title has shifted throughout the years between terms such as ELL coach, ELL specialist, and ELL generalist. During the time of the interviews, she did not have written documentation of her roles and responsibilities as her title was new to the district. As Michelle Andrews reflected on the hiring process, she believed her focus was supposed to explicitly support ELL-certified teachers. However, she mostly supports non-ELL-certified teachers based on her experiences. What follows is Michelle Andrew's story, condensed and edited from across her two interviews, about the ways she has made sense of roles and responsibilities, enacted coaching activities, and the barriers faced as an ELL coach. Woven throughout her story is her beliefs about the meaning of being an ELL coach.

Michelle Andrews' Story

Let's say this [ELL coaching role] is new...The position was new to the district. The role was not clearly defined on what the district wanted it to look like, so I envisioned it being working in one or two schools, supporting teachers, and providing

PD. That was my vision. When I interviewed for the position, they said I would have 13 schools...I did not really want that, and I said no thank you. They ended up calling me back and saying they really wanted me for the position. I took the position, but I do not think they really knew what they wanted the role to look like. I think they wanted me to support ELL [certified] teachers explicitly. You know, I'm laughing because the title [of my position] has changed so many times. When I came on, [my supervisor] said you are the ELL coach. Then they changed it to ELL Generalist... Then it changed to ELL specialist, but all my [ELL certified] teachers are specialist. I said I want to call myself an ELL Instructional Collaborator. This is really my own creative thinking about my title.

I'm going into [my 13 schools] and working with classroom [non-ELL certified] teachers mostly to support them. The ELL [ELL certified] teachers still need support as well, but the [ELL] kids are with classroom [non-ELL certified] teachers most of the day. I'm seeing that classroom teachers are reaching out quicker than our ELL teachers because now they've seen my face. They know me and they're calling me in to ask what do I do? How do I do this?... When general education teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, principals, [at schools] ask me to come, it was more productive because then I can prepare. We have a focus.

[In my role] I review schools' schedules [of the 13 schools] to make sure they're meeting the 60-minute time requirement [for ELL services]. I've created a new Home Language Survey because the other one needed an update. Just this weekend I created a waiver form because teachers did not have a procedure for distributing and officially processing waiver forms. I did some ACCESS WIDA assessments. We do have an assessment person, but I was also that person too. We were working side by side. I'm

over ELLevation [the platform] for [ELL] Individual Learning Plans. [When observing classrooms, I use] our ELL Walk-through tool and I go into all our classes or ELL classes [of the 13 schools] to look for instructional trends across the district. Are we doing these things? I've done about five of them so far [in the district]. I'm going in for 20 minutes. It is an observation tool; however, I go in upfront and say I'm not trying to get you. I'm looking to see if are we doing these things [ELL best practices] across the district, yes or no. I'm not using it as a got you tool or trying to grade you [teachers]. Then I go back and create a data sheet to show [for example] 80% of our classes are doing this [instructional trends], this is where we can grow... I'm trying out my coaching cycle so working through that with a teacher... We plan to lesson plan this weekend. Today was his first day teaching the lesson and it went well.

I feel like our administrators [at the 13 schools] don't know what exactly to look for in the ELL box...I'm coaching them as well to say this is what you should be seeing in the ELL block. I have got pretty good feedback about this [ELL walkthrough] tool. I think it's going to help our EL program grow.

An ELL coach is someone who builds teacher capacity. I want to build the ELL teachers' capacity. But not just them, [I want to] build classroom [non-ELL certified] teacher's capacity to be able to support our students and give them access. I really want justice. Some of the [ELL] things we're doing it, we can look at it as equity. It's a sense of urgency for me...Distinguishing between justice and equity is important. When I think of equity, everyone gets access to the curriculum or content...Whatever the target may be, but to me, there is a requirement to assimilate to the structure. With justice, systems are restructured to meet the needs of every child and it acknowledges all of who they are

and what they are bringing and to establishes that access is a right, not something that should be given.

The classroom [non-ELL certified] teacher needs support. That's what I've been doing mostly as I am getting [observations of] those classroom teachers. I would like to support the ELL teachers more, but I can't do it all because I'm the only person in this position. There's no one else... When general education teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, principals, [at schools] ask me to come, it was more productive because then I can prepare. We have a focus. The other way [without request from a school] was a waste of time because they didn't want me there.

[ELL coaching is] building capacity with those teachers to be able to understand what culturally responsive practices look like. What does it look like to give justice in your class? That's where I am. I think that's the bigger issue... Maybe teachers do have some of the [ELL] strategies, but some don't understand our [ELL] students. High expectations for our [ELL] students, I think that's what we're [as a district] missing. I think it [the teaching] is watered down, and I want them [teachers] to stretch our kids and believe that they can do it... I want them to be culturally responsive and know their students... I want to build the capacity for our teachers to understand our students and to know our students. Then the instruction will be better... Some [of the district] do not have really high expectations within our team [ELL teachers] because some don't believe the kids can do it.

I want teachers to engage students and provide justice for them... meaning, shifting some structures within their classrooms to make sure access is automatic and not something extra... The ELL students need access and equity. I like justice better than

equity. Give all kids access is what I want and that's why it's important. My role is important. My values are justice for kids. Everyone having access... [For example,] I go in [a classroom] and I see an EL student who has no access. The teacher doesn't know them. The teacher doesn't understand them. It's just not right. Some [teachers] don't know our kids and where they're coming from.

I'm going into classrooms [of my 13 schools] and some of our teachers have a thought process about our [ELL] students or thinking about our students that they're lazy or the parents don't care. Teachers are supposed to be the advocates for our kids. Then I'm thinking, how do you break down someone's mindset about a group of [ELL] people you know? I am a year in [this position] and I'm fighting that too.

Learning from Michelle Andrews' Story

In order to understand and describe Michelle's experiences and the meaning she makes of being an ELL coach, in the next section I will share her learning through four themes identified from an analysis of Michelle's interviews that reflect the sequence of her story. These themes include roles, responsibilities, barriers, and vision. Consistent with phenomenology, the themes are presented as learning that was gained by examining the experiences of Michelle.

Roles

Based on interviews with Michelle Andrews, her role was created to support the increase of the ELL student population in the district. Since this position was recently added, her roles and responsibilities were not as clearly defined as she anticipated. In her words, "the [ELL coach] role was not clearly defined on what the district wanted it to

look like.” However, Michelle was able to share her roles and responsibilities from her perspective. She stated, “the classroom [non-ELL certified] teacher needs support. That's what I've been doing mostly as I am getting [observations of] those classroom teachers.” Michelle also expressed her vision of ELL coaching differed from what she learned in the interview process. “I envisioned it being working in one or two schools, supporting teachers, and providing PD...That was my vision... When I interviewed for the position, they said I would have 13 schools.” She was not as interested in the ELL coaching position after learning about the 13 school assignments. “...I did not really want that, and I said no thank you.” However, the district extended the offer once more for consideration. “They ended up calling me back and saying they really wanted me for the position.” Furthermore, as a developing role in the district, Michelle encountered diverse titles for her role throughout the years. “The title [of my position] has changed so many times.”

Responsibilities

Michelle further shared a variety of coaching activities that she has conducted in her role. An example she provided from the interviews described her work on coaching cycles. “I'm trying out my coaching cycle so working through that with a teacher.... We plan to lesson plan this weekend. Today was his first day to teach the lesson and it went well.” The remaining coaching activities were provided in a list-like structure by Michelle. These included:

- Review of school schedules for ELL service hour requirement
- Updating the Home Language Survey to identify ELLs
- Conducting ACCESS WIDA screener assessments

- Monitor ELLevation (a platform for ILPs, Individual Learning Plans which is state regulated)
- Classroom walkthroughs for district trends
- Coaching cycles
- Building ELL capacity through the collaboration of administration and teachers
- Supporting SPED and interventionists in determining needs of dual-served ELL students

Michelle further shared how she interprets her responsibilities. Her understanding of ELL coaching thrives on building the capacity of all teachers in the district. This includes capacity building of ELL-certified and non-ELL certified teachers. “An ELL coach is someone who builds teacher capacity. I want to build the ELL teachers’ capacity, not just them. [I want to] build classroom [non-ELL certified] teacher’s capacity to be able to support our students and give them access.”

Barriers

Throughout the work, Michelle shared some barriers experienced in ELL coaching. One example captured from the interviews includes equity of supporting all 13 of her schools. “I would like to support the ELL teachers more, but I can't do it all because I'm the only person in this position. There's no one else.” Another example captured from interviews describes the teacher’s beliefs. “Maybe teachers do have some of the [ELL] strategies, but they don't understand our [ELL] students. High expectations for our [ELL] students, I think that's what we're [as a district] missing... The teacher doesn't know them. The teacher doesn't understand them... I'm thinking, how do you break down someone's mindset about a group of [ELL] people you know? I am year in [this position] and I'm fighting that too.”

Vision

Although Michelle described barriers to the work, she includes her vision in the role of ELL coaching. The interviews allude to a list of desired outcomes she wants to impact within her role. Some of those desires described, in her words, *justice* and *urgency* that she wants for the ELL student population. “I really want justice. Some of the [ELL] things we're doing it, we can look at it as equity. It’s a sense of urgency for me.” Furthermore, she wants ELL students to have access to the content and curriculum. “The EL students need access and equity. Give all kids access is what I want and that's why it's important. My role is important.” Finally, she strives to build ELL knowledge and capacity within her district among the teachers. “I want teachers to be culturally responsive and know their students...I want to build the capacity for our teachers to understand our students and to know our students. Then the instruction will be better.”

Maria Jackson’s Story and Themes

Maria Jackson is a novice ELL coach. Her assigned work is supporting ELL certified teachers. She does not work with non-ELL-certified teachers. “My main focus is ELL teachers.” She is assigned to support 12 schools in the elementary school band. Her job description based on her roles and responsibilities documentation are as follows: “Under the direction of the ELL Coordinator, provide assistance to teachers and school administrators to improve instruction for English Language Learners. Orients identified ELL teachers in the content areas and the instructional process.” The following section explores Maria Jackson’s story as summarized and revised from across the two interviews. Maria provides contexts within the sense of her roles and responsibilities,

coaching activities, and the barriers of the ELL coach work. Additionally, throughout her story, she provides a perception of her significance and enjoyment of the ELL coaching role.

Maria Jackson's Story

When I transferred [to this district] the ELL department at the time was only three to four people...I knew that there was no ELL coaching [positions available] at the time... When I started [as a teacher] I feel like we have almost doubled in the [ELL student] population...The supervisor [of the EL department] was requesting that [ELL coaching] positions be added. I applied and had a couple of conversations with her. I started in the fall with the ELL department [as an ELL coach]. In my first two years there were two of us in my role and we were called facilitators. We split the county in half [for support]. A third facilitator was hired mid-year last year, but one had to go on medical leave, so we still just had two. Then two more were hired for this year. Now, two of us [ELL coaches] are doing elementary, one [ELL coach] is doing middle school, and one [ELL coach] is doing high [school]. The [ELL] department has grown in size...now there are four of us [ELL coaches that support ELL certified teachers]. The department was expanding. [When I first started ELL coaching] I thought the job description was a little vague. I don't know the last time that this document [ELL coach roles and responsibilities] was updated. We talked about where the department is growing, and we have more people. There's quite a bit on the [ELL coach roles and responsibilities] document about supporting the TEAM instructional model [evaluations], and I certainly do help teachers with that.

I am usually working with ELL teachers who are reaching out and want support. It is a voluntary process... I do try to set up a schedule where I reach out to the people I haven't heard from every month [out of the 12 schools]. I will send an email out just for a quick [school] visit or something.

I try to do professional development once or twice a month [with the ELL-certified teachers at my 12 schools]. We did one in October after school. It is an hour-long PD. I am creating that [content] and getting those ready... I attended PLC [at one of my 12 schools] teachers are looking at their student writing tests. They have a great protocol where everybody brings the student [assignments] at a certain grade level and we all score it. We talk about what we see and what the next steps would be. I've participated in that.

I am doing coaching cycles based on instructional things. They're working on the kinds of student discourse. We're going through planning, I do some observations, and give feedback. Then with more experienced teachers, I am trying to work through coaching cycles... It's [a lot of coaching cycles this year] because we have a new curriculum, and it is supporting them with learning that new curriculum. [ELL teachers are] learning to shift their instructional strategies a little bit because we're starting to make shifts [in the curriculum]. We've been talking a lot about coaching cycles, and then sometimes what we're doing with new [ELL certified] teachers really wouldn't fit the definition of a coaching cycle because sometimes it's survival support. I think that takes a chunk of my time.

I am really doing a lot of planning together and just figuring out what EL students need to start to function in the classroom... I did three teacher visits at three different

schools in a day... For example, last week, I started at a school where the [ELL certified] teachers were getting their team evaluations. They were nervous about that and they wanted me to look at their plans and their PowerPoints. They really wanted to process through it... These were content area [non-ELL certified] teachers, who have [recently] moved into an ELL [teacher] position... Then I had some time in the middle of the day where I worked with one of my new teachers who is on a [ELL teacher] waiver and we are doing some planning for next week. We pick one grade level and plan that grade level for a couple of weeks until he gets a flow. Then we shifted to another grade level.

I would say I'm not striving for equity [working], I guess between all 12 [schools]. At the beginning of the year, especially, my priority is new [ELL certified] teachers who are either brand new like job-embedded, they haven't had coursework, or student teaching. ELL teachers really been my priority, but also there are classroom [non-ELL certified] teachers who moved over into an ELL position. It is supporting them, and I have instructional shifts [in the curriculum] that need support too... I tend to schedule meetings at the beginning of the year, especially weekly meetings with all the new [ELL certified] teachers... I am also working on developing a new curriculum for the district and working through that... I do a lot of planning with more experienced ELL teachers... To be honest, it tends to be the schools [out of the 12] that reach out and are willing to put in that time and planning. I prioritize some time for those schools. There are a couple of schools [out of the 12] on my list that you check in with them and they just tell you everything's fine. We communicate through email.

I guess in a perfect world I say everybody [all 12 schools] would have access to the same amount of [ELL coaching] support. I feel like if teachers were reaching out and

asking me to come, I would come. If you think about [ELL] student numbers and student needs, every student no matter what school they were at, would have ideally the same excellent instruction... Teachers would have as much support as they needed which, really can vary depending on teacher experience, number of students, and schedules... I guess equitable doesn't mean it's that the picture of the fence, right? It's not that everybody has the exact same time, but if everybody had enough support, they would be seeing growth in their students...and hitting the goals that they have for their students. I would feel it was equitable [of ELL coaching support] because everybody was getting what they needed.

I really enjoy [ELL] instructional coaching. I love the mix of spending time with teachers as learners and working with adults. I am also still being able to get into classrooms. I really enjoy coteaching lessons... Teaching with other teachers, working through things, and having student interactions. Personally, for me, [ELL coaching] feels like a good fit at this point in my life... I have two teenagers at home, so I just have a lot of empathy for what some students have gone through and the barriers that are in place for them. I think sometimes those barriers don't need to be there and that we really should be doing all we can to help them be as successful as they can in life.

Learning from Maria Jackson's Story

Maria provided insight into her experiences and the meaning of the ELL coach role. In this section, I will share her learning through five themes identified from an analysis of Maria's interviews that reflect the sequence of her story. These themes include her roles, responsibilities, barriers, vision, and reflections. The themes are

presented in a chronological order to the interview series which support the phenomenological view of the ELL coaching role from her perspective.

Roles

Maria Jackson begins her story by transferring into the current district she works in now as a teacher. However, based on interviews, the supervisor of the ELL coaches requested more positions to be added in the district to support the increase of the ELL student population. “When I started [as a teacher] I feel like we have almost doubled in the [ELL student] population...The supervisor [of the ELL department] was requesting that [ELL coaching] positions be added.” Once the positions were added Maria became an ELL coach. “My first two years there were two of us in my role.” Eventually, more ELL coaches were hired in the district. “Then two more were hired for this year... The [ELL] department has grown in size.” The titles of the ELL coach role have shifted as well throughout this transition of expansion in the district.

Based on the first interview, Maria expressed her interpretation of the roles and responsibilities as vague. “[When I first started ELL coaching] I thought the job description was a little vague.” However, we explored the roles and responsibilities artifact in the second interview and a built discussion around those indicators. In our discussion, Maria found that her work builds around supporting ELL teachers, the teacher evaluation process, as well as other coaching elements. “There's quite a bit on the [ELL coach roles and responsibilities] document about supporting the TEAM instructional model [teacher evaluations], and I certainly do help teachers with that...For example, last week, I started at a school where the [ELL certified] teachers were getting their TEAM

evaluations...they wanted me to look at their plans and their PowerPoints.” Other elements are also found in her roles and responsibilities documentation which explores the coaching activities she conducts in her role.

Responsibilities

Maria described a variety of coaching activities within her work. The overarching activities within her role consist of providing ELL-based professional development, lesson planning, coaching cycles, attending PLCs, and support to transitional teachers from teaching as non-ELL certified to ELL certified. “I try to do professional developments once or twice a month [with the ELL certified teachers at my 12 schools].” Maria further describes her view of shifts in coaching cycles and lesson planning this year compared to years past. “It's [a lot of coaching cycles this year] because we have a new curriculum, and it is supporting them with learning that new curriculum. [ELL teachers are] learning to shift their instructional strategies a little bit because we're starting to make shifts [in the curriculum] ... I am really doing a lot of planning together and just figuring out what do ELL students need to start to function in the classroom.” Furthermore, the type of coaching activities provided is also developed through the lens of teacher experience working with ELL students. “At the beginning of the year, especially, my priority is new [ELL certified] teachers who are either brand new like job embedded...Sometimes what we're doing with new [ELL certified] teachers really wouldn't fit the definition of a coaching cycle because sometimes it's survival support.”

Barriers

Throughout the interviews, Maria described a barrier that is presented in her role. The barrier involves balancing the workload of all 12 assigned schools. “I would say I’m not striving for equity [working between all 12 schools.]” However, she has developed a system that helps her navigate the amount of support she provides. “To be honest, it tends to be the schools [out of the 12] that reach out and are willing to put that time and planning. I prioritize time for those schools... I feel like if teachers were reaching out and asking me to come, I would come.”

Vision

Maria also explains her perspective of what equity could look like in her role. “I guess in a perfect world I say everybody [all 12 schools] would have access to the same amount of [ELL coaching] support. ...If you think about [ELL] student numbers and student needs, every student no matter what school they were at, would have ideally the same excellent instruction... Teachers would have as much support as they needed which, really can vary depending on teacher experience, number of students, and schedules... I guess equitable doesn't mean it's that the picture of the fence, right? It's not that everybody has the exact same time, but if everybody had enough support, they would be seeing growth in their students...and hitting the goals that they have for their students. I would feel it was equitable [of ELL coaching support] because everybody was getting what they needed.”

Reflections

As the interviews concluded, Maria provided her valued perspective on the ELL coach role. “I really enjoy [ELL] instructional coaching. I love the mix of spending time

with teachers as learners and working with adults.” She believes this role is a great match for her at this point in her career. “Personally, for me, [ELL coaching] feels like a good fit at this point in my life.” Furthermore, she finds value in supporting the ELL student population. “We really should be doing all we can to help them be as successful as they can in life.”

Danielle James’ Story and Themes

Danielle James is a novice-level coach. She supports four schools in the elementary school band with a higher ratio of ELL student and ELL-certified teacher population. The description of her roles and responsibilities documentation is as follows: “The role of an ELL coach is to build the capacity among leaders, building coaches, and teachers to execute high-quality instruction for all English Language Learners, meeting their academic, linguistic, and cultural needs.” This section presents Danielle James’ story within a synthesis of interviews. Additionally, it provides insight into edited content about the ways she has made sense of roles and responsibilities, conducted coaching activities, and the barriers in her perspective of being an ELL coach.

Based on interviews, Danielle James works with all teachers. However, this year she is working closely with the content teachers who do not provide direct ELL services. Danielle described that some of the content teachers are non-ELL certified. However, some content teachers do have the ELL certification. “Typically, I was working with ELL teachers, especially my first year [in the ELL coaching role]. It's more content [both ELL and non-ELL certified] teachers now [that I am working with]. As I'm developing relationships with schools, content teachers are reaching out to me more as well.”

Danielle James' Story

I am trying to remember my first [ELL] coach [experience] and I do not remember in this district [as a teacher] ... That was the 2010-2011 school year. My third-year teaching [in this district] which would have been 2013 we had more coaches... I think the [ELL] coach checked in more around ACCESS [testing] time. We would get reminders and updates, but I figured out ELL on my own honestly... I had two or three different [ELL] coaches in my last six years [as a teacher] ... The [ELL teacher] training wasn't there [or] the [ELL] coaching... Before then, [2015], ELL coaches did not do very much in the buildings I worked in.

[In my role] I meet with the principal before teachers return to work [from the summer] and walk-through [ELL] service models for the year... It goes back to, what are the school's goals? What is the principal's vision? The principal is the leader of instruction in the building... Ultimately, I am charged with what the principal's vision is for the school and being mindful of that. I also meet with the principal before teachers return [from the summer] to walkthrough the professional learning that they want. What do they want me to focus on?... I schedule check-ins throughout the year at least three times with the principals [at all four schools]. I am really tailoring it to each school... One principal really wants everyone trained [in ELL] so we're diving more into the collaboration aspect... I collaborate much more with building-level coaches than administrators [at my four schools] because building-level coaches have more of a pulse of what's going on in the building. They have knowledge of what the instruction looks like, what's going on in classrooms, and they're in planning 24/7. Teachers are going to

the building level coaches because they understand what's going on in the classrooms more so than administrators.

I am on the professional development committee for the district where I review courses. We also help the [ELL] coordinator have a long-term plan for PD. I also serve as the coach lead for two PDs [that are delivered to the district] ... I do trainings through PLC so that would be building the capacity around ELL best practices and then [I conduct] classroom visits that are supporting that implementation of support [I provide] ... This year we are focusing on the WIDA [English Language Development Standards Framework] 2020 standards, [reading] Breaking Down the Wall [book], and co-teaching [professional development content].

I also offer professional learning communities that are trainings around different ELL best practices and strategies... I collaborate with my team members [of ELL coaches] to grow in my knowledge as well as other departments [in the district] this year. I've gotten to collaborate more with our Exceptional Education department and the [district Exceptional Education] coaches there to help build those bridges and fill in some knowledge gaps.

The biggest thing this year was building knowledge around our dually identified students who are Exceptional Education and English Learners. There are a lot of urban legends out there about what services take priority [EE or ELL] ... [I am] building those bridges between EE and ELL. I make sure that the information I'm presenting is aligned to what the EE department says... I do have conversations about ACCESS testing before it begins because for a lot of our low-incidence students, everything is tailored... I am building my knowledge around that while also building the EE coaches ELL knowledge

of students. Then I bring it back to [school] teams because I've been getting questions already. A lot of times it is low-incidence services and Alternate ACCESS [testing].

I'm just now getting to really collaborate with our district lead literacy coaches. I've got some meetings on the books with them... It is helpful to really get that one-on-one time, especially with the one [district literacy coach] that I share [three out of my four schools] with and the sake of just building capacity... [I am] building the capacity of various stakeholders around EL best practices, filling knowledge gaps, providing clarification for misinformation, or just sharing new information... There are some people that are very willing to [learn], they just don't know so I give them that information.

[In my work] I visit some classrooms regularly. [For example,] I did a walkthrough of our SIFE program. This is students with interrupted formal education... It is new to this [school] building. All three [ELL SIFE] teachers are new to this position... I did some trend walkthroughs and I provided them with feedback as an overall next step for all three [ELL SIFE] teachers.

Our three [ELL team coach] goals are to build capacity around best ELL practices, plan for ELL supports, and the execution of ELL supports. Within those three goals, there are different action steps [ELL coaches] can take. The biggest one that I've done so far this year is sit in collaborative planning [at my four schools] and help talk through [ELL] support.

I attend collaborative planning with teachers. I have a lot of coaching conversations with teachers and sometimes they turn into coaching cycles... There's a lot more modeling this year of lessons, as well as providing feedback to teachers on their

lessons... I provide professional development and then I work one-on-one with teachers...just building their capacity around ELL practices. Not only building that capacity, but planning and executing [of ELL practices] ... It is one thing to give them the [ELL practices] information, but how is it being implemented in classrooms? I also build the capacity of the ELL teachers in the building to influence leadership and decision [making]. We [as district ELL coaches] do more consulting versus a building-level coach who has more accountability [in their school] as well.

I try to create my workload [of support for my four schools] to an even share of my time... I prioritize my week...That is not always the case based upon the needs right now. Sometimes there are more district level responsibilities that pop up during the week. That might cut my time short in one place or another [school]. For example, today I was talking with some teachers in the hallway...I had emailed them [stating] we're nine weeks in... How's it going? How can I support? I would love to come swing by and hang out with your class. [When scheduling this] I can't come in this week because my schedule's already full...We can look at next week on this day or the following day.

I think it would be helpful to have a caseload ratio [for ELL coaching support]. I get it that some [ELL coach] team members have a lot more schools [assigned], but they also still have fewer English Language Learners. They could have ELL-certified teachers of a ratio of 1 ELL coach to 35 ELL teachers or there could be a ratio of one ELL coach to 750 active ELL [students] because if you think about it... I would be able to support teachers better because I can't serve everybody now.

I would say [ELL coaching] is more than a job ...this is a calling and what I love to do...This work is hard, but you are impacting more [ELL] students... I have always

had a love for different cultures, and it was natural...All students can learn. Sometimes you got to take a different road to get there. What supports can we supply to make that content accessible for ELL students?... Instead of saying they [ELL students] can't read [or], they can't do it...It is they can! It is just how are we going to get there? All my work goes back to student learning in some shape or form. It is impacting language development and academic achievement.

Learning from Danielle James' Story

Danielle described her perspective on the roles and responsibilities of ELL coaching. In this section, I will share her learning through five themes identified from an analysis of Danielle's interviews that reflect the sequence of her story. These themes include her roles, responsibilities, barriers, vision, and reflections. These themes provide further insight into her meaning making and perception of the phenomenology of being an ELL coach.

Roles

In interviews with Danielle James, development about the ELL coach role was provided through the lens of her past teacher experiences. "I am trying to remember my first [ELL] coach [experience] and I do not remember in this district [as a teacher]." As the interviews progressed, more descriptions of the ELL coach role were provided. This perspective tracked the progression of ELL coaches in her district. "My third-year teaching [in this district] we had more coaches...I think the [ELL] coach checked in more around ACCESS [WIDA testing] time." However, Danielle described the role of an ELL coach as limited. "I figured out ELL on my own honestly... The [ELL teacher] training

wasn't there [or] the [ELL] coaching...ELL coaches did not do very much in the buildings I worked in."

As the interviews progressed, Danielle provided insight into her roles and responsibilities as an ELL coach through two perspectives. The first perspective is within the documentation of the ELL coach roles and responsibilities. "The role of an ELL coach is to build the capacity among leaders, building coaches, and teachers to execute high quality instruction for all English Learners, meeting their academic, linguistic, and cultural needs." The second perspective includes the ELL coach team goals developed in her department. "Our three [ELL team coach] goals are to build capacity around best ELL practices, plan for ELL supports, and the execution of ELL supports." Both concepts provide indicators to support her overarching work based on coaching activities she participates in.

Responsibilities

Danielle defines her coaching activities within two concepts of approach as well. She provides examples of activities that support either district-level responsibilities or school-based support. Based on district-level support, Danielle assists in ELL professional learning development for the district and collaboration with other departments in the district. "I am on the professional development committee for the district where I review courses. We also help the [ELL] coordinator have a long-term plan for PD... I've gotten to collaborate more with our Exceptional Education department and the [district Exceptional Education] coaches."

The other coaching activities Danielle provided supports at the school-based level. One action she supports is collaboration and meetings with building administrators.

“The principal is the leader of instruction in the building.... I meet with the principal to walkthrough professional learning that they want. What do they want me to focus on?”

Danielle also collaborates and meets with building level coaches to determine supports for her schools. “I collaborate much more with building level coaches than administrators [at my four schools] because building level coaches have more of a pulse of what's going on in the building.” Other coaching activities consisted of providing building-level professional learning or PLCs, observations, providing feedback, attending collaborative planning, and coaching cycles. “I provide professional development and then I work one-on-one with teachers... I visited some classrooms [at one of my schools] ... I did a walkthrough of our SIFE program and I provided them with feedback... I attend collaborative planning with teachers. I have a lot of coaching conversations with teachers and sometimes they turn into coaching cycles.”

Barriers

Within her role of working at four schools, Danielle described barriers that rise in her context. The challenge Danielle described is the capacity of supporting all four schools. “I try to create my workload [of support for my four schools] to an even share of my time... That is not always the case based upon the needs right now.” Danielle provides an example of dividing the workload between district and school-based needs. “Sometimes there are more district level responsibilities that pop up during the week. That might cut my time short in one place or another [school].” This example provides Danielle’s description of the availability she has when scheduling requests.

Vision

However, further into interviews, Danielle believes a caseload ratio could potentially support in navigating assigned schools per ELL coach. “I think it would be helpful to have a caseload ratio [for ELL coaching support].” One way she explores this concept is by creating a numeric ratio of ELL coaches to ELL certified teachers. “They could have ELL certified teachers of a ratio of 1 ELL coach to 35 ELL teachers or there could be a ratio of one ELL coach to 750 active ELL [students] because if you think about it... I would be able to support teachers better because I can’t serve everybody now.” In this example, it breaks down either the amount of ELL teacher or active ELL students an ELL coach would ideally support.

Reflections

As Danielle described her perspective of ELL coaching, she closes the interviews with her description of the passion she has for the coaching role. “I would say [ELL coaching] is more than a job ...this is a calling and what I love to do.” She finds value in her work by supporting the ELL student population. “This work is hard, but you are impacting more [ELL] students... I have always had love for different cultures, and it was natural...All students can learn.” Additionally, she believes that developing language growth and student achievement drives her work. “All my work goes back to student learning in some shape or form. It is impacting language development and achievement.”

Mike Carter’s Story and Themes

Mike Carter is an experienced ELL coach. The role has shifted within the five years of serving the district. He served one year as a building-level ELL coach. This role

was created at the time to support the student population of ELLs. The following year, his role further shifted to support Title I schools in all grade level bands at a district level. This shift was also a new role added to the district to support the ELL student population.

His overarching work includes supporting Non-ELL certified, content or mainstream education, teachers. His roles and responsibilities documentation are listed as follow: “Under the direction of the ELL and Federal Programs Coordinators: Provide assistance to teachers, school administrators, parents, and other stakeholders to improve the instruction and academic achievement of English Language Learners in high poverty schools. Provide guidance to general education teachers through classroom coaching, model lessons, effective use of materials/resources and professional development on best practices related to the instruction of English Learners in high-poverty schools.” This section serves to provide summarized and edited finding from Mike Carter’s two interviews. Findings include the ways he has made sense of roles and responsibilities, completed coaching activities, and the barriers of his ELL coaching role.

Mike Carter’s Story

I had been teaching ELL for many years [and] probably raised awareness [of ELL at schools]. I did a few PDs and things after school on a volunteer basis [during teaching ELLs.] ...I was asked to [ELL coach] so that is how I got into it...I already had a tendency to do training for other teachers [and] involved in PLCs, things like that...Because my role was created there was no expectation behind it. I was given the guidance. They had some ideas down on paper. My supervisor basically said to go find what the schools need.

I had a building-level [ELL coach] position for one year, and then moved up to this district-level [ELL coach] position. Both [positions] were brand new. The district basically invented the job. The first year I was an ELL coach was at an elementary school that had the largest percentage of ELLs. That same year the district created the position I am currently in [district level ELL coach] for our Title One schools. By the end of that year, the person in the [district-ELL coach] position moved on to a different role, and they decided to delete the school ELL coaching position for just the district level [ELL coach] ... We had such a large influx of ELLs, so schools needed support... That is what came about [for this position].

As far as the way my role is structured, I do more guidance, advising, strategy sessions, and professional development. My position is different from anyone else in this district. The [other] ELL coaches [in our district] primarily work with our ELL-certified teachers at all our schools... In my role, I work with our [non-ELL certified], general education, teachers... The reason my position was invented was our Title One schools had so many English Language Learners... Most of our teachers have not had training in that or they're not ELL certified. We needed somebody [in the district] that can come in and work with our general education teachers, [provide] strategies, brainstorm ideas, etc. That's where my role came in.

I essentially make contact [with my 12 schools] every so often mostly through administrators and instructional coaches because all our buildings have instructional coaches. They're typically ELA, math, science, or whichever. I'll reach out to them and say do you have anything you need? Do you have any teachers that need support? Do you

have anything that you'd like me to work on with your faculty? That's how I get most of my referrals.

I also get contacts from individual teachers. I get emails from teachers saying, hey, I need some help. I've got a bunch of newcomers, for example. I don't know what to do with them... I'll make arrangements to come observe their class, meet with them, and brainstorm strategies.

I do professional development as one of the hats I wear. I probably do about 30 professional developments a year. I also include follow-ups and walkthroughs...I do a lot of PD more so than probably some other coaches do [in the district] ... Oftentimes when I say to my principal [out of the 12 schools], what do you need for me this year, they say we need more training. Principals need me to come and do some after-school professional development. They want me to work on X, Y, and Z. I will make presentations on strategies and scaffolding. I'll come in and present it... Then I like to follow up, if not me, then at least the building level coaches or administration. Somebody is following up to check in and say how's this working for you and what questions you have, et cetera... These [professional developments] are about strategy because every classroom is different, and every school is different. You're going to have a different set of kids and what works in one classroom may not be that might not be the solution. In other words, I try to be very flexible when I go into the classroom, I try not to assume I already know what's going on or what the need is. I try to be a good listener. I try to watch [for] what's happening. Then based on what I'm hearing or what I'm seeing is going to determine the feedback I give them. I suggest the next steps forward.

I do a lot of PD and follow-up. Schools might say can you come in and do a PD on how to adapt our elementary reading curriculum for English Language Learners? I'll come in and do a PD on that... [Another example is] schools will say, we're struggling with fourth-grade math. Can you come in and do a PD on fourth-grade math for English Language Learners? Pretty much whatever they asked me to do, I'll come in and work on it with them... I also have done several SIOP [sheltered instruction observation protocol] series.

[An example of my work is] on Wednesday, I was at one of my [12] elementary schools all day and I met with every PLC [grade level]. We discussed what they're seeing... It was a brainstorming session. It opened with what are you seeing [and] what are your concerns? What are some things you need ideas on? We talked about it... We brainstormed ideas for scaffolding strategies. They ask questions like can you find a resource link or something? I said I'll work on that.

I was working with a third-grade team [at one of the 12 schools] and they have a lot of [EL student] newcomers that are struggling in math. They asked what can we do in math to get around the language barrier? Can you give us some ideas?... What I did was I came in and met with them during their PLC. We worked through different ways that we can get around the language barrier [and] different strategies we can use. For example, let's say one of the big things for me with math is anything that's abstract can be represented through concrete means and that's the best way to get around [the language barrier]. When you're teaching a mathematical concept, this helps all our learners anyway. It's not going to hurt our English speakers; it is to make that abstraction concrete... One example I used was fractions. If my newcomer doesn't understand what a

fraction is, I'm going to start with something very concrete [and] very tactile... I use the example of a bowl of apples. I've put three reds and one green in there. I say this is one bowl of apples, but inside one part is green, and three parts are red. Then I take those apples out and we show that. We see that I take those out and I put in tiles, now I've got a green tile, and I've got three red tiles, right?... It is a visual, tactile, but it's a little more abstract. A little less concrete. Then, I'll take those tiles out. I'm going to put them next to a fraction strip and we're going to cover that in color one part green and three parts red to match it. Now it's not tactile, but it's still visual. Then from there we move to the number line and put zero to four. I'm counting one on the number line, and then from there, pure numeric expression... By walking those students through that, those steps from concrete to abstract, they're more likely to get the concept without necessarily needing all the words... That is one strategy I gave the teachers, which is essentially visuals [and] modeling. That was part of the problem the teachers were running into was they were going straight to the abstraction, or maybe just slightly back from the abstraction. Maybe going back to the number line, but the kids weren't getting it. They got lost in the translation.

I'm also doing classroom observations and then giving feedback on those observations. I watched every one of the math teachers [at one school] and then I took notes. Then I followed up with their building-level math coach to identify some teachers that we want to work with one on one. It's whatever the school asked me to do... They're wanting strategies, scaffolds, and resources. That is typically what I end up doing. I walk them through what's available to them and we brainstorm in that sense. Let's look at an example lesson. What did your kids do in this situation? Sometimes I come in [a

classroom] and watch. Then the building-level coach and I can compare notes to see if I'm seeing the same thing they are seeing... What I spend most of my time doing is one on one with teachers. We are just walking through basic scaffolds, strategies, and lesson planning that they can do to help their English Language Learners.

There's our referral process to move ELLs from tier one and tier two [intervention]. A lot of times there are a lot of questions around English Language Learners... Do they have enough language to benefit from intervention materials? I've become the point person on that for questions like, is this appropriate, not appropriate? Then a lot of times schools email, call, or invite me to the data team meeting to be a part of that discussion.

The biggest barrier [in my role] is the teacher doesn't see the need [or] they don't understand why they need to differentiate for English Language Learners. That is the attitude that inhibits [my work] ... In those cases, I just try to do my best. I put on my salesman hat. I try to do my best to convince them that doing this for their ELLs, it's going to improve their whole class. It's going to improve their overall performance...I tell them with English Language Learners, sometimes you got to go slow to go fast. I know teachers want to move on to that next step, but if we don't get this foundation in place, ELL students are just going to be lost for the rest of the year. I do my best to convince them... Of course, there are always going to be some people that are not open [to my coaching] and that's okay. It's up to you.

Unfortunately, the issue that I do often run into is if the scaffolds aren't already made [for ELLs]. What I'm telling the teacher is we're going to have to do some extra planning... For teachers, when you already feel like you're barely keeping your head

above water and time is precious, that can be tough...I'll offer to come in and help teachers. I'll help you work through this [lesson] and make the scaffolds. The scaffold is not something we pull out of a box [and is] not coming from a curriculum.

The thing is, I don't work at all [12 schools] equally. Some have greater needs than others... If I had to portion it out where I was working with all 12 Equally, it would be too much for one person... Often, the case is I'll have maybe four or five schools that I'm working with very intensely. I periodically visit [the other seven to eight schools] and go over things because they just don't have as much of a need. Maybe they have more building-level support, or maybe they haven't got as many [ELL] newcomers in, for example. For whatever reason, it seems like every year, our newcomers tend to cluster in certain schools. I guess patterns of settlement. Those teachers are saying we're drowning in kids that don't speak a word of English. Come help us and that's when I know I'm going to have to spend a lot of time at those schools this year. I know they're drowning, so you focus on those four or five and check in with others [schools].

The biggest challenge I have [in this role] is I'm not in those [12] schools on a daily basis. I don't always know what's happening in the school or what the needs are of the school as well as I would if I was a building [level ELL coach]. When I was [an ELL] building level coach, I had a much better idea of the whole system, how things were working together, [and] the needs of the building. Whereas now I'm coming from Central Office, I'm going in a little more blind [and] having to deal with more guesswork. Sometimes I'll come in with one idea, [but] then a school has started some program and my idea is not going to work with that program. I'm going to have to realign this [idea] to make sure what I'm telling these teachers goes with this program that the principal

started... Teachers didn't necessarily want somebody coming in and doing a coaching cycle [about English Language Learners]. That's just not what they wanted... I figured out quickly I'm going to have to ask [the 12 schools] what you need because I'm assuming this is what they need. They wanted lots of training. They wanted advice on students, feedback on our teaching, scaffolding, and strategies. That's what I have fallen into. Whatever they say they need I am going to get it to them.

I really think I'm a pragmatist. I'm for whatever works. I try to be very flexible and give teachers whatever they need to be successful with their students... Ultimately, you want teachers to be successful... What I mean by that is I try not to come in with preconceived notions about the model [of strategies or scaffolds] you need to be using. These are the strategies because every classroom is different.

Learning from Mike Carter's Story

Throughout the interviews, Mike provided his experiences and interpretations of the ELL coach role. This section will describe the four themes developed by the analysis of Mike's transcripts. The themes include roles, responsibilities, barriers, and reflections on the work. These themes provide further perceptions of Mike's ELL coach work.

Roles

Mike's story includes experiences of ELL coaching from a building and district-level perspectives. However, prior to accepting the ELL coaching position he was asked to take the role while in the ELL teacher role. "I was asked to [ELL coach] so that is how I got into it... I already had tendency to do training for other teachers [and] involved in PLCs." Mike provides a context of his building-level and district-level ELL coaching

roles. “I had a building level [EL coach] position for one year, and then moved up to this district level [ELL coach] position. Both [positions] were brand new.” Mike believes there was a difference in the work during his time as a building-level ELL coach. “When I was [an ELL] building level coach, I had a much better idea of the whole system, how things were working together, [and] the needs of the building.” Both school-based and district ELL coaching positions were described to support the increase in the ELL student population. “We had such a large influx of ELs, so schools needed support...That is what came about [for this position].”

Mike described his roles and responsibilities as unclear at one point in his experience. “Because my role was created there was no expectation behind it. I was given the guidance. They had some ideas down on paper. My supervisor basically said go find what the schools need.” Eventually, he gained clarity on the roles and responsibilities. He found he is to support non-ELL certified teachers in title one schools. “In in my role, I work with our [non-ELL certified], general education, teachers... As far as the way my role is structured, I do more guidance, advising, strategy sessions, and professional development. My position is different from anyone else in this district.” Mike believes the district ELL coach role was created for the district based on teacher needs. “Most of our teachers have not had training in that or they're not ELL certified. We needed somebody [in the district] that can come in and work with our general education teachers, [provide] strategies, brainstorm ideas, etc. That’s where my role came in.” He is responsible for supporting the improvement of instruction for ELLs based on his documentation “...Improve the instruction and academic achievement of English Language Learners in high poverty schools.”

Responsibilities

Mike describes his experiences of coaching activities to support his 12 schools. The coaching activities provide a variety of work with stakeholders. One activity he shares is meeting and collaborating with school administration or building-level coaches. “I essentially make contact [with my 12 schools] every so often mostly through administrators and instructional coaches... Oftentimes when I say to my principal what do you need for me this year, they say we need more training. Principals need me to come and do some after-school professional developments.” Mike also develops his work through requests from teachers. “I also get contacts from individual teachers. I get emails from teachers saying, hey, I need some help.”

Other coaching activities include providing professional developments, walkthroughs, feedback, PLCs, and attending data team meetings for intervention group discussion. “I do professional development as one of the hats I wear. I probably do about 30 professional developments a year. I also include follow ups and walkthroughs.” Most of his professional development topics include strategies and scaffolding instruction based on a specific content area. “I will make presentations of strategies and scaffolding... [for example] schools will say, we're struggling with fourth grade math. Can you come in and do a PD on fourth grade math for English Language Learners?” Mike has also become a support for data team meetings for teacher support. “Then a lot of times schools email, call, or invite me to the data team meeting to be a part of that discussion... I've become the point person on that for questions like, is this appropriate, not appropriate? Do they have enough language to benefit from intervention materials?”

Barriers

As Mike has worked in his ELL coaching role, he expressed experiences of barriers. One barrier is supporting teachers of various beliefs. One examples he described includes a lack of understanding to differentiate or accommodate for ELLs. “The biggest barrier [in my role] is the teacher doesn't see the need [or] they don't understand why they need to differentiate for English Language Learners. That is the attitude that inhibits [my work.]” Another challenge he presented is when scaffolds are not provided within a curriculum. This further causes more work for a teacher to be tasked with.

“Unfortunately, the issue that I do often run into is if the scaffolds aren't already made [for ELLs]. What I'm telling the teacher is we're going to have to do some extra planning... For teachers, when you already feel like you're barely keeping your head above water and time is precious, that can be tough.”

Another barrier presented through his experiences builds upon supporting all 12 of his schools. “The thing is, I don't work at all [12 schools] equally. Some have greater needs than others... If I had to portion it out where I was working with all 12 equally, it would be too much for one person.” His way to navigate his caseload is by focusing on supporting four or five schools closely and consulting with the remainder schools.

“Often, the case is I'll have maybe four or five schools that I'm working with very intensely.” Furthermore, he bases his level of support for schools through monitoring ELL student population demographics of the district. “It seems like every year; our newcomers tend to cluster in certain schools. I guess patterns of settlement... That's when I know I'm going to have to spend a lot of time at those schools this year.”

The final challenge he describes is his personal reflections on his transition from a building-level ELL coach to a district-level ELL coach. Some challenges of that include not knowing the precise needs of a school building. “I don't always know what's happening in the school or what the needs are of the school as well as I would if I was a building [level ELL coach]. Whereas now I'm coming from Central Office, I'm going in a little more blind [and] having to deal with more guesswork.” This further causes challenges in developing ideas for his work to the alignment of the 12 schools. “Sometimes I'll come in with one idea, [but] then a school has started some program and my idea is not going to work with that program. I'm going to have to realign this [idea] to make sure what I'm telling these teachers goes with this program that the principal started.”

Reflections

As Mike reflects on his ELL coaching role, he values supporting ELL students in a practical approach. “I really think I'm a pragmatist. I'm for whatever works. I try to be very flexible and give teachers whatever they need to be successful with their students.” He believes that it is important to provide strategies that are specific to the classroom and student needs. “You're going to have a different set of kids and what works in one classroom may not be that might not be the solution. In other words, I try to be very flexible... I try not to assume I already know what's going on or what the need is. I try to be a good listener.”

Gabriela Hall Story and Themes

Gabriela Hall is an experienced level ELL coach. The title of her role has shifted within the past few years but still aligned with the ELL coach work. Her school assignments have also shifted throughout the years. She currently supports 12 schools in elementary, middle, and high schools that are identified as priority schools. The description of her roles and responsibilities documentation are as follows: “The role of an ELL coach is to build the capacity among leaders, building coaches, and teachers to execute high-quality instruction for all English Language Learners, meeting their academic, linguistic, and cultural needs.” Based on interviews, Gabriela Hall works with all teachers. However, she works closely with ELL-certified teachers. “If I had to estimate a percentage [of who I work with], I would say it is 95% ELL teachers.” The following section provides Gabriela Hall’s story in a way that is synthesized and edited from across her two interviews. Gabriela provides context as to how she makes sense of roles and responsibilities, coaching activities, and the barriers of the work.

Gabriela Hall’s Story

During the time [as an ELL teacher in the district] I had an ELL coach reach out to me. I don't know what the capacity [of an ELL coaches work] was... I don't think there was a particular [ELL] coach that was assigned to my school at that time...I worked with different [ELL] coaches... The district office just had a Bank of ELL coaches that were content-specific... You would make an ELL related request online, whether that was curriculum, scheduling, or whatever it was. Then someone [in the ELL department as an ELL coach] would reach out to me that had some experience in that area I was

requesting... I was the only ELL teacher at the school when I first got there. The first request [I made] was about scheduling. It was my very first year teaching middle school and we couldn't get the schedule worked out. I couldn't figure out what it was. The [ELL] coach helped me with that.

I was content, satisfied, and happy in the [ELL] teacher role... Then the EL specialist who had become the executive director of ELLs reached out to me and said I would like you to interview for the [ELL coach] position... I never would have considered [ELL coaching] for myself, ever [but] because I was asked I considered... The person who asked me to interview thought I had a solid grasp of the content and how to add in ELL strategies. My knowledge of ELL strategies was strong ... I came into the ELL office for a formal conversation with the executive director [and] talked about the qualifications... [ELL coaching] was not even on my radar [and I] was not seeking it at all. We talked about the role, specifically responsibilities, expectations... Then I decided to interview a couple of weeks later... I also interviewed about six other existing [ELL] coaches and people from the ELL Office. When I was trying to make the decision, I read seven books on adult learning theories and facilitating groups. I spent a lot of time before making that decision... [I did] a meditation walk [because] there was a lot of anxiety around leaving the classroom and moving into ELL coaching. [A friend said to me] Gabriela, think of the impact you have on [one school and] potentially have in a district [ELL coaching] role is limitless... I believed her [and] I trusted her.

There was a job description [for an ELL coach in the district], but I felt like it was vague. I wanted more details and interpretation around some of those phrases [in the job description document]. The first year I was in this role [of an ELL coach] we were called

consultants. There were only three of us for secondary... Then I believe that next year the name changed [from consultants] to EL coach. The role shifted as the [ELL] student numbers grew... The schools [assignment] changed my first year [as an ELL coach]. I had 14 schools in middle and high schools within three different clusters... I think the [ELL] office has grown. Our number of English Learners has grown, and personnel of support has grown... I think it's just a numbers game.

Several years ago, I had four schools and they were big with about 500 [EL] students in one case at a school. I had one day at each [of the four] schools. It was good because in terms of getting in with teachers and creating a predictable schedule was great. I say 4 [school assigned] was good. There are five days in a work week, but I treat the district responsibilities as a fifth school. I think one day a week is a really good way to quickly build relationships and everybody knows that every Tuesday the ELL coach going to be here [at one school].

Some of my responsibilities include supporting students' proper placement in scheduled classes by following the guidelines of the high school progression plan and ensuring that students are following the guidelines under state rules. Scheduling is one piece... Another responsibility is supporting compliance pieces, ILP completion, monitoring, and review... Some other things are supporting assessment... That is under compliance as well in terms of making sure everyone is getting tested. [I] also support [the process and planning of] assessments in terms of ACCESS testing.

I must remind myself that I have to be strategic about my support. It is a good exercise to prioritize my time. I visit four [out of the 12] schools regularly and alternate two middle schools, but that also means that I'm consulting with the others [6 schools]. I

am intentional about where I spend my time...I learned quickly that the schedule was the most pressing and immediate thing I had to get in place. I do this on purpose because that was the only way that I can keep it straight in my mind... I do consult with the literacy coach [at the 12 schools]. I do check-ins with the lead ELL Teacher [at the 12 schools]. I also do check-ins with the assistant principals [at the 12 schools].

To serve as an ELL coach, I do it for students. I am rewarded tremendously with my work with students and teachers... I am intrinsically motivated by watching students grow in their language. That's one of the reasons when I first moved into [teaching] ELL and I was so excited because I could see growth from day-to-day or week to week... I really enjoy helping to support teachers [in the ELL coach role]. It's mentorship, coaching, consulting, building relationships, and many other things. I think having a teacher understand that I'm a partner alongside her is really important to me as well... I can quickly give the teacher some small wins, build confidence, and reduce stress in a lot of cases. I see so much stress in this job and the teaching role today. It feels good to be able to help.

There's a list of district responsibilities that we are required to meet, which include supporting other content areas, content support creation, supporting professional developments, and other professional learning... There's also a level of advocacy like connecting students with resources in a [school] building... I build capacity among non-ELL [certified] teachers by building their knowledge around what strategies there are and how they can be delivered across content. I build the knowledge of school leaders in English Learner strategies and knowledge around what should be happening in their classes.

In a typical day, I have done three observations and provide feedback either in person or by e-mail to those teachers [at one of my 12 schools]. It may be leveraging the teacher [by] getting videos of her, and showing them to other teachers, or using her for peer observations... For other teachers, it may be a weekly coaching cycle. I work with one teacher and plan weekly English Language Arts content. I'm able to do a preconference, observe, and follow up weekly... Another piece of information I think is very important is I thank all teachers [I work with]. That's the very first thing I do for letting me visit their classroom... It's recommended that we then give a next step which is bite size piece of feedback. It's supposed to be the highest leverage strategy that the teacher can do, some sort of teacher moves. I include that in my follow up email.

An understanding that I have developed [over the years] is there are limitations in this role. I must be able to manage my feelings and emotions around those limitations. I have accepted that I need to be comfortable with working within a system to improve systems and structures [of priority schools] ... I made a conscious decision to rather than abandon systems to stay in them and work within them... I focus on things that I can do...

I think consultancy and coaching are two different approaches. I think we do both in this current role. I would say it's challenging because I feel like I don't get to everyone [at all 12 schools] ... There are always needs that go unmet, teacher and student needs. I could always be doing more... I recognize that there are limitations because I am only one person... I think it's discouraging. Whenever you see someone not getting what they need it's discouraging... [For example,] if I go in [to one of the schools] and there are two [ELL] students in one class versus across town there is a sheltered class of 27 [ELL] students... It really depends on the needs of the teacher and what can I afford to give in

terms of time [across the 12 schools] ... It's the same way when you look out and you're delivering a lesson to students and you see a student not getting what he or she needs, it feels discouraging, right? It feels like I can't do enough. I think discouraging is the word I would say. It still feels discouraging all these years later. It doesn't go away. There is a level of acceptance around it, but it's still I wish I could do more.

It's about teacher needs as well. Equitable [to me] would mean giving teachers the type of support that they need...I look at the number of students that a teacher has, and the language proficiency levels of those students. I often consider the native language of students as well or the home country. Sometimes that gives additional information that's useful in terms of my support because it allows me to think about leveraging first language support or not.

I was working with a teacher open to getting some information about a student who was not complying with her request. The [ELL] student was not making any language or academic growth... She asked for some feedback on that. "What I noticed [after observing] was that she was selecting students from African countries, primarily ELLs, and singling them out... The language and tone the teacher was using was always negative, meaning most of her interactions with the students [were negative] ... The two or three students that she had concerns about had negative interactions. I was able to tally that information in an observation. Then I captured her words and phrases... In the follow up meeting I was able to say I noticed this. I asked if she had any thoughts on that. I would not have taken that step with a teacher if I didn't think she was ready for that conversation. In fact, even having a trusting relationship I said that I observed some things that may be hard to discuss. Are you comfortable with us discussing them? She

gave me permission, so it was a trusting relationship and I asked her for her permission to go there.

The coach role is really important. Let's say coaches more [ELL] coaches are needed. Coaching can be tricky because I work out of the district level. I have one foot in schools and so managing [district work and 12 schools] can be quite tricky at times... [as an ELL coach I am able] to see growth and I'm working in a couple of high schools. I see 15- and 18-year-old boys and girls about to be launched into this world. Those are our people. Those are the ones who are going as our next group of brilliant minds. They are going to work on the problems we've created and bring creative solutions to some of the messes that they will inherit and encounter. It is a big responsibility to think that the clock is ticking, especially for high schoolers. We must get as much language and content to them so that they can go and do whatever it is that they wish to do in the world. The kids are my why, supporting teachers, and supporting students feels really good too.

Learning from Gabriela Hall's Story

Gabriela provided descriptive stories of her experiences and the meaning of the ELL coach role from her perspectives. In this section, four themes are identified and described from an analysis of Gabriela's interviews that reflect the sequence of her story. These themes include roles, responsibilities, barriers, and reflections. The themes are presented as learning that was gained by investigating the experiences of Gabriela.

Roles

Gabriela's story begins by sharing the experiences she had from a teacher's perspective working with an ELL coach. In the beginning, there was a lack of understanding in her view of what an ELL coach did, and which ELL coach supported specific schools. "During the time [as an ELL teacher in the district] I had an ELL coach reach out to me. I don't know what the capacity [of an ELL coaches work] was." Additionally, ELL coaches were described as supporting a specific need and based the work on requested submissions from teachers or schools. "The district office just had a bank of ELL coaches that were content-specific... You would make an ELL related request online, whether that was curriculum, scheduling, or whatever it was." One experience Gabriela shared working with an ELL coach was a request for support in scheduling ELL services. "The first request [I made] was about scheduling... The [ELL] coach helped me with that."

Gabriela further described her experiences of transition from an ELL teacher to an ELL coach. She explained that she was fulfilled in her ELL teacher role. "I was content, satisfied, and happy in the [ELL] teacher role." However, Gabriela was asked to interview for the ELL coaching position. "...The ELL specialist who had become the executive director of ELLs reached out to me and said I would like you to interview for the [ELL coach] position." Gabriela expressed that she did not take this decision lightly. She was content in the classroom and further investigated a variety of activities to support her decision making. Some of the activities included interviewing members of the ELL office, conversations with the executive director, meditation walks, and reading books about adult learning theories. "I also interviewed about six other existing [ELL] coaches

and people from the ELL Office.” Gabriela described that she did not think about entering the ELL coaching role prior to being asked. “I never would have considered [ELL coaching] for myself, ever... [ELL coaching] was not even on my radar [and I] was not seeking it at all.” Based on interviews, Gabriela thinks she was asked to interview for the ELL coach role because of her knowledge. “The person who asked me to interview thought I had a solid grasp of the content and how to add in ELL strategies. My knowledge of ELL strategies was strong.”

As Gabriela continued to share her story, she then reflected on her experiences during the first few years of ELL coaching. Gabriela transitioned to an ELL coach and wanted to seek more information about the roles and responsibilities of the work. “There was a job description [for an ELL coach in the district], but I felt like it was vague. I wanted more details and interpretation around some of those phrases [in the job description document].” She further explains that over time the titles have shifted. “The first year I was in this role [of an ELL coach] we were called consultants... Then I believe that next year the name changed [from consultants] to ELL coach.” She believes this title shift could be related to how the work of role has changed over time and the increase of the ELL student population. “The role shifted as the [ELL] student numbers grew... The schools [assignments] changed my first year [as an ELL coach] ... I think the [ELL] office has grown. Our number of English Learners has grown, and [ELL] personnel of support has grown.”

Responsibilities

Based on Gabriela’s experiences of ELL coaching, a variety of coaching activities were provided in her context. Some of the work is divided into the lens of school-based

support and district-based support. Some district-based coaching activities she described include collaboration with district content departments, creating professional development for the district, and supporting content. “There's a list of district responsibilities that we are required to meet, which include supporting other content areas, content support creation, supporting professional developments, and other professional learning.”

She also described coaching activities that take place based on school support. One school-based support she shared was scheduling based on state guidelines or state assessments. “Some of my responsibilities include supporting students’ proper placement in scheduled classes by following the guidelines of the high school progression plan and ensuring that students are following the guidelines under state rule...[I] also support [the process and planning of] assessments in terms of ACCESS testing.” Other activities include support in ILPs, Individual Learning Plans that are state designed to track ELL progression. “Another responsibility is supporting compliance pieces, ILP completion, monitoring, and review.” Gabriela also consults with building-level coaches, ELL team lead teachers, and administration to guide her work. “I do consult with the literacy coach [at the 12 schools]. I do check-ins with the lead ELL Teacher [at the 12 schools]. I also do check-ins with the assistant principals [at the 12 schools].”

Other coaching activities include building the capacity of ELL knowledge to support teachers. “I build the knowledge of school leaders in English Learner strategies and knowledge around what should be happening in their classes... I build capacity among non-ELL [certified] teachers by building their knowledge...I can quickly give the teacher some small wins, build confidence, and reduce stress in a lot of cases.” Gabriela

also finds that coaching activities consisted of connecting ELL students to specific resources. “There's also a level of advocacy like connecting students with resources in a [school] building.” Finally, she described other activities as conducting observations with feedback, coaching cycles, and lesson planning. “In a typical day, I have done three observations and provide feedback either in person or by e-mail to those teachers [at one of my 12 schools] ... For other teachers, it may be a weekly coaching cycle...I work with one teacher and plan weekly English Language Arts content. I'm able to do a pre-conference, observe, and follow up weekly.”

Barriers

Throughout Gabriela's experiences as an ELL coach, she shared some barriers to the work. Gabriela explained two barriers she has encountered in the work. One challenge she provided is that she feels there are *limitations* in the ELL coaching role. “An understanding that I have developed [over the years] is there are limitations in this role... I would say it's challenging because I feel like I don't get to everyone [at all 12 schools] ... There are always needs that go unmet, teacher and student needs.”

However, Gabriela tries to focus on what she can do and provide in terms of support. “It really depends on the needs of the teacher and what can I afford to give in terms of time [across the 12 schools].” She further realized that a developed schedule is an important tool to navigate her work. “I must remind myself that I have to be strategic about my support. It is a good exercise to prioritize my time. I visit four [out of the 12] schools regularly and alternate two middle schools, but that also means that I'm consulting with the others [6 schools] ...I learned quickly that the schedule was the most pressing and immediate thing I had to get in place. “Although she experienced these

feelings years ago, she explains that this challenge has not altered. “It still feels discouraging all these years later. It doesn't go away. There is a level of acceptance around it, but it's still I wish I could do more.”

As Gabriela reflected on her ELL coaching experiences, she believed her past school assignments were a good fit for the work. “Several years ago, I had four schools ...I had one day at each [of the four] schools. It was good because in terms of getting in with teachers and creating a predictable schedule was great.” She believes that her four school assignments supported her coaching role. “I say 4 [school assigned] was good...I think one day a week is a really good way to quickly build relationships and everybody knows that every Tuesday the EL coach going to be here [at one school].”

The other barrier Gabriela shared was an experience of a critical conversation with a teacher. The teacher requested feedback on a non-compliant ELL student. “I was working with a teacher open to getting some information about a student who was not complying with her request. The [ELL] student was not making any language or academic growth.” In her observations, she explained that some of the ELL students were experiencing negative interactions with the teacher. “What I noticed [after observing] was that she was selecting students from African countries, primarily ELLs, and singling them out... The language and tone the teacher was using was always negative, meaning most of her interactions with the students [were negative].” Gabriela proceeded to a conversation with the teacher about the observation. “I said that I observed some things that may be hard to discuss. Are you comfortable with us discussing them? She gave me permission.”

Reflections

In final reflections, Gabriela expresses how gratifying ELL coaching is for her. “To serve as an ELL coach, I do it for students. I am rewarded tremendously with my work with students and teachers... I see so much stress in this job and the teaching role today. It feels good to be able to help... I really enjoy helping to support teachers [in the ELL coach role].” She further expands her view of the importance an ELL coach has. “The coach role is really important. Let's say coaches more [ELL] coaches are needed.” She believes ELL students should be supported so they can be productive beings in the world after their high school education. “I see 15- and 18-year-old boys and girls about to be launched into this world... Those are the ones who are going as our next group of brilliant minds... It is a big responsibility to think that the clock is ticking... We must get as much language and content to them so that they can go and do whatever it is that they wish to do in the world.” Gabriela finds that ELL coaching is her calling in life because of how it makes her feel. “The kids are my why, supporting teachers, and supporting students feels really good too.”

Chapter 5: Conclusion

“Instructional coaches are on the rise in cores subjects like mathematics and literacy, but we know little about the nature of EL-focused instructional coaching” (Russel, 2015, p. 28). The purpose of this study investigated how ELL coaches defined, described, and interpreted their roles to engage in findings for this new phenomenon. This dissertation responded to a call to build the capacity of educators in the teaching and learning of the ELL student population (Fillmore & Snow, 2003). As such, I addressed the research question, “how do ELL coaches define, describe, and interpret their role in supporting teachers of linguistically diverse students?”

In this dissertation so far, I introduced and shared the significance of the study in Chapter one. I introduced the problem of limited learning opportunities for ELL students and the importance of examining the new phenomenon of the ELL coach. In Chapter two, I reviewed the literature including the Linguistically Responsive Teaching framework, increasing learning opportunities of Linguistically Responsive Teaching practices, and conceptualizing coaching. In Chapter three, I explained the research design including the phenomenological interview processes, Chapter four shared findings and presented individualized vignettes of each participant along with common themes to answer the research question.

Chapter five will look at each participant to discuss the common and unique perceptions of the work and role of an ELL coach. I also included connections to the framework of Linguistically Responsive Teaching to look at the participants. Next, I present six overarching themes. These themes include 1) Transitions to ELL coach, 2) ELL Coaches Engaging in Coaching Activities, 3) ELL Coach Collaboration with

Stakeholders, 4) Barriers to Being an ELL Coach, 5) the Uniqueness of the Role, and 6) ELL Coaching Beliefs. This chapter concludes with recommendations based on the experiences of these coaches and the next steps for research.

Transitions to ELL Coach

In *table 3*, four experiences are located across the top row to further describe the transitions of becoming an ELL coach. Each experience listed was found common for at least three to four out of the five ELL coaches. The experiences are further expanded by terms such as: role created, request to interview, unclear roles and responsibilities, and shifts of the work. The check marks indicate findings of the experiences based on the participants interview transcripts. However, if a check mark is not present it should not be assumed that this experience did not exist. To elaborate further, it means that I did not find evidence of the experiences in the transcripts.

The first column presents four out of the five ELL coach roles were created. Within the second column, three out of five ELL coaches were requested to interview for the position. The third column displays four of the five ELL coaches found the roles and responsibilities as unclear at some point during the work. Finally, the fourth column found three of the five ELL coaches experienced shifts of the work.

Table 3

ELL Coach	Role Created	Request to Interview	Unclear Roles and Responsibilities	Shifts of Work
Michelle Andrews	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maria Jackson	✓		✓	
Danielle James				✓
Mike Carter	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gabriela Hall	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3: ELL coach transitions into the role includes four experiences of role created, unclear roles and responsibilities, request to interview, and shifts of the work

One common trend of the role created found the development of ELL coaches within two categories. Those developments include the creation of the ELL coaching role or adding more ELL coaches to a department. This was the prevalent finding for four of the five participants. Michelle Andrews and Mike Carter's roles were created in their districts. "The district basically invented the job... We had such a large influx of ELLs, so schools needed support... That is what came about [for this position]" Mike Carter. Gabriela Hall and Maria Jackson were added to the ELL coaching role to expand the department. "The supervisor [of the ELL department] was requesting that [ELL coaching] positions be added" Maria Jackson.

However, both perspectives of developing positions aligned to a commonality of supporting the increasing number of the ELL student population in their districts. This

population has consistently displayed a rapid increase over decades (Pandya et al., 2011; & Wortham et al., 2002). Furthermore, it is found that many preservice and Inservice teachers are not equipped to meet the needs of ELL students (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). The findings of this research provided insight into diverse districts in Tennessee as an actionable step to navigate support for the increase of that population.

These action steps were innovative and proactive as the districts displayed an understanding of the need to support the ELL student population. This further connects to the conceptual framework of Lucas and Villegas (2013) in Linguistically Responsive Teaching. Furthermore, it captures the elements of both orientations and pedagogy of the framework. For example, the districts exhibited indicators of valuing linguistically diverse students by adding ELL coaching roles, which is an orientation of the framework. Additionally, the pedagogy of the framework was captured as means of providing strategies to support linguistic and academic demands in the classroom.

The next common experience found three out of the five participants were requested to interview for the position. That included Michelle Andrews, Mike Carter, and Gabriella Hall. Although the participants were asked to interview, the perception developed by the request varied. For instance, some participants were hesitant about the idea at first for various explanations. "I never would have considered [ELL coaching] for myself, ever [but] because I was asked, I considered... I was content, satisfied, and happy in the [ELL] teacher role" Gabriela Hall. "They ended up calling me back and saying they really wanted me for the position" Michelle Andrews. However, one participant made explicit connections to how he conducted ELL-coach like activities while in the ELL teacher role. "I did a few PDs and things after school on a volunteer basis [during

teaching ELLs.] ... I already had tendency to do training for other teachers” Mike Carter. This concept links to the literature found as ELL teachers are viewed to be the leaders of ELL instruction in a school building. “The ESL teacher was an influential provider of EL-related advice or information” (Hopkins, et al., 2019, p. 2313). The final commonality found within this experience is the ELL coaches were identified as experts or knowledgeable in the ELL teacher role, thus were requested to interview for the position. “The person who asked me to interview thought I had a solid grasp of the content and how to add in ELL strategies” Gabriela Hall.

The third common experience found included a need for clarity in the roles and responsibilities of ELL coaching at some point during the work. This was found in four participant’s transcripts which are Michelle Andrews, Maria Jackson, Mike Carter, and Gabriela Hall. There were two subcategories presented in this experience that were: gaining clarity and the districts developing visions of the role simultaneously. Two participants referred to their roles and responsibilities documents but found it unclear during the transition from teaching to ELL coaching. “[When I first started ELL coaching] I thought the job description was a little vague” Maria Jackson. “There was a job description [for an ELL coach in the district], but I felt like it was vague. I wanted more details and interpretation around some of those phrases [in the job description document]” Gabriela Hall. Gabriela provided further context on how she gained clarity by asking those already in the role or members of the ELL office prior to transitioning. “I also interviewed about six other existing [ELL] coaches and people from the ELL Office” Gabriela Hall. These participants purposefully explored more information about their role to gain further clarity.

The other two participant's perspectives provide context for the districts launching the vision of the ELL coach role. This launch of vision is connected to the invention of the roles in the districts simultaneously. "Because my role was created there was no expectation behind it. I was given the guidance. They had some ideas down on paper. My supervisor basically said go find what the schools need" Mike Carter. Michelle Andrews adds, "Let's say this [ELL coaching role] is new... The position was new to the district... The role was not clearly defined on what the district wanted it to look like."

Based on the findings of the literature review, it is not uncommon for various types of coaches to express unclear roles and responsibilities for decades. Taylor (2008) argues that there has not been an established definition of coaching. Aguilar (2013) adds "the title *coach* has been loosely and widely applied in the field of education" (p.18). This enhances the complications in development with the ELL coach role as findings displayed that districts created or added more ELL coaches. Since this is a new phenomenon of a role to districts, the vision of the ELL coaching role appeared to endure a development stage as the work progresses. This subsequently shifts to the final common experience found.

The final experience found three shifts that include titles, work of an ELL coach, or both. This was found in transcripts of Michelle Andrews, Danielle James, Mike Carter, and Gabriela Hall. The commonality of the shifts found to explore the various paths districts conducted to support the ELL student population. Michelle Andrews has encountered title shifts within the work. "...The title [of my position] has changed so many times. When I came on, [my supervisor] said you are the ELL coach." Danielle James provided insight to the scope of work based on her learning during teaching.

“Before then, [2015], ELL coaches did not do very much in the buildings I worked in”
Danielle James.

Mike Carter and Gabriela Hall encountered titles and the scope of ELL coach work shifts. Both participants expressed that the shifts of titles and roles were to accommodate the transition of the ELL student population increase. Mike Carter was a building-level ELL coach for one year and then transitioned to a district-level ELL coach serving 12 schools. The building-level ELL coach position was omitted after Mike completed that academic school year. “The first year I was an ELL coach it was at an elementary school that had the largest percentage of ELLs... and then moved up to this district level [ELL coach] position. Both [positions] were brand new” Mike Carter.

Gabriela Hall experienced alike patterns to Mike Carter as far as the title and scope of work shifts. A connection to a statement provided by Danielle James provided more context to an ELL coach work while Gabriela was a teacher. “I don't think there was a particular [ELL] coach that was assigned to my school at that time. The district office just had a Bank of ELL coaches that were content-specific... You would make an ELL related request online” Gabriela Hall. As Gabriella transitioned to an ELL coach, she experienced the title and work shifts. “The first year I was in this role [of an ELL coach] we were called consultants... The role shifted as the [ELL] student numbers grew... The school [assignments] changed my first year [as an ELL coach]. I had 14 schools in middle and high school” Gabriela Hall.

These shifts of title, the scope of work, or both align with the conceptual framework of Linguistically Responsive Teaching orientations (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). To provide specificity, it ties to valuing linguistic diversity. As stated previously, districts

either created or added ELL coaches to support the ELL student population. Not only did the districts develop or add to the ELL coach role, but shifts were found to sustain the support necessary for the increasing population. This provides insight into how the districts value coaches as a tool. Based on the literature review, coaches help improve instructional performance and can be an intervention of support (Marzano et al., 2013 & Gawande, 2011). The districts developmentally created the title and shifted the roles to accommodate the ELL student population.

ELL Coach Activities

Below in *Table 4*, provides findings of common experiences in ELL coaching activities. Coaching activities were provided in four categories of experiences. As stated previously, the check marks indicate findings of the experiences based on the participants interview transcripts. However, if a check mark is not present it should not be assumed that this experience did not exist. To elaborate further, it means that I did not find evidence of the experiences in the transcripts.

The interview series allowed exploration of defining and describing the ELL coach role with examples of their work. The participants provided a variety of coaching activities that they engaged in. Those four experiences of coaching activities are providing learning opportunities, observations and feedback, modeling or coaching cycles, and planning. In the first column, learning opportunities were provided by four out of the five ELL coaches. Within the second column, all ELL coaches shared experiences of observation and feedback. The third column of modeling or coaching cycle was found as a common coaching activity for four out of the five ELL coaches.

Finally, the fourth column of planning was found common for all five ELL coaches.

Table 4

ELL Coach	Learning Opportunities	Observation and Feedback	Modeling or Coaching Cycle	Planning
Michelle Andrews		✓	✓	✓
Maria Jackson	✓	✓	✓	✓
Danielle James	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mike Carter	✓	✓		✓
Gabriela Hall	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 4: ELL coaching activities trends included providing learning opportunities, observations and feedback, modeling or coaching cycle, and planning

The first experience involved four out of five of the ELL coaches. Maria Jackson, Danielle James, Mike Carter, and Gabriela Hall all engaged in providing learning opportunities in the context of professional learning. Although the content of the learning varied, each ELL coach was responsible for leading learning in their district. “I do professional development as one of the hats I wear. I probably do about 30 professional developments a year” Mike Carter. The topics of learning opportunities captured included providing strategies or accommodations to content or curriculum for ELLs, co-teaching, WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework (2020), and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). “Schools might say, can you come in and do a

PD on how to adapt our elementary reading curriculum for English Language Learners? I'll come in and do a PD on that..." Mike Carter. "I also offer professional learning communities that is training around different ELL best practices and strategies" Danielle James.

Two ELL coaches provide further context as to the attended audience of the ELL-based learning opportunities. Danielle James and Gabriela Hall have responsibilities of providing school-based and district-based learning. Danielle explained, "I am on the professional development committee for the district where I review courses... I also serve as the coach lead for two PDs [that are delivered to the district]." She produces content of opportunities for learning in the entire district. Gabriella Hall adds, "There's a list of district responsibilities that we are required to meet, which include supporting other content areas, content support creation, supporting professional developments, and other professional learning." She is also responsible for creating content for learning opportunities in the entire district.

Based on the learning opportunities, connections are discovered through various aspects. Those connections are evident in the conceptual framework and the literature review. An explicit connection of the learning opportunities involves the entire conceptual framework of Linguistically Responsive Teaching (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). These learning opportunities align with both the orientation and pedagogy. The ELL coaches exhibit an orientation indicator by advocating for ELLs in a sense of instructional practices. For example, the ELL coaches provide learning on how to accommodate the curriculum for ELLs to access the content. This work is advocacy to assure ELLs are successful and provided equitable learning. The pedagogy of the

framework is also relevant because the ELL coaches provide scaffolds of instruction for ELLs. ELL coaches understand second language acquisition, language demands of the classroom, and share the knowledge for the instructional purpose of supporting ELLs.

The findings also compare or contrast to elements of the literature review in several ways. One evident link is the topics of learning opportunities offered. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, SIOP, was a topic offered in several studies in the literature (Beck, 2017; Burr, 2017 & Morel, 2019). The SIOP topic remains within the learning context for ELL instruction years later based on this study. Other links are found in providing learning around practices and strategies for ELLs (Chisholm, 2020 & Alvarez, 2020).

On the other hand, several components contrast with the findings of the literature review. Based on Hopkins et al. (2015) and Kane (2020), there were limited ELL learning opportunities for the content of math. However, the findings of this study provided math learning opportunities. For example, Mike Carter supported the math curriculum based on school requests. “[Another example is] schools will say, we’re struggling with fourth-grade math. Can you come in and do a PD on fourth-grade math for English Language Learners?” Mike Carter. Another disconnection from the literature framed limited ELL learning opportunities overall (Weedle et al., 2021). “The overwhelming response was that the ESL training did not exist during the teacher certification process nor during school- or district- based PD” (Butcher, 2020, p.84).” In contrast, four out of five ELL coaches provided learning opportunities as a component that defines the work.

The second coaching activity that was a common experience included conducting classroom observations and providing feedback. This activity was found common among all participants. The observations are conducted for diverse purposes which include determining district trends, school-based trends, or individual teacher support. “[When observing classrooms, I use] our ELL Walk-through tool and I go into all our classes or ELL classes [of the 13 schools] to look for instructional trends across the district” Michelle Andrews. The ELL coaches find value in providing feedback to support their work. “It's recommended that we then give a next step which is bite-size piece of feedback. It's supposed to be the highest leverage strategy that the teacher can do, some sort of teacher moves” Gabriela Hall.

This coaching activity links directly to the pedagogy framework of Linguistically Responsive Teaching (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). The ELL coaches gather data from observations of classrooms. As the ELL coaches provide feedback, the pedagogy of the framework extends upon the ELL strategies, scaffolding instruction, identifying language demands, and more based on the observations. In disconnection with the literature review, ELL coaches provide opportunities for teachers to get feedback based on the pedagogy of teaching ELLs. “I would really like that one expert in teaching ELLs to come into my classroom, give me sustained feedback in the course of a year would be optimal” (Beck, 2017, p. 163). This study found that all ELL coaches constructed their roles in a way to provide the feedback needed for ELL instruction.

The third experience of coaching activities includes modeling or conducting coaching cycles. This was described as an activity for four out of the five participants which are Michelle Andrews, Maria Jackson, Danielle James, and Gabriela Hall.

Although this was a common theme, the ELL coaches described different stages of these coaching activities. For example, Michelle Andrews described the implementation of coaching cycles in her work recently. “I’m trying out my coaching cycle so working through that with a teacher... We plan to lesson plan this weekend. Today was his first day teaching the lesson and it went well” Michelle Andrews. While Maria Jackson described a differentiated support of modeling or coaching cycles based on the years of experience. “We’ve been talking a lot about coaching cycles, and then sometimes what we’re doing with new [ELL certified] teachers really wouldn’t fit the definition of a coaching cycle because sometimes it is survival support.” Furthermore, Maria finds herself conducting more coaching cycles recently. “It’s [a lot of coaching cycles this year] because we have a new curriculum” Maria. Danielle James provided a different aspect in her work, “I have a lot of coaching conversations with teachers and sometimes they turn into coaching cycles.”

The ELL coach work of modeling or coaching cycles connects to the conceptual framework of Linguistically Responsive Teaching pedagogy (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). “I am doing coaching cycles based on instructional things. They’re working on the kinds of student discourse. We’re going through planning, I do some observation, and give feedback” Maria Jackson. This example provides findings of coaching cycles that identify linguistic demands and discourse of a lesson with a focus on ELLs. Coaching cycles support teachers engage in practices of pedagogy for ELLs with an expert. In opposition, these findings go against the literature review of limited learning opportunities for ELLs stated previously (Butcher, 2020 & Weedle et al., 2021). Additionally, coaching cycles have been a general coaching activity for teachers to

engage in to strengthen their practices and take risks with strategies (Joyce & Showers, 1996, & Knight 2009). Based on this study, the ELL coaches were engaging in those activities with the lens of Linguistically Responsive Teaching pedagogy.

The fourth and final experience of coaching activities described by the ELL coaches was attending collaborative or one on one planning. This activity was found common for all five of the ELL coaches. Within this activity, descriptions for the purpose of this work were stated in diverse views. For instance, Maria Jackson has found planning as a major component of her work due to shifts of the curriculum in her district. “I am really doing a lot of planning together and just figuring out what do ELL students need to function in the classroom... because we have a new curriculum.” Danielle James attends collaborative planning as it is embedded into her team ELL coaching goals. “Our three [ELL team coach] goals are to build capacity around best ELL practices, plan for ELL supports, and the execution of ELL supports. The biggest ones that I've done so far this year is sit in collaborative planning [at my four schools] and help talk through [ELL] support.”

These coaching activities align with the conceptual framework of Linguistically Responsive teaching pedagogy as well (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). The coaches are working alongside teachers to support the planning process for ELLs. “We are just walking through basic scaffolds, strategies, and lesson planning that they can do to help their English Language Learners” Mike Carter. Furthermore, these activities, once again, contrast with the literature review of limited opportunities to work alongside an ELL expert in the planning process (Weedle et al., 2021 & Stairs-Davenport, 2021).

ELL Coaches Collaboration with Stakeholders

Another concept that was found to support ELL coaches in defining and describing their work includes a collaboration of ELL coaches and stakeholders. This was a common theme among all five of the ELL coaches and a core component of leveraging their work. However, the goal of collaboration was interpreted from diverse views. Those views consisted of determining the topic of support, working with other departments within the districts, and levels or requests of ELL coaching support. ELL coaches collaborate to determine the needs of a school building with various stakeholders. One of the most prominent finding is ELL coaches working with administration. “The principal is the leader of instruction in the building.... I meet with the principal to walk through professional learning that they want. What do they want me to focus on?” Danielle James. “Oftentimes when I say to my principal what do you need for me this year, they say we need more training. Principals need me to come and do some after-school professional developments” Mike Carter. Michelle Andrews describes another way she collaborates with the administration to build knowledge of ELL practices. “I feel like our administrators [at the 13 schools] don't know what exactly to look for in the ELL box...I'm coaching them as well to say this is what you should be seeing in the ELL block.”

ELL coaches also collaborate with other departments in their districts. Some examples of collaboration include working with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), literacy, or math departments. “I'm just now getting to really collaborate with our district lead literacy coaches” Danielle James. Mike Carter collaborates with the MTSS department for ELL guidance of intervention tiers. “There's our referral process to

move ELLs from tier one and tier two [intervention]. A lot of times there's a lot of questions around English Language Learners... Do they have enough language to benefit from intervention materials?"

The final description of collaboration among ELL coaches supports the work of determining the level or requests of support. ELL coaches collaborate with stakeholders to determine their work schedules. "I essentially make contact [with my 12 schools] every so often mostly through administrators and instructional coaches because all our buildings have instructional coaches... I also get contacts from individual teachers. I get emails from teachers saying I need some help" Mike Carter. Danielle James adds that the collaboration supports the diverse need of each school. "It's very tailored to the needs of the school...I collaborate much more with building level coaches than administrators [at my four schools] because building level coaches have more of a pulse of what's going on in the building" Danielle James. The collaboration component of an ELL coach work provides insight into tailoring learning opportunities to school needs, which is found as recommendations based on the literature review (Ballard, 2016; Kane, 2020; & Weedle et al., 2021). However, ELL coaches also describe the unique challenges of collaboration with stakeholders. This provides a transitional point of the study in a view of perceptions in the work.

Barriers to ELL Coaching

ELL coaches were able to provide further descriptions and interpretations of their work. In this section, ELL coaches described common experiences to barriers. There are two overarching barriers to the work that will be explored in this section which are the

equity of supporting school assignments and interactions of stakeholders that display a lack of Linguistically Responsive Teaching practices. In *Table 5* listed below, a synthesis of experience to barriers is described in three terms. However, this table further elaborates on how ELL coaches navigate the barriers of the work within columns two and three. As stated previously, the check marks indicate findings of the experiences based on the participants interview transcripts. However, if a check mark is not present it should not be assumed that this experience did not exist. To elaborate further, it means that I did not find evidence of the experiences in the transcripts.

Within column one, all five of the ELL coaches described experiences to barriers to serving multiple school assignments. However, columns two and three provided context as to how the ELL coaches work through that barrier. Column two provided the experiences of two ELL coaches that base their workload from the requests of stakeholders. The third column described that four out of the five ELL coaches shared experiences of working with a few schools explicitly and consulting with the remainder schools on their caseloads.

Table 5

ELL Coach	Barriers of School Assignments	Base Work from Requests	Works explicitly with few schools/consults with remainder
Michelle Andrews	✓	✓	
Maria Jackson	✓	✓	✓
Danielle James	✓		✓
Mike Carter	✓		✓
Gabriela Hall	✓		✓

Table 5: ELL coaches' barriers and navigation of workloads: barriers of school assignments, work directed from request of stakeholders, work with a few assigned schools closely, and consult with remainder school assignments

All five of the ELL coaches described barriers of equity to support their school caseloads within their perceptions. These barriers are factored by two findings which are the number of school assignments and balancing ELL coaching and district-level responsibilities. Michelle Andrews, Maria Jackson, Mike Carter, and Gabriela Hall described challenges around the number of school assignments. “The thing is, I don't work at all [12 schools] equally. Some have greater needs than others... If I had to portion it out where I was working with all 12 Equally, it would be too much for one person...” Mike Carter. Mike further adds by having multiple schools it is a challenge to determine the specific needs of all his schools. “The biggest challenge I have [in this role] is I'm not in those [12] schools on a daily basis. I don't always know what's happening in

the school or what the needs are of the school as well as I would if I was a building [level ELL coach]. When I was [an ELL] building level coach, I had a much better idea of the whole system, how things were working together, [and] the needs of the building. Whereas now I'm coming from Central Office, I'm going in a little more blind [and] having to deal with more guesswork.”

Gabriela Hall adds her perspective of the challenge being discouraging. “I would say it's challenging because I feel like I don't get to everyone [at all 12 schools] ... There are always needs that go unmet, teacher and student needs. I could always be doing more... I recognize that there are limitations because I am only one person... I think it's discouraging.” The second barrier of equity with school support found was balancing the school-based and district responsibilities within the role. “I try to create my workload [of support for my four schools] to an even share of my time... I prioritize my week... That is not always the case based upon the needs right now... Sometimes there are more district-level responsibilities that pop up during the week...” Danielle James.

Although the ELL coaches describe challenges of serving multiple school assignments or responsibilities, some ELL coaches were able to provide ways they navigate these barriers. There were two common themes among four of the ELL coaches, which are a request for support or working with a few schools closely and consulting with the remaining number of school assignments. Michelle Andrews and Maria Jackson described supporting schools that request ELL coaching. Both ELL coaches found their work more impactful by using this strategy. “When general education teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, principals, [at schools] ask me to come, it was more productive because then I can prepare” Michelle Andrews. “I feel like if teachers

were reaching out and asking me to come, I would come...To be honest, it tends to be the schools [out of the 12] that reach out and are willing to put that time and planning. I prioritize some time for those schools” Maria Jackson.

Maria Jackson, Danielle James, Mike Carter, and Gabriela Hall provided insight of working with a few schools intensely and/or consulting with the remainder. “There are a couple of schools [out of the 12] on my list that you check in with them and they just tell you everything's fine. We communicate through email” Maria Jackson. “We [as district ELL coaches] do more consulting versus a building level coach has more accountability [in their school] as well” Danielle James. “Often, the case is I'll have maybe four or five schools that I'm working with very intensely” Mike Carter. “I visit four [out of the 12] schools regularly and alternate two middle schools, but that also means that I'm consulting with the others [6 schools] ... I think consultancy and coaching are two different approaches. I think we do both in this current role.” Gabriela Hall.

This challenge was pressing for all five of the ELL coaches. However, Maria Jackson, Danielle James, and Gabriela Hall were able to define a vision of equity for their role in supporting schools. Similar traits were described in their visions by incorporating several components. Some of those components include a caseload ratio of ELL coach to ELL teachers, ELL students, teacher experience, schedules, and more. “I guess in a perfect world I say everybody [all 12 schools] would have access to the same amount of [ELL coaching] support. If you think about [ELL] student numbers and student needs, every student no matter what school they were at, would have ideally the same excellent instruction... Teachers would have as much support as they needed which, really can vary depending on teacher experience, number of students, and schedules...” Maria

Jackson. “I think it would be helpful to have a caseload ratio [for ELL coaching support] ...They could have ELL teachers of a ratio of 1 ELL coach to 35 ELL teachers. There's a ratio of one ELL coach to 750 active ELL [students]” Danielle James. “It's about teacher needs as well. Equitable [to me] would mean giving teachers the type of support that they need...I look at the number of students that a teacher has, and the language proficiency levels of those students. I often consider the native language of students as well or home country” Gabriela Hall.

The number of schools an ELL coach is assigned has been found as a common challenge among the districts of this study, as well as presented in the literature. Weedle et al., (2019) captured findings of ELL coaches transitioning from a building-level to a district ELL coaching position in California. This meant schools had a building-level ELL coach in previous years but transitioned to multiple school assignments. “The transition from site-based coaches to a smaller team of centralized coaches decreased teachers’ access to EL-specific knowledge and resources, constraining their development of social capital” (Weedle et al., 2021, p. 8). Further findings described teachers views of the shifts. Teachers found the ELL students were harmed the most, yet teachers wanted the ELL coach’s support. Furthermore, the literature consistently finds that there are limited learning opportunities in the topic of instructional practices that best support ELLs, as this is not a new phenomenon (Ballard, 2016; Beches, 2021; Beck, 2017; Butcher, 2020; Fairchild, 2019; Francheschini-Kern (2016); Hopkins et al 2015; Hopkins et al, 2019; Kane, 2020; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017; & Stairs-Davenport, 2021).

The second barrier found as common experience for Michelle Andrews, Danielle James, Mike Carter, and Gabriela Hall explores interactions with stakeholders that lack

Linguistically Responsive Teaching practices. Each experience can be viewed with unique descriptions; however, all interactions provide examples of bias or lack of Linguistically Responsive Teaching framework. Danielle James' example provides insight to Lucas & Villegas (2013) orientations and pedagogy by lacking values for linguistic diversity and strategies. "... Instead of saying they [ELL students] can't read [or], they can't do it...It is they can!" This example provides a context of teachers exhibiting deficit-based mindsets to linguistically diverse students. However, Danielle executes orientations of the framework by advocating and valuing linguistically diverse students within her response.

Throughout the work, Michelle Andrews shared experiences with a lack of Linguistically Responsive Teaching practices from some teachers. "...they don't understand our [ELL] students... High expectations for our [ELL] students, I think that's what we're [as a district] missing ... I think it [the teaching] is watered down...Some of our teachers have a thought process or thinking about our [ELL] students that they're lazy or the parents don't care. I go in [a classroom] and I see an EL student who has no access. The teacher doesn't know them. The teacher doesn't understand them. It's just not right. Some [teachers] don't know our kids and where they're coming from...Some [of the district] does not have really high expectations within our team [of ELL teachers] because some don't believe the kids can do it." These experiences that are described in merged vignettes frame upon a lack of both the orientations and pedagogy Lucas and Villegas framework (2013).

Michelle described her experiences of working with some teachers that water down the curriculum or did not set high expectations for ELLs. She further elaborates in

experiences with some of the teacher perceptions that view the ELL student population as lazy or lack of parent involvement. These examples align with a lack of orientations in sociolinguistic consciousness, value for linguistic diversity, and inclination to advocate for ELLs. It also aligns with a lack in the pedagogy of understanding the importance of knowing student background and experiences and understanding second language learning. Ultimately, it displays a lack of pedagogical work scaffolding instruction for ELLs for students to access the content. Furthermore, stakeholders within her district display characteristics of deficit-based mindsets which is barrier to her work. However, Michelle states, “it’s just not right.” This further executes her beliefs in the orientations of the framework by advocating and valuing linguistically diverse students.

Mike Carter provided two experiences that lack the framework of orientations in his interactions with various stakeholders. “The biggest barrier [in my role] is the teacher doesn't see the need [or] they don't understand why they need to differentiate for English Language Learners. That is the attitude that inhibits [my work] ... In those cases, I just try to do my best. I put on my salesman hat. I try to do my best to convince them... Of course, there are always going to be some people that are not open [to my coaching] and that's okay. It's up to you... Unfortunately, the issue that I do often run into is if the scaffolds aren't already made [for ELLs]. What I'm telling the teacher is we're going to have to do some extra planning...” In this example, a lack of orientations in Lucas and Villegas (2013) framework is uncovered. Those orientations include a lack of understanding language and culture as a deep identity, a lack of linguistic diversity is worth cultivating, and a lack of opportunities in improvement for ELLs. However, Mike

Carter advocates for the ELL student population by trying to convince the teachers in his district and by his coaching work.

Gabriela Hall presented an encounter working with a teacher that also displayed a lack of orientation in Lucas and Villegas (2013) framework. “I was working with a teacher open to getting some information about a student who was not complying with her request. The [ELL] student was not making any language or academic growth... She asked for some feedback around that. What I noticed [after observing] was that she was selecting students from African countries, primarily ELLs, and singling them out... The language and tone the teacher was using was always negative, meaning most of her interactions with the students [were negative] ...The two or three students that she had concerns about had negative interactions. I was able to tally that information in an observation. Then I captured her words and phrases... In the follow-up meeting I was able to say I noticed this...” This example, yet again, provided descriptions of working with biased beliefs. However, Gabriella was able to project the orientations of the framework by identifying and advocating for ELLs through meeting with the teacher in a post-coaching conversation.

This challenge is also evident in the literature review, however in a retrospect to the studies, it provides context for learning opportunities to build knowledge and improvements around Culturally and/or Linguistically Responsive Teaching practices (Alvarez, 2020; Chisholm, 2020; Neumayer DePiper et al., 2021; Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014; Peercy et al., 2015; & Russel 2014 & 2015). Furthermore, two of the studies provided a shift in teacher thinking based on learning around Culturally and/or Linguistically Responsive Teaching. In Chisholm (2020) and Neumayer DePiper et al.

(2021), researchers found a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy with instructing ELLs in math or ELL instruction. One participant stated, “At this point, I feel comfortable with utilizing many of the language access and production strategies we have learned about” (Neumayer DePiper et al., 2021, p. 499). The four ELL coaches demonstrate experiences of sharing the Lucas and Villegas (2013) framework of knowledge and advocacy for the ELL student population. This is done by their mindset, coaching conversations, and convincing teachers in their coaching work.

Uniqueness of ELL Coaching

Throughout the study, two unique roles and responsibilities were captured in interviews. All five of the ELL coaches presented unique qualities in his or her role. One example found a distinction of specific teachers supported by an ELL coach. The second unique role found was responsibilities that align with compliance of the work based on state and policy guidelines.

All five of the ELL coaches found that they prominently work with specific teachers. However, Maria Jackson and Mike Carter have specific teachers they serve explicitly based on their roles and responsibilities documents. Mike Carter’s role is structured to support only non-ELL certified teachers. “... In my role, I work with our [non-ELL certified], general education, teachers.” Michelle Andrews works with non-ELL and ELL certified teachers. However, she finds that she works more with non-ELL-certified teachers. “What I am finding is I am going in and working with classroom [non-ELL-certified] teachers mostly to support them” Michelle Andrews. Furthermore, Danielle James works with both non-ELL and ELL-certified teachers as well. Yet, she

also finds that her work is more prominent with content and non-ELL certified teachers compared to working with ELL teachers in years past. Some of the content teachers are described as those who do not provide ELL services, are considered homeroom teachers, but are ELL certified. “Typically, I was working with ELL teachers, especially my first year [in the ELL coaching role]. It’s more content [both ELL and non-ELL certified] teachers now [that I am working with]” Danielle James.

Based on the literature, Beches (2021), Burr (2017), and Lucas et al. (2018) recommend that the non-ELL teacher populations have opportunities for learning because “most mainstream teachers are not sufficiently prepared to provide the types of assistance that ELLs need to successfully meet this challenge” (Lucas et al., 2008, p. 98). The past research on content or non-ELL certified teachers displays a lack of preparation and sustainment in learning opportunities for teaching ELLs (Burr, 2017; Chin et al., 2016; Hadjioannu et al., 2016). Michelle Andrews, Danielle James, and Mike Carter have made meaning of their roles to support learning for that specific teacher population, which provides further context of their roles.

Maria Jackson also has a specific role designed to support only ELL-certified teachers based explicitly on her roles and responsibilities document and in her interview transcripts. “My main focus is ELL teachers” Maria Jackson. Although Gabriella Hall works with all teachers, she finds most of her work is with ELL-certified teachers. “If I had to estimate a percentage [of who I work with], I would say it is 95% ELL teachers” Gabriela Hall. The literature also finds that ELL-certified teachers need learning opportunities as well (Ballard, 2016; Beck, 2017; Butcher, 2020; Fairchild, 2019;

Hopkins et al., 2015 & 2019; Kane, 2020; and Weedle et al., 2020). Maria and Gabriela make meaning of their roles to support the ELL-certified teachers.

The final uniqueness of an ELL coach role is provided by Michelle Andrews. Based on the interview data collection, some structures of activities she described rely on compliance by the Tennessee State Board of Education, Chapter 0520-01-19, or the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, policies. “[In my role] I review schools’ schedules [of the 13 schools] to make sure they’re meeting the 60-minute time requirement [for ELL services]. This is a component of compliance by a policy that requires all active ELLs to receive an hour of services daily. “I’ve created a new Home Language Survey because the other one needed an update.” This is also a state rule of compliance for identifying students for the ELL program. “Just this weekend I created a waiver form because teachers did not have a procedure for distributing and officially processing waiver forms.” The waiver form is another compliance like component for waived ELL student families to approve or disapprove ELL services annually. A waived ELL is a student that qualifies for ELL services but opts out of the ELL program. Other compliance activities Michelle engages in are assessing ELLs for WIDA ACCESS and monitoring the ELLevation, Individual Learning Plans, a platform that monitors academic and language growth for ELLs. Both are compliance activities by state or policy guidelines.

ELL Coach Beliefs

The ELL coaches described and interpreted the work of their roles with descriptive details. Furthermore, the qualities of Lucas and Villegas (2013) framework

was found as a foundational attribute of all the participant's coaching work. This foundation grounded their work as an interconnected element to their role. Within the conceptual framework, various indicators were captured among the ELL coaches. "I want teachers to engage students and provide justice for them... meaning, shifting some structures within their classrooms to make sure access is automatic and not something extra... The ELL students need access and equity. I like justice better than equity. Give all kids access is what I want and that's why it's important...My values are justice for kids. Everyone having access..." Michelle Andrews. Mike Carter adds to this foundation, "Ultimately, you want teachers to be successful." Maria Jackson makes a similar statement about success, "... we really should be doing all we can to help them be as successful as they can in life." Gabriella Hall adds, "I see 15- and 18-year-old boys and girls about to be launched into this world. We must get as much language and content to them so that they can go and do whatever it is that they wish to do in the world. The kids are my why..." Danielle James provides her perspective as well, "I have always had a love for different cultures, and it was natural...All students can learn... What supports can we supply to make that content accessible for ELL students?" These examples contributed to various attributes of the conceptual framework within orientations and pedagogy. This research captured the moments of compassion and advocacy, supporting teacher and student achievement, sharing knowledge and skill sets, and more for ELLs as the foundations to the ELL coach role.

In final reflections, ELL coaches find value and joy in their role. "My role is important" Michelle Andrews. "I really enjoy [ELL] instructional coaching. I love the mix of spending time with teachers as learners and working with adults" Maria Jackson.

“I would say [ELL coaching] is more than a job ...this is a calling and what I love to do” Danielle James. “The coach role is really important. Let's say coaches more [ELL] coaches are needed” Gabriela Hall. The ELL coaches believe that the work is meaningful and that the position is worthy to support their districts. Gabriela Hall expands on the importance of the role by stating more ELL coaches’ positions are necessary to support the ELL student population.

Next Steps and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several next steps and recommendations are described to continue investigating and capturing the development of the ELL coach phenomenon. There are four next steps and three recommendations based on this study. The next actionable steps include (1) investigating ELL coaches in other states, (2) investigating a quantitative approach to ELL student data with ELL coach support, (3) gathering teacher perspectives of working with ELL coaches, and (4) connecting and collaborating the ELL coaches to support the development and sustainment of the work. The three recommendations for districts based on findings from this study are (1) consider ELL coaches based on ELL student trends, (2) districts should seek and support ELL coach candidates that embody LRT orientations and pedagogy to implement and sustain the role, and (3) ELL coaches’ roles and responsibilities must be explicit. Each of these next steps and recommendations serves in a unique way to continue the work of supporting the ELL student population.

The first next step based on this study is to investigate ELL coaches in other states across the country. There are limitations in this study because of the participant selection

only representing the state of Tennessee. The participants selected in this study only provided insight to “highlight what a typical, normal, and average” among ELL coaches in Tennessee (Patton, 2015, p. 268). Consequently, since the role is a new phenomenon, I believe that ELL coaches across the country should be investigated to learn more about how they define, describe, and interpret their roles.

The second next step provides a perception of the ELL coach topic through a quantitative lens. The quantitative approach could explore ELL student data with schools or districts that have ELL coaches to determine the impact of the ELL coach work. The third next step includes investigating the teacher perspectives of working with an ELL coach. This allows for a different view of the work. Additionally, it would further explore how teachers interpret experiences and make meaning of working with an ELL coach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Finally, the last step aligns with the phenomenon of the ELL coach role. As this role further develops, I suggest that collaboration of ELL coach to ELL coach is developed to sustain support. The findings of this study explore the shifts of titles, along with roles and responsibilities. As the student population shifts, the work of an ELL coach shifts. Thus, ELL coaches should be provided opportunities to work collaboratively.

The three recommendations for districts based on findings from this study are (1) consider ELL coaches based on ELL student trends, (2) districts should seek and support ELL coach candidates that embody LRT orientations and pedagogy to implement and sustain the role, and (3) ELL coaches’ roles and responsibilities must be explicit. First, this study explored how districts navigated supports for an increasing ELL student population. Four out the five of the ELL coaches’ roles were invented or added based on

a common trend of growth in the ELL student population among the districts. Baecher et al. (2012) claim that one out of every four students in public education are projected to be ELL by 2025. Furthermore, Villegas et al. (2018) believe that pre-service teachers are not equipped to meet the needs of ELL students. Stairs-Davenport (2021) drives further by claiming Inservice teachers are not equipped as well. Districts should be advised to monitor the ELL student population and be prepared to support the needs based on the student demographics and findings in the literature on teacher preparation for ELLs.

The second recommendation suggests districts should seek and support ELL coach candidates that embody the LRT orientations and pedagogy to implement and sustain the role. The findings suggests that the LRT framework by Lucas and Villegas (2013) was a foundational attribute to the work for all five of the participants. Furthermore, ELL coach candidates must have a strong foundation in the orientation of the LRT framework as four participants explicitly experienced barriers of the work that framed upon teacher orientations. Additionally, ELL coach candidates must have a developed pedagogy of the LRT framework as found by all five participants. This will further support the work of an ELL coach.

The final recommendation based on the findings includes the roles and responsibilities documentation. This document should be explicitly developed for and reviewed with ELL coaches. Four of the five ELL coaches described experiences at one point in the work of unclarity, and further used the term “vague” to describe the roles and responsibilities documentation. Taylor (2008) argues that there is not an established or clear definition of coaching in general. Poglinco et al. (2013) adds that this causes misconceptions about the coaching work. As a result, it is recommended that ELL

coaches be provided with and review their roles and responsibilities explicitly for clarity (Spaziani & Dillard, 2021). Furthermore, the findings recognized that shifts occurred in the work, which shifted roles and responsibilities as well. The shifts of the ELL coach work should be considered as roles and responsibilities are reviewed.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board

IRB

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN 37129
FWA: 00005331/IRB Regn. 0003571



IRBN001 - EXPEDITED PROTOCOL APPROVAL NOTICE

Monday, November 01, 2021

Protocol Title *Exploring Assessment, Learning and Student Success*
Protocol ID *22-2014 7qvi*

Principal Investigator **Kevin Krahenbuhl (Faculty)**
Co-Investigators **NONE**
Investigator Email(s) *kevin.krahenbuhl@mtsu.edu*
Department **Educational Leadership**
Funding **NONE**

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU IRB through the EXPEDITED mechanism under 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110 within the category (7) *Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior*. A summary of the IRB action is tabulated below:

IRB Action	APPROVED for ONE YEAR		
Date of Expiration	10/31/2022	Date of Approval: 11/1/21	Recent Amendment: NONE
Sample Size	FIVE HUNDRED (500)		
Participant Pool	Target Population: Primary Classification: General Adults (18 or older) Specific Classification: Administrators, teachers, and professionals working in educational settings		
Type of Interaction	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-interventional or Data Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtual/Remote/Online Interaction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In person or physical Interaction – Mandatory COVID-19 Management		
Exceptions	Click here to enter text.		
Restrictions	1. Mandatory SIGNATURE Informed Consent (in person). 2. Other than exceptions listed above, identifiable data/artifacts, such as, audio/video data, photographs, handwriting samples, personal address, driving records, social security number, and etc., MUST NOT be collected. Recorded identifiable information must be deidentified as described in the protocol. 3. Mandatory Final report (refer last page). 4. CDC guidelines and MTSU safe practice must be followed		
Approved Templates	IRB Templates: Recruitment Email and In person Informed Consent Non-MTSU Templates: Follow up emails and interview information		
Research Inducement	NONE		
Comments	NONE		

Post-approval Requirements

The PI must read and abide by the post-approval conditions (Refer "Quick Links" in the bottom):

- **Reporting Adverse Events:** The PI must report research-related adversities suffered by the participants, deviations from the protocol, misconduct, and etc., within 48 hours from when they were discovered.
- **Final Report:** The PI must close-out this protocol by submitting a final report before **10/31/2022 (Refer to the Continuing Review section below); REMINDERS WILL NOT BE SENT.** Failure to close-out or request for a continuing review may result in penalties including cancellation of the data collected using this protocol and/or withholding student diploma.
- **Protocol Amendments:** An IRB approval must be obtained for all types of amendments, such as: addition/removal of subject population or investigating team; sample size increases; changes to the research sites (appropriate permission letter(s) may be needed); alterations to funding; and etc. The proposed amendments must be clearly described in an addendum request form. The proposed changes must be consistent with the approval category and they must comply with expedited review requirements.
- **Research Participant Compensation:** Compensation for research participation must be awarded as proposed in Chapter 6 of the Expedited protocol. The documentation of the monetary compensation must Appendix J and MUST NOT include protocol details when reporting to the MTSU Business Office.
- **COVID-19:** Regardless whether this study poses a threat to the participants or not, refer to the COVID-19 Management section for important information for the PI

Continuing Review (Follow the Schedule Below)

This protocol can be continued for up to THREE years by requesting a continuing review before **10/31/2022**. Refer to the following schedule to plan your annual progress report; **REMINDERS WILL NOT BE SENT.** Failure to obtain an approval for continuation will result in cancellation of this protocol.

Reporting Period	Requisition Deadline	IRB Comments
First year report	9/30/2022	NOT COMPLETED
Second year report	9/30/2023	NOT COMPLETED
Final report	9/30/2024	NOT COMPLETED

Post-approval Protocol Amendments:

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to implement minor and significant amendments that would fit within this approval category. **Only TWO procedural amendments will be entertained per year (changes like addition/removal of research personnel are not restricted by this rule).**

Date	Amendment(s)	IRB Comments
NONE	NONE	NONE

Other Post-approval Actions:

The following actions are done subsequent to the approval of this protocol on request by the PI or on recommendation by the IRB or by both.

Date	IRB Action(s)	IRB Comments
NONE	NONE	NONE

COVID-19 Management:

The PI must follow social distancing guidelines and other practices to avoid viral exposure to the participants and other workers when physical contact with the subjects is made during the study.

- The study must be stopped if a participant or an investigator should test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of the research interaction. This must be reported to the IRB as an "adverse event."
- The MTSU's "Return-to-work" questionnaire found in Pipeline must be filled by the investigators on the day of the research interaction prior to physical contact.
- PPE must be worn if the participant would be within 6 feet from the each other or with an investigator.
- Physical surfaces that will come in contact with the participants must be sanitized between use
- **PI's Responsibility:** The PI is given the administrative authority to make emergency changes to protect the wellbeing of the participants and student researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the PI must notify the IRB after such changes have been made. The IRB will audit the changes at a later date and the PI will be instructed to carryout remedial measures if needed.

Data Management & Storage:

All research-related records (signed consent forms, investigator training and etc.) must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data must be stored for at least three (3) years after the study is closed. Additional Tennessee State data retention requirement may apply (*refer "Quick Links" for MTSU policy 129 below*). The data may be destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity of the research subjects.

The MTSU IRB reserves the right to modify/update the approval criteria or change/cancel the terms listed in this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

- Post-approval Responsibilities: <http://www.mtsu.edu/irb/FAQ/PostApprovalResponsibilities.php>
- Expedited Procedures: <https://mtsu.edu/irb/ExpeditedProcedures.php>
- MTSU Policy 129: Records retention & Disposal: <https://www.mtsu.edu/policies/general/129.php>

IRB

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN 37129



IRBF016 – Participant Informed Consent A. INFORMATION AND DISCLOSURE SEGMENT (Participant Copy)

Study Title Exploring Assessment, Learning, and Student Success
Primary Investigator(s) Kevin Krahenbuhl
Contact information kevin.krahenbuhl@mtsu.edu
Department & Institution Womack Department of Educational Leadership

Protocol ID 22-2014 7qvi **Approval:** 11/01/2021 **Expiration:** 10/31/2024

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project in which you have been invited to participate. Please read this disclosure and feel free to ask any questions. The investigators must answer all of your questions and you must be given a signed copy of this disclosure.

- Your participation in this research study is voluntary.
- You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time without loss of any benefits.
- In the event new information becomes available that may affect the risks or benefits associated with this research study, you will be notified so that you can make an informed decision at that time.

For additional information on your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Office of Compliance (Tel 615-494-8918 or send your emails to irb_information@mtsu.edu. (URL: <http://www.mtsu.edu/irb>).

Please read this section and sign Section B if you wish to enroll in this study. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this disclosure form for you to keep for your future reference.

1. What are the prime types of physical contact the participant will have?

The participant will have the following type(s) of contact(s) with the investigators or/and other participants at least sometimes during this research:

☒ 1.1 Virtual Interactions

☒ Qualtrics ☒ Zoom ☐ Telephone ☐ Other

☒ 1.2 In person interactions

☒ With PPE ☐ Without PPE ☒ With Social Distancing ☐ Without Social Distancing

The participants will be asked to provide their contact details to be used by MTSU COVID-19 task force for contact tracing if needed

2. What is the main category of this research?

☒ 2.1 Educational Tests

☐ 2.3 Psychological intervention or procedures

☐ 2.5 Medical Evaluation

☒ 2.2 Social/Behavioral Evaluation

☐ 2.4 Physical Evaluation or Procedures

☐ 2.6 Clinical Research

3. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to engage in scholarly practice that seeks understanding, interpretation, and evaluation of impact of assessment, learning, and student success in local contexts.

4. What type of data will be collected from you?

Data collected for this study will include classroom samples including blinded assessment results, observations from educational settings, and interviews.

5. What are procedures we intend on doing to collect the above described data?

The procedures will utilize semi-structured interview protocols for interview data, direct requests from the researcher to the participants for classroom samples, such as assessment results, and in-person and/or Zoom-based observations.

☒ 5.1 Audio recording ☐ 5.2 Video Recording ☐ 5.3 Photography ☐ 5.4 NO audio/video recording

6. What will you be asked to do in this study?

You will be asked to participate in this study by engaging in survey, interviews, and opening up your classroom for observation, as well as sharing relevant educational resources for the study with the researcher(s).

7. What are we planning to do with the data collected using your participation?

All data collected will be blinded, using pseudonyms in all reporting. All data will be aggregated and analyzed using relevant coding schemes informed by Saldana (2015) for qualitative data and running and reporting descriptive statistics as well as inference testing as appropriate informed by Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Field (2015).

8. What are the expected results of this study and how will they be disseminated?

We anticipate the results of this study will provide meaningful data to improve our understanding of assessment, learning, and student success in this local context. Results will be disseminated in public presentations, entirely blinding all data including participants and local contexts, and summarized results can be shared with the local context per their request.

9. What is the approximate time commitment not including your preparation time for participating in this study?

It is expected that this study will last approximately one semester, or about 15 weeks. During that timeframe, participation in this study will involve primarily opening up your educational setting for researchers during typical professional working time. As such, it is not expected that you will be participating in a significant increase in your time commitment.

10. What are your expected costs to you, your effort, and etc.?

There are no financial costs associated with this; there will be some limited time costs associated with sharing of assessment data, completing surveys, and participating in an interview.

11. What are the potential discomforts, inconveniences, and/or possible risks that can be reasonably expected as a result of participation in this study?

Because we are systematically examining relevant educational data and focused on questions related to assessment, learning, and student success it may cause some discomfort in reflecting on current practices that may not be in line with your vision. Additionally there will be minor inconvenience in providing some limited time to completing surveys, interviews, and organizing and sharing assessment data.

12. What are the risks and bodily harm due to COVID-19 exposure?

Although the MTSU IRB considers this research as "no more than minimal risk," the participants will be in physical contact with the PI and other participants during this study. Therefore, the participants will be exposed to the risk of contracting COVID-19.

- **The participants must adhere by the following to reduce the risk for infection.** The participants in this study will be adhering to MTSU guidelines with regards to mitigating risks for exposure to COVID-19. The procedures are consistently updated and will be copied and pasted directly from <https://www.mtsu.edu/coronavirus/> for each iteration of this study. Additionally, the researchers will adhere to policies from local educational contexts.
- **The investigator will follow these precautions:** The researchers in this study will be adhering to MTSU guidelines with regards to mitigating risks for exposure to COVID-19. The procedures are consistently updated and will be copied and pasted directly from <https://www.mtsu.edu/coronavirus/> for each iteration of this study. Additionally, the researchers will adhere to policies from local educational contexts.
- **COVID-19 Contact Tracing:** The participants will be asked to provide their contact details will be given to the MTSU COVID-19 task force if someone you came in contact with tested positive for COVID-19. Your contact details provided in this form will be destroyed after a few days if no positivity of COVID-19 is detected.

13. What are the anticipated benefits from this study?

a. The benefits to science and humankind that may result from this research:

This study will provide meaningful scholarly data and analysis to lead to improved practice in education with regards to assessment, learning, and student success.

b. The direct benefits to you: There are no direct benefits to the participants except perhaps obtaining a deeper understanding of their practice through reflection on their use of academic knowledge and by situating themselves as scholarly practitioners.

14. How will you be compensated for your participation?

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

15. Circumstances under which the researcher may withdraw you from this study:

You may withdraw from this study at any time and for any reason. Please contact the PI to request removal from the study and you will be removed as a participant from that point forward.

16. What happens if you choose to withdraw your participation?

There is no ramification to you for withdrawing from participation.

17. Can you stop the participation any time after initially agreeing to give consent/assent?

Yes.

18. Contact Information. If you should have any questions about this research study or possibly injury, please feel free to contact my faculty advisor, Kevin Krahenbuhl, at kevin.krahenbuhl@mtsu.edu. For additional information about giving consent of your rights as a participant in this study, to discuss problems, concerns and questions, or to offer input, please feel free to contact the MTSU IRB by email: compliance@mtsu.edu or by telephone (615) 494 8918.

19. Confidentiality. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information private but total privacy cannot be promised. Your information may be shared with MTSU or the government, such as the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, Federal Government Office for Human Research Protections, if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

20. Confidentiality and COVID-19: Your information will be provided to the University COVID-19 task force or other public health officials in the event you or one of the research participants or investigators should test positive for COVID-19. Complete the COVID-19 Contract Tracking Page after you agree to consent.

You do not have to do anything if you decide not to participate. If you wish to enroll however, please enter your name and age in the attached Segment B document and sign in the space provided.

Consent obtained by:

Researcher's Signature

Name and Title

Date

Contact details for the student worker:

ALSI Ed.D. Program
College of Education
MTSU Box 93 • COE 202
1301 East Main Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
o: 615-898-2995 • f: 615-898-5188



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to confirm that Abi Spaziani has been added to the approved IRB protocol at Middle Tennessee State University #22-2014qvi. This is a standing protocol approved by the Institutional Review Board for candidates who are completing interview, survey, and/or collection of general classroom data that does not involve intervention. The Program Director is labeled as the Lead PI for this approved IRB as only candidates who are working under his supervision, coordinating with a Director-approved dissertation chair, are permitted to be considered for approval to this protocol.

This letter is being provided to the district to affirm that the Program Director and IRB at Middle Tennessee State University confirm that Abi Spaziani is listed on the standing protocol. Thank you for your support of this important research and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin S. Krahenbuhl".

9/28/22

Kevin S. Krahenbuhl

Program Director, Assessment Learning & Student Success Ed.D. Program

Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected basis with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by MTSU. The Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and can be reached at: Equity Administration Building 110, 1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132, StudentAffairs@mtsu.edu or 615-898-1100. The MTSU policy on non-discrimination can be found at www.mtsu.edu.

Appendix B

Type of Data	How this data is connected
Artifacts: Handbook/Roles and Responsibilities	Tracked documentation of ELL coaching roles and responsibilities to guide question development and details of the work.
Coaches Interview Part I: History of ELL Work	Obtained generic information to proceed with follow up questions for future interviews and understand the “why” of becoming an ELL coach.
Coaches Interview Part II: Details and Reflection of ELL Coaching	Gained insight to the roles and responsibilities of being an ELL coach in details. Provided context and examples of such title. Allowed ELL coaches to make meaning of his or her job title. Gained further insight of what interpretations are created by the role.

Appendix C

Interview questions

Interview I: Participants provide artifact documentation of roles and responsibilities from handbook or any other form of evidence.

History of serving ELLs and becoming an ELL coach:

- Tell me about your background as a teacher.
- In what ways have you worked with ELLs as a teacher?
- About how many ELLs does your district currently serve?
- Tell me about your journey in becoming an ELL coach.
- How long have you been an ELL coach?
- Why did you become an ELL coach?
- What did you do to become an ELL coach? Qualifications?
- Tell me about a time when you first learned about ELL coaching.
- If I were to ask you right now, to describe what it means to be an ELL coach, what would you say?
- About how many ELL coaches are in your district?

Interview II -Create iterative questions based on interview I

Details and reflections of their current experiences being an ELL coach:

- What is the importance of being an ELL coach?
- Walk me through a typical day in your life as an ELL coach.
- What are some of your responsibilities?
- How often are you pulled from building level vs. district level work?
- Tell me about an “AHA” moment you had as an ELL coach.
- Is there anything else you would like to share about being an ELL coach?