

POSITIONING AND REPOSITIONING: DEVELOPING TEACHER IDENTITIES
FOR A MORE POSITIVE POSITIONING OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH

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by

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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read Positioning and Repositioning: Developing Teacher Identities for a More Positive Positioning of Students Learning English by Laurie Robinson, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctorate in Education Leadership at San Francisco State University.

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Despite the ever-growing presence of students learning English in California schools, most teachers do not develop a professional identity inclusive of this population of students. Teachers often feel underprepared to by their preservice learning regarding students learning English, and thus develop an aversion toward teaching courses specifically designed for them. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how teachers developed their professional identity in relation to students learning English, as well as what influence instructional coaching had on their positioning of students. The study used discourse analysis to better understand the beliefs and positions of my participants. I triangulated research using multiple sources of data including interviews and classroom observations. My study focused on four teachers of students learning English and two instructional coaches at two high schools within the same school district. The key findings revealed the importance of continued professional learning and the need to create structures for reflection that encourage a more asset-based orientation toward students learning English. Additional findings suggest the need for instructional coaches to be well-trained, diverse, and conscious of their own professional identities. The recommendations from this study call for leadership to promote a school culture centered on the promotion of more affirming educational experiences for secondary students learning English.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this dissertation.

Barbara Henderson, Chair

Date

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I have spent a lot of time at San Francisco State University, as an undergrad, acquiring my teaching credential, earning my master's, and now completing my Doctorate of Education. My dissertation reflects my journey as an educator, the failures, and the lessons. I owe a lot to my own teachers and mentors to be in a place today to share what I have learned and how I intend to move forward. I would first like to thank my chair, Dr. Henderson. Dr. Henderson's knowledge and experience helped shape a path forward for me whenever I felt lost. Her feedback helped to shape my ideas and, most importantly, pushed my writing forward. Even if my writing style sometimes drove her crazy, she remained a champion of my ideas and passion. I would also like to thank Dr. Fan and Dr. Fogo for their critiques and encouragement. Dr. Fogo's insights helped refine my research questions and allowed me to discern what was most essential in my work. I first met Dr. Fan as a 22-year-old naïve preservice teacher in my credential program, and I am delighted that, after that, she still was willing to assist on my committee. Working with Dr. Fan on my dissertation has made my career in education come full circle, and I am so grateful for her guidance. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for all of their emotional support. I would like to thank Dr. Christopher Collins for all of our library work time and Zoom accountability sessions, which helped keep me on track. Thank you to my husband, Jose Villalobos, for your support, for being a soundboard, and for packing me a lunch so it was one less thing for me to think about. Finally, I would like to thank my cat, Maddie (aka, my fourth committee member) for always sitting by my side, no matter how late, and keeping me company as I wrote.

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CHAPTER 1: SEEKING THE RIGHT KIND OF SUPPORT

Teachers deal daily with a diverse set of student needs that can often leave them feeling frustrated and helpless. In absence of support and training, they will often shift their feelings of inadequacy onto the students they are failing to reach and develop deficit notions about them. When high school teachers develop these deficit notions about students learning English, it can affect these students' general feelings toward schooling, their ability to complete units toward graduation and the "A-G requirements" required for 4-year college admission, and their ability to reach higher levels of engagement with schooling. This type of negative teacher attitude disproportionately affects students learning English, as they are already "othered" upon entering school spaces in the United States and are thus more vulnerable to misplaced teacher frustration. Though many other populations of students face othering in our school systems because of cultural, racial, dis/ability, or other differences, students learning English are also in the unique position of not being able to communicate, build relationships, and advocate for themselves at the same level as their native speaking peers, particularly with their largely monolingual teachers and administrators.

Therefore, educational leaders, including principals and teacher leaders, need to find ways to help teachers work through the source of their frustration and recognize how it manifests in their treatment of students. Professional development is a typical method

for supporting teachers, although it is not without limitations (K. S. Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). In particular, traditional forms of professional learning have demonstrated poor efficacy when it concerns changing teachers' beliefs and attitudes, rather than teaching skills or strategies (Kim & Viesca, 2016). Specifically, to humanize teachers' views of students, teachers need training that will allow them to approach students in a humanizing way. Instructional coaching is a promising method of professional development that may be better suited for creating fundamental teacher change (Knight, 2009). Instructional coaching provides teachers with a mentor and allows those teachers to self-direct their new learning, while also giving them the benefit of accountability in their cycles of reflection. When left to our own, reflection becomes nice but is not a necessity. Yet, at the same time, reflection appears to be the only method that can substantially change teachers' current thinking (Mellom, Straubhaar, Balderas, Ariail, & Portes, 2018).

Instructional coaching is a method of professional learning that has increased in popularity in the K-12 system over the last 10 years. Many programs that feature a mentor teacher working with a peer to achieve instructional goals call the process instructional coaching, but programs often follow varying models and hold different philosophies. Some instructional coaching programs partner teachers to codevelop

curriculum or examine classroom data. Some coaches work with teachers exclusively to develop their knowledge of a particular set of strategies.

The program our district uses was developed by Jim Knight and is referred to as the impact cycle. During the impact cycle, coaches meet with teachers and discuss a plan to capture a sense of the current reality of classroom instruction, either through observations or evaluations of student work (Knight et al., 2015). Coaches then engage teachers in a series of reflective questions designed to help them develop a goal that is measurable but meaningful to them. Once teachers have developed a goal, coaches may propose a strategy that will help teachers meet their goal. Together teacher and coach explore the strategy through modeling and use of a checklist. The checklist is coconstructed between coaches and teachers, and teachers are encouraged to make alterations to the strategy to best meet the needs in their specific context (Knight et al., 2015). Coaches then observe the classroom again and measure teachers' progress toward the goal. From there, the teacher and coach enter the cycle again, either to refine the current goal or determine a new goal. At the core of the model, teacher autonomy and reflection are the guiding philosophies (Knight, 2019). Though the model requires teachers' goals to be student-centered, teachers own the process, and coaches behave more as a guide and a resource. Knight's (2019) model is distinct from other methods of instructional coaching because teachers are more likely to commit to lasting change when

they own the work, rather than seeing coaching as something in place to fix their otherwise poor practices.

The student-centered nature of this model of coaching is ideal for teachers of secondary students learning English, as it keeps the focus of teachers' reflective work on students and the feedback teachers can gain from their classroom interactions. Students learning English struggle to find the same recognition in the classroom as their peers, and coaching can help bring these students into focus with their teachers.

Significance of the Problem

Recently, California placed a sharper focus on secondary students learning English who have not yet met reclassification, dictating they should be placed in a designated English support class in addition to their regular English coursework. Though these classes are designed to assist students learning English in developing skills needed to succeed in the secondary context, the courses can instead pose obstacles for students trying to fulfill coursework to meet graduation and college eligibility requirements. This is particularly important and relevant in my work. In my district, for the last 3 years of data, none of the students classified as English learners at the time of graduation met A-G requirements through their coursework. Zero percent of students were enrolled in coursework to complete the requirements; 0% of students met the requirements. Meeting A-G requirements is necessary to gain eligibility for the California State University

(CSU) and University of California (UC) systems (The Education Trust, 2018). When we conducted an analysis of transcripts for the group of students affected, we discovered the majority of secondary students learning English were not meeting A-G requirements because they were sent to the continuation high school at some point for being deficient in credits. Credit deficiency is likely caused by failing a significant number of courses. The continuation high school does not offer A-G approved courses, so it is impossible for students to graduate A-G eligible for 4-year institutions.

Though problems with the English learner classification and the ability to fulfill requirements for eligibility are systemic and institutional, teachers still play a critical role. Support classes for students learning English are frequently taught by teachers with no specific preparation or understanding of the most effective practices for secondary students learning English (Olsen, 2010; Shim, 2014). Teachers should present students with appropriately rigorous work, have students socially interact to practice language, and pay explicit attention to linguistic functions while also covering curricular content (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). In the absence of quality training, teachers of classes with students learning English will often reproduce deficit assimilationist practices, as the stigmatizing nature of support classes will frequently cause them to conflate developing English with cognitive disability (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). The mindset of such teachers might influence their grading practices and

assessments of students' progression, which could account for students' credit deficiency. Lack of credits leads to their enrollment in the continuation high school or, for others, to dropout. Indeed, students learning English have a 15-20% higher likelihood of leaving high school before graduation than their mainstream peers (Ramirez, Gonzales-Galindo, & Roy, 2016).

Teachers are less likely to engage in training that will help them develop a more asset-based views of students learning English and embrace linguistically responsive practices if they do not see instructing students learning English as a part of their teacher identity (Reeves, 2009). Teachers of students learning English are not always multilingual learners themselves, so they can have difficulties relating to the unique challenges students with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds face as they navigate a predominantly English educational system. In addition to these relational identities, teachers of students learning English often cultivate an identity around the content area they teach, and thus only secondarily develop an identity as a language teacher (Reeves, 2009).

In our district, we offer a comprehensive training in a linguistically responsive approach to teaching all areas of content. The training is called Constructing Meaning, and it uses research-based practices for strong pedagogy with a specific focus on explicit language instruction and academic optimism toward students learning English.

Constructing Meaning encourages teachers to plan with language-based goals in mind, provides strategies for explicit language instruction by attending to language functions, and stresses the importance of oral language practice in classrooms. The training also calls for teachers to reflect on their learning goals and evaluate students' work to determine if their instruction is helping students meet those goals. Though the training is comprehensive, convincing teachers to authentically participate in this professional development is often a struggle. Teachers will often express it is not their responsibility to learn language practices because they are more concerned with student learning practices more specific to their content area. Similarly, teachers will also reject support from instructional coaching or mentors if they feel like accepting this support will conflict with their identity as the experts of their respective classrooms (Knight, 2018). Accepting assistance and learning from an outside source can become uncomfortable for teachers who identify a learner identity as inferior because it implies ignorance. Teachers need to have their knowledge validated to ensure new learning is seen as additive and nonthreatening.

Research on the impact of teachers' beliefs and the academic success of students learning English points to a need for schools and teachers to not only question but also to challenge their beliefs about their preparation to teach students learning English, to recognize how beliefs impact their pedagogical decisions, and to see how those beliefs

influence students' perceptions of their efficacy. Teachers must challenge these ideas to provide equitable and enriching educational experiences for students learning English. To challenge these ideas, teachers need a humanizing professional development experience, one that will engage them in structured reflection to examine their own sense of identity and see how their identity can be supportive and inclusive of all students in their classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to investigate notions of teachers' professional identities as they relate to students learning English, as well as what kind of influence professional learning, in the form of instructional coaching, has on their interactions with students in the classroom. Positioning theory is a rich conceptual lens that can be used to examine how these identities evolve during teachers' experiences and how they manifest in classroom discourse (Harré, 2012). Reflexive positioning, or the ways teachers understand their role in relation to their students and prior experiences, helped me to explore not only how teachers view their professional identities but also how they built their understanding. Interactive positioning, the process teachers use to inform students of their role during classroom discourse, also added a lens to examine teachers' notions of students learning English and their place during instruction (Harré, 1991). Gaining a sense of what the professional identities of teachers are and what informs their

positioning will ultimately provide a sense of how professional learning and structured reflection can assist in repositioning teachers' identities to make them more inclusive of students learning English. In my study, I gained this sense by interviewing four different teachers across two school sites who engaged with courses specifically designed for students learning English. In addition to interviews, my findings included analysis of a classroom observation of each of my teacher participants. Including classroom observations allowed me to observe the interactions in the classroom and how teacher and student positioning was affected by their discourse.

With a better sense of how teachers reflexively position their identities, my study can help to inform school leaders about their approach to continued in-service development of their teachers. Each year, teachers enter this profession with varying degrees of readiness to meet the challenges that await them in the classroom. Though it is a requirement in California for teachers to complete coursework designed to help them develop instructional methods to serve students learning English, teachers often need more guidance once they enter their full-time assignments. Ongoing professional learning is important for teachers to feel confident and successful, and it will also help school leaders meet policy expectations that state students learning English should attend schools in which they are seen as assets and given access to language development across content areas. My study explored the potential of an instructional coaching program to

meet this professional learning need and provides insights into how such a program could be best implemented. Interviews with teachers include their insights on the instructional coaching program and professional learning in general. In addition to the interviews with teachers, I included interviews of a coach at each site who works with my teacher participants. Adding coaches' perspectives enhances the understanding of instructional coaching's influence on teachers' positioning in the classroom, as well as what influence, if any, it has on instructional interactions.

Positionality

My own career in education began as a teacher caught up in a destructive cycle we often see in monolingual, white educators like myself. I was underprepared and lacked awareness and understanding of students' experiences in my classroom. When I first began teaching in 2006, I was prepared with only a semester-long course, taught by a long-retired teacher, on how to best meet the needs of students learning English. As a secondary English teacher, I had to hope the strategies and practices employed in my classroom were good enough for all students. A statement I have often heard from teachers is "good teaching" is enough for students learning English. Unfortunately, the good teaching I believed went on in my classroom was not attending to any of my students' cultural or linguistic experiences. Deep down, I knew I was wrong. There were always students in my classroom for whom I knew the language I was using was an

obstacle. I knew them because of their silence. And I left them that way. At the time, I convinced myself it was a kindness—I did not put these students on the spot or invite them to participate more actively because I was allowing them safety and comfort. What I really did was make things easy on myself. Because I did not know enough to deliver what they needed, I made them invisible.

I eventually happened into a professional development experience that asked me to reflect on the silence of those students in my classroom and what I could do about it. They suggested a strategy (a highly structured and linguistically attentive variation of a think-pair-share), and I tried it in my classroom the next day. Suddenly, I was hearing from an array of voices in my classroom that had always been there but were finally given a moment to let themselves be known. I was supported in attempting these and other strategies by a few colleagues with whom I attended the training, and we would often meet to discuss our experiences and how things were going in our practice. In a few short years, I was so engaged in developing practices that built on students' literacy, I requested to teach the courses for students learning English in addition to my regular English classes. Working with linguistically diverse students has been one of the best parts of my career, even though I began at a deficit and stumbled into intentional practice almost by accident.

As a practitioner and researcher, I want to limit teacher development experiences like my own. My successes and failures were always accidents, and my sense of professional identity came from socially reproducing my own educational experiences, which did not include learning a second language. I know many new teachers are in similar positions as I was in the beginning, but through ongoing in-service development experiences that are structured and intentional, I know they can find the same success I eventually did and learn to advocate for this group of students. There are other groups of teachers who enter the profession poised to advocate for students learning English. I hope to study more about how their attitudes and beliefs can be identified in practice and replicated for others who need more support.

Therefore, my linked research questions for this dissertation are: How do the professional identities of secondary teachers relate to how they interact with and position English learners? In what ways do coaching experiences influence teachers' identities and their interactive positioning in their classrooms with English learners?

Scope and Significance

Researchers have suggested there is a significant impact on teachers' beliefs and the positioning of students learning English in their secondary classrooms (Reeves, 2010; B. Yoon, 2008). The literature has also suggested those beliefs are rooted in teachers' personal and professional identities (Martin & Strom, 2016). Studies have examined how

teachers acquire their identities (Reeves, 2009; Shim, 2014), but less research has focused on how teachers examine and reflect on how their identities position students in the classroom. Most importantly, few studies have examined how teachers can successfully engage with in-service development that challenges their positioning and shifts their perspectives. My study explored the extent to which a humanizing form of professional learning—instructional coaching—can go beyond developing teachers’ instructional toolboxes and what factors allow them to reflect and reposition themselves.

For the last year and a half, I have held the position of director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability in my district. It is an administrative role, which is new for me, but my role provides me with positional power over issues that have always been close to me throughout my career in education. I oversee the program for students learning English, instructional coaching, professional learning, and curriculum decisions. Though I have spent the majority of my career as a teacher of students learning English and as an instructional coach, I now have an even greater responsibility at a systems level to affect obstacles and frustrations I experienced in the classroom. My study has great significance for leaders in positions like mine, as it provides insights into the mindsets of teachers teaching students learning English, how their identities are developed, and what kinds of experiences they crave to feel more successful and disrupt the cycles of harm their positions can perpetuate with their students. Recent policies adopted in California,

such as the Roadmap for English Learners, call for more asset-based, whole system supports for students learning English (Hakuta, 2018). To enact principles of this policy, leaders will need a better understanding of educators in their system and how to support them in meaningful ways.

A Note on Language Choices

Throughout my study, I describe certain phenomena with terms that have specific meaning but can be interpreted broadly. As these constructs have significant meaning to my study design and findings, it is important to note how these ideas are defined and used in my dissertation.

The first significant construct is reflection. Teachers are often encouraged to be more reflective about their choices in instruction but are rarely provided time or guidance to support reflection in their work. Reflection means to give something careful consideration or thought, and the process of meaningful reflection on instructional practice should be based in critical inquiry. I designed my research to be a qualitative study because as reflection is broad, it is difficult to operationalize and determine specific impact. Instructional coaching is promising in its ability to take the broad concept of reflection and demystify it for teachers by embedding time for reflection into their professional learning. Without structures for reflection, teachers are less likely to

incorporate it into their practice, and, without it, they are unlikely to spend time reevaluating the ways they interact with and position their students learning English.

The second construct concerns teacher identity and positioning, which itself has many layers (Martin & Strom, 2016). Teacher identity is not only teachers' sense of who they are in regard to their profession but also how they have built that idea from their past experiences as people and students, their preservice teaching experiences, and finally their experiences in their current assignment. Positioning (Harré, 1991) is related to identity, although it goes further by explaining how identity is contextualized. Teachers can position themselves reflexively, comparing themselves to other teachers and mentors, or interactively, as they engage with coworkers and students. Understanding how teachers position themselves can provide a better sense of how their identities form and evolve. Ultimately, how teachers position themselves also reveals how students interact and therefore position themselves in relation to the teacher, their peers, and the curriculum.

Finally, humanizing is a third construct that runs like an undercurrent beneath the other two constructs and the rest of the themes that emerged. To better understand how and why teachers have positioned themselves and created their professional identities, it is valuable to humanize them (Knight, 2018). As professional development is often criticized as a means of fixing bad teachers or poor teaching, it provides no understanding of where deficit-based ideas or practices originated and skips right to a solution. To see

students like students learning English as capable and in possession of rich experiences and linguistic capital, their teachers need to humanize them. This transformation can be made more difficult when the entire system of education, including the support of teachers, is often a dehumanizing process where teachers feel they are pinpointed as the problem without ever being provided time to reflect and experiment with more engaging practices. The cycle needs disruption.

Note on Nomenclature

When I began this dissertation, I knew I would need to attend to the language used to discuss students learning English. This issue is currently in conflict between the world of researchers and the world of practitioners. When I am at work communicating with coworkers and completing reports for the California Department of Education, students learning English are called English learners and often more commonly referred to by the acronym ELs. Even the Roadmap for English Learners, a recently adopted policy that calls for asset-based orientation toward this group of students, uses the term English learner to describe them. If I were to use any other term in my workplace currently, no one would understand my meaning. Recently, some practitioners and researchers have brought up issues with the English learner label, as it centers on English and comes from a deficit base, ignoring all the other capital these students bring to our schools.

Research has turned to labels such as bilingual learners or emerging bilinguals. Though these labels are a step forward, there are still a few issues with each term that make me hesitant to use them in my dissertation. Many of our students speak more than two languages, and that is not inclusive in the term bilingual. Another issue is applying the term emerging to the label still has a deficit base, denoting again what they do not possess instead of what they do.

I attended a training this year where a researcher discussed person-centered language, a concept that comes from dis/ability studies. The idea is you center the person in your language before you center any particular status the person might have (Blaska, 1993). As humanizing is such an important construct in my work, I find it important to center students before their status when I refer to them. I also find it important that the label is reflective of an ever-evolving status. They are learning English, which is something additive to their person, rather than a more stagnant label on their identity. Though it might be grammatically more challenging at times, I use students learning English throughout my dissertation in the majority of cases. When discussing literature, quoting my participants, or talking about an official classification, I use English learner for clarity. Though it might seem like a simple change, how we use language matters, and I hope the language shift I bring to my dissertation will be reflected in my professional setting soon.

Organization of the Dissertation

My dissertation follows the traditional structure for a dissertation, aside from my findings chapter, which I have divided into two chapters. After this introduction to the problem, purpose, and significance of my study, I review the literature that currently exists on positioning, teachers' attitudes toward preparation, and humanizing professional learning. Once I have reported major findings and gaps in the literature, I explain my methodology and study design. This chapter includes the rationale for the structure to my data sources, methods of data collection, and how data were analyzed. My two research questions have guided the organization of my findings. In Chapter 4, I focus on my first research question. I focus on exploring the professional identities of teachers of English learners and how that influences the way they act with students learning English in the classroom. I focus on the interactive positioning of students in my classroom observations and then provide context to those interactions by revealing how teachers have reflexively positioned their identities in response to their preparations and backgrounds. I decided to address the second research question, which addresses the influence of instructional coaching on teachers' identity and positioning of students, in a different chapter. I made this decision because the focus changes from teachers' identities to how they engage with instructional coaching and their evolved positioning. In my final

chapter, I provide implications based on my findings and make recommendations for professional learning, leadership, and policy, as well as future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Though the population of students learning English in the United States increases exponentially each year, students immigrating to our country and enrolling in our school system is not a new phenomenon. Educators have been grappling with how to meet the needs of multilingual students in a largely monolingual system for decades. As I sought to examine the relationship between teacher identity and positioning on the outcomes for these students through critical reflection in the form of instructional coaching, I needed to better understand the studies that have already been conducted. Particularly I needed to familiarize myself with empirical understandings on teacher attitudes and beliefs as well as how teachers have engaged with professional learning, and what influence this had on their dispositions in the classroom.

Context

I began my review of the literature by searching databases to better understand what beliefs and attitudes teachers of secondary students learning English held toward their students and how those beliefs and attitudes affected their students. One of the first challenges I encountered was related to the search terminology to use. Though there is a lot of debate right now regarding nomenclature for describing the experiences of bilingual or multilingual students, research of the last 10 years mostly used terms such as “English learners” or “English language learners,” perhaps because they are used as

descriptors for this population by many state governing bodies. Though I have decided to be more person centered with the language in my dissertation, the literature most often uses historical terminology, perhaps to be more easily discovered by practitioners.

While exploring literature that defined those beliefs and attitudes, I noted researchers described how those beliefs created positional identity in classrooms with students learning English and how these positions were used to reinforce power dynamics. Reviewing these articles' theoretical and conceptual frameworks was my first exposure to Harré's (1991) development of positioning theory, which helped to explain how teachers' identities influenced classroom discourse. After reviewing a dozen articles on the topic, I came across B. Yoon's (2008) study, which was framed by positioning theory, on three teachers and how their respective identities interactionally positioned English learning students in their classrooms. B. Yoon's study named a phenomenon I observed in my own professional context frequently and helped me further reflect about the identities and positions I observed teachers bring into the classroom. B. Yoon's ideas appeared simple yet gave me a better understanding of teachers' motivations and their treatment of students. I used her study as the basis for my continued search, using Google Scholar to determine which studies cited her work.

After gaining a further sense of what professional identities teachers held in relation to their English learning students and how these identities impacted their

students, I also wanted to investigate how, if at all, teachers engaged in training to expand or shift those identities. The research revealed varying approaches to professional development for shifting the mindsets of teachers, leaving some gap in the literature that specifically explored sustained reflection as a means of development. Articles mentioned instructional coaching by name, sometimes referring to it as mentorship, though the definitions for what coaching entailed varied greatly. I reviewed close to 40 articles but selected only those that explored how teachers position students learning English, how teachers engage with professional development, and how that professional development moves teachers' overall attitudes toward their students.

Teachers' attitudes toward students labeled as English learners are informed by teachers' identity, and this influences how they interact with, or position, students learning English in their classroom. How students learning English are positioned in the classroom will impact the relationship they have with their teacher, the power they have with their peers, and the access they have to classroom discourse and learning. Though the population of students in the United States grows increasingly more diverse, the teaching workforce remains largely White (California Department Of Education, 2019).

The disconnect produced by these differing positions is not eased in teacher's preservice experiences. Despite the best efforts of teacher education programs, preservice work is often not long enough or situated strongly enough to connect to field experiences.

Provided with these challenges, it is difficult for teachers to shift their attitudes and beliefs within the course of a single semester's class. In some cases, teacher programs will not offer a standalone course or will focus more on strategy than challenging beliefs (Ramirez et al., 2016). Since preservice training faces these challenges in preparing teachers to serve students learning English, teachers need a sense of urgency in acquiring professional development to hone their skills. For professional development to be effective, it needs to avoid prescription, be sustained, and involve critical reflection (Kennedy, 2016). As long as the teaching force remains demographically disconnected from the population it serves, taking on positioning theory is a useful way to examine professional learning for teachers of secondary English learners.

Theoretical Framework

Teachers have a significant impact in determining who has power in the classroom, influencing how the teacher and students position themselves in relation to one another. Positioning theory is concerned with the way people present their understanding of their rights and duties in a given role in relation to others with whom they interact socially (Harré, 2012). For example, how teachers present themselves to students during classroom instruction reveals how teachers position themselves. Positioning helps to explain the particular way the role of teacher or student is understood by individuals in context. Positioning theory is examined in a triangular structure

comprised of three major elements: a person's position, talk and actions, and the storyline (Harré, 1991).

The structure of positioning is related to earlier ideas expressed in Bourdieu's notion of habitus (Reay, 2004). Bourdieu defined habitus as the set of notions the individual brings into a context, which Bourdieu called the field (Shim, 2014). The habitus is informed by the kinds of social and cultural capital the individual possesses, and thus the habitus accounts for why individuals are prone to social reproduction and reinforcing structures that best suit their capital (Shim, 2014). Harré (1991) explained the tendency for social reproduction as the storyline or narrative understanding members of an interaction possess regarding the situation or context. In a classroom, a storyline is made up of the events that occur during daily classroom tasks. The triangular structure is important, as Harré observed to change a position would change the discourse and the storyline of an interaction. For example, if teachers position themselves as authoritarian when teaching students learning English, their chosen position will alter conversation and events during the class period.

The theory of positioning becomes more significant to use as a lens to understand how English learners and teachers interact in classrooms. When teachers of students learning English position themselves as advocates for all students, regardless of language ability, they communicate their duty to offer equitable education to all. Students learning

English have a chance to be validated in this environment. Without this positive and inclusive positioning in a classroom, the student learning English is likely to feel invisible or powerless. The issue then becomes how to shift a teacher's attitude expressed toward students in classroom interactions. Most professional development is focused on instructional strategies, but few teachers engage in learning aimed at examining the manifestations of identities they bring into the classroom. Instructional coaching is one method of professional development that is steeped in reflective work and might hold promise in shifting teacher mindset.

Empirical Literature

Power and Positioning

My theoretical frame is based on how teachers' beliefs impact the sense of value and power students learning English hold in the classroom. To feel an investment in their education, students learning English need to feel teachers acknowledge their presence and the experiences they bring to the classroom. In B. Yoon's (2008) study of three content area teachers who worked with English learners, she found how teachers positioned themselves in the classroom impacted students' power and visibility in the classroom. B. Yoon defined teachers' positions by how they viewed their role in the classroom, whether they felt they were there to support all student needs, just students they were trained to teach, or if they were teachers primarily of their subject matter. These identities are at the

heart of why B. Yoon's work is so essential to my study. In my experience, teachers will frequently position themselves in these ways and use it as their justification behind the access students are provided with in the classroom space. B. Yoon observed lack of access left the students in the room feeling powerless. This creates a kind of invisibility, which impacts students' sense of value both with themselves and with their perceptions on the value of education. Teachers' perceptions can impact students' sense of self-efficacy as well.

Turner, Dominguez, Maldonado, and Empson (2012) also use positioning theory as a theoretical frame to examine power and agency among English learners engaged in discussion in math classrooms. Similarly to B. Yoon (2008), they found students who were actively and interactionally positioned as competent math thinkers held greater power in classroom spaces (Turner et al., 2012). Students in classrooms with teachers who actively encourage them and invite them to participate take greater risks in their learning are more likely to keep working on developing their skills (Ramirez et al., 2016). Positioning is a key framework when discussing classroom dynamics for students learning English or acquiring skills in mathematics, as both areas assume prerequisite skills students must first demonstrate before they can access power in their learning and interactions.

Teachers need to distinguish academic and social purposes for language and emphasize practice in both (Faltis, Arias, & Ramírez-Marín, 2010). Students will not be able to fully benefit from the practicing social forms of language if they are not able to find authentic engagement with their peers in the classroom. Langer-Osuna (2017) more recently used positioning theory to inform her conceptual framework while examining English learners and native speaking peers engaged in partnered problem solving in their math course. Her framework names ways students are internationally positioned, either by their influence on the task, their social authority, or their intellectual authority (Langer-Osuna, 2017). Teachers and peers who validate students' contributions reinforce the authority and thus power students have in the classroom. For English learners, this validation during classroom discourse with peers is invaluable, as it not only encourages their practice of key language skills but also can help English learners feel less isolated in school environments.

Teachers' Lack of Preparation and Urgency

Teachers position their students learning English based on their own identity as professionals. Often this identity is formed by the degree of preparation teachers feel they have encountered prior to entering the classroom. Teachers often indicate they feel underprepared by their training programs and receive little to no professional development to address the language needs of students (Batt, 2008; Gomez &

Diarrassouba, 2014; O'Brien, 2009). Gleeson and Davison's (2016) case study of high school subject area teachers working with ELs found teachers relied far more on their own assumptions about effective language practice based on their past educational experiences than on any professional learning. These teachers would often develop strategies based on their own beliefs, such as emphasizing spelling or oral discussion, with little understanding on whether those practices were beneficial for advancing the skills of the students in their classes. Similarly, Shim (2014) found a connection between teachers' assumptions and decisions about practice. When lacking proper training, teachers will often reproduce instruction from their own experience, which often comes from a more monolingual and dominant culture experience (Shim, 2014). Without new learning to disrupt these ideas, teachers are likely to engage in practices that place students learning English at a deficit. Gleeson and Davison also found these assumptions became habits on which teachers relied. These habits discouraged the teachers from pursuing additional learning opportunities. Positioning theory explains this through reflexive positioning, one of two major types of positioning. Reflexive positioning is best explained as the internal discourse of individuals about their identity and position in relation to those around them in a given situation (Harré, 1991). In this case teachers are positioning themselves in relation to their students and determining the learning experiences they are creating are effective, and if a student is struggling, that lies more

with the student than the learning environment. If teachers are already reflexively positioning themselves as skilled, there is no reason for those teachers to feel a sense of urgency to intentionally seek additional learning opportunities.

The sense of urgency teachers feel toward increasing their knowledge of pedagogy that serves students learning English is a significant factor on whether or not teachers actively pursue new learning. In Gomez and Diarrassouba's (2014) study, teachers indicated a desire to learn more about linguistic and cultural needs of their students learning English correlated with the high or low percentage of students learning English in their classrooms. In addition to the physical presence of students in the classroom, the desire for professional learning is sometimes split at single school sites, as some teachers on campus teach a lower percentage of students learning English, so they feel less responsibility to shift their practice for a classroom minority (Batt, 2008). In this sense, teachers are positioning themselves as teachers of students learning English based on the number of students they teach. If they see these students as a minority, they can position themselves as responsive to a greater need in the classroom, not as a teacher of students learning English.

Though teachers frequently identified lack of teacher preparation to be a challenge for the success of students learning English, research also found teachers were somewhat ambivalent about the need to pursue more education (Reeves, 2010). Studies

have revealed many educators feel inadequately prepared to work with students learning English based on their preservice preparation and other professional development (Gomez & Diarrassouba, 2014; O'Brien, 2009; Reeves, 2010; B. Yoon, 2008). Despite these findings, teachers do not always show overwhelming interest in attending additional professional development to develop these skills (Reeves, 2010). Reeves (2010) posited this perception could stem from teachers' experience with poorly done or irrelevant professional learning. There could also be a belief among teachers that no specialized training is needed for students learning English, as they will benefit from effective strategies that work for all students (Reeves, 2010). Teachers' attitudes about professional learning must be challenged so they can meet the needs of their students with their practice. In the absence of quality training, teachers will make assumptions based on classroom experiences they believe are working, with little evidence to support their argument, and this will ultimately put students learning English and their particular linguistic needs at an academic disadvantage.

Reshaping Perceptions via Professional Development

As the prior section demonstrated, challenging teachers' perceptions about professional learning is key to shifting the deficit or ineffective practices they bring to the classrooms. Many studies have focused on different approaches to engage teachers in reflection about their work with students learning English (Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Mellom et

al., 2018; Ramirez et al., 2016). In Kayi-Aydar's (2015) study of three preservice teachers of students learning English, she examined the negotiation of teachers' developing sense of identity and position and the impact it has upon their sense of agency. Through interviews and journals, teachers reflected upon their novice work in the classroom and their position in relation to their mentor teachers and their students (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). The interactions and reflections about their position in the classroom fueled teachers with a sense of agency to develop practices that demonstrated attentiveness toward the needs of their students who were learning English. The preservice teachers frequently positioned themselves in opposition to the attitudes and outdated practices of their mentor teachers or aligned with those with which they philosophically agreed. Developing agency from reflective practices would be a great catalyst toward pursuing professional learning and overcoming the attitudes examined in Reeves's (2010) study.

Sustained and conscious reflection as a part of professional development to examine attitudes toward students learning English was present in many studies (Bohon, McKelvey, Rhodes, & Robnolt, 2017; Choi & Morrison, 2014; DaSilva Iddings & Rose, 2012; Kim & Viesca, 2016; Mellom et al., 2018). Though some studies presented a model of professional learning that did require a week or a few days of an institute to acquire new understandings, many of them discovered the need to go further and provide ongoing support when trying to address attitudes and beliefs (Bohon et al., 2017; Choi &

Morrison, 2014; DaSilva Iddings & Rose, 2012). As with B. Yoon's (2008) study, teachers will often position themselves as teachers of students or teachers of content. It takes intervention to shift teachers' sense of responsibility from the responsibility of the student to learn to the responsibility of the teacher to change their strategies for students to access material (Choi & Morrison, 2014). Teachers will not disrupt the internal cycle of reflexive positioning independently. Iterative reflection for teachers acquiring new perspective about students learning English is necessary because these ideas are often filtered by teachers' sense of identity and previous experiences both professionally and personally. Just as teachers communicate importance and value in the way they interact with, and thus position, their students, teachers need professional learning opportunities that will interactionally position them as professionals, capable of challenging their preconceived ideas about pedagogy or a population of students.

A teacher's sense of identity can be quite strong, so the need for time to examine practice continuously will be the only way some new ideas and practices will be implemented, as Kim and Viesca found in their 2016 study. Through their analysis, the researchers determined teachers positioned their students reflexively through their expectations of student behavior. These expectations developed either through their own dominant cultural identification of what a good, motivated student should be or through previous experience with other types of students. For example, one teacher expressed

frustration about the talkative nature of his students and compared this with his own perception of his behavior when he was a student, which he identified as being more respectful (Kim & Viesca, 2016). The judgments kept the teacher from forming more positive relationships with his students, and in turn, he failed to engage his students in the ways the professional development was promoting. Identity is a powerful part of our own internal narrative and unfortunately can be used to block new learning if it does not align in a way that reinforces our sense of self. Because an individual's sense of identity can block them from acquiring new learning, teachers need mentors who can offer outside perspectives and push for more critical forms of reflection.

Studies found coaching relationships play an important role in the identity development of teachers responsible for the needs of students learning English (Bohon et al., 2017; Choi & Morrison, 2014; Mellom et al., 2018). In Choi and Morrison's (2014) study, which examined teacher's implementation of a particular set of strategies for students learning English, they found an interconnection among professional learning, cycles of reflection, and collaboration of knowledge construction to start impacting teachers' attitudes and beliefs. If teachers' attitudes and beliefs could be shifted, they would be more motivated to change their practice, and that change of practice could have an impact on student outcomes (Choi & Morrison, 2014). For most teachers, it can be incredibly difficult to find time and energy to engage in cycles of inquiry independently.

Furthermore, teachers' abilities to set aside their own perspectives and biases to take a fully realized look at their own practice is extremely difficult without outside assistance. Using a coach or a mentor who is positioned to support new ideas from professional learning or simply identifying time for critical reflection can help teachers embed time and space for this process as well as benefit from an outside perspective. Unfortunately, studies found a coaching structure is not frequently a part of many professional learning opportunities because of the time and cost associated with such an approach; however, if there is a desire to see a change in teacher practice, it may be one of the most effective avenues (Bohon et al., 2017).

Though studies made strides in focusing teachers' attentions on reflection and coaching relationships, researchers concluded they need to adapt their approach in the future for a more direct confrontation of teacher's deficit beliefs about students learning English (Kim & Viesca, 2016). This is a valuable observation, as it suggests if professional development is imbedded with discussions of cultural understanding, it could disrupt the negative perceptions some teachers possess. In a similar study on shifting teachers' attitudes, Mellom et al. (2018) examined shifts in teachers' beliefs after undergoing a yearlong training in a culturally responsive pedagogical approach. They collected data in the form of logs teachers kept at various points throughout the training. The method of journaling is used in many studies I examined, but this one is potentially

stronger as it asked teachers to reflect on the role of home language and the ways their students could be assets during classroom instruction. The guiding reflection questions were designed to measure how the teachers felt about their students, particularly in how they were able to connect with them on a personal level and use their home language as an asset in classroom instruction (Mellom et al., 2018). Though the results were somewhat inconsistent, overall teachers' reflections showed they held more positive attitudes toward English learners' classroom participation. In addition, teachers developed a greater linguistic awareness in their classrooms. Teachers in the study were exposed to a training as well as frequent check-ins with an instructional coach (Mellom et al., 2018). Though other studies also used instructional coaching to shift teachers' beliefs and attitudes about practices in relation to students learning English, this was the only study I identified that used the model to address beliefs about the students themselves. In my study of teachers' identities and positioning toward secondary students learning English, I also examined more iterative forms of professional development in the pursuit of more closely examining such a relationship.

Summary

Classroom teachers' power in the part they play for the equitable success of students learning English cannot be understated. As we see in studies by B. Yoon (2008), Turner et al. (2012), and Langer-Osuna (2017), teachers' beliefs shape the use of student

language, the power students have in participation, and the sense of belonging students learning English feel in the school environment. Gleeson and Davison's (2016) and Kim and Viesca's (2016) studies showed teachers who are more open to learning about research-based practices and pedagogies will support their English learners' academic success, which will also have a huge impact on how those students view their own capacity for growth. To prepare for more engaging and relevant classroom discourse, teachers need to reflect upon their identity and challenge their level of preparation to meet the needs of these students. Teachers need to critically reflect on their position and identity to feel a sense of agency in meeting the needs of their English learning students. Students learning English need respect and support to have equitable and enriching experiences in school.

One of the more encouraging aspects of recent literature on professional development for students learning English is the acknowledgment there needs to be a major shift in how schools offer professional learning to their teachers. Choi and Morrison (2014), Bohon et al. (2017), and DaSilva Iddings and Rose (2012) acknowledge singular efforts to expose teachers to new ideas are rarely effective in isolation. As teachers, we can verify students rarely succeed with mastering a concept after short exposure to it and can reason it would be difficult for adult learners to succeed with this method as well, yet that is how most professional development is traditionally organized.

In addition, the more closely tied a new concept is to a new philosophy, the more time a teacher will need to explore the idea and examine how it might challenge or shift previously held notions. That kind of reflection takes time and rarely thrives in isolation.

My study examined the critical reflection instructional coaches engage in with teachers of students learning English. My study offers a new perspective from many I have read because the focus is on the coaching process as a means to shift teacher thinking as a part of teachers' in-service development. In addition to interviews, I also analyzed classroom observations, which was not a frequent data source in many of the studies. I believe the classroom observations provide me with a comparison between how the teachers' support and reflection with their coach impacts their daily practice.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Methodological Literature

The primary goal of my research was to examine teachers' professional identities and how they may influence the language and actions of teachers as they work with secondary students learning English in their classrooms. Most importantly, I wanted to examine the extent to which instructional coaching practices have any influence on those interactions. Positioning theory is a foundational frame that has guided many empirical studies on teacher interactions and attitudes toward students learning English, which is why I selected this approach for my dissertation. The theory has also provided me with a lens to view my own work with teachers, as it helps me better understand where they are coming from and how that viewpoint influences their work with students.

When working with teachers and gaining a sense of their professional identity and what brought them to work in education, it is critical to understand how that informs the way they position themselves in the classroom. There are two major ways people position themselves in a given context: interactionally and reflexively. Interactional positioning describes the way figures, such as teachers, will position themselves and their students through their interactions with them. For example, teachers who identify as authoritarian will position themselves as authoritative by taking a stern tone in the classroom. This interaction will consequently position the students as silent and subservient to the teacher.

Another form of positioning is reflexive positioning, which is how individuals negotiate their own sense of identity in social acts through a more internal process (Tan & Moghaddam, 1995). In the classroom, this might be the internal dialogue teachers engage in throughout class that informs who they are in the classroom as professionals. As my goal is to better understand how teachers position themselves in relation to their students, my best method is to observe their interactional positioning, often established by their discourse in the classroom.

Harré (1991) referred to the discourse used in interactional positioning as *speech acts*, a common term in linguistics to define the intention and production of an utterance. Speech acts are often defined by their purpose, as utterances can be used for a variety of purposes, such as asserting information or providing a directive or declaration (Searle, 1976). Positioning theory and discourse analysis both share a common root in discursive psychology, which posits individuals form and negotiate their sense of identity and attitudes through social interaction and discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). To those using discourse analysis in qualitative research speech is an act and a catalyst for reaction between the parties engaged in a discourse. Language is more than a utilitarian practice to share descriptions and basic assertions. People use language to describe their feelings and ideas, but they also use it to interact and make others feel or believe particular things (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

As a research tool, discourse analysis can be used to gain a better sense of how individuals have developed their identity as a teacher and established that identity by communicating with others (Gee, 2011). This type of analysis might also help to determine how they use beliefs about themselves to interact with their students learning English and how these interactions will position those students in a classroom in terms of access to their education. Identity is relatively stable (Harré, 1991), so it is more complex to study not just how individuals define themselves but also to examine how they define themselves in relation to others. In this dissertation, I also used discourse analysis to gain insight on the beliefs these teachers hold about their students learning English, as revealed by the ways they engage in discourse with these students and the language they use.

Teachers of students learning English might not explicitly define their feelings and beliefs about their students, but the language they choose or how they express that language might reveal a deeper understanding of their implicit beliefs. Discourse analysis consists of many different approaches to linguistic understanding, though many of the methods involve a close examination of grammatical principles used to create meaning (Gee, 2011). For example, the syntax of a sentence and the position of a subject can denote significance in even a simple sentence. This often involves a process of examining routine conversation or writing as if it is something strange or foreign to the person

conducting the analysis (Gee, 2011). Approaching the analysis of ordinary discourse as if it is strange allows the analyst to observe parts of conversations about which we normally make assumptions without examining potential underlying implications.

Though there is no one way to conduct discourse analysis on a transcript of speech or text, there are many tools that allow a focus on how people build relationships, identities, and expectations (Gee, 2011). Each of these tools can help to reveal important insights in a classroom setting, as the identities and relationships at play help form expectations of both teacher and student behavior and outcomes. Examining those identities and relationships is important in the context of students learning English, as teachers of these students come with a wide variety of expectations, some of which are damaging to the teaching exchange. Teachers' expressed beliefs as demonstrated through their discourse lead to varying educational outcomes for their students learning English.

Research Questions

One of the most significant aspects of my research was the examination of teachers' beliefs and attitudes of secondary students learning English and how teachers' attitudes shape the position those teachers take toward their students. My first question was aimed at qualitatively capturing my participating teachers' identity as professionals serving students learning English, because that identity informs their attitude. Therefore, my first and overarching research question was: How do the professional identities of

secondary teachers relate to how they interact with and position students learning English?

Though many empirical studies discuss the importance of teacher identity, I needed to determine what specific identities are present in my own context. It was also significant to understand teachers' sense of self to know what brought them into education as a profession. Understanding why individuals choose to enter classroom teaching as a profession can inform an understanding about their philosophy about students and their role as an educator. Though acknowledging the professional and classroom identities teachers possess is important, it was also key to see how these identities situated themselves in classroom interactions with secondary students learning English. This helped me uncover a sense of who my participants were and who they were in relation to others.

Understanding their professional identities and how teachers relate to students learning English in their classrooms provided me with a sense of how identity and position are related. Examining this relationship helped assess the influence of practices such as instructional coaching on how teachers position and reposition the students in their classroom. Working with an instructional coach provides teachers a space for feedback and support that allows them to transform their practice and thus how they relate to their students in their classroom discourse. Instructional coaches' work is based

on the power of dialogue and reflection. The role of the coach is not to dictate to the teacher but to guide their reflection. This model of coaching acknowledges the experiences and identities teachers are bringing to their work with students learning English and uses dialogue to allow them to explore those experiences and form measurable and actionable goals that will address their progression. To authentically move practice and challenge teachers to question the way they previously interacted and related to their students, teachers need structured reflection that humanizes them, allows them choice, but ultimately pushes their thinking (Knight, 2019). Teachers need a coach. Coaching pushes past a pleasant conversation with a colleague and toward a powerful exchange that can foster dialogue questioning previously held assumptions. This is in part because coaching is goal based and iterative. Coaching does not seek to fix teachers, but it does hold them accountable for their growth. Teachers need this kind of humanizing but firm approach to development, as otherwise they will hardly find the time or motivation to be so reflective in isolation. Considering these factors, my secondary subquestion to my first research question was: In what ways do coaching experiences influence teacher identity and their interactive positioning in their classrooms with students learning English?

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at two high schools in a local high school district. The district serves approximately 4,200 students, 14% of whom are classified as English learners. The district spans several communities but only offers English language learning services for more newcomer students at the schools in one community. There are about 275 designated English learners at each of the sites I chose for my study. Though they make up roughly one fifth of their respective school populations, they are still often neglected in their campus cultures.

My role in the district is director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability, and part of my responsibilities is overseeing the program for students classified as English learners. I assist in their identification, placement, reclassification, monitoring, testing, as well as professional development for teachers who work with students learning English. In addition to my work on the district's program for students learning English, I work on many initiatives with teachers, ranging from developing scope and sequences for course content to developing professional learning sessions and most notably, running our district's instructional coaching program. I began a role as an instructional coach in 2013 before transitioning to the role of district instructional coach right before I stepped into my current administrative position. In addition to the coaching work, I have spent many years teaching students learning English. Though I have taught courses designed for students new to the country, I have spent the majority of my classroom time with students

classified as long-term English learners. Because of my role and work history, it feels quite natural to conduct a study with coaches and teachers as my target participants.

As not all schools within our district serve a large number of students learning English, I limited my study's participants to coaches who serve the two high schools with the largest number of students learning English and the most English language development course offerings. There is more than one coach at each site, so I narrowed my criteria to the coach working in the role the longest and who was conducting coaching cycles with more than two English language development teachers. Of the teacher participants with whom I am working, I chose a variety of experience levels in relation to their work with students learning English. In addition to a variety in levels of experience, I made sure I had a balance of content area teachers. At each school site, I focused on one teacher who teaches the second level of the English Language Development class and one teacher who teaches a content area English Language Development class (e.g., the history class we have specifically for students learning English). All teacher participants have some familiarity with the training program used by the district, *Constructing Meaning*, as they had started the training or completed it. I also selected teachers with a variety of experience levels, as instructional coaching focuses on in-service development of teachers. Teachers with many years of experience can sometimes be more resistant to in-service development as they often feel more confident in their experiential knowledge

and practice than their less experienced peers. I wanted to include their perspective to better understand how coaching functions for a range of teachers. Lastly, all of my teaching participants were monolingual, which represents the majority of teachers at the school outside of the world language department. The coaches in my study were both bilingual, speaking English and French. Though both have spent time in France teaching English, only Ms. Marple teaches French at Eastfield. To find out more information about my participants, refer to Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Information

Name	Site	Role	Description
Ms. Ellis	Washington High School	Instructional Coach	She has been a teacher at Washington for the last 8 years, teaching English and ELD. She has been an instructional coach for the last 3 years.
Mr. MacArthur	Washington High School	Teacher, English Language Development, Theatre	Mr. MacArthur is in his first full year of teaching at Washington. In addition to ELD, he teaches 10th-grade English and theatre.
Ms. Sanger	Washington High School	Teacher, Biology and College and Career ELD	Ms. Sanger is in her first year of teaching at Washington, though she comes with some experiences from another state. She teaches biology and is also teaching

			College and Career, a new course in the district.
Ms. Marple	Eastfield High School	Instructional Coach	Ms. Marple is in her 15th year at Eastfield High. She teaches French and leads the language department. She has been an instructional coach since 2013.
Ms. Caulfield	Eastfield High School	Teacher, English Language Development	Ms. Caulfield is in her 17th year in the district but her second year at Eastfield. She is in her second year teaching ELD, as she primarily taught English courses previously.
Ms. Radcliffe	Eastfield High School	Teacher, Academic Language Development, Psychology	Ms. Radcliffe is in her third year at Eastfield. She teaches psychology and Academic Language Development, a course for juniors.

Although two coaches and four teachers is a relatively small sample size, I focused on the influences of the teacher-coach relationship, not the impact. Thus, the small number of participants was sufficient to go into depth, particularly because I used discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a fine-grained process that reveals the most by going into depth, compared with a single case that reveals a more surface-level trend among a wide number of participants.

Ethics and Protection of Human Participants

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed my proposal for research and granted my study an exempt status. My study is exempt because it involves a study within my own institution and does not ask my participants to engage in practices outside

those routine for our setting. There is little risk for participants, as this research asked participants to talk about their professional roles and responsibilities. I presented each of my participants with a consent letter, detailing appropriate IRB information, and provided time to review it and ask any further questions. All of my participants signed the consent form, and I retained copies for my records.

During our interviews, I informed participants they did not have to answer a question if it caused them any discomfort. All of my participants were comfortable with all questions I posed. To protect their confidentiality, all teachers participating were given pseudonyms. Beyond that, few identifiers are present in my findings. Transcriptions of data are stored in a device with full disk encryption and password protection. All audio recordings were deleted after my dissertation is complete.

Data Sources

Data included interviews, observations, and data memos collected over the course of a semester. As a qualitative study within my own district of employment, data collection mostly revolved around materials and interactions I encountered in my daily practice as director of curriculum, instruction, and accountability.

I first conducted two interviews with the instructional coaches partnered with the target group of teachers. Around a similar timeframe, I also interviewed the two focal teachers with whom each coach is working. Later in the semester, I interviewed the

teachers for a second time. The interviews were spread throughout the semester to gain a developing sense of their ideas about their practice and how they position themselves in the classroom. I did not create a strict pre- and post-intervention design study, as the study concerns identity and a reflection-based form of professional development. Identity is a construct formed and renegotiated many times over the course of a person's life (Harré, 1991). It is not likely teachers' entire identity constructs will shift dramatically during the course of a single semester, but there should still be evidence of the influence of their reflections, which will arise in the language they use when articulating their own internal sense of position. To humanize the teachers in the coaching process, they are provided a lot of autonomy in what they choose to reflect upon and the methods they engage with to improve their classroom practice. Research supports this as a sound method for professional development, though it does make it more difficult to gauge a specific shift in a short amount of time, such as a single school semester (Knight, 2019). Thus, my main focus was to encourage teachers to reflect on what the coaching process has been like for them and even how it could be improved to help them further.

The first interview focused more on demographic information and sought to capture the teachers' sense of identity and position to address my overarching research question. The second interview focused more on both teachers' and coaches' experiences with instructional coaching, allowing coaches and teachers to reflect on how their work

together has impacted their teaching practice with students learning English.

Furthermore, the second interview focused more on the future of coaching and other teacher support efforts. As my goal is to better understand the relationship between coaching and supports for secondary teachers serving students learning English, I wanted them to focus forward in their feedback and not limit themselves to an evaluation of what currently exists. My goal was to help them explore potential supports. For coaches specifically, the second interview also focused on their reflections as teacher leaders and the support they have received to continue with their work.

In addition to the interviews, I captured video data from a classroom observation of each participating teacher. The observation took place for one class period between the first and second interview with the teacher. Because I hold some positional power in the district, I believe my presence during that observation might alter the events of the classroom discourse, so I used video instead of being present in the classroom. Coaches already are in the habit of videotaping instruction to allow the teachers time to review and observe their own classroom environment. I simply obtained permission to have these recordings shared with me. Though this is not a perfect solution in that teachers have still likely altered their speech or behavior because of the presence of a camera, I do think it mitigated some issues that might have arisen if I were physically present in the classroom.

As I watched the videos of classroom instruction, I completed a classroom observation protocol to guide the notes I was making. The protocol consisted of three parts. Part 1 was a place for me to gather contextual information about the class I was observing, such as the teacher, the class period, how many students were present, and the main instructional objective of the lesson. Part 2 of the protocol contained my observations. I split this part into three columns: teacher actions, student actions, and comments. In the sections observing teacher and student actions, I made objective observations based strictly on what I could observe from the footage. In the comments section, I allowed myself to record more subjective thoughts that occurred as I was making my observations. Once I recorded all of my observations and watched the video again to note anything I may have missed, I recorded reflections in Part 3. I had a series of five reflective questions I completed for each observation. The nature of the questions was to record my ideas about how students were positioned, if there was any evidence teachers had been working with an instructional coach, and what teachers' overall behaviors suggested about their role and position in the classroom. Though this protocol was designed to help my data collection from the videos of classroom practice, it also served as a first round of analysis for my classroom observation data.

Data Analysis

After I conducted my interviews, I transcribed them. I recorded the interviews on my phone, so through iMovie I made a video with my audio and a random image and uploaded it to YouTube. YouTube has a feature that automatically generates closed captions on all videos. It is not perfect, but it is very accurate. Once it had completed the closed captions, I download a rich text file, and I corrected errors. Going through the transcript to address errors as I listened again to the audio served as a first process of data analysis. As I spent time with my interviews in this way, I began to highlight sections that resonated with me so I would remember to return and take a closer look. From there I began descriptive lumping of each transcript. I would lump my data into discernable parts and then come up with a descriptive name for that part. The advantage of this strategy as an approach to first round of coding is it made it easy to return to sections of data and quickly gain a sense about the kind of information I had, since the codes were descriptive. These descriptive codes also helped me determine common themes across my data. From there, I engaged in second round coding that was more thematic in nature. To gain a sense of the thematic “buckets” emerging from my research, refer to Table 2. As there were moments of compelling exchanges between teachers and students within those themes, I used those excerpts to conduct discourse analysis. I followed a similar process to transcribe, using cycles of coding and identifying key moments in classroom observations.

Table 2

Research Questions and Data Sources

Thematic “Bucket”	Research Question	Data Source
Interactive position by teacher in classroom practice	In what ways do coaching experiences influence teacher identity and their interactive positioning in their classrooms with English learners?	Classroom observations
Teacher identity Formed by practice	How do the professional identities of secondary teachers relate to how they interact with and position English learners?	Teacher interviews
Influence of coaching on teacher interactions during classroom practice	In what ways do coaching experiences influence teacher identity and their interactive positioning in their classrooms with English learners?	Coaching interviews Teacher interviews Classroom observations

Once I had my transcriptions and a sense of my thematic buckets, I uploaded my data into Dedoose. Dedoose is an online-based platform where researchers can upload their data, create descriptors, and code sections of their data. Including all the interview transcripts and classroom observation notes, I had 16 pieces of data uploaded to Dedoose. As I went through the data on Dedoose to add my codes, I referred to sections I had previously lumped together with particular descriptions, such as teachers’ views of students, or coaches’ view of teachers of students learning English. As I reviewed data in these sections, I created descriptive codes within to my themes that related to what the teacher had communicated. In Dedoose once you add a code, it creates an excerpt of the

section you have coded. These excerpts can later be downloaded in an Excel spreadsheet that can be filtered by codes or piece of data from which they came. Once I had my spreadsheet completed, I had 95 excerpts. I then took the coded excerpts and determined how they fit, not just within my thematic buckets but also in relation to answering my research questions.

Even with a reliable coding system and careful transcription, this study has the greatest relevance within my own district. The sample size of teachers was intentionally small. Because I used discourse analysis, I aimed for a greater depth of understanding to these specific examples. I believe the insights I gained from the level of detailed analysis I conducted with my participants is valuable to inform future practice within my district and in my own leadership practice.

The process of discourse analysis required very specific transcriptions. Not only did I need to transcribe what people said and when they paused, I also needed to track a number of nonverbal communications, such as head or hand motions, as these also created meaning in discourse that was valuable to analyze. This close transcription of selected excerpts is time consuming but also a form of analysis.

Validity and Reliability

My analysis gains validity by the triangulation of multiple sources of data as well as from the consistency with the data analysis procedures I used. My study is small in

scope by design, but the amount of data collected from each participant allowed for rich and detailed analysis. For each participant, teachers and coaches, I conducted two interviews over the span of a semester. Though the focus of each interview was slightly different, similar themes arose in each discussion. By addressing similar topics in each interview, I ensured there was reliability in the perspectives shared by my participants. In addition, I conducted classroom observations for each of my teacher participants. Comparing statements made in interviews to behaviors observed in the classroom activities helped to triangulate the data I obtained. For added accuracy, I followed up with some of my participants to ensure my transcriptions of our conversations were accurate.

Each part of my data was analyzed with consistency. Using my thematic lens of interactive positioning, reflexive positioning, and the influences of instructional coaching, I went through each part with the same process for transcribing and coding. Once I had my coded data, I explored how to best organize my data based on how it related to my research questions. My intention was to represent my participants' responses faithfully, though that is not to say they were not subjected to my bias. I believe all research is to a degree subjective as we filter information from our own worldviews. I am invested in both equitable outcomes for students learning English and the instructional coaching program, but I also have a strong desire to improve the conditions for each in my district. Therefore, I add to the validity of my analysis by acknowledging the inconsistencies as

they arise and try to understand what they mean in the context of improving professional learning experiences for teachers of students learning English.

Conclusion

Findings for my qualitative study are divided into Chapters 4 and 5, each exploring one of my two research questions. By using Gee's (2011) discourse analysis and the lens of positioning theory, my findings reveal the interactions between students and teachers and how they reflect the way teachers position their identity in the classroom in relation to students learning English.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS: INTERACTIVE AND REFLEXIVE POSITIONING

In this chapter, I discuss the interactive positioning of teachers as they engage in discourse with their students in the classroom. Interactive positioning provides insight into how people negotiate a sense of identity, both for themselves and those with whom they interact. It also informs how one person's sense of identity influences the power and position another feels during that interaction. In the space of a classroom, interactive positioning occurs through classroom discourse as a teacher is in dialogue with students. Later in the chapter, the focus shifts to teachers' reflexive positioning and more specifically, their comments made during interviews about their professional identities. Teachers' comments reveal how they understand their role as teachers based on their life experiences and their preparations to become teachers of students learning English.

Interactive Positioning

My analysis is based in Gee's (2011) identity building tool, as Gee asserted through talk we establish positions and identities within a place such as a classroom. During my coding of the classroom observation protocols, codes related to the thematic idea of interactive positioning came up most often, from teachers' evaluation of student responses to their encouragement, or lack thereof, of peer interactions.

Teachers in my study attempted to position their students in affirming ways by fostering a positive classroom atmosphere and encouraging student responses. Yet,

overall, teachers interacted with students in ways that positioned students as requiring information from the teacher to be successful in developing skills in English and literacy. In this way, the teacher's interactions communicate to students learning English that teachers are the gatekeepers of English proficiency and solely possess the correct information. Through speech and nonverbal cues, teachers reinforce the message that students learning English are completely reliant on the classroom teacher to progress in their learning. The reinforcement of this idea was seen during my classroom observations in terms of how teachers structured the class and the types of feedback they provided to student responses.

The classroom observations provided ample evidence that teachers positioned students as dependent on the teacher for knowledge. In all four classroom spaces where data were collected, teachers designed a majority of the instruction to facilitate interactions with the class as a whole or with students working independently. In two of the classrooms there was a section of class time allotted to group work, but even this group work necessitated teacher interactions for students to be productive. I turn now to these classroom observations to show how in lessons that are teacher led and in lessons that use group work the teachers persistently retained control.

The observation from Ms. Caulfield's teaching demonstrates a highly structured teacher-led lesson, which is typical of her practice. On the date of this observation, Ms.

Caulfield's ELD 2 classroom was engaged in an activity where the objective was to have students use descriptive language they had just reviewed to describe details and make inferences about photographs from the Civil Rights Era. Ms. Caulfield began the activity by modeling how she would describe a photograph and then wrote it out in sentences for the students to copy. From there, the class moved to additional photographs, and the teacher instructed the students to create their own sentences. Ms. Caulfield then asked students to share their sentences by calling on them randomly, pulling popsicle sticks with their names written on them to determine who would speak. Though soliciting responses in this way ensured students would contribute to the classroom discourse, the purpose of their responses was to allow the teacher to monitor students' understanding and provide feedback on their accuracy. Therefore, the students did not help build the conversation in these teacher-student exchanges.

The teacher also provided opportunity for building connections with peers by directing students to share their sentences with a seat partner twice during the class period. However, most students sat silently and did not share. Those who did engage with their partner simply read their sentence out loud, as Ms. Caulfield had provided no instructions on eliciting feedback or engaging in additional dialogue. As Ms. Caulfield's directives prompted recitation in the whole group and the peer settings, these interactions

communicated to the students that Ms. Caulfield was the primary source of knowledge in the classroom, as she was the only one positioned to evaluate responses.

I witnessed a similar dynamic in the peer interaction I observed in Ms. Sanger's biology classroom. Upon entering the classroom, students were prompted to begin work on a warm-up question projected on the board. The question was content-based, "What is the difference between primary and secondary succession?" and intended to review material taught on a previous day. Students worked quietly and independently on their responses for a few minutes before they were directed to read their responses aloud to their seat partner. Though this structure encouraged a peer interaction, like with Ms. Caulfield's class, they were not prompted to provide feedback or engage in any discussion. After students shared with their partner, Ms. Sanger called the classes' attention back to the front of the room and called on a volunteer to provide the correct response. From there, students were directed to put their warm-ups to the side so they could review the graded test the teacher had passed back. Ms. Sanger reviewed each of the answers as students listened. These interactions positioned students learning English in Ms. Sanger's classroom as passive as they reviewed material. These activities were structured so there was only one potential correct answer to each of the warm-up questions and the test items, so the teacher was solely responsible for providing the information. During the review, Ms. Sanger was leading students through in an

encouraging way. When one student expressed his frustration about the mistakes he had made on his exam, Ms. Sanger assured him mistakes were natural and reviewing them was “how we get better for next time.” Though the environment of Ms. Sanger’s classroom positioned the students as capable and intelligent, the structure still reinforced the idea that the teacher would have to lead them to a better understanding through feedback and corrections.

Structuring the classroom space so the teacher is the central figure of feedback and thus, the holder of knowledge, could also be seen in the way Ms. Radcliffe conducted her classroom activity. Ms. Radcliffe’s social science class was engaged in the revision process of an essay on the day I observed her classroom. At first, Ms. Radcliffe’s class differed from the others as her warm-up prompted students to respond in dialogue that was more generative than rote. The warm-up asked students to brainstorm the resources and methods they had used over the course of the semester to become stronger writers. Students shared out different responses such as “reading more” and “writing multiple drafts,” and it was clear in how Ms. Radcliffe responded there was no single correct response and she was open to ideas she had not previously expected to hear; however, this structure shifted into one more closely resembling the other participants’ classrooms as the period progressed. Ms. Radcliffe instructed students to work on revising their essays on their Chromebooks, using feedback from a peer edit workshop conducted in a

previous classroom session, as well as feedback she had left on each of their drafts. The entirety of the period was then spent with Ms. Radcliffe conducting one-on-one meetings with students while others worked silently and independently. In Ms. Radcliffe's feedback sessions with individual students, she took them through points of the paper and explained what they needed to improve. Though she positioned students as insightful, at one point commenting to a student that she "really liked that you used this example. No one else in the class brought that up, and I think it works well for your claim," most of her feedback concerned their grammatical errors or inconsistencies. By focusing most of her feedback on low level English language errors and providing directive corrections, Ms. Radcliffe positioned herself as the authority to hold such knowledge for students to clarify their writing. Had Ms. Radcliffe structured her comments as questions, asked students to read sections of their writing out loud, or asked them to further explain their intentions, students would have been positioned as more active participants of the writing conference and would have had more agency in clarifying their writing.

The way Ms. Radcliffe structured her writing conferences, with mainly teacher to student feedback, was a common way many teacher participants chose to structure their instruction. In Mr. MacArthur's ELD 2 classroom, students were also working on a grammatical lesson set up in a manner that prompted Mr. MacArthur to frequently provide feedback to students concerning their use of conjunctions. Mr. MacArthur began

class by reviewing previous class lessons, as Ms. Sanger had, and moved on to having students copy notes in their notebook. Like with Ms. Caulfield's lesson, a good amount of modeling was done by the teacher, with Mr. MacArthur writing many sentences on the board for students to copy. Mr. MacArthur explained how each sentence used a conjunction and why specific conjunctions were more effective choices. Again, as with all other teacher participants, students were interactively positioned by Mr. MacArthur as passive recipients of knowledge, requiring Mr. MacArthur's guidance and understanding, rather than being allowed to play with and discover language rules independently.

Though students were later directed to work independently to complete cloze sentences with conjunctions of their choosing, students mainly shared their choices with the teacher to receive feedback on whether the conjunction had been applied correctly. Mr.

MacArthur did construct sentences around topics that were of high interest to students, such as video games, and allowed them to complete sentences with information from their personal lives, such as hobbies they enjoyed or their after-school obligations.

Despite the positive rapport the teacher had clearly developed with his students, the interactions and discourse still relied heavily on Mr. MacArthur's knowledge for students to progress through the lesson.

Two of the four participants' classroom lessons involved group work, a pedagogical structure that has potential to interactionally position students as capable of

learning from one another and of valuing their collaborative ability. In Ms. Sanger's classroom, students spent time working on a poster to represent different aspects of a biome. However, elements were missing from how Ms. Sanger structured the activity, which resulted in her remaining positioned as a central figure. Specifically, as students worked on their posters, Ms. Sanger would circulate the room to visit each group, providing feedback or posing questions about aspects of the poster. While Ms. Sanger was focused on one group, I observed that other groups appeared to be distracted, perhaps waiting for her guidance, instead of working productively. In a few cases, only one group member appeared to be writing anything on the poster, while the other students engaged in conversations about social topics. Only when Ms. Sanger returned to a group would those students reengage with their work and have productive questions for the teacher. Though this could be attributed to a classroom management issue, it is also likely students are more accustomed to a teacher-centered learning structure in this classroom and felt less sure in how to move forward in their work without the direct feedback of their teacher.

A similar issue with the structuring of group work was observed in the brief group assignment done in Mr. MacArthur's class. Mr. MacArthur provided students with sentences cut into strips, with pieces of the sentence separated from each other and other slips with conjunctions written on them. The students' directive was to put the sentences

back together, using the conjunction to make them longer and more complex. The directions for this assignment are intended to allow students to play with English language functions and structures. Yet the sentences were organized such that there was only one correct combination for the sentences and only one correct conjunction that could be used. Though it was encouraging to see students negotiate their understanding of the conjunctions with one another and this activity could have positioned them as capable as learning from one another, Mr. MacArthur's decision to provide only a single possible outcome for each sentence limited the student interactions. In the end, each group was left waiting for Mr. MacArthur to visit each of their workspaces to validate whether each group had produced the correct answer. By creating this restriction, Mr. MacArthur reinforced the positioning of students as more passive and himself as the gatekeeper of grammatical knowledge in English.

A common thread through these classroom observations was teachers' over reliance on instructional structures that position teachers' discourse with students as more essential than other types of interactions emphasizing student initiative. Lessons structured around student agency are more likely to promote learning through discovery and provide more complex and meaningful settings for using language. Students learning English are developing their language in all domains, both written and oral, but research has emphasized the need for oral literacy practice as a method for developing skills in a

new language (Lucas et al., 2008). Centralizing the teacher as the dominant source of knowledge and accuracy stifled student interactions that, perhaps unintentionally, positioned them as passive recipients of knowledge in the classroom space.

Teachers' interactive positioning of their students learning English in this matter is often based on their past experiences, particularly with their preparation. As a former instructional coach and current administrator in my district, I have observed teacher-to-class or teacher-to-individual student interactions to be the dominant structures of instruction across classrooms. This phenomenon can be referred to as "initiate, respond, evaluate," a commonplace pattern for classroom discussions where the teacher retains control and merely expects recitation from students (Parker, 2006). The initiate, respond, evaluate pattern is often a learned behavior in teachers, as they are replicating experiences from their own educations and responding to expectations they feel placed upon them.

Messaging to teachers about how they should position themselves as content authorities begins on their pathway toward entering the profession. High school teachers are required to have a Bachelor of Arts in the subject they teach, and usually must take additional coursework or pass a discipline-based exam before entering a credentialing program. The emphasis on content knowledge in their preparation leading up to entering the teaching profession sends high school teachers the message that content expertise is

as important, if not more so, than teaching philosophy or pedagogical practices. When they finally enter classroom spaces, they may feel their central role is to share their content expertise with their students. In addition to their educational experiences, many teachers develop their pedagogical practices based on their previous experiences with teachers in classrooms where they have been a student, and many of these experiences have involved teacher-centered instructional structures (Anyon, 1980). Further, as student teachers during their credential programs, many are likely paired with teachers who have also relied heavily on teacher-centered interactions in the classroom.

Teachers are also often hesitant to allow for more peer interaction and opportunities for co-construction of knowledge and instruction in classrooms that house a good number of students who are extremely new to the English language. In two of the four classrooms I observed, students are in an ELD 2 classroom, which is generally populated with students who are recent arrivals to the United States and have scored a level two (of four) on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) test. Students in these classrooms are generally still building a lot of their vocabulary in English and navigating the syntactical differences in English as compared to the language with which they are more familiar. Teachers in these classrooms desire to provide a lot of supports for these students, as students are still at a level in which they require a lot of guidance when playing with language. Even with this consideration, there

were a lot of missed opportunities during instruction where teachers could have provided scaffolds that allowed students to engage more with their peers, independent of the reliance on teacher directive. For example, during his class, Mr. MacArthur had them rearranging strips of parts of sentences to form with appropriate conjunctions. In Mr. MacArthur's instruction there was only one correct response for each sentence, so students were dependent on his feedback to evaluate their correctness. Mr. MacArthur could have focused his lesson to just include the usage of "and" and "but" as conjunctions to connect ideas. He could have then provided a sentence frame for students to share their reasoning with students like, "I chose to connect the ideas with (and/but) because the ideas are (similar/different)." By limiting the focus of the conjunctions and providing the sentence frames, students would have structures provided by the teacher to rely on while still being free to navigate the assignment collaboratively. The framing of the sentence also gives them language at their level to use that allows them to express the reasoning and thought behind their choices. Providing this freedom in the structure of the classroom would also allow Mr. MacArthur to circulate the room to observe students' justifications, which would give him insight into their understandings and potential misconceptions about the conjunctions. Teachers who hold the structure of instruction to mainly teacher-to-class interactions are depriving themselves of more rich formative

information, which could in turn help them devise more targeted lessons to help their students' progress.

Teacher participants in my study clearly cared a great deal about their students and felt a strong sense of responsibility to ensure students understood the lesson and were making measurable progress. Each teacher had a clear lesson objective that asked students to engage in grade level appropriate content. In each of my observations, there were many times I heard teachers openly praise a student's idea or work. Though each classroom environment felt positive, students were interactionally positioned as passive receivers of information rather than active members of knowledge construction. Teachers were focused almost entirely on a classroom structure that relied on teacher instruction and feedback to move learning and interactions forward. Teachers are likely comfortable with this format as it is the one they most often have seen modeled and thus is the one with which they are most familiar. It is also a comfortable structure when working with students who do not have a high proficiency yet with the language, and teachers often do not want to put students in positions within the classroom that will embarrass them or make them feel uncomfortable. Still, students need to have more opportunities to engage with material collaboratively and in a way that promotes their critical exploration of concepts and language. Teachers need to move out of their comfort zones and push themselves to alter their traditional structures. To shift their instructional design into one

that positions students as more active members of classroom discourse, teachers need to first be aware of the structures and participation patterns happening during their lessons. Gaining this awareness is extremely difficult to achieve independently, so teachers would benefit from working with a peer to help push them forward. Once teachers gain awareness, they need time and professional learning to understand and embrace new ways to structure their instruction. Implementing these changes also requires time and support, as teachers will often find challenges with trying a new practice otherwise unfamiliar to them. Teachers need a partner in this process. Investing in time, collaboration, and professional learning resources for teachers is vital, otherwise students will continue as passive within the classroom space. When students, particularly students learning English, are positioned as passive consistently, they risk forming a reinforced helplessness when presented with cognitively or linguistically challenging tasks. We owe it to these students to promote their progression within the classroom space.

Reflexive Positioning

Reflexive positioning is an aspect of positioning theory that accounts for the positions that are created and understood more internally than interactionally. Though the reflexive position is informed by context and discourse, it is also honed by an individual's internal dialogue. The reflexive position will impact the interactional positioning that

occurs within a context, so it is important to understand how reflexive positions are informed and negotiated. In terms of the classroom space, reflexive positioning can illuminate how teachers understand the dynamics of their role in the classroom and their duty to their students. Teachers' understandings are partially informed by instructional discourse but also by their experiences with teachers and the educational system throughout their lives. Individuals who decide to become teachers have had a lifetime of models in the form of their own classroom teachers. The messages they receive about what it means to be a teacher, through both positive and negative examples, become a part of their internal narrative when taking on the role themselves. In addition to experiences with the system, teachers must take courses in their preparation programs, many of which have assignments designed to help them develop their own sense of teaching identity and pedagogical philosophy. All these ideas exist even before they enter the first classroom where they become the teacher.

Professional identity. As mentioned in the previous section, teachers enter their first classroom with many ideas previously acquired about what it means to be a teacher. Those ideas are only further developed internally over time and with classroom experience. The teacher participants in my study presented a range of years of

experience, from 2-17 years. Regardless of their years of experience, their sense of a teacher's professional identity and what drew them to taking on the role was a common theme throughout their interviews. Overall, the teachers in my study were drawn to the teaching profession because of extremely positive experiences with the education system and positive feelings toward adolescents and the subject matter they were assigned to teach.

Though all teachers enter the profession with observed knowledge of teaching from their prior educational experiences, some teachers also come from households where family members were in the field of education. Being immersed in messages about education while growing up has had a positive impact on two of my teacher participants.

Ms. Caulfield observed:

I come from a long line of teachers in my family; some have been in this area, too. I grew up around schools a lot; I loved school as a kid, and I, actually my high school experience, not all of high school was real comfortable or easy for me. But I had some really, really great teachers that, you know, help—helped get me through, and they saw the strengths in me.

At this point in the interview, Ms. Caulfield stated she not only grew up with teachers in her immediate family, but that there is also a lineage of the profession in her heritage. Ms. Caulfield is building her identity as a teacher by associating it with the well-established tradition in her family, demonstrating a long-standing understanding of how the role is enacted. She explained she grew up around schools, and in the same

breath, claimed she developed a love for it. Though Ms. Caulfield contrasted her love of school with her struggles during her high school years, she attributed her ability to overcome those challenges to her teachers. Her teachers motivated her, allowing her to see strengths in herself. Ms. Caulfield not only had positive experiences with education by growing up surrounded by educators in her family, but also in her own times of struggle, teachers were the ones she claimed gave her the ability to persevere. With that framing of teachers in her mind as she entered the profession, Ms. Caulfield enters classroom spaces positioning herself as a positive role model for her students. She may even feel that in classroom spaces with students learning English, who can also find navigating school to be challenging as she describes her own experiences in high school were, she is there to find strengths in them and promote them to succeed.

Ms. Radcliffe was another teacher who noted her family's influence on her decision to become a teacher. She shared:

But what drew me to education was that my mom worked for San Francisco Unified School District. She just retired, so she'd been with the district for 28 years on her retirement. And my stepfather, he had passed away in '99, which is the year that I graduated high school, and he was also an education.

Ms. Radcliffe is clear in her connection between her family and what initially influenced her decision to become a teacher. Ms. S, like Ms. Caulfield, draws upon her mother's well-established experiences by noting her mother's recent retirement that concluded her 28-year-long career. Ms. Radcliffe also spoke fondly of her stepfather

during our interview, attributing his guidance to helping her through more challenging aspects of her time in high school. She mentioned he was also in education, but not before mentioning he passed away the year she graduated from high school. Including this reveals the significance this event had on her development, which makes the fact that her stepfather was also an educator hold that much more weight. Having two significantly positive influences in her life also be in the profession of education shows the reverence Ms. Radcliffe already possessed when she came into the classroom. Ms. Radcliffe feels teachers can have longevity and impact in their work, so she reflexively positions her own role in the classroom as having great significance.

Family connections were not all that drew Ms. Radcliffe toward a path as an educator. Ms. Radcliffe and other teacher participants also reflexively positioned their roles based on their feelings toward the students they would be teaching. Ms. Radcliffe shared, “I knew that I wanted to work with children in some capacity because I'd always had a social justice background, and so I felt like this was the method that I wanted to do it.” Here Ms. Radcliffe mentioned being driven by the desire to work with children. In the same breath, she attributed it to her social justice background, conveying that working with children was a way to further social justice. Though she did not go into detail about how teaching promotes social justice, she cited it as the driving force for her work.

Mr. MacArthur was more specific in his descriptions of his path to becoming a teacher and how it related to students:

I went over to Korea just for the travel experience, and while I was over there, I was teaching kindergarten. So that was my first actual experience with teaching, and I enjoyed working with the kids, and I remember finding that line of work rewarding, seeing the kids grow and develop their language. And so, when I found myself kind of getting into a rut with sales and I was thinking of different career choices, I went back to teaching, and so that's kind of what led me to where I have ended up today.

Mr. MacArthur had a less outlined path toward education in his early life than Ms. Radcliffe or Ms. Caulfield, but he is clear about the student's role in prompting his decision making. Specifically, he highlights that he found the work rewarding because he could watch growth. He even contrasts this feeling with the feeling of being in a "rut" as he found himself with his previous career path. Mr. MacArthur is the only teacher participant who specifically mentions witnessing students' development of language skills as a contributing factor to his decision to enter the profession. Though Mr. MacArthur did not speak of family connections or extremely positive experiences in his own schooling, it is clear this positive experience in teaching students in Korea contributed to his overall positive feelings about the teaching role and education as a social good.

One of the stronger draws to education as cited by many teachers during my interviews was by their passion for their specific content area. As I explained previously,

teachers with secondary credentials are required to have a bachelor's degree in their content area and demonstrate proficiency on an exam before entering their credentialing program. Even in the credential program, core classes generally revolve around curriculum and instruction practices specific to the teacher's discipline. It is not all that surprising that teachers find themselves drawn to education based on their subject area. At one point Ms. Sanger noted, "I really liked biology, and so I was more drawn into education by my content area because I had a huge passion for it." Her passion for her subject area is even more understandable considering that science teachers are further siloed by their content areas—there is an entirely separate credential for teachers who teach life sciences and those who teach physical sciences. Her knowledge must be extremely specified, so her passion likely motivated her throughout obtaining her credential. Ms. Sanger shared:

I wish I could work more on my, my bio classes because that's just where, like, I feel the most like I want to develop that, because that's you know what I'm going to be teaching in the long term.

Here Ms. Sanger expressed her interest in her subject matter and lamented that it is not currently where she gets to spend most of her energy. Ms. Sanger was assigned a section of a college and career elective class for freshman students who are learning English, in addition to her sections of biology. Ms. Sanger's frustration in not getting to work on her content area is understandable, considering the emphasis placed on her

content knowledge leading up to this point in her career. It is daunting for any teacher to take on teaching unfamiliar content, but that difficulty is compounded when teaching a class designed for students learning English, something with which she had little experience previously. With that considered, it is still somewhat concerning that she mentioned biology is more important because it is what she will be working on “in the long term.” Though Ms. Sanger’s experience with the college and career elective class might be temporary, the students learning English in her classroom will be a constant in her career, especially if she stays teaching in the area. Yet, based on her comments, developing as a teacher of her content area is a more central goal for her.

The passion teachers held toward their content was also observable in other teacher participants. In the discussion on what drew her to teaching high school specifically, Ms. Caulfield also brought up similar sentiments:

I actually had thought about teaching younger kids, but I realized how much I loved literature and discussion and all the things around it, so I ended up moving into this instead, as I had gotten a master’s in literature.

Ms. Caulfield’s love of her content area was not only a factor in her decision to teach, but also formed her ideas about the specific age groups with which she wanted to work. A former English teacher myself, I can relate to Ms. Caulfield’s desires, as I also studied literature and developed a desire to share it with younger generation. The danger in this desire is Ms. Caulfield and my educational experiences and comfort level with

literature often written in a complex form of English often differs greatly from that of our immigrant students. Culturally, students learning English might not value the same styles or interpretations, and initially they might not be able to grapple with the higher level texts Ms. Caulfield and I might appreciate as people who have gone on to acquire advanced degrees in the subject matter. Mr. MacArthur also brought up his motivations based in content appreciation: “My background was always in the arts, creative writing, film, theater; that's what interested me, and I wanted a career that would allow me to work with all these things that I loved.”

Mr. MacArthur mentioned observing student growth was a motivating factor for him to become a teacher. During this portion of the interview, he also spoke of his love of the arts and how teaching would be a venue in which he could continue to explore those passions. In addition to teaching the ELD 2 class, Mr. MacArthur also teaches a theatre arts course and advises the drama club. It is important teachers can explore their passions alongside students, as when teachers are invested in their practice and the school as a whole, they are more likely to stay within a system that normally experiences a lot of turnover. Mr. MacArthur clearly positions his understanding of the teaching role as something that should be creatively fulfilling for him, and there is nothing wrong with that unless it comes into conflict with the needs of the student population. If students do not end up sharing the same passions and become disengaged with a topic that the teacher

is interested in, sometimes resentment toward the students will develop. Students learning English are especially vulnerable to these potential resentments as they are coming from environments that might not place the same value on particular kinds of art or may struggle with accessing the language necessary to engage with the art if the teacher does not provide the right access points. At a certain point in our interview, Ms. Sanger expressed this frustration: “It's not my job to teach them English. Like I'm not an ELD teacher, I'm not an English teacher, I'm a science teacher.”

In many ways what Ms. Sanger expresses here is true. In fact, she said this while recounting a conversation with her instructional coach where the coach was reminding her that her primary role was to teach her students learning English biology. For Ms. Sanger, it was a relief to know the responsibility of teaching English was not squarely on her shoulders, as it is not something she had been prepared to do, as the majority of her preparation concerned her content teaching. By contrasting herself with ELD and English teachers, Ms. Sanger firmly positions herself as a teacher of her content. The issue here is that by positioning herself as a science teacher and rejecting the notion that she must teach her students English; she is also neglecting to mention the responsibility she has as a teacher to provide access to language necessary to engage in discourse about science. Ms. Sanger is likely rejecting this responsibility because she feels ill-equipped to meet the needs students learning English have. Ms. Radcliffe has a social science credential,

yet she teaches a class to students classified as “long-term English learners,” so she positions herself as a teacher of students learning English. Still, Ms. Radcliffe feels anxiety when it comes to how well-prepared she is to address her students’ needs. She shared, “I feel that being an ELL teacher, you do have to be very English focus—or language focused at least—and so I wish I had more tools to develop that.”

If when teachers feel confident in their subject matter, it makes them more invested members of the school community, then the opposite can also be true. Ms. Radcliffe’s concern about having the appropriate tools to teach the language required to help students developing English are common among teachers, especially those without English backgrounds or with little experience with working with students who are developing English. These concerns will often turn to frustrations that will lead teachers to reject their classroom responsibilities to providing access to language and retreat to their content teaching, an area where they often feel more confident and thus, safe.

Whether the teachers in my study positioned themselves as teachers based on their positive experiences with educators in their past, positive feelings toward students and education as a social good, or developed a passion for their content area, they all clearly have taken a moral stance on the teaching profession. In these teachers’ view, teaching and education are positive social experiences where adults can make a difference and can inspire passionate feelings toward subject matter. In this area, cost of living is high, and

our district is one of the lowest paying. As these teachers are obviously not motivated by money, and in some cases are even insecure about housing and saving for the future, it is that much more important they feel their profession is altruistic and promoting social good. This feeling is sometimes in contrast to the systemic inequities inherent in education that impact vulnerable populations, such as students learning English. Students who immigrate to the United States and are enrolled in their classes have often been under-schooled or experienced long periods of interrupted education for a variety of factors, including political unrest in the countries they have immigrated from or economic uncertainty in their families that caused them to move. These students often experience trauma in their journeys that schools ignore or are ill equipped to address. For these students, school might not feel like a positive experience, and they might have a hard time with connecting to subject matter. Language barriers can often pose an obstacle for these students when forming the same kind of relationships with their teachers their more English experienced peers can access. All these factors can cause an incongruency between the way teachers and students learning English experience school, and this can create a further divide that limits students learning English from the more positive influences of school. Teachers who reflexively position the role of teaching this way need to be more mindful of these differences and challenge the way they view education and their role within it to ensure they are providing the best experience for all students, and

not just those who are already equipped with the navigational capital to understand and appreciate the system as they were.

Preparation to teach students learning English. One major experience that informed my teacher participants' internal discourse or reflexive positioning of their role of teachers was their preparation experiences, particularly their preparation to meet the needs of students learning English. Some of the teachers had no experiences initially, others had some information embedded into general coursework, and one even had a dedicated course for pedagogy about students learning English. Regardless of the form the preparation took, all teachers reported they did not feel adequately prepared when they first began working with students learning English. When investigating this feeling with my teacher participants, it became clear it was not because of the preparation methods themselves and instead stemmed more from the teachers' reflexive positioning when engaging with their preparation. Overall, teachers did not fully engage with their preparation because they did not hold an identity of a teacher of students learning English. In a few cases, teachers did not find engaging with preparation meaningful because they did not believe they would ever have to use the information, as they would not end up teaching students learning English.

California currently serves 1.3 million students learning English, and that number has grown and is expected to keep growing (Hakuta, 2018). This means roughly 1 out of

every 6 students in California public schools is a student learning English. Still, there is a pervasive belief among teachers that they will be working in schools that do not serve this population of students. Ms. Radcliffe was one of the teachers who had experience with a dedicated course for teaching students learning English during her credential program, yet she did not believe teaching this population would happen during her career:

So, I never ever thought that I was gonna teach ELL students. I mean honestly when I was at State in the credential program, there was the one class I didn't pay attention in; I mean I just picked up some things, but I was like, "I'm never gonna teach ELL like that's not going to apply to me at all," and then sure enough that was the class they gave me when I started. And it was like, crap, I wish I remembered everything that they taught me.

Ms. Radcliffe's expectation that she would not teach students learning English caused her, by her own statement, to disengage with the material of the course. Though some might argue a singular course is not enough to fully prepare teachers, regardless, it left her frustrated she had not been more invested by the time she got her first teaching assignment. Since Ms. Radcliffe was raised by a mother who taught in San Francisco Unified School District, and Ms. Radcliffe attended San Francisco State University, on the surface it is hard to understand where this expectation might have originated. It could potentially be because of the content-heavy nature of teacher preparation. It is also likely caused by the segregation of students learning English, even in diverse places like the Bay Area. During our interview, Ms. Radcliffe remarked, "I did my student teaching at Pacific High School; they don't have ELL students, so I didn't have any experience." It is

important to note Pacific High School does serve a small population of students learning English, about 28 in a school of 600. The population is still proportionally smaller than other schools in the district, and they do not have a dedicated program for newcomer students. Even within the non-students learning English population, there are students who were at one point learning English but have since been designated by state measures as “reclassified English proficient,” having learned enough English to no longer carry the designation of English learner. Because these students do not make up a majority of the population, providing language access to content is not a concept emphasized at this school, so Ms. Radcliffe developed the assumption it was not something she would need to learn. She began to regret not absorbing more information from her preparation program only after she began to identify as a teacher of students learning English, reflexively positioning herself as needing such information.

Ms. Caulfield was another teacher who linked a perceived need with the sense of urgency in seeking preparation to meet the needs of students learning English. Ms. Caulfield was also in a program that offered some support around pedagogy for students learning English but also found herself in a context where she did not feel it necessary to seek additional guidance:

I felt like my program wasn't as strong as it could have been, but I also, you know, the school that I was at before did not have traditional EL classes or designated EL classes, so at that time I didn't do as much training in that area. And if I had

been at Washington or Eastfield, I probably would have done more of that just by the nature of who I had in my classes.

Ms. Caulfield hinted at her feelings about the inadequacy of her preparation but explained she did not seek out better professional development because at the time she was at a school in the district that did not have a dedicated program for students learning English. This is a difference in how Ms. Radcliffe speaks of the population of students, as she acknowledged the school did not have programs for students learning English, not that they were not a part of the school's population. Still, she similarly attributed her lack of urgency for development on the fact she was not at either of the schools in the district that do house those programs and a greater number of students learning English. This demonstrates that Ms. Caulfield, as we saw with Ms. S, needed to be in an environment where she encountered high numbers of students identified as EL to reflexively position herself as a teacher of students learning English, thus in need of professional learning to support them.

Ms. Caulfield and Ms. Sanger had opportunities to have dedicated coursework in their preparation programs for working with students learning English, which was not the case with Ms. Sanger or Mr. MacArthur. Ms. Sanger obtained her teaching license in a rural area of Indiana, where there was a smaller immigrant population and less students learning English attending the schools she worked in. When discussing her preparation, Ms. Sanger noted the lack of training: "It wasn't a required, a requirement to be, to have,

any sort of certification. And I don't even really think it was something that was mentioned very much in my coursework at all.”

In Ms. Sanger’s case, not only was there no dedicated course, but there was also not even mention of meeting linguistic needs of students at all. Though this might not pose issues in Indiana, it does a disservice to Ms. Sanger as she transitions to teaching in California. California requires all teachers obtain authorization to work with students learning English as a part of receiving their credential. In cases like Ms. Sanger’s where they do not receive instruction in their program, they must take additional courses or pass a state exam. Ms. Sanger opted to take the exam but spoke of how little use any of the information she studied has been to her work with students learning English. Mr. MacArthur noted a similar experience, as he obtained his credential in a program that opted to forgo a dedicated course and instead to embed pedagogy for students learning English into other courses. Still, Mr. MacArthur was in a better position than Ms. Sanger, as his program encouraged their preservice teachers to work with students learning English during their time as student teachers. Mr. MacArthur explained encounters with students learning English during this time was not equivalent to working as a full-time teacher of students learning English:

It was more students doing individual projects with one-on-one tutoring, and so I feel like with the one-on-one aspects I was, I felt, prepared. But maybe not so prepared when it came to approaching a group with such diverse needs and trying

to be able to instruct and support students with varying, with vastly, ranging needs, talking about highs and lows within the same level.

Mr. MacArthur identified that not all preservice experiences translate immediately to what will be expected of teachers once they are in a full-time teaching assignment with students learning English. Since Mr. MacArthur's preparation experience only expected him to work with students learning English, without providing explicit guidance on pedagogy and strategies to meet the needs of his students in a more realistic classroom setting, he found himself with a skill set that did not completely transfer, and this left him feeling unprepared. The absence of Ms. Sanger and Mr. MacArthur's direct training in pedagogy for students learning English reinforced the ideas held by many teachers, that it might not be a necessary skill set for them to develop. They then positioned themselves as underprepared to teach this population, thus likely less enthusiastic about taking on a teaching assignment with students learning English.

Teacher preparation to meet the needs of English learners is important but is not the most significant factor in whether a teacher positions themselves as a teacher of students learning English. Though teachers in my study were not likely to see the importance of pedagogy for students learning English with no emphasis placed on it in their preparation, even those who completed coursework on the topic reported its minimal impact, as it was not coupled with realistic experiences with this population of students. During our interview Ms. Radcliffe noted, when it came to her future working

with students learning English, “I don't think it was stressed to me that this may actually be a possibility on my educational path.” Whether her professors did emphasize this point, she was not willing to engage with the information from the course until she was faced with the daily reality of the students in her classroom. Preparation programs need to constantly refine their approach to introducing student teachers to pedagogy for students learning English, but even a perfect approach to preparation would not be enough on its own. I believe these data speak to a need for ongoing support during teachers’ in-service experiences as well. Mr. MacArthur reflected on the need for training to go beyond credentialing programs:

I think there's an expectation that a lot of the learning would have been covered in credential programs, and it is, but even so I think it would be good to have some kind of support system or program for new teachers to be checking in and to be providing strategies for use in the EL classroom specifically.

Mr. MacArthur indicates a sentiment many teachers new to the profession share. Teacher positioning shifts once teachers further refine their understanding of their role during their first few in-service years. Teachers need guidance during this time to continue their development in their instructional practice and ensure they are cultivating an asset-based orientation to students learning English they have been tasked to serve.

Desire for professional learning. As discussed in the previous section, developing an identity as a teacher is not a singular event in a person’s career. Teachers are constantly renegotiating their notions of education and their role within it as they

work with different populations of students or are influenced by continued education or work with mentors. Teachers reflexively position and reposition themselves, and these reflections will sometimes reveal needs teachers were not previously aware they had. All four teacher participants recognized this need and communicated an interest in continuing their professional learning, especially in serving students learning English. In-service development of teachers, commonly referred to as professional learning or professional development, can take on different forms, and the method of professional learning can sometimes have as much of an impact as the content. All teachers in my study indicated the professional learning they desired most would take the form of collaborative experiences. All teachers wanted more time to observe one another and share ideas, but they stressed the need for leadership to provide time and structures for collaboration to be effective.

In my interviews, all four participants brought up the desire to observe teachers engaged in classroom practice with students learning English. Observing classrooms was brought up frequently and was mentioned as what teachers perceived would be the most valuable kind of learning. Ms. Sanger stated:

I think what would be most valuable to me would be to spend more time in other teachers' classrooms, seeing what they do. Especially teachers that have, like, been in California for a long time and have been doing this for longer than I have.

Ms. Sanger stated this kind of learning would be most valuable to her, though she did not spend a lot of time elaborating on exactly what aspects of practice she would most want to observe and how these observations would move practice in her own classroom. It is telling that she specifically mentioned wanting to see teachers who have been teaching in California for a long time, or in general been teaching for longer than she has, indicating she expects experience plays a role on teacher's practice. Mr. MacArthur and Ms. Caulfield mentioned they wanted to observe more experienced teachers and were likewise vague about what aspects of practice they would want to examine. Only Ms. Radcliffe mentioned she would like "to go into other EL classrooms and see how those teachers interact with their students that would be effective." Ms. Radcliffe highlighted a critical area of observation would be the teacher and student interactions during classroom discourse. The desire to observe other teachers in classroom practice, even without a focus, speaks to the power of contextualized learning for in-service teaching. As teachers shift their reflexive positioning as they encounter students learning English and begin to feel more responsibility to their learning, they in turn feel more responsibility to adjust their practice. Because teachers need to apply this learning to the classrooms to meet the needs of their current students, there is a sense of urgency to skip over theory and dive straight into practical application. The problem becomes that a lot of practice that can be observed in a classroom will vary in its quality and effectiveness. In

addition, even if teachers observe an effective practice, they might benefit from understanding the theoretical basis behind the practice before attempting to implement the practice in their own context. Teachers observing one another in practice might be beneficial, but only in conjunction with other kinds of professional learning.

Professional learning of any kind will demand a lot of teachers' time. Even to observe other teachers at their school site, they will need to do so during their preparation period, or they will have to request a substitute so they can observe their colleagues when they themselves would normally be teaching. Teachers need additional time to collaborate with their colleagues to share their practice and insights, particularly those concerning practices to support students learning English. In our district, we only support collaboration time by releasing students early every other Wednesday so teachers can meet with their colleagues during contracted hours for about 90 minutes. As there is no other time to do so, this time is also often used for staff meetings or trainings on mandated information. Teachers often express frustration over the lack of time they have to work with one another. Mr. MacArthur shared:

There needs to be opportunities for all EL teachers to be able to share ideas, and it seems like we have, we have those things built in, but at the same time, it feels like there's such a finite amount of time in which to get things done during those times. And so, I'm not sure where the time is found or what it would look like.

In this part of the interview Mr. MacArthur lamented not only how finite the amount of time was to work with colleagues, but also the amount of work that is expected

to be accomplished within that small amount of time. Mr. MacArthur's uncertainty on how time can be increased for teachers is not an unfamiliar sentiment, as many teachers feel helpless when discussing collaboration time. Collaboration time does not count toward instructional minutes, so every minute teachers spend in collaboration must be negotiated, and teachers expect to see an increase in their pay. Even so, increasing collaboration time is one of the only ways teachers and district and site leaders can accomplish many of their goals when it comes to improving learning conditions for students. Otherwise, teachers engage in collaborative discussions whenever they can, and this inconsistency can produce inequitable conditions for students. Ms. Caulfield shared:

I think they need common planning time, they need a lot of support from senior teachers, and structures where they have the time and freedom to ask those questions and look at materials with them, aside from just expecting that it's always just going to happen randomly after school or something like that. There's just not a structure in place for the collaboration that way I think that would be really helpful to them.

Ms. Caulfield highlighted a lot of the same issues as Mr. MacArthur about the lack of time and all the objectives that must be accomplished. She went on to point out the expectation that this collaboration will otherwise happen after school or during times where teachers are volunteering their time. Though teachers are accustomed to working beyond hours they are contracted for, they still get to make those decisions themselves. Without time embedded into the workday, it communicates that collaboration is not considered essential, as otherwise the time would be structured and protected so all

teachers could participate. It is interesting that Ms. Caulfield, as a teacher with many years' experience, framed her argument based on the needs of younger teachers, as she used "they and them" instead of "we" when discussing needs. I would argue her statements apply to the needs of all teachers, regardless of experience level, as all teachers have potential to benefit when examining materials and practices in the classroom, particularly for classrooms with high numbers of students learning English.

The teacher participants also brought up time and structure for professional learning from outside experts. In the district we employ a lot of teachers on special assignment who are trained to provide support to their fellow teachers, but there are not as many opportunities for teachers to engage in learning from experts in the field. Ms. Caulfield brought up her desire to see the district provide more of these opportunities:

I just feel like there are things like that, that (*sic*) as a group we probably need more help and training in as a group, rather than saying, "Oh this is an option for you to do it," but to provide that actual time where we're pulled out to do that, where there are subs, where there's time to learn with new materials to talk with other experts.

Ms. Caulfield acknowledged the district announces opportunities of trainings for teachers to attend, but they rarely present the trainings in a way that communicates an expectation that teachers will attend and be provided with the time to properly engage with their new materials and insights. She specifically mentioned teachers are not "pulled out," meaning the training takes place during the work week, during work hours, and

substitute teachers are provided to cover the teachers' classes. Her desire to see professional learning structured this way is similar to the insight teachers provided about the way collaboration is provided. If the district does not offer to send teachers to trainings during teachers' contracted hours, they must attend professional development after school, on weekends, or during their summer break. Attending workshops and conferences during this time can pose challenges to teachers who must care for family, those who have other obligations such as school or a second job, or those who simply need the time to rest. School districts like ours do what they can to offer professional learning during contracted time, but they often encounter obstacles, such as the cost of the training, the cost of the substitute teachers, or even the availability of quality substitutes. This will often cause districts to limit the number of participants, and that will sometimes unintentionally communicate to teachers their learning is not essential. There is often a challenge because to provide teachers the maximum benefit of professional learning, teachers will need time to collaborate and practice their new learning with their colleagues, which will also require more time and structure built into teachers' time. Despite these obstacles, school leaders will still have to consider the benefits of supporting continued learning for teachers supporting students learning English and find ways to embed it into time and structures they have.

Overall, teachers in my study indicated a desire to continue learning and recognized the benefits they saw in collaborating with their colleagues to strengthen their practice. When teachers are reflexively positioning themselves in a way that acknowledges the need for additional training, they have a sense of urgency that districts need to address. Though the teachers in my study appeared ready for more learning, they were also unsure of how to seek out new ideas and time to collaborate, and instead indicated their expectation that structures and systems in schools would provide these opportunities. Ideally teachers would be able to have more agency in seeking out these opportunities based on their needs, but most teachers who support students learning English are only beginning to adopt an identity affirming of this population of students, and the knowledge required of teachers to succeed in this role is still not clear to them. Teachers need guidance to ensure their newly identified needs do not leave them feeling hopeless and frustrated when supporting their students.

Conclusion

As I have discussed in this chapter, how teachers position themselves, both interactively with students in their classrooms and as professionals in relation to their ideas and experiences with their role as classroom teachers, matters when it comes to creating affirming experiences for students learning English. Teachers will continue to reproduce cycles of behavior and instructional choices that do not benefit their students

unless they feel an urgency to reevaluate their positions and take up a new approach. As the interview data show, teachers have begun to feel that urgency and desire more opportunities for professional learning. Instructional leaders need to answer to these desires, while ensuring opportunities they offer are responsive to teachers' needs and produce better conditions in instructional spaces at the school site. In the next chapter, I will explore instructional coaching's role in creating such a professional learning environment.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS: INFLUENCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

In the previous chapter, I explored what the data revealed surrounding my first research question: How did the professional identities of secondary teachers relate to how they interact with and position students learning English? By examining classroom interactions that showed how students learning English were being positioned, I compared this data with information from interviews with my teacher participants that revealed how they viewed their professional identity and how that was informed and renegotiated by their past experiences with education and with students in their classrooms. When many of these teachers entered classrooms with high numbers of students learning English, they felt unprepared to support their students' language needs and expressed desires to engage in further professional learning.

Instructional coaching is a method my district employs to offer job-embedded supports to teachers for their in-service development. Examining how instructional coaching fulfils or falls short in providing teachers with additional professional learning is the focus for my second research question: In what ways do coaching experiences influence teacher identity and their interactive positioning in their classrooms with students learning English?

In this chapter, I first explore instructional coaching as viewed by teachers and examine how closely the intended model of coaching aligns with the teachers'

experiences. In addition to teachers' viewpoints, I share coaches' discussion of both the role of instructional coaches and their work specifically concerning teachers working with students learning English. Coaches and teachers also discuss instructional coaching as a method for providing structure for teachers' reflection of their own position, particularly in relation to students learning English. Finally, I explore how teachers have repositioned themselves as teachers of students learning English based on the language shifts that occurred in our interviews over the course of a semester.

Teacher Interpretation of Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching in our district follows a model that partners teachers and coaches to examine classroom practice in cycles of inquiry. Teachers develop their own measurable, student-centered goals based on current classroom data. The coach then recommends a strategy and co-constructs a checklist with the teacher to facilitate implementation. The teacher attempts the strategy, and both coach and teacher reflect on progress on the goal and the next steps they will take. The process is designed to empower the teacher to make progress on learning that is most meaningful to them and will have the greatest impact on their students. It is also designed to be a place where teachers can reflect and reexamine their positioning in the classroom. Despite how instructional coaching is designed, its influence on teachers in practice can be difficult to ascertain, as a shift in teacher thinking and practice happens incrementally over time.

Overall, teachers in my study had positive experiences to share about coaching but did not identify it as a main contributor to changing their attitudes or position in the classroom.

Teachers who had positive experiences with instructional coaching highlighted the partnership aspect of our model as a strength of the program. Ms. Radcliffe reported feeling her coach valued her perspective and what she brought into their work together:

You know, it's, it's just kind of nice for somebody who's supposed to be like your coach, right, it sounds like it there's like this kind of hierarchy, right, like this system of power, but he doesn't act like that in any way. He's so receptive to whatever it is that I have to say or whatever it is that I have to contribute, so it's really kind of, I do feel like it's such a mutually beneficial relationship.

Ms. Radcliffe shared her feelings that a coach would traditionally be seen as a role with power, and people in this role would normally position themselves as more knowledgeable than the teacher with whom they were partnered. She further shared her coach does not view their relationship as a hierarchy, so she feels empowered to contribute her perspectives and ideas to the point she feels both parties are able to benefit from their work together. Most people do not feel invested in work where they feel they have no voice and are simply being told what to do. Because Ms. Radcliffe feels she has equal stake in their goals to improve classroom practice, she is more likely to engage authentically in the process. Though engaging authentically in the coaching process is an important step to shifting teacher practice, it is also important to examine how the

coaching process influences what happens in the classroom. Ms. Radcliffe spoke about this aspect of coaching as well:

The instructional coach has kind of been that sound board, having the tools to implement in the classroom, being able to be encouraged to take the risks. I think it's what it is, and you know, as a new teacher you're scared to take the risk because you don't want to fail, but sometimes you have to take that risk, because some of those risks are worth it, and I find that a majority the risks that I take have ended up being worth it, learning how to build a community in your classroom. And so that trust exists, so that if something doesn't work it's not the end of the world, you pick up and you move on with your students.

Ms. Radcliffe refers to the instructional coach as a “sound board,” implying she still feels a lot of agency in decisions made for her classroom practice. She highlights that the coach is the one who has tools that encourage her to take risks she might not normally feel comfortable in taking. Though Ms. Radcliffe does not go into detail about what those risks are, she mentions the risks that have had a beneficial effect have helped her build community in her classroom. This ability to build community suggests more positive interactional positioning of students in the classroom. The instructional coach has allowed her to feel a sense of safety when experimenting with new ideas in her instruction, to the point where she expresses that even if a new idea does not work, she feels confident in moving on with her students, instead of feeling frustration or placing blame on the students learning English in her classroom. Mr. MacArthur also communicated a similar experience when he discussed instructional coaching’s role in his classroom practice:

I can sense that certain things are going right, and I can sense that certain things are going wrong, and I might have an idea of how to fix it, but when you're in the moment and class is going, it's not always easy for you to identify what exactly the problem is, and it's even more challenging to be able to step back and take the time and figure out, okay what's the best way to fix that or correct that, so to have people who are experienced in the field of education come in and see what's working or what's not working and identify that along with you and then give you a suggestion for how to change it, that's actually been really helpful for me.

Mr. MacArthur similarly identifies the partnership approach to instructional coaching as an asset, pointing out that the coach is recognizing areas to work on along with the teacher rather than for the teacher. Mr. MacArthur also points out that though teachers are often aware when lessons and classroom interactions need to be improved, it is helpful to have another professional help pinpoint potential practices that can lead to those improvements. Mr. MacArthur is less specific than Ms. Radcliffe about what those specific practices are in his classroom, but his comments seem to suggest instructional strategies more than his attitudes toward students learning English and how that might impact his classroom climate. The language Mr. MacArthur uses, words like “fix,” “correct,” “right,” and “wrong,” when talking about improving conditions in his classroom reveals his belief that the role of instructional coaching is to improve his lesson plans, not his overall disposition toward students learning English in his classroom. Shifting his positioning in the classroom is less tangible and often will not take one correct form.

Limitations of the instructional coaching model were brought up more directly by Ms. Caulfield and Ms. Sanger. Ms. Caulfield is in a unique position as she has previous experience as an instructional coach in her former school. Ms. Caulfield is currently working with an instructional coach but spoke more directly about the district's program from the perspective of a coach when she identified some of the model's limitations:

It's very different working with teachers that are second year and beyond than the first-year teachers, and I find those teachers to be a little more receptive to what's going on, and I've had some challenges trying to figure out how to approach that group.

Ms. Caulfield distinguished instructional coaching's effectiveness for a first-year novice teacher from teachers who have had more time in the field. As a coach herself, she reported struggles in reaching the group of more experienced teachers, claiming that those newer to the profession tend to be more receptive. It is also worth pointing out that Ms. Caulfield is choosing to speak on coaching from the perspective of an instructional coach and not of a teacher who has participated in coaching, as she is further illustrating her point. Ms. Caulfield is the most veteran teacher of my participants, yet she did not directly speak of her experiences receiving coaching during our interviews. For many teachers, support is mostly offered to those less experienced in the profession, so it is assumed that after time, teachers will have become stable enough with their pedagogy to not require additional help. In our district, there is a perception that coaches only work with new teachers or those struggling, so to admit working with an instructional coach

might make teachers feel as though they are exposing their own weakness. Despite how the model is presented to teachers, and no matter how often the instructional coaches work to dispel these misconceptions, there is still a stigma for veteran teachers. If teachers are hesitant to work with the instructional coaches, then instructional coaching does not have a chance to influence teachers' attitudes and practices when it comes to working with students learning English.

In addition to the stigma associated with working with instructional coaches, there are other issues that limit the effect coaching can have on practice. To conduct a coaching cycle, teachers must find time to meet with their coaches and engage in reflective discussions or learn about new strategies. Even if teachers are willing and able to meet during their preparation period or after school to engage in this work, coaches themselves are often a limited resource. With the high rates of turnover in our district, we will occasionally have up to 10 new teachers at a given school site. Even with a lot of release time, building relationships and conducting meaningful cycles with that many teachers can be a daunting task for an instructional coach. Ms. Sanger expressed her frustrations with feeling like she did not receive the time and investment she wanted from her coach:

I've never really had anyone observe me teach, but that's something I'd be interested to just, just tell me what I'm doing well . . . I don't know, I just feel like I haven't really gotten a lot of feedback on my own instruction. So just, I know that there's a few instructional coaches, some very pressed for time, but I would be interested in that for sure. Yeah, that's huge.

Ms. Sanger expressed her desire to have someone observe her instruction, affirm what she is doing well, and provide her with feedback. Ms. Sanger came to the school with previous experience but is still developing her pedagogy and would value feedback if it was provided to her. She went on to clarify she has met with a coach a few times, but that was mostly to help her work through some of her challenges with adapting her content for students learning English and learning background information about some of their circumstances. Ms. Sanger had not yet gone through a full coaching cycle at the time of our interview. Though she acknowledged coaches are limited in the time they are provided to work with teachers, it is understandable that she also feels frustrated, as she is not being provided with the same opportunity to grow in her instructional practice. Considering that Ms. Sanger was new to the school and new to teaching students learning English, she could benefit greatly from having a coach to partner with as she navigates the way she will position herself in relation to her students learning English.

Overall instructional coaching is a positive experience for most of the teacher participants in my study. Instructional coaching's impact is affected by the perception coaching is only for teachers who need help or to be "fixed," which can be stigmatizing for teachers who already might possess insecurities about their instructional practice, particularly with groups like students learning English. Instructional coaching is also a limited resource in our district, as there are only so many coaches, and coaches are only

partially released for their coaching duties, as they are also assigned teaching sections. Coaches must work to acknowledge these limitations and strengthen the messaging for teachers around the purpose and goals of their work together.

Coaches View Their Role as Teachers' Advocates

As seen in the previous section, there are still some inconsistencies in how teachers who participate in coaching view instructional coaching as a professional learning method and the impact it has on their practice. One way to gain insight about what informs teachers' perspectives is to examine how coaches view their role. How coaches reflexively position themselves within the instructional coaching role will likely influence their interactions with the teachers with whom they partner, and these interactions will inform teachers' ideas. Though I interviewed only two coaches, one from each of the instructional sites I studied, coaches I chose had the most consistent interactions with my teacher participants. Overall, coaches positioned themselves as advocates for the teachers with whom they worked but acknowledged the struggle to refrain from judgmental behavior.

Coaches need to reflect and reposition themselves in their roles as much as teachers must in relation to their students. Ms. Marple has been an instructional coach since the program started in 2013. In the beginning, there was far less direction about the philosophy and approach to instructional coaching in the district. Ms. Marple

acknowledged the shift to a more teacher-directed than coach-directed approach was initially a struggle for her:

I can support teachers by actually being honest and meeting them where they are and letting my stuff go and not coming in and going, “Oh well this could happen, this could happen, this could happen.” It's like just actually coming in, and it has nothing to do with me at all, I'm literally a vessel to them saying “where are you at, what do you want to work on, and let's do it.” I think I've gotten really good at that finally. I don't think I was, I used to be a fixer, I wanted to come in and tell you what I think you needed to do. I still can do that in a way but it totally, it's coming from a totally different perspective.

Ms. Marple illustrates her shift in attitude by juxtaposing two different statements she would make to teachers. She claimed her previous communication to teachers was “this could happen,” implying a more declarative, directive commentary in her coaching. At this point in her coaching career, Ms. Marple says her communication of teachers is led by inquiry, starting with statements like “where are they at.” The shift to a more inquiry-based approach to coaching has altered Ms. Marple’s perception of her role and taken her away from being a “fixer.” The idea of “fixing” also came up in Mr. MacArthur’s interview, as he claimed he saw the coaching experience as one that could help him fix what had gone “wrong” in his instruction. Since Ms. Marple first positioned herself this way as a coach, it could explain where Mr. MacArthur developed the idea this was a function of instructional coaching. Coaches must evaluate their own understanding of the role to be cognizant of how they are communicating their position to the teachers with whom they work. If coaches are not constantly reinforcing they are there to be a

partner in reflection and inquiry, teachers could come away with more prescriptive notions of instructional coaching.

Similarly, Ms. Ellis was another coach who positioned herself as an advocate for teachers. Ms. Ellis also acknowledged lack of judgment was essential to building successful coaching relationships. Ms. Ellis based her understanding of her role as an instructional coach in the feelings she had when she was newer to the profession:

I didn't feel like I had tons of colleagues to talk to or tons of colleagues who had time to talk to me as a new teacher. I always felt like it was an imposition to show up in somebody's classroom be like, "I need this." And so, part of my role as a coach is to be that person, where now I'm here for you to show with my classroom to come with this, this idea, and for us to sit down and see ... to tease through that idea. Another part of it is to work with teachers on [pause] developing some of those tricks of the trade that as more tenured teachers, we just kind of forget that people didn't always know.

Ms. Ellis uses the word "imposition" when describing how newer teachers sometimes feel when it comes to reaching out for assistance and collaboration, based on how she was often made to feel. The sense teachers are an imposition to other more senior teachers is often what contributes to the stigma of instructional coaching and working with more senior teachers. Ms. Ellis not only feels that her role is to be someone that teachers can come to and not feel they are bothering her, but also that teachers should feel they are the driving force of the collaborative conversations. As Ms. Ellis puts it, teachers should come with the idea, and their work together should consist of "teasing through" that idea. Ms. Ellis feels the teacher is the genesis of the work and not the

coach, implying the coach is not there to direct and instruct the teacher. While the teacher might be the driving force of the collaboration, coaches still play a necessary role, as they possess knowledge informed by their experience. Ms. Ellis noted that often more experienced teachers will take their knowledge for granted, so it is the coach's responsibility to demystify and work through ideas with the teachers with whom they have partnered.

Coaches View of the Role to Support Teachers of Students Learning English

To authentically engage with coaching cycles for inquiry and reflection, teachers need to feel they have safety and autonomy within the process. Though it is important for all teachers to engage with an ongoing process of collaboration to further develop their pedagogy, it is that much more essential for teachers working with students learning English. As discussed in the previous section, coaches who participated in my study positioned themselves as advocates for the teachers they partnered with but also expressed a need to shift the mindset of teachers with whom they were partnered to build a more asset-based framing toward their students learning English.

Though coaching is often seen a method of professional learning for instructional strategies, the instructional coaches also reiterated the climate and attitudes toward

students learning English was equally important. Teachers of students learning English often express frustration with students' level of language and how it deviates from what is considered standard proficiency. When teachers are accustomed to teaching students born speaking English, they expect a certain level of proficiency, and anything that differs can be seen as incorrect, and this will sometimes cause them to ignore the growth, construction, and development of students' ideas. Ms. Ellis recalled this phenomenon in a conversation she recently had with a teacher with whom she is partnered:

I had a discussion with a teacher today where we were looking at [student work], and I was asking him what he thought of their responses, and he's like, "well, you know, I can kind of see that they're getting it, but how they're saying it doesn't say that." I was like, "well but if we take away all of the grammatical errors, and if we take away the fact that the sentence is constructed backwards, like can you see that they have the right ideas in the sentence regardless of what the sentence sounds like." And he agreed that they did, and we discussed that [*sic*] doesn't matter what the sentence really sounds like if they're able to convey the ideas to you.

In Ms. Ellis's recounting of the conversation, the teacher was caught between being able to see that students were "getting it," meaning the content, but that he could not get over "how they're saying it." Ms. Ellis asserted what was getting in the way were the grammatical issues and the construction, which are common errors for someone acquiring a new language that is syntactically different from the language they first acquired. In a reflective discussion, grounded in examining the work of students, Ms. Ellis openly discussed this issue and ultimately got the teacher to agree the most

important aspect for students was their ability to “convey ideas.” The conversation Ms. Ellis engages in with the teacher she has partnered with is an essential function of coaching, as it helps teachers to reevaluate their reflexive position with their students learning English. When a coach affirms the notion that conveyance of ideas is more important than language proficiency when working with students learning English, it gives the teacher permission to let go of ideas of correctness and to evaluate students on their construction of new knowledge. This, in turn, can promote a more asset-based view of students.

Teachers’ asset-based framing for students learning English is not just important for their learning and assessment of classroom content, but also for their emotional well-being in the classroom. As mentioned in the previous section, teachers will often feel unsure of how to break down or assess content in their instruction for students learning English. The teachers’ uncertainty is compounded by the perception that it is harder to form relationships with students learning English because of the language barrier. When students and teachers do not have a relationship, it can be difficult for teachers to use their knowledge of students to tailor the curriculum to their needs or interests. Ms. Marple made comments about this issue in her interview while discussing guidance she provides to teachers she coaches:

If you're just only looking at a pacing guide and not addressing your students' needs, you're going to miss a lot of the people in your classroom. So you really I

think you need to be, I think you need to also, and I'll say it over and over again, you need to actually know who's in the room and get to know them a little bit and that is gonna take time.

In her analysis of what she believes teachers should focus on when working with students learning English, Ms. Marple makes a distinction between referring to a pacing guide versus addressing students' "needs." Some in education would argue adhering to a pacing guide fulfills a student's academic need, but what Ms. Marple is referring to when she says "needs" goes beyond the academic sense. Her focus with the teachers with whom she partners is focused more on the relationships, or getting to know, even a little bit, the students in their classrooms. Ms. Marple acknowledged this might be a challenge for some teachers because it takes time. This can cause apprehension in some teachers, especially those newer to the profession, because time to build relationships can be seen as time away from academic instruction. Many teachers feel a sense of obligation to strictly follow their pacing guide, as that is often how they are evaluated by their supervisors. Adhering to a pacing guide can sometimes be more detrimental in a classroom with students learning English, as students need the extra time to both circumvent the language barrier and build a comfort level with their teachers before more academic based conversations can happen. It is vital that instructional coaches are working with these teachers and essentially giving them the permission to value their student's ability to properly absorb content above the coverage of the content itself.

Whether coaches are providing teachers with a different lens in which to instruct and assess their students learning English or encouraging them to prioritize building relationships, their partnership is critical for both the teachers and the students they teach. Though coaches see themselves as advocates in place to support teachers, it is vital that their support encourages teachers to reflect on the impact they are having on the students they are there to serve.

Coaching as a Method of Structured Reflection

If teachers are to develop stronger instructional practices and more affirming classroom cultures for students learning English, they will have to be more reflective about their current pedagogy. As discussed in the previous chapter, teachers often report feeling underprepared by their credential program or feel they need more training once assigned to a classroom with a large number of students learning English. Though teachers are eager for additional learning, adjusting to full-time teaching often leaves little time for this learning or reflection to occur. When schedules become impacted, teachers will often forgo opportunities for reflection when so many other tasks are demanding their time. Even though little to no time is left for reflection, teachers still find it important and desire more time for it in their schedule. Instructional coaching is a method employed by the district to structure reflection for teachers about their practice, guided by their coach. Though the instructional coaching model attempts to embed time

for reflection, teachers do not always recognize their time with coaches as time for reflection. Teachers could fail to see this time as reflection because they associate coaching more with the implementation of instructional strategies. Coaches' behavior could potentially fuel the perception that exploring instructional strategies is more important than reflecting upon the needs of students learning English.

Teachers are able to define the value of reflection, particularly in how it relates to their evolving skills as instructors. Mr. MacArthur made an observation on the connection between reflection and shifts in instruction during his interview:

When you're thinking ahead to, "What am I going to teach tomorrow, what are we gonna do the next day?," that's when you kind of have those reflective moments, and that's like, I think is where instruction begins to change.

In Mr. MacArthur's comments, he posed planning-based questions about what he is going to teach within an upcoming period as the starting point to what he refers to as "reflective moments." For many novice teachers, planning is one of their top concerns as the craft is still new to them and it takes time to develop curriculum and tie that to strategies for instruction. Mr. MacArthur connected this concern to spurring reflective moments, which speak to the iterative, if brief, process teachers engage in with reflection. The real power behind Mr. MacArthur's comments is revealed in his comment that this "is where instruction begins to change." It is significant that though reflection can be informal and brief, it is the key element to shifting teacher behavior in the classroom.

As key as reflection might be for teacher change, teachers were not quick to tie instructional coaching as a vehicle to promote reflective thinking. When thinking back to structures in place at school that prompt teacher reflection, Mr. MacArthur struggled to think of many opportunities he had been provided:

I guess in terms of collaboration time, which is about every two weeks, and I mean those are opportunities for us to intentionally sit down and think about instruction, but I mean beyond that, I can't off the top of my head think about built-in routines or structures or opportunities for reflection beyond [collaboration] days.

Mr. MacArthur's comments highlight collaboration time, time provided to teachers to work with their colleagues during contracted hours without students present, as the only time he is provided to "intentionally" think and discuss issues related to instruction. Though at first his use of the word "intentionally" might imply there are other more informal structures, he went on to clarify there were no "routines, structures, or opportunities" in which reflection was supported. Mr. MacArthur was not alone when expressing the perceived lack of time and structure for reflection. Ms. Sanger claimed there were more opportunities for reflection in her preservice experiences: "I don't do it so much anymore; it's more just like all in my head." Mr. MacArthur and Ms. Sanger both failed to recognize instructional coaching as a built-in structure that encourages reflection with a colleague. Ms. Caulfield, as both a more veteran teacher and someone

with coaching experience, expressed deficiency with current structures for reflection, though she was able to make more of a link to instructional coaching in her comments:

Because I'm a coach, I go individually and I do talk to some other EL teachers, like some of the new EL teachers, I've been speaking to them and asking them how things are going but [sigh] I don't know how that structure could work or what we could do for that. But I feel like collaboration for EL teachers is really, really important because of, you know, the greater need for the population.

Ms. Caulfield was the first participant to highlight the connection between coaching and a structure for reflection. More specifically, Ms. Caulfield draws a parallel between reflection and collaboration, as that is the word she used in her comments.

Collaboration was also a way that Mr. MacArthur and Ms. Sanger identified their structures for reflection, or lack thereof. Ms. Caulfield again drew on her experience as an instructional coach herself, rather than as a teacher of students learning English, to highlight her attempts to connect with other teachers teaching a similar population. From this perspective, Ms. Caulfield explained reflection with her colleagues as talking to other teachers and “asking them how things are going.” Though informal check-ins with teachers are potential structures for both collaboration and reflection, Ms. Caulfield is clearly unsatisfied with this method, as revealed in a large sigh before wondering how the instructional coaching structure could better support collaboration. Ms. Caulfield nevertheless highlighted the importance of structures for reflection and collaboration,

noting it is even more significant for teachers who work with more vulnerable populations, such as students learning English.

Reflection has the capacity to greatly influence classroom practice, and teachers appear to acknowledge its importance. The fact that teachers were not able to connect the practice of collaboration and critical reflection to a method of professional learning such as instructional coaching is concerning. When discussing the role instructional coaches play in supporting teacher reflection, Ms. Marple provided insight on why there might be a disconnect:

If your coach is somebody who is reflective and sees that as an important priority . . . based on who your coach is, and based on their perception of the importance of reflection, and what does reflection truly mean? Is it a reflection of what you just taught? Or is it the concept, or is it the project, or is it the assessment that you want to get to? So, it's kind of like, you know, I think you should reflect on all pieces. I think it makes you a much stronger and more successful teacher . . . if you're forced to reflect about it, then that gives you a better confidence, and you're just a better teacher because of that.

Ms. Marple proposes there is a connection between coaches' perception of reflection and whether it will happen meaningfully during a coaching cycle with their partnering teacher. Ms. Marple even states a coach's own capacity for reflective behavior will have an impact on the coaching relationship. Moving further, Ms. Marple breaks down her understanding of what reflection might center on during coaching interactions. Reflection can mean many different things when it comes to areas of instruction that might benefit from critical inquiry, such as instructional practice, concepts or content, and

even assessment practices. Ms. Marple argued reflection should be inclusive of all aspects, and even argued teachers who are “forced” to reflect about their practice ultimately become better teachers because of it. Though forced is likely too strong of a word, as the instructional coaching model stresses the need for teacher autonomy, teachers are highly encouraged to engage in reflective discussion as a part of the critical inquiry they engage in during a coaching cycle. Though Ms. Marple does not directly state it during her interview, it is possible the teacher participants did not draw connections between coaching and structures for reflection because of coaches’ behaviors. Ms. Marple does posit her belief that reflection only happens if a coach prioritizes reflective conversations, but even if reflection is a priority, how reflection is defined can vary greatly among professionals. As one goal of reflection is to allow teachers to reevaluate their positioning of their students learning English, coaches need to prioritize this aspect of their role. Coaches need to be more intentional about their goals and intentions with the time they spend with teachers, so they understand the purpose behind their work together and how it can provide time for the reflection teachers already see as valuable.

Shifts in Beliefs About Students Learning English

Perhaps because teachers value reflection whether the reflection is tied to instructional coaching, there was still evidence in the interviews that teachers had shifted

their attitudes toward their students learning English. My interviews with teachers took place at the beginning of the fall semester and at the beginning of the spring semester. Though only a few months apart, teachers shared insights about how their perspectives had changed over the course of just one semester of teaching students learning English. In many of their observations, they mentioned having a new view of their students, emotionally and academically.

Teachers in my study all mentioned that engaging with students learning English in their classrooms required something different of them from what they might provide in other classes they teach. Even if teachers felt strong in an area, such as creating an affirming classroom environment, they found they had to incorporate more specific strategies. Ms. Radcliffe reflected on her own need to reevaluate her positioning in the classroom:

I definitely have to look at instruction through a different lens, I have to be more interactive; it definitely requires—I mean I'm community-based anyways with all my classrooms—but it definitely it has to be more community-based. So, I have to have more conversations with the student, getting to know them on a deeper level, having them know each other this semester.

When explaining the shift she has made over the semester, Ms. Radcliffe described it as a “different lens” she now looks through when designing instruction. Ms. Radcliffe expressed her new lens informs her instruction by providing “more.” She repeated the word “more” several times when explaining students learning English

require more interaction, a more community-based environment, and more conversations. Though she did not quantify exactly what more looks like in the classroom, she highlighted areas of instruction that all lead to quality relationship building. Though many teachers are concerned with strategies for engaging students learning English with content, Ms. Radcliffe implied relationships, including those with their peers, are the most important element when providing access points to the curriculum. Ms. Radcliffe was not alone when noting how her shift in perspective involved more than her instructional strategies. Ms. Caulfield also spoke to her transitioning viewpoint:

I'm actually finding it really rewarding transitioning to this; I'm really glad that I have. I feel like it's, it's opened my eyes to a lot of things, and I feel like I'm learning a lot which is great. I tell them all the time, I feel like I learned from them all the time, just in the way that hopefully they're learning for me, but I'm, you know, just in terms of your teaching style and in terms of your worldview, it's both. Yeah, so realizing things that you did before that maybe weren't the most effective.

Ms. Caulfield's comments speak to her evolving ideas about teaching and her identity as a teacher of students learning English as she links the idea of "transitioning" and "rewarding." Though Ms. Caulfield has had to reevaluate her positioning, she has a positive feeling toward the transitions that have been made. Ms. Caulfield is the only more veteran teacher in my study but is new to teaching students learning English. Though she has extensive experience, she acknowledged she has had to learn and make significant changes in her pedagogy to serve her students. Ms. Caulfield's comments, like

Ms. Radcliffe's, go beyond academic considerations, as she commented it is "teaching style" and "worldview" that have shifted her perspective as she has continued her work. For teaching style, Ms. Caulfield mentioned she has reflected and found past practice has not always been effective for students, which indicates her reflection has been taken inward as she has looked at controlling her own behavior rather than placing blame on students for not adjusting to her teaching style. Her ability to be more self-reflective could perhaps be attributed to her shift in what she calls worldview. Ms. Caulfield did not specifically define worldview, but, as she distinguished it from teaching style, it seems to be a term to address the more global issues students learning English deal with that impact classroom dynamics. Ms. Sanger was more specific about those dynamics in her interview:

I think it's really changed my perspective and made me just a lot more aware of some of the challenges that come along with EL and how difficult it is for these students coming into a new country and having to learn a new language. Like I have such a new perspective on how extremely difficult that is and I feel, I don't know, I feel a lot more like, empathy not only with them but with my EL students that are in my gen ed classes, like I kind of feel like I, I'm looking out for them a lot more because I'm witnessing what it probably was like for them just a year or two ago, but I do think coming in new is really hard.

Ms. Sanger claimed working with students learning English has "changed my perspective," which is similar to the "different lens" Ms. Radcliffe described and the "transitioning" identified by Ms. Caulfield. Ms. Sanger went more in depth than her peers by defining her new understanding of the challenges students learning English face, such

as transitioning to a new language and culture. She commented specifically that she has built empathy, to the point where she finds herself “looking out for them a lot more,” including students who are still developing English though they are no longer considered newcomers. Ms. Sanger’s shift in thinking was perhaps most profound of all the teachers, as in an interview conducted in the beginning of the fall semester she had commented, “It’s not my job to teach them English, like, I’m not an ELD teacher, I’m not an English teacher, I’m a science teacher.” In our follow-up interview at the start of the next semester, she reflected on her considerations when planning: “Since I have this class, but also in my other classes, I’m constantly like monitoring language and thinking about language.” Ms. Sanger transitioned from rejecting the position of responsibility for language instruction to a teaching identity that is more conscious of language access points in all of her classes, not just her classes specifically designed for students learning English. The repositioning of her identity is partially informed by the empathy she has gained for her students’ obstacles in the classroom.

What causes a teacher to reevaluate and reposition their teaching identity to be more inclusive of students learning English can be hard to attribute to a single influence. Though Ms. Sanger never specifically mentioned instructional coaching as a structure she relied on heavily for reflection and growth, Ms. Ellis offered insight during her interview that provides an explanation for the shift in teachers’ thinking:

So, I think exposure [to EL] is a big part of it, and then also giving, exposing teachers to more skills to help them help EL students. I wonder if a lot of our teachers, it's not that they're anti-English learners it's just that they feel like, overwhelmed by them and shutdown.

The idea of exposure, a word Ms. Ellis repeats, is a key concept to understanding how and why teachers might reposition themselves to be more inclusive of students learning English. As teachers in my study commented when they were discussing their preparation for the profession, they often did not feel a sense of urgency in acquiring skills to work with students learning English because they were not sure how often they would need to use those skills in the classroom. For teachers to confront this reality and value skills they have been taught, they need to be assigned to classrooms with a large number of students learning English. Though students learning English make up a large portion of the school population at both Washington and Eastfield High Schools, these students often blend in with the rest of the student population or are segregated from their peers in specially designed courses. Until teachers are assigned to one of the specially designed courses, they will often not identify as teachers of this population and feel less of a sense of urgency in accepting support to shift their perspective or classroom practice. Exposure alone is not enough to change ideas, as Ms. Ellis pointed out when she commented that teachers also need more “skills to help them help EL students.” Without support, teachers are exposed and take on an identity of a teacher of students learning English, but that identity can be one of frustration and prone to reproducing cycles of

harm. Ms. Ellis wonders if most teachers are not “anti-English learner” but instead are showing signs they need support to move forward. Instructional coaching is meant to be one of those supports, so it is critical coaches push forward with making stronger connections between the coaching cycle and structures for support and reflection.

Conclusion

In summary, there was not a lot of evidence to draw a notable connection between instructional coaching and teachers’ identities and the positioning of English learners. Teachers seem to appreciate the instructional coaching method but fail to describe its benefits in the same way instructional coaches define them. Teachers have a strong desire to spend more time in structured reflection and collaboration but were not always able to see instructional coaching cycles as a vehicle for these goals. Despite this weak connection, teachers in my study still made statements that indicated they had shifted their beliefs and ideas about what it meant to be a teacher of students learning English. Teachers need to be exposed to students learning English in their classrooms to reflexively position themselves as responsible for adapting their teaching style to best suit this population’s needs. Once they feel that sense of urgency, instructional coaches need to be there to provide support, push for critical reflection, and be a lot more transparent about their goals and intentions.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine how teachers interactionally positioned students learning English in their classrooms and how teachers reflexively positioned themselves based on how they interpreted their role as professionals. The purpose was also to determine the influence instructional coaching had on teachers' ability to examine and reflect on how they position themselves in relation to their students. Positioning theory guided my conceptual design, as it helps explain how teachers interpret their role in a classroom and for the students learning English as they interact with them.

Positioning theory also helps shape my two research questions. For my first research question, I asked: How do the professional identities of secondary teachers relate to how they interact with and position students learning English? Findings from this question highlight how students are positioned as more passive recipients of knowledge during instruction, as well as how much influence life experiences and preparation have on how teachers form understandings of their professional identities. Professional identity and professional development have been extensively studied, but there are gaps in the literature exploring how professional learning can support a shift in mindset and positioning. My research has added insight to this gap through my second research question: In what ways do coaching experiences influence teacher identity and the positioning in their classrooms with students learning English? Findings in this area show

that though teachers value instructional coaching and time for reflection, they do not always identify coaching as a structure for reflection. Teachers still made shifts in their attitudes about their students learning English, but it was hard to determine if the shift was influenced by instructional coaching.

Interpretation of Findings

In this section, I analyze each of my findings and offer my interpretation of each area and how I believe it connects to the review of literature presented in Chapter 2.

Interactive Positioning

While examining interactions between teachers and students in the recordings of classroom instruction, I identified patterns of behavior on the part of the teachers. Observing the classrooms helped me gain insight into how teachers were interacting and positioning their students learning English. The overall climate of the classroom space felt positive, as students could be seen smiling and participating in friendly conversation with one another and the teacher before instruction had formally begun.

The dynamic in the classrooms began to shift once the lesson began, as the teachers in my study were situated in the front of the classroom as they explained material, gave directions, reviewed examples, and posed questions to the entire class. Through the interactions, the teachers were the focus of the classroom and the holders of knowledge, positioning students as passive recipients of information. It is not uncommon

for teachers to rely on this model of instruction across campus, but students learning English are especially in need of peer and one-on-one interaction to engage language practice with content they are acquiring. The need for this kind of peer interaction is shown in Langer-Osuna (2017) study which showed the way teachers positioned the students learning English in their classroom influenced the way students were perceived by their peers. I believe teachers in my study are relying on this structure because it provides comfort and control. Many of the students in their classrooms are new to using English to express their understanding, and perhaps the teachers do not want students to struggle in absence of their guidance. Teachers need to feel confident in their abilities to scaffold and restructure instruction with methods that will support students while giving them more autonomy and space to play with language.

Reflexive Positioning

Engaging teachers in reflection on their professional identities during our interviews helped me gain a sense of what informed their position as teachers and how that may impact their interactions with students. Almost all teachers in my study either had a family member who had been involved in education or noted they had positive experiences with education or tutoring roles prior to entering education. Teachers in my study also shared a strong connection to their subject matter, a passion they were eager to share with students. Though the enthusiasm and positive positioning about the profession

is essential to teachers' retention in the field, it sometimes finds itself at odds with students who do not feel the same excitement or share the same positive feelings about the education system. As B. Yoon (2008) noted, teachers who position themselves as more content-based tend to regard the purity of maintaining content learning above their responsibility to provide access points to student learning. During our interviews, teachers noted the tension in feeling they were more prepared to teach their content than to meet the needs of students learning English. Though they positioned themselves as underprepared to fully realize their role as instructors for students learning English, they also expressed a desire to learn and engage with more professional development.

Instructional Coaching Influence

By interviewing both teachers and instructional coaches, I was better able to understand how instructional coaching was perceived and how it influenced teachers in their work with students learning English. Teachers and coaches both possess positive views of coaching, as teachers reported feeling coaching was an opportunity for them to feel supported and have a sounding board to further develop their new ideas about students and instruction. Though teachers saw benefits to coaching, their comments were limited to its ability to help with instructional strategies and lesson design. Teachers did not directly identify coaching as an influence to help shift their mindset, nor did they indicate that coaching was a structure provided to them to guide their reflective thinking.

Many teachers in my study were new to teaching at the school site they are assigned to, and thus have only been working with their coaches since the start of the school year. As Choi and Morrison (2014) found, the process of cycles of inquiry and reflection has to be iterative to see sustainable changes in teachers' outlook. It takes time to develop relationships between coaches and teachers that allow trust to have more reflective and vulnerable conversations.

The coaches felt their role was to be an advocate for teachers and empower them to make meaningful changes in their classroom. To accomplish this goal, they used critical cycles of inquiry. The coaches each provided examples of questions they posed to teachers to push their thinking and reevaluate how they were responding to their students learning English. Though coaches felt there was a more obvious connection between their work and teachers' capacity for reflection, they acknowledged there were factors that could impact teachers' experiences with coaching. Both Ms. Marple and Ms. Ellis have had a few years' experience with coaching, meaning they have been well trained and have had a lot of practice in the field. A coach with less experience and training might not yet see the value of emphasizing reflection over introducing teachers to new strategies for teaching content. Instructional coaches need to have a clear understanding of their role and support from their site and district leaders to feel confident and knowledgeable enough to clearly articulate their role to the teachers they are supporting.

Reflections and Shift in Attitudes Are Still Evident

Despite the unclear connection between instructional coaches' and teachers' perceptions of the role of the coach, there was still a strong indication that teachers' valued time for reflection and even made shifts in their thinking about students learning English. Teachers in my study began interviews in the beginning of the school year discussing frustrations and their focus on content-based instruction. By the end of the first semester, many discussed a new lens or perspective that not only affected their interactions with students but also impacted their worldview. Most notably, Ms. Sanger began the year by claiming she was a biology teacher, and it was not her role to teach students English. A few months later, she discussed that working with students learning English had made her more conscious of providing access points for language in all her courses.

Though I saw no direct evidence of this shift in their classroom instruction, it was encouraging to hear the change in their reflexive positioning in such a short amount of time. Though the connection between instructional coaching and the change in perspective could not be directly linked, teachers' repositioning of their role to be more inclusive of students learning English indicates they are in a more open position to engage in more professional learning about adapting their instructional practice. Teachers were not previously feeling the urgency of obtaining such knowledge, as they were

positioning themselves as underprepared or teachers of their content. This finding affirms not only B. Yoon's (2008) study but also Shim's (2014) work that found in absence of adequate preparation, teachers will rely on their own assumptions when making instructional decisions. Without the support of the instructional coaches, once teachers feel this sense of urgency, they could become frustrated and turn those feelings toward their students instead of reflecting on their own practice. Instructional coaches need to feel confident in their ability to support teachers as they are navigating their new understandings of their role.

Implications

My findings are vital to better understanding the ongoing reflexive positioning teachers are engaged with as they develop their professional identity and interact with their students. My findings also provide insights for the professional learning needs of teachers of students learning English. These findings have broad implications for leaders' considerations of professional development as well as creating a climate inclusive of students learning English.

Professional Learning Implications

Teachers in my study reported feeling underprepared to meet the instructional needs of students learning English, but they were also open to opportunities to increase

their knowledge. Most of the teachers had a positive view of instructional coaching, though coaching was not directly tied to their repositioning of their teaching identity.

Instructional coaching in our district follows a model supported by current research on professional learning. Teachers are autonomous partners with their coaches as they conduct cycles of critical inquiry and use classroom evidence to co-construct measurable goals. When coaches select strategies to best address their goals, they work with teachers to model implementation and allow feedback from teachers about adapting the strategy for practice. All of this is done with the coach posing probing questions as a vehicle for teachers' own reflection. Though the model is the correct choice for our district, it is only as powerful as it is understood and enacted by the coaches themselves.

Our district sees a lot of turnover in all areas: teachers, classified staff, and administrators. Coaches have seen more consistency, but over the 7 years coaching has existed in our district, a fair number of coaches have come and gone. When coaches leave, they take with them a lot of training and insights gained through working with other coaches, both at their site and with the district instructional coach professional learning community (PLC). We offer training to all new coaches and continue the work with our PLC, but it often takes time for a new coach to fully understand the philosophy and methods with our coaching model. Coaches need not only training but also increased and ongoing support both at the district and site level to gain the correct skillset and

mindset to support teachers, especially those teachers working with populations such as students learning English.

As turnover impacts administrators as much as instructional staff in our district, coaches often find themselves working with new leaders at their sites, and often these new leaders are unsure about the role of an instructional coach. As difficult as it is for coaches to navigate their role, the problem is compounded when they also feel a responsibility to instruct their supervisor about their work and its value to teachers. As a district office leader and coach for a number of years, I feel a sense of responsibility to work with the site leaders so they better understand coaching. Principals and vice principals are often overwhelmed by a number of management-based duties and can often prioritize those tasks over those that affect instructional practices, trusting coaches to know their role and work with teachers without much oversight. Though I am not advocating for site leaders to micromanage their coaches, coaches are often in need of more support than site administrators typically provide. Site leaders need to be included in more organized forms of professional learning that will help them understand our coaching model and what role they need to play in supporting coaches at their school sites.

Climate of the School Site

Supporting instructional coaches on site to ensure they feel confident carrying out their work is not the only area of need from our site leadership teams. As teachers were describing how they came to reflexively position themselves and define their professional identity, they discussed the influence of students learning English and classroom interactions, but they also highlighted the influence of elements external to the classroom. Almost all teachers brought up the need for collaboration with their peers and a desire for time to reflect and learn with their colleagues. To ensure there is time for these critical practices and that they are conversations that promote a solution-oriented and asset-based framing of students learning English, site administrators need to set the proper tone.

As previously discussed, turnover is an issue at all levels in our district. Though it can be hard to build a strong climate in the face of so much change, one potential positive is there is always an influx of new ideas and attitudes coming in with new employees. To leverage this positive aspect in the otherwise destructive nature of employee turnover, site leaders can use the opportunity to set a tone when onboarding new staff and use their newfound enthusiasm to infuse more positive framing for the staff at large. Instructional coaches are also vital in this effort, but they cannot work in isolation. When trust is built between coaches and teachers that leads to critical reflection that imbues more asset-based orientations toward students learning English, that work cannot be undermined by other staff with whom the teacher is bound to interact. Whether it is in a

department meeting, the lunchroom, or casual conversation around the copy machine, teachers hear the attitudes embedded in discussions with other teachers about particular populations of students. Leaders need to set the tone and ensure all staff are evaluating their reflexive positions in relation to their students, so the climate is one that consistently affirms the student population. The work can begin with professional learning, but it needs collaboration to sustain it.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Professional Learning

Based in the implications of the findings of my research, I have recommendations for the kinds of professional learning that will lead to a more positive climate in schools for students learning English. The main method of professional learning I investigated was an instructional coaching model. In interpreting my findings, I have discovered districts cannot neglect the training and support of those coaches. Without a proper understanding of how to carry out their role, coaches will not be able to attend to teachers' needs.

When engaging with professional learning, the target audience is usually classroom teachers. Though most topics speak primarily to teacher concerns, professional development that seeks only to address teachers reinforces the silos educators often face. Professional development needs to be inclusive of the leadership and other staff members

that work together to create the school environment. This becomes even more vital when it comes to the kinds of professional learning offered to instructional coaches. To build trust with the teachers with whom they partner, coaches maintain strict levels of confidentiality, and that means sometimes their daily work becomes invisible to colleagues around them. Though coaches cannot speak to the details of their work, the process they engage in with teachers should be better understood by others, particularly the leaders who are in place to support and promote their service. I recommend all principals at the site level be trained in the instructional coaching model, with an emphasis in exploring the philosophy that guides the cycles they participate in with teachers. Principals should attend the trainings with their coaches but also have time in the day to meet with the trainers independently to hear information specific to their role as site leaders. In addition to the training, principals should engage in a cycle of inquiry, either with the coaches at their site or with another principal from a different site in the district. Trainings are helpful for understanding the intentions and theoretical frame of the work, but the real power will come from their ability to see how the coaching cycles can inspire critical reflection about practice. This process will also give them better insight into what their teachers experience and how they are navigating their own practice and development.

Aside from the additional support from leaders at their site, coaches will need the support and space for ongoing reflection with colleagues who share their same role at other sites. Our district coaching PLC includes 10 coaches from across the district, and we meet about once a month. Though coaches are usually paired with at least one other coach at their school site, they benefit from hearing from a diverse set of perspectives when it comes to refining their coaching practices. The meetings are a great place for connection, but I recommend PLCs also be leveraged for continued learning and refinement of practices. One of the main areas coaches often struggle with is helping teachers create a student-centered goal that also speaks to an area the teacher feels passionate about. At these meetings, coaches should bring goals they have developed with teachers and workshop them together. They can role-play issues and give one another advice on questions they can use to further prompt teacher thinking. Finally, coaches should experience a coaching cycle themselves, by partnering with the coach at their site and taking turns developing student centered goals and working on strategies to meet their goals. All our coaches are partially released, meaning they still spend time in the classroom. Though it is hard for professionals to juggle two roles, I recommend this practice for any district considering adopting coaching. It is important for coaches' credibility with teachers to be connected to a classroom, and it allows them to engage with coaching from the teacher's perspective. Only by experiencing coaching from both

sides of the cycle can coaches deepen their understanding about how their work impacts teachers' practice.

Coaches need professional development in more areas than just implementing their coaching work. Coaches are working with teachers from different content areas who have different ways of positioning themselves in relation to their students. As seen in my findings, coaches will often encounter teachers who feel underprepared to meet the needs of students learning English or who will position themselves as teachers of content more than teachers of a particular population of students. Coaches need to have training in a variety of topics to gracefully navigate those conversations and pose the right kind of critical questions to move teachers into new ways of thinking. They also need to be prepared to offer information and strategies to teachers who feel frustrated or helpless. I recommend all coaches be trained in community responsive practices so they might be able to offer some concrete strategies to support teachers' shifting perspectives. It is also important coaches receive training in instructional practices designed with students learning English in mind, as teachers will need suggestions of new practices to use as they reevaluate and evolve their current routines. Though coaches are not in place to fix teachers or their teaching, the coach will still need to offer new ideas to keep teachers motivated and confident in their ability to move forward.

A note on teacher education programs. Though most of my professional learning recommendations involve in-service development, teacher education programs still bear a lot of responsibility in creating teacher candidates who develop identities as teachers of students learning English. My study focused on teachers already practicing in the classroom because those are the teachers I encounter daily, but those teachers would be more receptive to trainings and discussions if they came in primed to engage in further learning concerning students learning English.

Credential programs often offer a separate course designed to address the needs of students learning English or embed those lessons in other courses to meet the requirements of the Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) authorization for a teaching credential in California. Though meeting the needs of this requirement is a start, teacher education programs need to go beyond the basic requirements and frame all courses, particularly content-focused pedagogy courses, in terms of cultural and linguistic responsiveness. By focusing the discourse around students learning English on just one course, teacher education programs can unintentionally reinforce the notion that cultural and linguistic pedagogy is a separate issue, only relevant if teachers happen to teach a course specifically designed for those students learning English. Teachers are more likely to encounter linguistically diverse students in all of

their classes and need to understand the access points they must provide in their curriculum.

While students are completing courses for their credential, they are placed in classrooms to complete their student teaching requirement. Single-subject credential candidates typically teach two sections of classes for one semester. Candidates work with their mentor teacher and their university supervisor to determine which courses they should work with to complete this requirement. Often teachers are encouraged to select courses that focus more on “general education” than courses for specialized populations. The reason behind this suggestion usually is perceived as a kind gesture, as setting teachers up for a situation they can feel more successful with instead of addressing a more “challenging” assignment for their first teaching experience. Unfortunately, this reinforces a deficit notion about teaching students learning English, painting the teachers’ perception that these courses are difficult and undesirable. The university and the school sites need to partner to ensure teacher candidates are in placements that will support them as they teach courses that accurately represent the types of classrooms they will likely encounter when they find employment. By more mindfully placing teachers while they are still in a supportive environment like teacher education programs, we will produce candidates better prepared to continue their learning to be more affirming of all students.

Recommendations for Leadership and Policy

When considering policy recommendations, it is important to note an extensive policy for students learning English has recently been adopted by California's State Board of Education called the English Learner Roadmap. The English Learner Roadmap is a step toward more equitable schooling for California's multilingual students. The strongest demonstration of this is the very first principle that challenges educators to be asset-oriented and provide a safe, inclusive environment for English learners. In 1998, Proposition 227 passed, effectively banning bilingual education in California. Proposition 227 reflected a time in California where the public—and many educators—felt English was the only measure of success and all students' native languages were only an impediment to assimilating to school and society at large. The policy's greatest strength is the challenge to shift this mindset so educators can see linguistic diversity as an asset for both the school and the bilingual students' future goals. Similarly, the other principles focus on examining instructional practices and assessments so those too can be more accessible, responsive, and thus, equitable. The policy also calls for a systems-based approach, ensuring the climate of the school is affirming to students learning English at all levels, and alignment between the school and programs for students that will assist them in transition to their postsecondary goals.

Implementation practices will be key to maintaining equitable outcomes with the roadmap policy, and it is suggested much of the implementation and evaluation work be carried out through district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The policy recommends districts focus on one principle at a time to develop a comprehensive plan. The LCAP is an ideal place for this, as the plan allocates funding for each initiative as well as a metric to ensure progress is made. The issue is the English Learner Roadmap does not come with any additional funds for the local control funding formula, which is the funding source for LCAP. The district only receives a set amount for the number of students learning English enrolled. County offices can apply for grants to help with implementation of the English Learner Roadmap, but then those funds are allocated to programs determined by the county office. In our district, this has been an issue because our county is spread over a large and diverse set of cities and districts. Typically, the county office coordinators for English learner services cater largely to districts closer to their main office in South county. As we are in the north of the county, our district has not seen as many benefits. My recommendation is for the California Department of Education to open the grant funding for individual districts so we could have more control of funding and use it to support many of the professional learning needs in our area.

Prioritizing elements on the LCAP will be a great starting point for districts, but districts must work to include a variety of stakeholders in their district advisory committees working on the LCAP; otherwise the plan will not have a far reach. Parents and guardians, principals, and teachers all need to commit to an area of focus within this policy to make sure changes reach the classroom level. Principle two asks that English learners are provided language development across the content areas, so a district might decide to invest in a professional development program designed to support teachers in honing language development skills within their content area. The professional development offerings also need to address the first principle, which calls for an asset-based orientation toward students learning English. There needs to be ongoing education for teachers on culturally and linguistically responsive practices. Providing professional development would be a start, but the district must also develop a plan to monitor the effectiveness and quality of the professional development and consider the power of instructional coaching as a method of reflection and continued support for using their new learning.

The LCAP typically designs metrics around action items based in data received from accountability measures, such as the standardized assessments. Districts overly use the data from these assessments because of the ease; the tests are administered and reported on regardless, so educators see the benefit of using the information for multiple

purposes. The problem beyond the test providing only a single measure is the fact that no test can be designed to perfectly captures the entire story of the impact or effectiveness of a particular action item that is implemented. As my position in the district makes it likely I will be involved in the implementation and evaluation of aspects of this policy, I will advocate to include more qualitative information to measure the impact. When implementing professional development for content area teachers working on language development with their students learning English, we already provide the teachers with a survey to rate their feelings about their readiness to implement specific strategies. I would advocate to administer similar surveys to students learning English, asking them to evaluate their experience with specific strategies used by their teachers. Some of the survey questions should be kept open ended on both so we might capture ideas outside what we are specifically looking to evaluate. It would also be beneficial to hold focus groups for teachers and students learning English to capture some of their ideas while we are in the process of implementation so we might address certain issues more quickly.

Recommendations for Additional Research

There are some limitations in my findings, partially due to the design of my study. Further research is necessary in the areas of both instructional coaching and how it impacts the positioning of students, particularly students learning English.

My study focused on four teacher participants across two school sites over the course of the fall semester. Though a single semester can be pivotal to a teacher's growth and gains in experiences, it is difficult to see the influence of instructional coaching over such a relatively short amount of time, particularly when most of the teachers were newer to the coaching experience. Future research is needed on this model of instructional coaching over a longer period, once relationships between teachers and coaches have been better established. The critical inquiry coaches engage in with teachers they are supporting takes time, as it is grounded in classroom evidence, which must be meaningfully collected. When coaches are guiding conversations around the classroom evidence and teachers' feelings and ideas, their reflection can also be valuable but time consuming. Future studies should focus on teachers who have previous experience with coaching and should follow these teachers over a period of at least a year to see more tangible evidence of shifts in teacher perception and positioning.

Another area that deserves greater focus is teachers of the population of students referred to by the state as "long-term English learners," or students who are still designated as English learners despite attending American public schools for 5 years or longer. My study primarily focused on teachers working with students considered "newcomers," those who have arrived in the United States within the last 2 years. Teachers of newcomers are important in research focused on positioning because the

language barrier between teacher and student is often more overt, and thus teachers will develop stronger positions in relation to their students. Conversely, students deemed as long-term English learners are often more orally proficient in English and able to blend in more with their native speaking peers. This group of students might not be as easily recognized as students learning English, so their teacher will develop a positioning related to these students that is more complex but still deficit based. As these students are still exploring their use of the written conventions of English, teachers might position these students as in need of remediation, support classes, or referral to special education services. Future research needs to look further into the relationship between the teachers and this population of students to determine the professional development recommendations for teachers, as they do not come with the same sense of urgency as teachers working with newcomers. Inspiring teachers to reposition themselves in relation to their students does not come as easily without that clearer sense of urgency.

Final Reflection

As I sit here, typing out these last few pages of my dissertation, a pandemic is going on outside my window. COVID-19 has brought the world to a halt over these last few months, and education has found itself in a territory which is completely unfamiliar. School has been closed since March 13, 2020, and will likely remain in this half remote, half “socially distanced” instructional model for at least the next year. Despite our efforts,

our students are struggling to access instruction without the support of the institution and community of their peers and teachers. Their families are struggling to with rent payments, bills, and ensuring there is food in their homes. Our schools will be no stranger to this financial insecurity, as already our district has announced cuts.

I cannot describe the strange feeling of completing a dissertation on the promise of an instructional coaching program for students learning English with the new knowledge that a program such as coaching will likely be cut as we face increased financial hardship. I also wonder what this changed world means for those students who are already so vulnerable in our system.

Despite these feelings, I am surer than ever in the findings this dissertation has revealed to me and the need to press forward with better systems, specifically those systems that support our students learning English. Instructional coaching takes time to show efficacy and is costly, and that will make it a target in any cost-saving decisions. However, as we navigate this new frontier in education, teachers will now need coaching more than ever. Teachers have already had to reposition themselves as online instructors, practically overnight. Teachers need support as they explore new techniques and platforms. They will need to discuss and brainstorm new ways of reaching their students learning English, who already faced a language barrier and now face the barrier of engaging with a structure of education they have never experienced before.

Teachers are fighting against feelings of hopelessness and frustration daily. What they need now is a peer, someone who understands their unique context and can devote time to sit in reflection. Sometimes teachers do not need a new strategy, they need to talk something through, and professional learning cannot offer that space in the way instructional coaching can. These are the methods that aided my own learning. I have never had an idea that did not benefit immeasurably by the development of it in dialogue with a trusted colleague. Teachers need that dialogue now and the freedom to follow the topics that are the most meaningful to them in this current context. Jim Knight, creator of the instructional coaching model my district follows, has said, “Choice is how we define our humanity.” He argued choice and autonomy need to be at the cornerstone of any humanizing form of professional learning. If we do not humanize the teachers as we support their evolution, how do we expect them to do the same for their students? With everything we now face, humanization might be the most important idea of all.

Personally, I have come a long way since I first stepped foot in a classroom, young, naïve, and ill positioned to face everything required of me to serve the students I was tasked with teaching. I am now in a leadership position in that same district, meeting teachers across our schools who are getting their start and feeling the same anxieties, amplified in our current uncertainty. No matter what lies in store in the fallout of COVID-19, I want to make sure I am the hand that reaches out to them, with all the

resources at my disposal, with a fierce compassion. Recently in discussion with our lead wellness counselor, she was recounting how many misunderstand the nature of compassion. She said, “If a child is reaching out to a hot stove to touch it, out of curiosity, how does someone usually respond? They might scream. They might grab the child by the shoulders to move them away. They don’t do this out of anger—their behavior is an act of compassion.” Compassion can often become misconstrued as acceptance, which is why we might have a hard time granting it to those engaged in talk or behaviors with which we disagree. I do not always like the kinds of things I see in classrooms from teachers instructing students learning English—but they do not have a lot of use for my judgment. What they need is my compassion. But my compassion must be a fierce encouragement to look at what they are doing in a different way.

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