Examining the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Teacher Endorsement Course

A thesis presented

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to reveal the degree to which the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Endorsement (SEI) course supported teachers of English learners (ELs) so that EL instruction could be amended or modified and school district efforts to support ELs and teachers could be addressed accordingly. This study examined the learning environment within the SEI course, EL instruction changes made as a result of the course, and current district efforts to support ELs and teachers. The case-study methodology was selected to analyze EL teacher and school district administrator views and experiences.

The fourteen themes emerging from the data led to three findings: (1) the SEI course contained strong takeaways, and there was targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction, (2) EL instruction was headed in the correct direction, but continued and focused change was needed to improve professional development, instruction, and supports in place to educate ELs, and (3) a shift in mindset leading to changes that went beyond teaching and learning. Two clear implications for this study are: (1) overview of the course and changes to instruction, and (2) changes in mindset based on new learning. This study should identify ways to build on this training for teachers, who must be the ones to drive change to professional development and EL support. This work could provide support for other districts as they review their efforts to educate ELs.

Keywords: transformative learning theory, sheltered English immersion (SEI), English learner (EL), frames of reference, communicative learning, critical reflection
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Chapter I: Introduction

Daniella Molle (2013), in her article on the need to examine teacher professional development, said, “In the US context, educators look to professional development for solutions to persistent inequities such as the differences in achievement among groups of students” (p. 197). This doctoral thesis focuses on the instruction given in the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Teacher Endorsement (SEI) course, to determine how well the course supported English learner (EL) teachers’ efforts to provide the best possible learning environment for the growing EL population.

This chapter comprises the statement of the problem, a summary of the research problem, an exploration of the research problem’s significance, and a theoretical framework for this study. As an educator fortunate enough to work with a diverse group of learners daily, I believe all educators must collaborate to ensure provision of quality training to support teachers in their efforts to meet all learners’ needs. Through this ongoing study the curriculum and learning experiences within this endorsement course were examined to understand how they affected participants’ EL instruction efficacy.

Statement of the Problem

The topic. Educator professional development (EPD) must create new learning opportunities for teachers. The number of ELs is increasing across this country, with a deficit of qualified educators to support their needs (Batt, 2008). Lifelong learning and EPD are necessary to maintain teachers’ evolving expertise, learning, and reflection as they strive to identify the changes in their classrooms (Dirkx, Gilley & Gilley, 2004). Diarrassouba and Johnson (2014) called for providing “school personnel with diversity training that ultimately changes perceptions and behavior toward racially, culturally, and linguistically different people” (p. 14).
After a civil rights investigation in 2011 identified Massachusetts programs for ELs as inadequate (Maxwell, 2012), Massachusetts’ educational leaders implemented a professional development initiative to provide additional supports for educators to better instruct English learners. Pressure from federal civil rights officials led to the creation of training for academic-content teachers (p. 8). Designed to give teachers the knowledge and instructional practices required to better support ELs and to address the almost 45,000 teachers yet to receive specialized training for EL education, the course required math, English language arts (ELA), science, and social studies teachers to receive an endorsement for sheltered English instruction (SEI). The goal for the teacher endorsement course was to qualify ELs for placement with only trained content-area teachers by 2016 (Maxwell, 2012).

**Research problem.** Our schools’ stakeholders must ensure that EPD is worthwhile, targeted, sustained, and effective to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Dirkx et al. (2004) identified the need to focus on learning and reflection as tools to prepare educators to support this nation’s changing student population, which represents this study’s core mission: to examine the learning environment within this sheltered English instruction course and how this course effected change in the way ELs are supported in the classroom.

Centered on the instruction provided to teachers, the research problem was designed to reveal how and why this course supported teachers in their effort to educate ELs. The problem addressed within this study is the lack of discussions and reflections about the course within the examined school district. The problem stems from the need to examine whether or not this course is sufficient to prepare educators to support ELs.

**Justification for the research problem.** School districts are struggling to support the rising number of students whose first language is not English (Batt, 2008). Multiple studies have
attempted to identify the best practices to support efforts to educate ELs. These efforts have focused on inclusion of peer support, modifications to student work, high-level vocabulary, clear learning objectives, teacher collaboration to develop positive learning environments (Baecher, Artigliere, Patterson & Spatzer, 2012; Calderon, 2007; Echevarria, Frey & Fisher, 2015; Lee, 2012; Min, 2006; Watkins & Lindahl, 2010; Williams & Pilonieta, 2012), and giving teachers additional tools to support ELs in mainstream classrooms (Huerta & Jackson, 2010; Pawan, 2008). Tools examined included the SEI and English-monolingual-plus-English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs (Honigsfeld, 2009).

One EL instruction model that inspired the Massachusetts SEI course and other English-monolingual-plus-ESL programs was the Structured Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006; Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004; Short, 2013). Echevarria et al. (2004) identified how parts of the SIOP can improve instructional practice for ELs because sheltered instruction seeks to incorporate various teaching techniques. These techniques enhance lesson preparation, build background knowledge for students, monitor their comprehension of classroom materials, incorporate learning strategies into the curriculum, provide opportunities for interaction among students and monitor effectiveness through assessments (Echevarria et al., 2004; Short, 2013).

Even with the creation of these supports, the growing EL population has pressured school districts to find the resources to educate these students (Adams & Jones, 2006). The district examined in this study has seen an increase of ELs in the past few years. The 2013–2014 Massachusetts School and District Profile on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s website identified that 52.8% of students’ first language was not English. Another 12.4% were classified as ELs. The 2016–2017 profile identified 61.8% of the students
as having a first language that was not English and 17.1% as ELs. The 2017-2018 profile identified 64.4% of students as having a first language that was not English and 17.1% as ELs.

**General deficiencies in EL practices.** The real issue driving this study is the lack of success at correcting EL education deficiencies. Multiple studies have evaluated the effectiveness of EL educator learning support programs and policies (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010; Garcia, Lawton & De Figueiredo, 2012; Lillie, Markos, Arias & Wiley, 2012). Their results clearly identify teachers’ struggles to educate ELs when faced with a lack of EL and educator support programs.

California and Arizona’s educational policies provide insight into failed attempts to address the education of ELs (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010; Garcia et al., 2012; Lillie et al., 2012; Olson and Jimenez-Silva, 2008). Gandara & Hopkins’ (2010) exploration into the effects of the passage of Proposition 227 and Proposition 203 on the education of ELs in those states raised concerns about the invisibility of large numbers of ELs in special education, particularly those in poverty. Emphasizing how those propositions and many other influences prevented access to equal opportunities for quality education (p. 113), the article examined the structure of programs in English-only states, identifying trends for ELs in special education and uncovering ELs’ actual educational experiences (p. 104).

Gandara & Hopkins’ (2010) quantitative study used the relative risk ration and other methods to examine data from the Office of Civil Rights (ORC). The findings raised concerns about lack of attention toward the number of ELs placed in special education classes. Other issues the article explored included EL placement patterns and educational opportunities (p. 113). The article called on educators to challenge this “invisible problem” through multilevel analysis to determine the effects of these policies and to examine ELs’ learning opportunities.
This involved monitoring the effect of these policies on vulnerable subgroups, improving data gathering around these policies, and using relative risk ratios to examine disproportionate rates of special education placement of certain subgroups (p. 115).

Restrictive legislation and its effect on EL instruction was also seen in Arizona (Garcia et al., 2012; Lillie et al., 2012; Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008). Garcia et al. (2012) examined Arizona’s structured English immersion program, conducted in a four-hour structured block. The article examined whether Arizona’s current EL policies, procedures, and efforts helped to close the achievement gap. A comparison of Arizona performance results to those of Utah and the District of Columbia, where this program was not used, highlighted the poor performance of ELs in mathematics and ELA. This study called for elimination of the one-size-fits-all model Arizona was using at the time and the further examination of ELs’ higher skills when determining their success within this structured block instructional model (Garcia et al., 2012).

The examination of the Flores Consent used in Arizona provides additional information about the use of supports for ELs (Lillie et al., 2012). This qualitative study used observations, interviews, and artifacts to examine the implementation of an SEI program for ELs. Issues related to this program included inadequate funding and poor teacher preparation for EL instruction and a lack of structure within the four-hour EL instruction model. Outside of instruction, the study identified cases of ELs physically and socially segregated from other students, ELs stigmatized by the separation required for the program, and the higher retention and dropout rates for ELs (Lillie et al., 2012).

Olson and Jimenez-Silva (2008) examined the effect that Arizona’s mandated SEI endorsement policy had on teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward English language students. This work called for increased examination of endorsement programs and how teachers’ beliefs and
attitudes influence their behaviors toward ELs in the classroom. The researchers identified the importance of organizing and implementing SEI endorsement courses to enable teachers to build confidence in the EL curriculum (Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008).

Olson and Jimenez-Silva (2008) also warned that states must look seriously at the instructors and their attitudes toward these classes. This article concluded that state departments of education must reexamine state policies of mandatory content and endorsement coursework strategies. The article called on departments of education to examine their mandated courses to ensure that they were more than just opportunities to pile on more information for teachers to know and use in their classrooms (Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008).

One solution was presented by the Karabenick and Noda (2004) article that identified research-based professional development as essential for districts and teachers who encounter the challenge of providing quality education for an increasingly diverse student population. The article stated that this training must focus on skill building, resource expansion, and enhancing teachers’ sense of efficacy and confidence (Karabenick & Noda, 2004).

**Deficiencies in the evidence.** Existing literature was examined to evaluate the effectiveness of EL and educator support programs and policies (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010; Garcia et al., 2012; Lillie et al., 2012; Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008). Many other studies have examined instructional best practices and programs to support effective EL instruction (Baecher et al., 2012; Calderon, 2007; Echevarria et al., 2015; Echevarria et al., 2006; Echevarria et al., 2004; Honigsfeld, 2009; Huerta & Jackson, 2010; Lee, 2012; Min, 2006; Pawan, 2008; Short, 2013; Watkins & Lindahl, 2010; Williams & Pilonieta, 2012). Two studies conducted since the Massachusetts SEI course was implemented examined a pilot course and other courses throughout the state (Haynes & August, 2012; Haynes & Paulsen, 2013). Haynes and August
(2012) studied the pilot SEI course with research questions designed to examine instruction quality, course material use, course coherence, and teacher outcomes. Haynes and Paulsen (2013) used research questions to examine course delivery and outcomes. These studies proved useful in our understanding of the curriculum within some of these courses, but further examination must be completed.

The questions about the course that guide this study focus on the learning environment within the course. The inclusion of modeling, practice, feedback, and collaboration as goals in the course materials drove this study’s development. This study was not concerned with how the course ran or whether the students followed the assignments, but how the study participants learned to support ELs. The deficiency in evidence for the course’s efficacy is due to inadequate examination of the learning environment in this endorsement program. This examination of the learning environment, changes to instructional practices and supports implemented within the selected school district builds on previous research into this SEI course.

**Relating the discussion to audience.** Brooks, Adams, and Morita-Mullaney (2010) highlighted various school districts’ struggles with the rapid rise in the EL population. This article researched the Indiana Department of Education student reports to identify that, as of 2010, Indiana had seen a growth rate of 409% over a 10-year period for EL Students, but the state had only 325 certified teachers of ELs to teach 46,471 students, for a ratio of one licensed teacher for every 143 ELs (p. 146). The audience for this study included teachers, school leaders, and school district leaders who were encountering the issues the article had identified.

**Significance of the Research Problem**

Many teachers seek ways to support ELs in schools nationwide, but most teachers have not been trained to do so, while some hesitate to participate in the professional development
activities conducive to EL instruction and support. Some educators and administrators believe the EL teacher is responsible for instructing these students in the English language, while many others have felt unsupported because of incomplete professional development (Reeves, 2006).

The growing number of ELs in classrooms nationwide highlights the need for effective, sustained, and meaningful professional development. The relationship between students and teachers can improve only if the teachers are given the tools to better understand the needs of their changing student population, for interactions between ELs and teachers greatly affect the learning environment (Yoon, 2008).

Given this, a participative voice in EL education may empower and improve teacher and administrator perspectives on this subject, help relieve their frustrations with it, and open a meaningful dialogue about it. Examining and reviewing programs and support systems for ELs is a key step toward these goals. Many EL programs remain as they are, effective or not, because of past practice patterns and lack of leadership to improve teacher training and/or funding for their betterment (Dahlman & Hoffman, 2009).

Harper and de Jong (2009) examined three studies of elementary- and secondary-school EL teachers to identify the consequences of recent educational policies for teachers and ELs. Legislative policies, curricula, professional development, support for ELs, and the reassignment of bilingual teachers were all investigated. The study defined the need for improved professional development that targets teacher attitudes toward ELs, informs teachers about second language acquisition, and stresses literacy development in content areas.

The article stressed the need to create curricula and policies that support ELs so they can be effectively included in the classroom while providing teachers with the expertise needed to support these students. Lack of classroom participation, meaningful peer interaction, teacher
feedback and opportunities for language development for ELs were identified as areas of concern. The article concluded that curricula should be set up to address language demands in content areas instead of just communication and social demands. The study identified how past policies were based on the belief that ELs’ needs were not so different from those of English-proficient students (Harper & de Jong, 2009).

**Research Questions**

This qualitative case study examined the learning experiences of teachers in Massachusetts SEI teacher endorsement course and any changes to instruction related to this course. Interviews and surveys with teachers and administrators were utilized to explore and understand educators’ perspectives of this course. These interviews were also designed to explore changes to how educators view their responsibility for educating ELs, implementation of instructional supports for ELs and district supports for educators.

This study was not designed to examine if the SEI course improved the achievement of EL students as it focused solely on the learning environment created for educators within the course and how the course affected instructional practices. Therefore, the overall research questions that guided this inquiry were:

1. How do educators describe the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI Endorsement course?
2. How did the SEI endorsement course help to create a learning environment that facilitated awareness and examination of teachers’ identities, assumptions, and perspectives about educating EL students?
3. How did the learning environment provide opportunities for collaboration, modeling of instructional practices and self-reflection?
4. How were the participant’s instructional practices affected by the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI course?

5. How do you feel the district or school assisted, supported and contributed to your learning in the course and implementation of components of the course into your instruction?

**Theoretical Framework**

The Massachusetts Department of Education posted the syllabus and handbook that detailed the components of the SEI endorsement course. These documents identified the improvement of EL instruction through modeling, teaching practice improvement, and feedback. The syllabus focused on the need for collaboration among all teachers to support ELs. These goals led to the use of transformative learning theory (TLT) as a lens to examine this course and any changes to the way ELs are educated. This theory also aligns with the examination of how the district worked to support educators as they implemented changes in their post-course instruction.

TLT involves adult learners incorporating critical reflection into their education, particularly by identifying their own assumptions and those of others. The goal is for the learner to challenge all of those assumptions (Grabove, 1997). Mezirow (1997) summarized the importance of transformative learning as follows: “Transformative learning is not an add on. It is the essence of adult education” (p. 11). New learning must be presented through a well-developed frame of reference with the use of critical reflective thought, imaginative problem posing, discourse, group deliberation, and group problem solving. Methods for this process may include critical incidents, metaphor analysis, concept mapping, life histories, and participation in social action (Mezirow, 1997, pp. 10-11).
Overview of the TLT. Mezirow (1997) identified transformative learning as the process of effecting change in frames of reference, or structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. The goal of adult learning is to strengthen and build on a foundation of knowledge to help the learner understand new subject content, and to assess assumptions more critically. These assumptions include beliefs, values, judgments, and feelings. This reassessment process should help students recognize the frames of reference necessary to improve at working with others to collectively solve problems and to learn from each other (Mezirow, 1997).

Perspective transformation and adult education is needed for real behavioral change, because “transformation in meaning perspective is precipitated by life’s dilemmas which cannot be resolved by simply acquiring more information, enhancing problem solving skills or adding to one’s competencies” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 108). Mezirow’s work was centered on the idea that adult education could precipitate, facilitate, and reinforce perspective transformation (1978).

Critical reflection in transformative learning involves challenging the validity of presuppositions in prior learning, which Mezirow (1990) claimed to be the most significant learning experience in adulthood because it involves reassessing the way one has perceived, known, believed, felt, or acted. Mezirow (1997) determined that students can become critically reflective of their assumptions or those of others by reading a book, hearing a point of view, engaging in task-oriented problem solving, or self-reflectively assessing their own ideas and beliefs (p. 7). These articles further identified transformative learning as the essence of adult education (Mezirow, 1990; 1997).

For Mezirow (1997), the goal for transformative learning ultimately involves adult students changing their points of view and habits of mind through experiences with people or cultures that prompt them to reflect critically on prior misconceptions about particular groups or
Ideas (p. 7). This type of learning could result in a change in the way the learner views a particular subject, group, person, or idea, which leads to transforming habits of mind to remain aware of biases about other cultures. The four processes for learning involved with transformative adult learning include: (1) elaborating on an existing point of view, (2) establishing new points of view, (3) transforming our points of view, and (4) transforming our habits of mind (p. 7).

Mezirow (1997) stated further “adults have acquired a coherent body of experience—associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses—frames of reference that define their life world” (p. 5). Mezirow (2000) examined frames of reference as structured encounters that determine how human beings see the world and identified that these views and perceptions can be transformed through critical reflection on these experiences and assumptions. This article observed that transformation occurs when adults learn by incorporating past and present incidents that are vital to the learning process (Mezirow, 2000). Using transformative learning as a lens could allow a researcher to examine patterns or trends in the data that identify ways in which adults have altered their worldview by working with others to share experiences.

**Key tenets from the TLT.** Cranton and King (2003) applied Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (1997) to conclude that EPD must be communicative which involves understanding the meaning of what is being communicated by examining purposes, values, beliefs and feelings (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). The focus was on moving away from the instrumental which only focuses on the how to and instead focusing on emancipatory learning. The article described emancipatory learning as critically questioning and reflecting on what human beings do and why it is important thus freeing us of old, unsupported beliefs. The article identified this
as the heart of transformative learning for EPD (Cranton & King, 2003, pp. 31-32), which informed this examination of the SEI course.

Key tenets from this theory that align with this study include frames of reference, communicative learning, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection. Frames of reference consist of habits of mind and points of view (Mezirow, 1997). Communicative learning involves examining beliefs and values (Cranton & King, 2003).

Mezirow (1997) determined that adult education must support learners in becoming more autonomous thinkers by learning to negotiate their own values, meanings, and purposes, rather than to act uncritically on those values of others. This perspective transformation includes critical awareness of how one understands and perceives the world. Examining perceptions leads to a more inclusive, integrative perspective and is a key component of transformative learning for students to use when making decisions (Mezirow, 1990; 1997).

Cranton and King (2003) considered communicative learning vital for this process because it draws on critical reflection and critical self-reflection. Adult learning through discourse requires a learner to become critically self-reflective and to develop reflective judgment. Skills necessary to do so include open-mindedness, empathetic listening, elimination of premature judgment, and seeking common ground (p. 35). The article recounted the use of transformative learning to improve educator professional development by including the involvement of teachers’ personal values, world perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching. Critical reflection in teacher training involved reflection on content, process, and premise. Content reflection included examination of the problem; process reflection included reviewing problem-solving techniques; premise reflection involved questioning the problem itself (pp. 34-35).
In Mezirow (1997), the environment required to facilitate transformative learning had to provide educators with the support they needed to realize and analyze their assumptions and those of others. The learning environment must allow learners practice identifying frames of reference and create discourse with others to confront them. Situations must be carefully created to ensure an opportunity for a safe environment that allows everyone to challenge, defend, explain, assess, and reflect on their frames of references and those of others (Mezirow, 1997).

**Critical views of the TLT.** Examining critical views of this theory is crucial for understanding how to promote participation in transformative learning and how to respect the different learning styles of adults. One key criticism of TLT maintains that there are areas lacking in the theory (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Critics of TLT claim that the theory is good but could be better if certain aspects were to be addressed (Howe & Bagnall, 2013) such as the lack of theoretical analysis in various studies to examine transformative learning.

Taylor (2008) stated that Mezirow (1997) assumed that there is only a singular concept of this theory and further identified three issues with transformative adult learning. Taylor questioned the role of the student and identified the need to review a student’s responsibility in this type of learning environment. The affect and impact of transformative learning was identified as an unknown with Taylor calling for more evidence before implementing a transformative learning environment. Lastly, Taylor called on educators and instructors to accept responsibility of this learning environment by requiring instructors to examine their own frames of reference before guiding learners in this effort.

Taylor and Cranton (2012) also examined five specific issues, with the goal of extending the discussion on Mezirow’s theory (1997): experience, empathy, desire for change, the positive orientation theory, and the need for research into positivist and critical approaches. The article
called on researchers to turn a critical eye on their assumptions, consider that this type of learning can be negative, and break from traditional research into transformative learning theory to expand the way this theory is researched.

Another category of critics includes those who reject the theory based on a conflicting philosophical standpoint (Howe & Bagnall, 2013). Mezirow (1996) actually addressed criticism of his theory directly in an article aimed to address issues raised by Bruce Pietrykowski (1996). Mezirow (1996) stated that Pietrykowski claimed that human beings are all stuck in our own culturally unique frame of reference that outside cultures cannot affect.

This article noted that Pietrykowski critiqued a number of the major tenets of transformative learning theory, which included the distinction between instrumental and communicative learning, the transformation of meaning structures, and the notion that critically self-reflective learning was emancipatory (Mezirow, 1996). This critique that questioned frames of reference could provide additional review of the structures in place within any learning environment to ensure that all learners are provided with the opportunities to participate in the learning activities.

Additional minor criticisms question a certain element of this theory (Howe & Bagnall, 2013). For example, Mezirow (1997) again presented a critical view of transformative learning by acknowledging that this theory assumes that people will bring their experiences and prior knowledge to the learning environment. Howe and Bagnall (2013) concluded that this assumption does not guarantee that everyone is actively participating in the learning process.

Dirkx (1997) suggested that there are many different types of adult students so the definition of TLT could not apply to them all, and that the theory lacks clear definitions for different types of students. Even with these critics, transformative learning seeks to encourage
learners to examine their habits of mind and points of view (Mezirow, 1997). This component could provide teachers with a chance to reflect on their teaching and learning when trying to create a supportive learning environment for all students.

**Applying the TLT to this study.** Mezirow’s (1997) TLT increased my understanding of why we must focus on how adults learn, and how frames of reference, communicative learning, critical reflection and critical self-reflection can support adult learning (Mezirow, 2003). Conceptually, lifelong learning, combined with transformative learning, includes the process of change, self-discovery, and social critique (Cranton, 1992).

Cranton (1992) focused on moving beyond self-directed learning toward transformative knowledge, which she deemed necessary for learners to examine their values, beliefs, expectations, and basic assumptions, as these can inhibit, conflict with, and/or prevent learning. This article stated that this process was daunting for educators because it required an environment in which a learner could reflect on his or her assumptions. The application of transformative knowledge within this examination of the SEI course directly relates to the learning environment created for teachers to re-examine their own beliefs and those of others.

Cranton (1992) sought to define methods that educators could readily employ to support the concept of transformative knowledge. Methods included recognizing assumptions that act as constraints, challenging them with activities, providing guidance and sources to address them, supporting the learner in this effort by encouraging him or her to question assumptions, guiding revision of assumptions, and creating an environment that supports this effort (pp. 151-152).

This transformative learning theoretical framework puts the focus on the role of culture and experience in shaping what we know and how we came to know it. Central constructs for transformative learning include experience, empathy, and desire to change (Taylor & Cranton, 1995).
Transformative learning helps a person achieve a shift in outlook through critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 2000), thus transforming education from a passive preparatory exercise into an ongoing and empowering means of personal and social transformation.

The relationship between adult learning and life interests as a way of learning could enable people to better understand and examine the meaning of what they perceive to be their life or work purposes. For Kroth and Boverie (2000), this learning process enables adult students to examine, revise, or reinforce their assumptions. It is therefore an ongoing and reflective pursuit. The goal is for teachers to be not uncomfortable teaching ELs but not to become too comfortable at the same time. Thus, they must continually examine their perspectives, experiences, and instructional practices, wary that the fastest growing portion of our student population is not receiving a quality public school education.

**Theoretical framework conclusion.** Mezirow’s (1997) theory shed new light on this research by pivoting the focus to examining how adults learn. This research must focus on how we educate teachers instead of simply giving them extra supports, computer programs or new textbooks. Focusing on frames of reference, communicative learning, critical reflection and critical self-reflection allows for examination of this course from a different perspective by providing the knowledge necessary to see if this course enabled teachers to understand and work with other educators in an attempt to comprehend their ELs’ backgrounds and needs. This lens is an effective tool for examining not only the course but also changes in instructional practices and supports created for teachers within the examined district.

**Summary**

Dirkx et al. (2004) identified the need to focus on learning and reflection as tools to prepare educators to support this country’s changing student population. This became the call to
action that created the purpose for this study that is designed to examine the current SEI curriculum and learning experiences of teachers in the Massachusetts SEI teacher endorsement course. This study also was aimed at understanding how this SEI course affected instructional practices and the district’s efforts to support ELs. This support is a vital component for creating a learning environment that supports the needs of all learners.

Yoon (2008) stated that interactions between EL students and teachers improved the learning environment for ELs. This is why transformative learning theory is aligned with this study; TLT focuses on the use of critical reflection, self-critical reflection, meaning perspective, and communicative learning in adult education. These were key criteria for evaluating this SEI course.

The syllabus for this SEI course called for modeling, feedback, and collaboration among all teachers. These key tenets from the course drove the selection of transformative learning theory for this study. Mezirow (1978, 1997, 2000, 2003) focused on critical reflection as a key component of adult learning. His seminal work for the TLT sought to provide the goals and functions for adult learning (Mezirow, 1978) and identified that the key element for adult learning was to examine how we are caught in our own history and reliving it, described as a “meaning perspective” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 101). The next chapter will focus on a critique of literature to focus the theoretical framework and direction of this research.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Overview

This literature review is divided into four sections. The first examined literature that addresses Massachusetts’ current policies for educating ELs, particularly ones that have dictated the way ELs are taught in Massachusetts’s public schools. This examination shows the challenges educators encounter when supporting ELs.

The second section focused on successful Educator professional development (EPD), SEI courses, and educator support efforts. While, the third section explored successful supports for ELs and educators for their use of collaboration among multiple stakeholders, initiatives to support ELs, and training to support educators’ understanding of their changing student population. The focus was on current practices in schools that provided successful, positive learning environments for all students.

The fourth and final section examined transformative learning within Educator professional development, focusing on the catalysts for a transformative learning environment, to provide context for the research questions and offer concrete examples of transformative learning practices within EPD.

English Learning Policies in Massachusetts

An examination of Massachusetts’ EL policies reveals educators’ challenges in working with ELs. The passage of Ballot Question 2 in 2002 led to many statewide changes in EL education, including the replacement of bilingual education with all-English instruction designed for language learners (Adams & Jones, 2006; de Jong, Gort & Cobb, 2005).

Adams and Jones (2006) stated that Question 2 attempted to create a well-planned language development curriculum for ELs in all content areas. The article identified that lack of
bilingual teachers, lack of training for monolingual teachers, and the expectation for ELs to reach full English proficiency in one year all hampered quality instruction for English learners, therefore the sheltered English immersion curriculum needed revision. The article called for an increase in the professional development available to mainstream teachers and the hiring of more bilingual teachers in every school district. This study emphasized the need for stronger school leadership supporting collaboration between mainstream teachers and EL teachers to develop a better EL support plan (Adams & Jones, 2006).

De Jong et al. (2005) examined the effects of Question 2 on schools with a qualitative case study using document analysis and interviews to determine the ballot question’s effect on three school districts. The research questions focused on the changes that took place in various districts as a result of Question 2 and how school administrators understood and implemented the changes that the ballot question had called for (p. 601). This case study identified ways school districts attempted to use waivers and other loopholes by using experienced personnel to avoid implementing structured English immersion programs. Administrators in these districts did not limit themselves to the literal examination of the law. Attempts to lessen the burden of these new regulations included clustering same-language students in classrooms to maximize home language instruction and adapting bilingual programs as the law allowed (p. 614).

These various studies reveal an effort to examine EL instruction and EPD further in Massachusetts. The SEI endorsement course was designed to support all school personnel with the difficult task of educating ELs. How effectively this course prepared educators to work with ELs must be investigated to build on the intentions of this initiative’s creators. One way to research educator professional development is to examine effective learning environments for educators.
Educator Professional Development (EPD)

The examination of studies of EPD and SEI programs (Batt, 2008; Batt, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DelliCarpini, 2014; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010; Markos, 2012; Matsumoto, 2016; Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008; Osterling & Webb, 2009; Pawan, 2008; Washburn, 2008) shows the need for collaboration, effective teacher training and sustained teacher learning. Not all teachers are certified or qualified to work with ELs, which many teachers identified as a hindrance to effective EL instruction; teachers also demanded training to involve EL parents in their students’ education, implement EL curriculum and improve current EL programs (Batt, 2008).

The 161 participants in Batt’s (2008) study were educators who worked with ELs and provided thoughtful insight into EL instruction. The article recounted that the greatest challenges to EL instruction were lack of qualified educators, understaffing of EL teachers, and the burden of additional duties assigned to EL teachers. The study’s conclusion called for educators to examine the causes that restricted hiring of staff that are more qualified while at the same time hiring consultants to support teachers in creating Sheltered English Instruction academies and altering the EL curriculum (Batt, 2008).

This study identified that the highest-priority areas for Educator professional development were EL instruction methods, sheltered instruction, and first- and second-language acquisition methods. Batt’s (2008) study of teacher perceptions of English learner instruction identified needs for professional development to compensate for the knowledge and skills teacher preparation courses were not offering. Furthermore, designers of teacher preparation programs need to modify coursework to include ESL methods and sheltered instruction training. Batt (2008) declared that these reforms had to become the responsibility of all educators.
Batt (2010) explored the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and cognitive coaching (p. 997). This mixed-methods research effort, which included knowledge tests, survey and interviews, sought to answer five questions that focused on: (1) instruction within the SIOP course, (2) teacher commitment to execute the course objectives, (3) use of the course materials, (4) EL teacher coaching efforts, and (5) changes to classroom practices (pp. 997-998).

Participants in this study included fifteen mainstream elementary teachers with a large EL population in their classrooms. Eight of the participants rated the training as effective and indicative of teachers’ commitment to the program, identified the materials as useful resources, and maintained that this program would effectively support ELs in the classroom. Seven of the participants implemented the model often prior to the coaching phase of this process. The fifth question’s responses showed committed use of the Sheltered English Instruction Protocol critical components and clear changes to instruction based on the cognitive coaching (Batt, 2010, pp. 1003-1004).

Batt (2010) concluded that schools are investing many resources into EL professional development but questioned whether teachers where provided with the support needed to reach their full potential. Batt identified that teacher’s knowledge of the SIOP model must translate into practice for this training to be worthwhile and cognitive coaching is a cost-effective way to ensure that a district receive a return on their professional development investments (p. 1005).

Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) examined multiple years of EPD to identify the requirements for creating high-quality teacher learning environments that included clear guidance on educating ELs and understanding how they acquired knowledge. Learning opportunities for educators had to emphasize hands-on learning, application of practice, reflection, and collaboration with peers (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Dove and
Honigsfeld (2010) supported this by calling for collaboration and co-teaching between EL and mainstream teachers as a way to better support educators’ professional development.

An interdisciplinary collaborative teaching course created by an EL teacher and an English professor enabled the instructors to model collaborative teaching (DelliCarpini, 2014). This mixed-methods study examined ways for teacher education programs to identify and address issues of collaboration among EL and mainstream teachers (p. 133). The qualitative data for the study was collected from forty participants through surveys, reflective writing samples, focus-group discussions, and open-ended interview questions (p. 136). DelliCarpini (2014) identified this collaborative teaching model’s positive effect on students. Participating students and teachers both wanted this model included in teacher education programs (p. 138).

Markos (2012) conducted a qualitative teacher study of a fifteen-week state-mandated SEI course. She raised concerns about teacher preparation programs for English learning that de-emphasized teacher beliefs about English learners and the teachers’ responsibility for educating them (p. 40). Markos’ course was designed to use guided reflection to enable pre-service teachers to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about ELs: “Guided reflection, as I use it in my course, provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to look at and understand the cultural and linguistic differences between themselves and language learners” (p. 43). Guided reflection activities that Markos identified included group work, readings, mock trials, discussions, and quick writes (p. 44).

A native English-speaking freshman ESL writing teacher at an American university studied the use of journals for teacher reflection (Matsumoto, 2016). The participants were English learning teachers who had completed EL courses in Massachusetts. The article indicated that this journal writing exercise was effective as a form of professional development, because it
enabled the participants to reflect continually on their teaching practices (Matsumoto, 2016).

Matsumoto (2016) analyzed various stages in the journal writing to monitor EPD through grounded theory. Interviews also enabled the author to check in with the teachers on the effectiveness of their journal writing. Matsumoto (2016) concluded that the study’s results showed that participants were able to regain a sense of professional expertise and self-regulation without the guidance of others (p. 533). These journals allowed participants to integrate theories and activities from various courses into their teaching while examining their practices in new ways that supported the teachers’ efforts to become more flexible in their instruction (p. 533).

Olson and Jimenez-Silva (2008) emphasized that SEI endorsement courses should allow teachers to build their confidence for educating English learners. Osterling and Webb (2009) called for preparing future teachers to educate a culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student population (p. 284) while giving educators opportunities to confront their deeply rooted beliefs, values, attitudes and relationships so teacher transformation could occur (p. 269). Further, Washburn (2008) indicated that such programs should focus on the lack of understanding and empathy by teachers for educating English learners.

Pawan (2008) recounted a qualitative research study that examined teachers’ knowledge of four types of educational scaffolding and identified teachers’ classroom activities with Els. The data included 3,374 CAT online postings and two surveys of seven male and twenty-six female teachers with a range of five to twenty years of experience in education. The study concluded that cultural scaffolding received less than 7% of the references in the online postings. The postings detailed teachers’ challenges and struggles. Some findings revealed scaffolding that incorporated student experiences into learning; others identified a lack of interpersonal
opportunities in the teaching. Pawan indicated that all EL instruction must include cultural scaffolding (pp. 1460-1461).

Pawan’s (2008) research question examined whether effective EL instruction was similar to effective instruction for all students. The answer was yes, wherever teaching was effective for both types of students, and no, where teachers’ cross-cultural relationships with their students were underdeveloped (p. 1460). Pawan’s (2008) findings indicated the following: (1) cultural competency must be a part of a teacher’s toolbox for building relationships with students; (2) educators rarely use cultural scaffolding; (3) literacy instruction is important for ELs; (4) EL instruction must include the creation of cross-cultural relationships with students; and (5) EL instruction is not just the responsibility of EL teachers; professional development programs targeted to help teachers work with EL students are necessary (Pawan, 2008).

**Findings on EPD.** This section provided insight into various teacher preparation courses that were designed to improve educator’s abilities to support English learners. Most of these courses went beyond strategy discussion to include hands-on and collaborative learning opportunities. Some challenged teachers to examine their own beliefs, attitudes, and values in order to effect real change for the participants.

**Collaborative Environments in Schools**

The aforementioned research calls for reconsideration of current EL education policies and supports. This section focuses on successful collaborative school environments created by educators to support English learners (Pawan & Craig, 2011; Pawan & Ortloff, 2011; Peercy, Martin-Beltran, Silverman & Nunn, 2015; Smith, Coggins & Cardoso, 2008; Tellez & Manthey, 2015; Verplaetse, Ferraro & Anderberg, 2012).
Pawan and Craig (2011) examined English learner and content-area teachers’ opinions about education with a focus on the effect those opinions could have on their ability to collaborate with each other. The article indicated that teacher collaboration was necessary to support ELs (p. 293). The article made multiple recommendations for long-term teacher collaboration that focused on EPD, school climate, and EL teacher leadership with teacher collaboration in supporting ELs as the encompassing goal. The role of EL teachers within this school culture would be to help content-area teachers understand English learners’ educational needs while advocating for collaboration among all school staff to improve EL instruction.

Pawan and Ortloff (2011) examined teachers’ perceptions of collaboration between EL and content-area teachers with a focus on factors affecting such collaboration as well as what transpired when these teachers did collaborate. The research was conducted after the participating teachers had completed the Collaborative Teaching Institute (CTI). The study’s goal was to identify how CTI and other programs could promote collaboration. This qualitative study included one-hour interviews with educators and administrators at ten different schools with CTI alumni. Interviews were done concurrently with observations of classrooms and meetings (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011). The study’s conclusions identified key personnel opportunities for collaboration, tensions, and conflicts in collaboration, as well as successful activities that fostered collaboration between EL and content-area teachers.

Data was divided into two categories: (1) factors that sustained collaboration, and (2) barriers to collaboration (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011). EL teachers reported that governance, including district leaders, was necessary to enforce collaboration at the schools. Administrators discussed how the creation of procedures for collaboration sustained that activity. Content-area teachers reported that their interactions with English learner teachers were the main catalyst for
collaboration, emphasizing the need for the inclusion of EL teachers as members of a supportive team (pp. 467-468).

Barriers to collaboration also included governance and formalization. English learner teachers defined interiorization or a lack of collaboration with others along with lack of trust and appreciation for their suggestions as barriers to collaboration. Content-area teachers focused on formalization and the lack of formal procedures necessary to create space and time for collaboration. Administrators saw the state of governance and leadership as a hindrance to creating a collaborative environment for teachers (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011, pp. 467-468).

The recognition of conflict that emerged from the data led to many changes within the school district’s CTI. The main focus was providing time for EL and content-area teachers to discuss challenges that prevented collaboration. Sessions were held to address barriers to collaboration. Discussion topics included involving EL parents, administrators, and teacher leaders in the program. The researchers identified that trust was a goal to foster collaboration among teachers whereas distrust could adversely affect collaboration (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011).

Many researchers have examined collaboration between EL teachers and mainstream teachers as a means of improving EL instruction. Peercy et al. (2015) examined the co-construction of curricula between EL specialists and mainstream teachers in their second year of a three-year federal grant to support ELs’ vocabulary development and reading ability (p. 34). Research questions on how teachers engaged in collaborative planning, teaching, and reflecting guided this study, which also investigated how these methods affected the teachers’ engagement in EL instruction. Data was collected through videos, audio recordings, field notes, observations, and interviews with teachers (p. 38).
Analysis of the data identified two major themes: (1) how teachers collaborated in EL support, and (2) how this collaboration shaped their engagement in their teaching practices. When these teachers collaborated, they better understood ELs’ learning experiences and acknowledged their needs. The findings supported teachers’ demands for more opportunities to collaborate and for ongoing professional development to be directed toward classroom instruction (Peercy et al., 2015).

Smith et al.’s (2008) use of case studies in exploring the passage of Question 2 in Massachusetts revealed efforts made in schools to support ELs. These studies were designed to discern which schools were succeeding under the new English-language immersion policy and which of those initiatives were successful with ELs. Each school deemed successful had found its own way to address the education of ELs under Question 2: by enacting alternative pedagogical practices to meet those students’ needs.

This creative non-compliance with the law helped ELs succeed in learning English, which inspired refinement of the law. Through cross-case analysis of these schools, researchers concluded that data use, staff and family recruitment, and use of student supports were key to student success (Smith et al., 2008). The most successful schools offered multiple ways to address various levels of English proficiency. These included a collaborative school environment committed to ELs’ education, constant attention to data and best practices for EL instruction, highly skilled teachers and school leaders, and supports beyond the classroom (Smith et al., 2008). These practices were referenced in this present study.

Tellez and Manthey (2015) examined collaboration among school staff members by surveying 578 California teachers. The research questions were designed to explore the relationship between EL teaching and collective efficacy at educating ELs. Surveys identified
teachers’ confidence in the EL strategies their schools used. Teacher participants in this study claimed that a school-wide collective efficacy was associated with strengthened instructional practices and programs; thus, collective, not individual, efficacy was necessary to support ELs.

The findings did not identify a superior instructional approach but suggested that the quality of the programs was crucial to student success. Four language teaching program components identified as essential were: (1) staff capacity to address EL needs, (2) school-wide focus on EL instruction, (3) shared responsibility among all staff regarding EL instruction, and (4) an ongoing data-driven assessment of any EL program (Tellez & Manthey, 2015).

Verplaetse et al. (2012) examined a program empowering educator to become experts in EL education: a teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) master’s program. It was provided to ten geographically isolated teachers with large EL populations that failed to meet annual student progress benchmarks. Verplaetse et al. (2012) chronicled these educators’ efforts as they completed the program so they could be certified in bilingual education. The study identified and chronicled collaborative class-based research projects, ongoing community of practice activities, and commitments to pay it forward, all of which participants considered vital to teachers’ development of EL education expertise (p. 352).

The study identified these ten teachers as EL experts-in-progress within their schools, districts and communities (Verplaetse et al., 2012). They developed their expertise through activities in co-constructed knowledge, collaboration among cohorts to work through various growth stages, and self-reflection that encouraged the participants to employ this new information in their schools (p. 369-370).

**Findings on collaborative environments in schools.** This section highlighted studies that earmarked current school practices, teacher collaboration, and school leadership for
improvement to create the positive learning environment necessary for teachers to better their EL instruction through the SEI endorsement course. The next section will examine the use of transformative learning theory within teacher professional development programs.

The TLT and its Application to EPD

This section provides concrete examples of the adult learning environments that have used various TLT strategies with a focus on educating teachers in transformative learning (Burke, 2013; Carrington, Mercer, Iyer & Selva, 2015; Forte & Blouin, 2016; Gravett, 2004; Hoover, 2010; Johnson & Fargo, 2010; King, 2004; Kitchenham, 2006; Lee & Brett, 2015; Naidoo & Kirch, 2016; Ross, Adams, Bondy, Dana, Dodman & Swain, 2011; Servage, 2008). These studies supported the tenets of the TLT used in this present study.

Burke’s (2013) qualitative study of an experimental approach to EPD concluded that demonstration, observation, feedback, collaboration, and reflection were the learning strategies included in the TLT approach. The study used teacher questionnaires, written reflections, observations by the researcher, and written notes. Four Spanish teachers with varying degrees of teaching experience participated in this study. Their responses identified the essential components of EL teacher training: meetings with the researcher, receiving peer and consultant feedback, and on-site coaching. The teachers continually saw this training as relevant because of its daily applicability in the classroom. Burke (2013) identified that changes in EPD occurred because teachers could now take a leadership role in their learning and did not have to leave their classrooms (p. 259). The inclusion of consultants to support learning opportunities, inter-teacher collaboration, and hands-on experiences gave teachers a different type of EPD. Burke (2013) highlighted how this program went beyond telling teachers what to do but instead provided supports that enabled teachers to create curricula and activities with support from others (p. 259).
Carrington et al. (2015) focused on a critical service-learning program for educators in investigating the values necessary for inclusive education, defined here as the involvement of all students in all aspects of learning as valued members of the learning community. The article defined service learning as a combination of experimental learning and community service (p. 61). Transformative learning was the program’s primary goal that was reached by requiring teaching candidates to complete twenty community service hours before completing the educational program (p. 63). The community service component enabled teaching candidates to participate in critical reflection of social values and educational practices while encountering other perspectives, thus contributing to inclusive teaching based on values of social justice. The article examined the service-learning program’s effects on the value of inclusive teaching and on teacher candidates’ preparation to become educators through questionnaires, focus group interviews and qualitative analysis (p. 64).

The results highlighted the critical service-learning program’s emphasis on diversity and inclusion. It also included a focus on teaching strategies and encouraging educators’ appreciation of diversity in schools (Carrington et al., 2015, p. 70). Themes emerging from the research included empathy, acceptance of diversity, and respect. Carrington et al. (2015) concluded that transformative learning experience was needed for an inclusive learning environment in schools.

In their qualitative study with twenty-four teachers with varying experience in education, Forte and Blouin (2016) focused on an online learning environment to examine the connection among educational goals, sociocultural awareness and critical discussion within that environment (p. 782). Forte and Blouin (2016) shared a study seeking evidence of transformative learning surrounding sociocultural issues for classroom teachers who enrolled in an online ESL EPD program. The study sought to determine ways that teachers participated in critical reflection of
their perspectives, how this affected their ability to make sense of their own experiences, and the ways this process created potential for action in changing their teaching practices to support ELs.

Data analysis from this study revealed shifts in the sociocultural perspectives of teachers involved in the program (Forte & Blouin, 2016, p. 793). The article identified the correlation between the carefully chosen resource materials and the increased critical reflection of the participants. The article stated, “Findings from the use of the transformative learning theoretical framework to explore perspective shifts occurring in an online ESL professional development program reveal positive changes that will benefit English language learners in the classroom” (p. 793). Recommendations from this study focused on careful selection of texts and assignments for online programs, along with the need for motivated, self-directed learners, to realize transformative learning more fully (Forte & Blouin, 2016).

Gravett (2004) related an action research project informed by the TLT to examine educators’ ability to change from a teacher-centered approach to a learning-centered dialogic approach (p. 259). Two workshops were conducted to allow educators to scrutinize their feelings, assumptions, and expectations of teaching before exploring alternative forms of teaching (pp. 262-263). Research was done with a journal, open-ended questionnaires, feedback meetings with coordinators, and interviews (p. 265). The results showed that changes in teaching perspectives could be altered through a process incorporating TLT, and that action research with TLT could be used in education.

Hoover (2010) examined California’s New Teacher Project (NPT) to address the lack of research of the induction programs that enabled educators to move beyond survival concerns and emotional support. This qualitative, descriptive study emphasized the refocusing of induction programs on teacher learning and development (p. 16). The article identified the need for
mentoring, time for collaboration among teachers, assessments of their progress, reflection on
the program’s efficacy, creation of teacher networking opportunities, and strong principal
leadership in transformative learning. All of these elements comprised a conceptual framework
for the examination of teacher professional development programs (pp. 16-17).

Hoover (2010) used documents, interviews, field notes, and focus groups to examine the
NTP program. Hoover (2010) stated that it was crucial to consider the mentor selection and
training as well as the NTP’s use of empirical evidence to guide staff development and program
efficacy reflection, and its allowance for teacher collaboration. Identifying teacher mentoring and
examination of student work as a professional development activity, the author concluded that
well-trained mentors can create a transformational learning environment for educators (p. 18).

Johnson and Fargo (2010) related a mixed-methods longitudinal study that examined how
middle-school science teachers’ involvement with a transformative professional development
(TPD) model changed instructional practices and student learning. This study used teacher
observations of classroom instruction, lesson plans, and student growth scores to probe the TPD
program. This model was created to improve science EPD to meet the needs of urban science
teachers and their diverse students. TPD addressed the teacher’s personal, professional, and
social development, the school climate, the needs of students, and the beliefs of teachers (p. 9).

TPD’s intended outcomes included improved instruction, increased student achievement,
collaborative school environments for staff and students, and a strengthened school vision geared
toward that collaboration (Johnson & Fargo, 2010, p. 11). The article identified how the TPD
program allowed teachers and professional development providers to construct their activities (p.
23). They also found that the program let teachers build supportive relationships, study effective
learning strategies, and work within a safe learning environment that the article identified as
crucial for teachers to support their peers’ EPD.

Overall, the study focused on the improved effectiveness of the urban science teacher’s instruction (Johnson & Fargo, 2010). The article identified how teachers’ home visits to their minority students and lessons that were culturally responsive to those students led to improved instruction (p. 23). Though student achievement varied at different schools, the results indicated that teachers’ increased understanding of their students’ educational needs signified an actual improvement in their teaching, which led to an increase in student learning (pp. 23-24).

King’s (2004) study of EPD emphasized reflective practice and dialogue, reaffirming the use of the TLT as a frame of reference by which to examine the efficacy of EPD. This study examined educators’ personal and professional learning within a professional development environment of transformative learning. The article stressed that adult learners may begin to examine their own values, beliefs and assumptions when allowed to reflect on their learning. King stated that this shift in thinking is an emergence of transformational learning (p. 155).

This mixed-methods study explored both sides of teacher education by focusing on both the learner’s and the professor’s viewpoints and experiences. The Learning Activities Survey (LAS) was used to gather data. The research questions focused on the type of transformative learning the educators experienced, trends in their learning, needs that emerged, barriers to transformative learning, and providers’ responsibilities for activating this learning (King, 2004, p. 156). Thirty-six of the fifty-eight participants underwent perspective transformation; many re-evaluated their worldview and developed a new frame of reference for their teaching (p. 162).

King (2004) stated, “Creating professional development environments that cultivate freedom for critical questioning, reflective learning, and discussing and adopting new ideas can enable educators to create better understanding for themselves and consider extending their
practice in new directions” (p. 169). The trends observed in the transformational change of these educators included a more inclusive view of the world, themselves, and others. King (2004) recommended recognition of the responsibilities of the facilitator and learners, examination of the institutions that provide EPD, and identification of the learner’s responsibility (pp. 170-171).

Just as the education of ELs has challenged educators and school districts nationwide, the fast-changing world of communication has created many issues for educators. The Kitchenham (2006) article used transformative learning theory (TLT) to examine elementary school teachers from one independent and two public schools. The research questions probed whether teachers had undergone perspective transformation based on their use of educational technology.

This exploratory qualitative study used technology action plans that the participants had completed before the study, their reflective journal entries, a teacher questionnaire, interviews, and field notes (Kitchenham, 2006). Results showed that disorienting dilemmas occurred when working with the devices that then caused perspective transformation by the teachers when they engaged with educational technology. These dilemmas such as creating webpages led participants to question their assumptions about learning so that participants utilized discussions of technology to question their frames of reference, habits of mind, and worldviews. The article concluded that critical self-examination resulted in better mindsets for learning and Educator professional development (Kitchenham, 2006).

Lee and Brett (2015) detailed a qualitative case study that examined whether teacher-to-teacher discussions showed how their perspectives changed during the author’s EPD course. This study was based on a theoretical framework incorporating Mezirow’s (1997) transformative learning and Bakhtin’s (1975) dialogism focused on teacher to teacher discussions to identify the nature of effective online discussions for teachers (Lee & Brett, 2015, p. 73). The study
questions were designed to reveal how changed perspectives were seen in the open dialogue during the course and what discussion characteristics led to open dialogues.

Lee and Brett (2015) stated that this study supported the claim that open dialogue can lead to teacher perspective change. The article described how an opportunity for teachers to interact with persuasive discourses and challenge authoritative ones could enable perspective change (p. 80). The study’s findings also presented the need to create a supportive safe environment for EPD. Perspective changes during this process included reconsidering authoritative discourses, further examining the limitations of top-down education, receptivity to the teachers’ voices, and the revelation of internal dialogues of participants during these discussions to better understand how to create better learning opportunities and environments for ELs (p. 81).

Naidoo and Kirch (2016) focused on offering a new teacher professional development model that combined reflection and teaching. This qualitative research sought to provide empirical evidence to support teacher development with this model (p. 383). The researchers used posture as a tool for implementing two mediation practices from the cultural-historic activity theory (CHAT): (1) placing responsibility for learning on the participants, and (2) posing open-ended questions to drive learning (p. 383). The articles findings came from the analysis of classroom observations, interviews, journals, and videos of twelve new teachers. Observing that teacher candidates targeted by teacher instructors had noticed, studied, and changed their posture and their questioning patterns in their teaching (p. 389), the article identified the need for increased reflection in teacher training. The article also identified the need for teacher educators to provide environments and tools needed for this learning in order to incorporate meaningful learning experiences within teacher certification courses.
Ross et al. (2011) examined Teacher Leadership for School Improvement (TLSI), a graduate program designed for practicing educators to mentor and support the development of master teachers, teacher leaders, and teacher researchers. The program’s goals were: (1) to improve instructional strategies, (2) to use data to drive student learning, (3) to create leadership and mentoring roles, and (4) to examine an inquiry stance toward teaching that must be shared with other educators. This interview-based qualitative case study involved twenty graduate students and six principals. Interview questions were designed to answer two research questions that focused on (1) teachers’ perceptions of the program’s effects on their teaching, instructional problem-solving and school leadership and (2) principals’ perceptions of those effects. Findings indicated that teachers believed they had transformed their habits of mind and frames of reference for both teaching and leadership (Ross et al., 2011). Data supporting these conclusions were drawn from both teachers’ and administrators’ statements and presented in two separate frameworks: (1) inquiry stance (teaching) and (2) leadership stance (leadership).

**Inquiry stance.** Inquiry stance and learning to view oneself as an autonomous professional were identified as the frameworks for defining the changes to teaching that had occurred. Teachers defined “inquiry stance” as the development of a new lens by which to examine their own teaching practices. Principals defined “autonomous professional” as a teacher who gained the confidence necessary to take a professional stance and strive to improve their practice (Ross et al., 2011, pp. 1217-1218).

**Leadership stance.** Leadership stance and the viewpoint that student learning is a communal responsibility were the frameworks associated with leadership changes (Ross, 2011, pp. 1218-1219). Teachers defined “leadership stance” as the view that leadership must be required of every teacher, which helped other teachers to expand their own views of leadership.
The findings suggested that “communal responsibility” was more than an attitude change, it was a new way of acting in the classroom that the researcher had observed within the schools chosen for the study. Principals reported that this new attitude supported a more collaborative approach toward educating students (p. 1219).

Ultimately, the data showed signs of transformation in teaching approaches but teachers reported that restrictions in schools impeded this transformation. These restrictions included administrative changes, staff turnover, and educational mandates. The researchers questioned whether this transformation could continue, especially in high-needs schools. Barriers to transformation there included unsupportive conditions within the schools and the failure of their leaders to maintain cultures that empowered teacher leadership (Ross et al., 2011).

Servage (2008) contended that transformative learning could enhance the understanding of the value of a professional learning community (PLC). He claimed that the inclusion of transformative learning in PLCs would elevate them from social learning environments to ones based on a communicative framework. Transformative learning for personal change entailed asking teachers to share their assumptions, strengths, issues, beliefs and weaknesses with their colleagues as part of the learning process, thus could enhance the effectiveness of PLCs by directing conversations toward foundational instead of immediate education issues (p. 74). By tapping the center of beliefs or values detrimental to schools and student learning, this process would help create a collaborative environment in schools but would also necessitate the examination of the leadership required to support this effort (Servage, 2008).

**Findings on the TLT and its application to EPD.** This section showed how transformative learning could help educate and support teachers. The learning conditions and
expectations within many schools are constantly changing, which requires all educators to examine their beliefs about the students in our schools.

**Literature Review Summary and Conclusion**

The studies examined in this literature review reinforce the need for effective, sustained, meaningful professional development for educators. Studies explored in the review used a variety of interviews, observations, surveys, and documents that provided background and evidence for an examination of the SEI course. The review also described Massachusetts’ current EL education policies and practices and included EPD to provide a background to current efforts to support educators. Other studies were examined to highlight educators’ struggles and successes in trying to meet ELs’ needs.

Ultimately, this literature offers a background for the reasoning behind the examination of the SEI teacher endorsement course in Massachusetts. The SEI teacher endorsement course in Massachusetts is a new mandate so this study addresses the lack of literature on this program. The research featured in this literature review highlighted the importance of supporting teachers in their efforts to educate a growing EL population. The SEI course was designed to achieve this goal however; research educators must determine the course’s effectiveness in this area. The next chapter will address research design and methodology of the study.
Chapter III: Research Design

This qualitative case study examined the learning experiences of teachers in the Massachusetts SEI endorsement course and any changes to instruction related to the course. Interviews and surveys were used to reveal educators’ perspectives on the course and how the course affected instructional practices.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this inquiry were:

1. How do educators describe the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI Endorsement course?

2. How did the SEI endorsement course foster a learning environment that facilitated awareness and examination of teachers’ identities, assumptions, and perspectives about educating ELs?

3. How did the learning environment provide opportunities for collaboration, modeling of instructional practices and self-reflection?

4. How were the participants’ instructional practices affected by the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI course?

5. How do you feel the district or school assisted, supported and contributed to your learning in the course and implementation of components of the course into your instruction?

This SEI course—a mandate from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for all mathematics, ELA, science and social studies teachers to maintain their teaching license—was divided into three sections: (1) understanding and embracing the responsibility for teaching language to ELs, (2) understanding how ELs acquire language, and (3) understanding the
instructional strategies and practices that comprise this program (Maxwell, 2012). This forty-five-hour course had twelve face-to-face sessions, eight online sessions, and one capstone project.

This chapter presents the design of this qualitative study. As mentioned above, the Massachusetts Department of Education’s website posted a syllabus detailing the various components of the Massachusetts SEI endorsement course. The syllabus identified the course’s goals: to improve EL instruction through modeling, to improve teaching practices, and to provide feedback to participating teachers on their progress. These goals drove the selection of TLT as the lens by which to examine the course’s learning environment.

**Case Study Method**

The above research questions were pursued through the case study methodology guided by Merriam (1998), Stake (1995), and Yin (2003). Each author worked to define, explore, and apply case study as a rigorous research tool. They also provided their own interpretations of the design, data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings processes. Case study methodology was selected to analyze teacher’s and administrator’s views and experiences. Stake (1995) identified people’s participation as crucial to a case study in an effort to understand them and hear their experiences (p. 1). Careful review of the definition and design of case study research provided the necessary guidance for conducting this research.

**Definition of case study.** Baxter and Jack (2008) identified Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) as two key sources for guidance when conducting case study research. Stake (1995) defined a case study as a specific, functioning, and complex integrated system, which was identified as a bounded system: an object instead of a process. People and programs were identified as cases (Stake, 1995). Case studies can also be viewed as a thing, a single entity, or an intrinsically
bound unit (Merriam, 1998), for an intrinsic interest in a case leads to an intrinsic case study that must focus on interpretation as an essential part of research and data-culling (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995).

The research processes define case studies (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). A case study’s scope includes investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Case studies are necessary if the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2003). Case study inquiry includes multiple data sources but draws on prior theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. Case study applications include the ability to describe, explain, illustrate, explore, and evaluate a topic (Yin, 2003).

**Design of case study.** A good case study depends on discipline: “These forms of organization move the research away from puzzlement toward understanding and explanation” (Stake, 1995, p. 16). This design stressed the use of the issue as a conceptual structure to create research questions and the direction for the study. Constructivism was identified as a component for case study research because of the interpreter’s role as a gatherer of information; knowledge must be constructed instead of discovered (Stake, 1995).

Yin (2003) stated, “Good preparation begins with desired skills on the part of the case study investigator” (p. 57). Skills required for case study research include asking good questions, listening well, and adapting to unforeseen situations. Researchers must also have solid knowledge of the issues studied and be unbiased by preconceived notions (Yin, 2003). These criteria are key for designing a blueprint of questions and protocols for interpreting the findings. This protocol must include an overview of the case study project, data gathering procedures, questions, and a guide for reporting the case study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

**Methods**
This study’s researcher, as a member of the participant’s school district, continually worked to exclude personal biases and beliefs about the course from the research. The inclusion of teachers who teach at the middle school level was monitored by the teacher’s union because of my role as an assistant principal at the elementary and middle school levels.

Mezirow’s (1997) transformative learning theory (TLT) was the theoretical framework for this study while qualitative research design was the methodological approach. The constructivism paradigm was used focusing on collaborative and social constructivism. The constructivist paradigm was described by Stake (1995) as providing readers with good data for their own interpretation.

This constructivism was a central component of the case study research approach of both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003). Baxter and Jack (2008) identified that “constructivists claim that the truth is relative and that it is dependent on one’s perspective” (p. 545). Cobern (1993) noted, “Learning is the active process of constructing a conceptual framework” (p. 109). The interaction between the researcher and object of investigation is at the center of this research (Butin, 2010; Cobern, 1993; Creswell, 2013).

Cobern (1993) defined constructivism as a model for describing learning, identified inquiry activities as key to creating discourse and defined interpretation as a driver of learning that is sometimes influenced by prior knowledge (p.110). Collaborative constructivism included personal ideas that people bring to the process and the need to talk through them (p. 111). Stake (1995) identified constructivism as a possible component of case study research because of the interpreter’s role, as mentioned above.

For Elliot, Fisher, and Rennie (1999), qualitative research is designed “to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage, and live through
situations” (p. 216). Qualitative research examines the participant’s experiences and perspectives to gain insight into complex processes and activities (Elliot et al., 1999; Patton, 1990).

The scope of qualitative research addresses a problem and develops an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 1990), which can be a key idea, concept or process (Creswell, 2012). For Patton (1990), qualitative research seeks to discover, explain, and comprehend complex processes and activities. This research is geared towards fieldwork that entails direct contact with participants and situations being studied (Patton, 1990). The main focus of qualitative research is how something happens rather than on the outcomes or results obtained (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990; Ponterotto, 2005).

Stake’s (1995) interpretation of qualitative research focused on personal interpretation instead of cause and effect. An understanding of complex interrelationships that exist between all is a key element of qualitative research (p. 37). Interpretation is a model for qualitative research, and defined research questions within qualitative research seek patterns and uncover relationships (Stake, 1995).

Study Context

This research study was conducted during the 2017–2018 school year. Massachusetts will now require all content-area teachers who educate ELs to complete this course in order to remain a licensed educator.

Research site. The study was conducted in a school district in Middlesex County in Massachusetts. The school’s student population comprises approximately 7,200 students with 500 classroom teachers. The 2013–2014 Massachusetts School and District Profile taken from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s website identified that 52.8% of the school district’s students’ first language was not English. Another 12.4 were
classified as ELs. The same report for 2016–2017 identified 61.8% of the students as having a first language that is not English. Another 17.1% were identified as ELs. The 2017-2018 profile identified 64.4% of students as having a first language that was not English and 17.1% as ELs.

**Participants.** This study’s participants comprised seven middle-school teachers who volunteered to be interviewed after completing an anonymous online survey. Union representatives were included in the study to give the participants extra support. Purposeful sampling for selecting teachers for the initial survey focused on content-area teachers who had completed the SEI endorsement course during the previous three to four years.

Survey and interview questions were designed to examine the learning environment within the SEI course and how the course affected teachers’ instruction for their EL students. The research questions were designed to determine how well the course addressed teachers’ assumptions and perspectives about ELs. The individual interviews and surveys also sought to understand any changes to instructional practices that were made as a result of this participating in this SEI course.

This study also included interviews with administrators. The administrator dedicated SEI course focused more on supervision while providing an overview of the teacher course. Administrator interviews were geared more toward the first, fourth and fifth research questions on instructional practice changes.

Teachers and administrators from my school district were interviewed because this course is neither part of their evaluation nor a district initiative but is a mandate from the state for both teachers and administrators to maintain their Massachusetts educator’s license. The study’s long-term goal was to use the examination of this course to provide more professional development geared toward supporting ELs. Participants’ responses were not shared with any
other participants, and their names were not mentioned in this study.

**Recruitment and access.** The participant recruitment process began with a letter to the superintendent (Appendix A) that detailed the study and the possible benefits and risks for participants. The letter was followed with a meeting to discuss his concerns and thoughts about the study. Next, a letter was sent to all principals and teachers’ union representatives (Appendix B) detailing this research effort, which requested the involvement of the principal and the teachers’ union representatives in the participant selection process. Each building’s union representatives were invited to take part in the study (Appendix B) and to monitor the study.

The recruitment process began after the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved it. A selected group of teachers were sent an email that described the study, included a link to a survey, and contained the unsigned consent form to participate (Appendices C & G). The survey document invited participants to continue the study by agreeing to participate in one-on-one interviews.

Every participant that volunteered through the survey was sent a letter (Appendices D & E) and a consent form (Appendix J) to review their rights and the study’s scope, purpose, and potential risks. This consent form noted participants’ right to withdraw from the study at any time, given that participants were volunteering their time for the study and events in and outside of work might prevent them from completing it. All participants had to sign an informed consent (Appendix J) before the research could begin.

**Protection of human subjects.** The Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines were strictly followed for the study participants’ protection. All survey and interview participants were given the study’s purpose, scope, and benefits in the consent letter (Appendices C, D & E), which allowed any participant to leave the study if they chose.
Data Collection

Seminal works (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) about case study research called for a data-gathering plan, which must comprise the definition of the case, research questions, identification of helpers, data sources, time and expense allocations, and intended reporting.

Merriam (1998, 2002) defined the need for interviews, observations, and documents for an effective case study, suggesting that one or two sources serve as the main data source, while the third plays a supplementary role. This study used multiple individual interviews of teachers and administrators along with a survey designed to include more teachers.

Interviews. Seidman (2013) described interviewing as necessary because the researcher needs to discover the stories of others and defined these stories as a way of knowing (p. 7). Ponterotto (2005) explained that deeper meaning is discovered through interaction and dialogue. The data collection process must focus on the use of multiple data sources to provide a comprehensive perspective (Patton, 1990). Proper data collection is imperative to legitimizing a qualitative research inquiry that uses a case study methodology (Yin, 2003). An effective research plan within a case study must include interviews, observations, and analysis of documents or artifacts (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). The interview questions must be geared toward examining the participants’ experiences, behaviors, opinions, and values (Patton, 1990; Rios-Aguilar, Gonzalez-Canche & Moll & Rubin, 2012).

Probes, follow-up questions, ‘why’ questions and role-playing questions ensured the use of disciplined, open-ended interviews designed to facilitate relevant, context-rich data collection (Patton, 1990). Each interview included an analytical memo or written report completed within hours of the interview to record the researcher’s first impressions of the data (Merriam, 1998).

Seidman (2013) identified these requirements for interviewing: interest in others, keeping
one’s ego in check, and assuring participants that their stories are important. This advice guided this research, because the experiences of the people within the examined district led to more insight into the learning environment of this SEI course. This study used in-depth phenomenological interviewing with primarily open-ended questions (Seidman, 2013).

In this study, participants reconstructed their experiences in and after the SEI professional development course and made sense of those experiences through dialogue with the researcher (Seidman, 2013). The goal was to minimize the impact of the interview process on the participants while allowing them to share their experiences in the course and their subsequent experiences educating ELs freely.

The work of Seidman (2013) was used as a guide when choosing interview techniques, which included active listening while remaining aware of the interview process and the substance of the responses (p. 82). Seidman’s (2013) work also stressed the need for researchers to trust their instincts during the interviews to effectively pursue areas that needed more detail or clarification not to just stick to a script and avoid leading questions. The focus was on asking ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions while offering follow-up questions. My role as a researcher was not to interrupt the participants but to ask them questions that encouraged them to tell stories that reconstructed their learning experiences in the SEI class.

**Surveys.** Union leaders and administrators were invited to identify content-area teachers in their building to complete the survey. To preserve their anonymity, it had no specific questions about the grade levels or subject areas taught. It comprised open-ended and Likert-scaled questions focusing on the learning environment and assignments within the SEI course, changes to instruction and district efforts to support ELs.

**Data Analysis**
The search for strong patterns was the primary focus for all data analysis for this study, consistent with Stake’s (1995) approach to data analysis. This study’s goals were discovering patterns and consistency among the data while looking at the information repeatedly in a reflective, skeptical way that seeks meaning within the morass of data (Stake, 1995). One key element to data analysis is that knowledge emanates from the researcher’s questions (Merriam, 1991). This helped in the search for patterns among the data to extract meaning and construct truths from it (Butin, 2010). Data analysis must also examine, categorize, test, and recombine data to address propositions of the study (Yin, 2003). Five techniques for case study data analysis are pattern matching, explanation building, time series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2003).

First- and second-step coding provided the framework for data analysis (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). Microsoft Excel and second-step coding was used to format and arrange the data into patterns to reveal themes. Patton (1990) stated that the purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings. Content analysis must be used for identifying, coding, and categorizing the patterns within data. The challenge for content analysis lies in reducing the volume of data, identifying significant patterns among them, and constructing a framework for their presentation (p. 381).

**First-cycle coding.** This study used a combination of first-cycle descriptive and in vivo coding (Miles et al., 2014). Saldaña (2013) stressed that coding requires researchers to view their data with an analytical lens in order to divide the data into separate coded sections. Descriptive coding was used to assign labels to summarize data and create topics to support data categorization (Miles et al., 2014). First-cycle in vivo coding was used to accurately code the
data. This was intertwined with descriptive coding to create codes from participants’ own language (Miles et al., 2014).

**Post-coding transition.** Saldaña (2013) called for a post coding transition method called Code Mapping (p. 194), which allowed for the examination of the first-cycle coding efforts before moving on to the second-cycle coding. Code Mapping helped the data organization through Microsoft Excel and facilitated the examination of the category construction after all qualitative data was collected. This process allowed for an examination of the codes and categories that emerged from first-cycle coding.

**Second-cycle coding.** Pattern coding was used to identify major themes in the data and search for explanations in participants’ responses. Saldaña (2013) deemed second-cycle coding necessary for examining social networks in human relationships.

**Pattern coding.** For Miles et al. (2014), pattern coding was necessary for condensing large amounts of data, moving the research to data analysis phase, and creating a cognitive map (p. 86). Pattern coding was used in this study’s data analysis to create categories or themes, causes or explanations, relationships, or theoretical constructs within the data (p. 87).

The goal for this data analysis was to use first-cycle coding, along with pattern coding, to ensure that the participants’ voices were clearly heard and understood when reporting the study’s findings. These coding resources were necessary to ensure proper technique was used during every phase of the data analysis. Miles et al. (2014) warned against becoming set on certain patterns or thinking that you understand the meaning of the data too early, which was useful for the entire data collection and examination of data phases.

**Presentation of Findings**
Stake (1995) wrote, “It is an effective author who tells what is needed and leaves the rest to the reader” (p. 121). Attention to structure and content ensured an effective presentation of the research findings, which were organized to enable the reader to understand the study’s deeper meaning (Stake, 1995). The researcher must also clearly define the audience and format for the presentation (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Effective communication of the research findings must begin with a thorough outline of the overall written report (Merriam, 1998), followed by a linear-analytic structure, which must include a review of the literature, details of the methods for research, the findings from data collected and analyzed, and the study’s conclusions and implications (Yin, 2003).

**Data Management and Storage**

Yin (2003) recommended a database for notes, documents and any other information, all organized as a chain of evidence to allow an outside observer or reader to trace the evidence, understand the research questions, and clearly identify the steps in the data collection (p. 105).

Confidentiality was the researcher’s focus for the participants. Each participant was given a pseudonym and an identity key, which was kept in a safe at the researcher’s home and shredded upon completion of the study. All interviews, responses, and written documents used those pseudonyms. Each interview was recorded then transcribed using the Rev Voice Recorder app. All audio recordings, interview notes, and reflective journals were kept in a safe at the researcher’s house and destroyed upon completion of the study. All files were kept on a password-protected computer and destroyed upon the study’s completion.

**Trustworthiness**

My role in this study is as a novice researcher, acknowledging that my research study skills are limited. With that in mind, I developed and adhered to a clear set of procedures and
protocols designed to ensure the trustworthiness of this research (Amankwaa, 2016; Miles et al., 2014; Ortlipp, 2008; Yin, 2003). Protocols, data triangulation, and journaling were essential to the development and implementation of this research effort. Trustworthiness encompassed four areas: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

**Credibility.** This focused on seeking peer input when developing the research topic, ensuring thorough examination of participants, and detailed journaling of the entire research procedure.

**Transferability of findings and dependability.** This included a detailed description of the problem of practice, the significance of the research, and journaling. This also focused on a detailed description of the entire research process.

**Confirmability.** This included a type of audit procedure with the three-step coding, triangulation of data, and journaling focused on coding and identification of patterns (Amankwaa, 2016). Triangulation of data was a key component in ensuring the confirmability of this research, as triangulation and recruitment were the driving forces behind the implementation of the anonymous survey.

**Data sources.** The three data sources included the survey, the teacher interviews, and the administrator interviews. The survey comprised Likert-scaled questions and two open responses. The participation for the survey created a large number of anonymous responses, which allowed it to serve effectively as the third data source without researcher bias toward any of the participants (Pattern, 1999). Some participants provided an email address at the end of the survey but this was not examined as part of the survey data, which allowed the responses to remain anonymous.

**Reflective journals.** These ensured transparency during the research, as well as
adherence to proper research procedures. Ortlipp (2008) used reflective journals to examine her own values, thoughts, experiences, and decisions in a way visible to both researcher and participants. These journals could thus become guides for decisions when changing research design, updating research approaches, and reconsidering research methods. Ortlipp (2008) also used these journals to review her theoretical lens, practice critical self-reflection, and examine her role as researcher, interviewer, and interpreter of data (p. 703). Reflective journals were included as part of this research to identify thoughts, opinions, and struggles within this process in a way that was transparent to participants and readers.

**Checklist.** Miles et al. (2014) and Yin (2003) used a checklist to frame their research effort. The construct validity, external validity, and reliability tests Yin (2003) identified for case studies ensured this study’s trustworthiness throughout the research process and guided the study’s operational steps. A checklist designed around objectivity, reliability, internal validity and external validity was created and followed (Miles et al., 2014, p. 311 -314).

**Coding.** A succession of first-cycle coding, post-first-cycle transition coding, and pattern coding was used. Reflective journals provided space to document questions, issues and areas for clarification at each coding phase. The focus for external validity centered on protocols, methodology, research procedures, descriptive findings, use of experts to review work, and thorough review of study limitations. The overarching goal was the transferability of this research effort so that EL instruction and teacher professional development could be examined in other districts as well.

**Researcher’s goal.** The goal was to create an operational set of steps to conduct research, using sound judgment during data collection and multiple cases to ensure valid findings, thus conduct a study that could be duplicated (Yin, 2003, pp. 35-37). Good results that are significant
to other educators could drive the need for change in EL instruction.

**Positionality Statement**

I examined my positionality to identify ways my prior experiences may have influenced my perceptions. For this study, my perceptions of ELs and my research into the support teachers need to educate them must be examined, as well as how my background, upbringing, and experiences in education portray my biases, beliefs and perceptions about the support ELs receive in our schools. I hope this case study will empower teachers to identify resources to better support our ELs and foster collaboration between administrators and teachers to address EL education. If such collaboration is going to take place, I must address my beliefs, background, and biases so they do not interfere with the collaboration.

My background differs greatly from those of most ELs, and my goal as an educator and researcher is to work with our ELs to better understand their struggles, concerns, and needs. My greatest challenge is my lack of understanding of the pressures and struggles these students face inside and outside of school. My experiences as a student provide me with an understanding of bullying and peer conflict because I had those experiences, but I have never experienced a home without food, slept on a floor, raised a younger sibling, or dealt with an abusive adult in the home. I also have never felt out of place in school or been forced to learn another language or survive within a school environment foreign to me. My educational experiences did not include curricula, instruction, or assessments that excluded my race or did not support my learning.

I was never forced to confront my positionality as a white male until I began to work in education. I have failed to acknowledge the privileges associated with this for too long. Therefore, I must endeavor to examine my own background and beliefs while focusing on what I can learn from those of others, as my research is centered on my need to learn from others’
experiences to continue to examine the struggles ELs encounter. Takacs (2002) stated, “Only by truly listening to others can I see how I am constrained and how I can become aware of the conceptual shackles imposed by my own identity and experiences” (p. 170). I must use conversations, the experiences of others, and research to provide additional resources and supports for ELs.

I want to ensure that each student is given the resources necessary to succeed academically and socially in school. I have strong opinions and biases toward the resources, programs and instruction currently available for ELs. I have a clear bias toward the need for collaboration of all stakeholders to effectively change the ways we educate ELs. I also believe that we are not providing the support teachers need to educate ELs, and this lack of support is ultimately leading to increased failure for these students. My experience working in a school with a large EL population has made me aware of the need for leaders and teachers to work together to develop sound curricula for ELs. The relationship between administrators and teachers is critical for this, as it shapes a school’s culture. It cannot be a relationship of fear, mistrust or suspicion between teachers and school leaders if real change will occur (Barth, 2006).

As an assistant principal, I have observed much EL instruction. This has helped shape my goal to ensure collaboration so all staff members can contribute to the improvement of that instruction. Working with teachers and students has further influenced my feelings about EL instruction, but these biases must not affect my objectivity during my research, nor must the three main fallacies in argument presentation: jumping to conclusions, generalization, and overlooking alternative explanations (Machi & McEvoy, 2012).

By understanding these pratfalls, I will continually re-examine my research to identify biases. To avoid biases, I plan to use the literature review to provide detailed information about
the supports and structures that have proven effective for EL education. Since my role does not enable me to work directly with ELs in the classroom, I have no preconceived ideas for how changes in EL education must happen.

Summary

This chapter detailed the design for this study with a clear description of the data collection and analysis methods. The SEI course was designed to support teachers and school administrators in their efforts to educate ELs. The participants were teachers and school administrators required to take the course to maintain their educator’s licenses. This qualitative case study sought to understand the learning environment in this course and the affect it had on the EL instruction. Interviews and surveys were used to gather the data for analysis. Once the research was conducted, the findings were examined through the use of TLT to identify common themes and analyze participant responses, which is addressed in the next chapter.
Chapter IV: Research Findings

This chapter will present the emergent themes from the teacher survey, interviews with teachers, and interviews with administrators. The examination of each theme associated with one of the five research questions (RQ) began with a cross-analysis of data from surveys, teacher interviews and administrator interviews.

The difference between the three data collection instruments and the three data collection sources should be clarified. The three data collection instruments included the survey, teacher interviews and administrator interviews. The three data sources included teachers who participated in the survey, teachers who continued on through the interview process, and administrators interviewed as part of this research.

As the survey responses were anonymous, the difference between the teacher survey data and the teacher interview data cannot be determined. As such, each will count as its own data source. This was a decision made by the researcher to include more participants by protecting anonymity. This inclusion of as many data sources and participants was done with the goal of increasing the validity of this research effort.

This study examined the learning environment of the Massachusetts SEI endorsement course, identified changes to instructional practices, and determined the learning supports provided to teachers within the examined district. Per the state’s mandate, teachers had no choice but to complete this course to maintain their educator licenses.

Coding

The coding of the data from the surveys and interviews was done in three phases. This process began with assigning the survey and interview question to one of the five research questions that guided this research effort. All survey and interview data was copied to a
Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to undergo the three-phase coding. Likert scale questions were charted in Microsoft Excel and reviewed as part of refining the teacher and administrator interviews. The two open response questions from the survey were coded utilizing the same procedures employed for the interview questions. This included reading the interview transcripts and highlighting key points. This process mirrored many of the reverse outlines utilized to create this research paper.

Once in excel, first cycle coding was done using descriptive and in vivo coding followed by implementing code mapping as a way of cycling back to examine the first cycle coding (Saldana, 2013). This was followed by pattern coding and used to identify major themes in the data and search for explanations in participants’ responses. For Miles et al. (2014), pattern coding was necessary for condensing large amounts of data, moving the research to data analysis phase, and creating a cognitive map (p. 86).

**Online Survey**

The online survey was designed to be anonymous, so, with assistance from the school district’s data department I identified and received the email addresses of all teachers of grades 6-8 who had taken the SEI course. An email was sent to each teacher explaining the survey, providing the anonymous consent, and detailing the time frame. The survey was kept open for eight days from May 2-9, 2018.

When the participants clicked on the emailed link, they were directed to @https:// surveymonkey.com, which provided the unsigned consent form as part of the first question. Once they signed the form, the participants completed the survey of two open-response questions and seven Likert-style scale questions.
The coding of this survey began with assigning each interview question to one of the five RQs. This allowed organization and categorization of responses to identify themes for each RQ. All survey data was transferred to a Microsoft Excel document, where it was coded, broken down, categorized, and transitioned into themes.

Survey Participants

The survey was sent to eighty-five middle school teachers. Three teachers were out on long-term leave, one had taken the teachers’ test for SEI endorsement, and one teacher’s email address no longer existed (I did not pursue that). A total of twenty-four teachers participated in the survey, which constituted a 30% response rate; twenty-four surveys were 100% completed, and two participants left one of the open-response questions blank. When the participants signed on to the survey, they were initially provided with a copy of the unsigned consent document for this web-based survey, the only question they were required to answer.

Survey Findings

As part of the discussion about the themes that emerged for each RQ, survey data will be presented in: (1) a chart displaying the 5-point Likert-style scale questions (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree; Not at All to A Great Extent; Very Ineffective to Very Effective); (2) a chart detailing the one question that asked participants to choose certain components of the course (the chart was designed to identify findings as related to the RQs [see Appendix K] for a breakdown of the survey and interview questions and their correlation to the RQs); and (3) breakdown of open-response questions and how they related to the themes identified for each RQ.

Teacher Interview Participants

The survey ended with an invitation to educators to continue their participation in this study. Question twelve asked if they would like to be part of the interview process; Question
thirteen asked for their email addresses. At the end of the survey timeframe, eleven of the twenty-four teachers who completed the survey volunteered for the interview process. They were sent an email describing the interview process which contained the informed consent document. Out of the eleven, seven expressed interest in being interviewed, so their interviews were scheduled. Many of them had different backgrounds and taught different subjects, but each had been in the examined district for multiple years. Each participant was given a pseudonym that begins with Teacher and ends with a number based on order of interview completion.

**Administrator Interview Participants**

To gain a better understanding for RQs one, four and five, which asked about the teachers’ perceptions of the SEI course, necessary changes to instruction techniques and processes, and future directions for the district, administrators had to be interviewed as part of this study. Seven administrators were sent emails based on their participation in the SEI course as a teacher, or the presence of an SEI program in their schools. Out of the seven, four responded and were interviewed. The participants included both principals and assistant principals who had district experience working with SEI-trained teachers. Each participant was given a pseudonym that begins with ADMN and ends with a number based on order of interview completion.

**Themes Taken from Research Questions (RQ)**

This section will answer the RQs with data taken from the open-ended and Likert-style survey questions, teacher interviews and administrator interviews. For each RQ: (1) survey data was charted and reviewed; (2) survey open-response-question data and interview data were examined to give every participant a voice in the findings; (3) participant voices presented themes that emerged from the data gathered during this research effort.

**Research Question One**
Learning environment and experiences within the SEI course. Data collection instruments that drove the development of themes for this RQ included Likert-style scaled survey questions, open-response survey questions, and teacher and administrator interviews. Both the teacher and administrator interviews produced an overarching theme that the course was a positive but flawed endeavor.

Teacher interviews and Likert-style scale survey questions identified these sub-themes: (1) instructors drove the classroom environment; (2) online and classroom learning environments presented challenges but also future opportunities; (3) missed opportunities; (4) strong takeaways that created targeted implementation. Information from administrator interviews presented more evidence that the course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor.

Table 1 and 2 details the survey questions; Table 3 details the themes that emerged from the data collected for this RQ 1:
Table 1

*Effectiveness of Course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Effective</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>Average out of 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>70.83%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Role as an EL Teacher*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WIDA Overview: Examples include WIDA Can Do Descriptors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Conversation, Module A</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Module</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Module</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Module</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Implementation Reports from each module</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone Project and Presentation</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3

*Themes from Research Question One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Instructors drove the classroom environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Online and classroom learning environments presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>challenges but future opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Missed opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Strong takeaways and target implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator Interviews</td>
<td>Course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor.* This theme emerged from administrator interview data. This section will focus on administrator responses to identify both positive outcomes and areas of concerns. Teacher interviews supported this theme but are examined in further detail within the other four themes identified for this research question. Survey data indicated a positive view of the learning environment within this course.

*Administrator interviews.* Three of the four administrators interviewed gave the course a mixed review based on their conversations with teachers. ADMN 2 was the only administrator to provide solely positive feedback, and it was interesting that this administrator chose to attend the teacher version of this SEI course with teachers from the district. (Administrators were required to take a shorter version of the course, but this participant wanted to learn with the teachers.)

All four administrators sought teacher feedback and observed instructional changes. Their tone and understanding evinced the importance they placed on the course. All four saw
changes in instructional practices as a step in the correct direction. Mostly, their thoughts on the course could be summarized as a difficult effort for teachers but ultimately a worthwhile one.

Interview responses revealed that administrators had multiple conversations with teachers during and after the course about the teaching strategies introduced and implemented.

ADMN 2 provided the most detail for questions about classroom practices and implementation of course objectives in daily lessons but the least about how teachers felt about the course. However, ADMN 2 emphasized the importance of taking the SEI course with teachers, because the learning experience enabled discussion among teachers and administrators about their vision for supporting ELs:

I think that to know where they’re coming from and what’s in front of them, it’s a better understanding. You can sit with them, not be, like, in front of them. I think it’s better to sit beside someone then in front of someone. Being alongside them, knowing that we’re both in this together, and we want the same things for the kids.

ADMN 1 detailed disappointment with course materials and lack of new techniques presented to participants but said most teachers had positive experiences in the class:

And it was just maybe the luck of the draw, they said. But the majority of our teachers here have had a real positive interaction with the class. Absolutely, I believe so. Yes. I believe that it really has helped, and, like I said, that when I walk around and talk to them about the EL students and they’re all focused on the development of those, not just the EL students, of all the students.

ADMN 3 described most feedback from teachers as positive but stressed skepticism because it was a required mandate from the state. This participant was concerned that the course was harder than any expected and wondered if it would be applied throughout the schools:
But when they get back in school, they really need to apply what they’ve learned, and not just check that box, “Oh, there’s that course, I took it.” They really have to apply it, because those are the students we have in front of us. So, we try to further their education at school with inclusive practices. I think there was, like, a 50/50, but it was a lot harder than I thought they thought it was going to be. I think they try to take as many positives away from it, but I think the most important thing is, they saw it as a necessary checkbox.

ADMN 4 said teachers were overwhelmed with the course, and many teachers experienced stress because of the short time period they were given to complete the course:

So, they felt like they were rushed, the workload was pretty intense, I would say. But when the course was finished, I think they took a lot out of it, and started implementing some of the strategies in their own classrooms.

The administrators described the course as rushed with a heavy workload, but it was evident upon completion that teachers took something from the course and have worked to implement new supports for ELs. Administrators were seen as involved in the process and invested in understanding how the course has changed EL instruction. The following themes presented from teacher interviews and survey responses further explore this finding.

*Instructors drove the classroom environment.* This theme emerged when teachers were asked to describe the SEI course’s teaching and learning process. The question sought to determine whether the class was teacher-centered or student-centered, and why. All seven teachers mentioned their instructors when discussing the course’s learning environment.

*Teacher interviews.* Teacher 1 called the course student-centered because the instructor provided background knowledge and guidance while participants worked through the material:
I found that it was more student centered. I would say this, because I think our instructor presented us with a new strategy, or a new idea, but that it was really put in our hands, as to how we would apply it to our own practice.

Teacher 3 discussed how the course might have been better structured for participants but acknowledged the efforts of the instructor: “But I think our teacher really tried to kind of be a vehicle for information and have us actually navigate it ourselves.”

Teacher 4 described the course as task-oriented with multiple opportunities for group work and peer reflection, hence a student-centered learning environment:

There was a lot of movement within the classroom. There was a lot of time to reflect with your peers. And our instructor, from my experience, was more of a facilitator than anything else. So, I would certainly lean toward it being a student-centered activity.

Teacher 5 explained a similar learning environment with activities that allowed for the examination of EL students:

The instructor was kind of putting us in the time, the mindset of an ELL student. Seeing some things that they would encounter. And we did a lot of activities, a lot of group work and a lot of student-centered stuff.

Teacher 5 credited this instructor with adapting the course to keep the participants active and learning throughout it.

Teachers 2, 6 and 7 viewed the course as more teacher-centered: each focused on the lack of time to work with others in the class and amount of time the instructor spent presenting the materials. Teacher 2 described an environment in which the instructor spoke the most: “We were sitting in groups, but I feel like a lot of it was instruction, and not a lot of it was us talking about
things.” Teachers 6 and 7 described an environment in which the instructor modeled the strategies with little time to work with others or practice inside of class. Teacher 7 said:

There’s less opportunity for you to actually do things, whereas they’re showing you how it needs to be done and then you practice it when you go home without being able to get feedback from the professor and other people in the class before you actually do something.

Data from the teacher interviews indicated that instructors drove the learning environment within the course.

**Online learning environments presented challenges but possible future learning opportunities.** This theme emerged from responses to questions about redesigning the course and the course strategies that were implemented to support ELs. Five of the seven participants referred to the course’s online component. All but one had problems with the online component; the youngest participant said the online module was the preferred way of learning.

**Teacher interviews.** Teacher 1 discussed technological problems with the modules and said the instructor was forced to compensate for those problems with handouts and additional in-class assignments. Teacher 2 said the online modules interfered with dedicating the time needed to implement strategies in the classroom:

I thought that the online modules were really intensive, and it made it difficult to do the write-ups, the SIRs, because there was so much that went along with the online piece of it that the write ups seemed to… Not that you push them off a little bit, but you had to do so much with the online portion before the next class that the write-ups were just another piece to it. It almost was like, ‘Pick one or the other.’ Do you want us to spend the week between classes doing online stuff and reading, getting ready for the next class, or do you
want us to implement a strategy that we learned and report back about it? It just seemed like we had to do both. It was a lot to do.

Teacher 4 described the lack of feedback within the discussions regarding how to change or modify instruction:

I think it was well intended. I think it was beneficial to observe and read what other teachers had posted, but as far as receiving feedback on how to change, how to modify my progress, I didn’t see it was there. It was helpful being able to see what other teachers had posted but not really to get the feedback from them.

What stood out among the negative feedback about the online component of the course were the comments from Teachers 5 and 6. Teacher 5 was concerned about the amount of reading assigned for the online discussions but stressed a need for more public, open discussions online. This participant also emphasized the need for more discussion: “A little bit more discussion; in the one that I did was a lot of kind of like private commenting.” Teacher 6 said the online modules were “…preferred over the classroom visits, just because it could be on my own time, and it wasn’t so pressure-based.”

These participants were promoting the online format as a way to create more learning opportunities. The findings suggest that online components could provide teachers with additional training, collaboration opportunities, and resources for supporting ELs.

**Missed opportunities.** This theme emerged from participants’ call for improvements to the course and the various course components they had implemented in their EL instruction. The course held many positives for them, but improvement was needed.

**Likert-style scaled survey.** Both survey questions detailed takeaways and implementation of best practices from the course, as well as missed opportunities or areas needing improvement.
As Table 2 indicates, 70.83% of the participants identified the course as “effective,” while another 8.33% rated it as “very effective.” The combined 20.83% of the participants who rated the course as “somewhat effective” or “neither” called for continued focus on supporting teachers. Table 3 displays implementation of the various components of the class that supported their efforts but highlighted one key area needing further examination. Approximately thirty three percent of participants identified the diversity conversation as a key component of the course, which requires further review to make these conversations common in schools.

*Teacher interviews.* Teacher 2 viewed the lack of conversations with others in class as a missed opportunity: “For me it was like, why can’t we just have these conversations in class?... For me, I always like interacting with live humans. The online piece to me was just extra work.”

Teacher 3 praised the course’s academic content but questioned its amount of focus on that content, instead calling for a focus on practical components of ELs such as their lives, educational backgrounds and test scores:

Mainly I like the collaboration aspect of it, having the teachers work even more together, but less so on the scholarly side of it, as opposed to the actual EL data itself. I felt like we were given a lot of language that is good to know when dealing with students, but nothing that was actually student-driven itself.

Teacher 3 went on to describe what additional information would be needed:

And when I say ‘student,’ I mean, like, the actually EL secondary students and primary students themselves. Like, who are these kids? How many of them are there in each district? And we never really broke apart our districts. We broke apart our classes a little bit, but I would like to have seen how were these kids actually performing in their schools? How are we measuring them?
Teachers 4-7 called for more time to work with other participants, in class or online. Teacher 5 wanted “a little bit more interaction with the other classmates on the online portion.” Teacher 6 said the range of teachers was too great within the class, so the course should be grouped by content or grade: “So it was just too broad of educators not building specifics.” Teacher 7 summarized many of the views on working with other teachers to improve instruction:

The classroom environment, I would have the opportunity to kind of practice the things with other students—with the students in the class or the teachers—practicing them with you, so you can implement it and have them pretend to be the student and talk through things and what could go wrong and what could go right and how you could adjust, depending on what happens in the class.

The feedback from these teachers indicated there is always room for improvement with any initiative or large endeavor such as this SEI course. The suggestions or missed opportunities do not necessarily require an additional training effort by the state but could serve as opportunities for districts to give teachers more support in their education of ELs.

**Strong takeaways and targeted implementation.** This theme emerged from the discussions on course strategies that were implemented to better support ELs. Six of the seven teachers identified vocabulary instruction as a key takeaway from this course. All seven teachers identified and described course strategies they have implemented to support ELs.

**Likert-style scaled survey.** Both survey questions detailed takeaways and implementation of best practices from this course. Table 2 shows that 70.8% of the participants rated the course as effective, while another 8.33% rated it as very effective. Table 3 clearly identified the implementation of multiple strategies or best practices by most participants. Vocabulary instruction was identified by 83.33% of the survey participants as a key learning component of
this course. Teacher interviews about takeaways and changes to instruction clearly identified the implementation of vocabulary instruction designed to support Els.

*Teacher interviews.* Teachers 1, 2 and 4 discussed how their lesson planning now focuses on vocabulary instruction. Tiered vocabulary, seven-step vocabulary, and sentence-starters were some strategies implemented with write-ups completed in the class, which Teacher 2 described:

> We learn these strategies, put it into action into your classroom, and then write it up and explain how it went, what you did. To me, those were helpful, because it forced me to do another strategy and reflect on, ‘Does it work? Did it not work? How could I tweak it?’

Teacher 7 described how the vocabulary strategies improved planning for the instruction of ELs:

> The only thing it really helped with was reminding you that there are multiple ways a student can interpret the word you’re presenting. So, if you say “face” in math, and you have an EL student, they might go with the obvious instead. Instead of saying, “Oh, it could be this side of a geometry shape,” so it’s more of that kind of thing. It’s kind of keeping you aware. So that’s where it was more helpful, was kind of a conversation of where the EL student was coming from and to keep you thinking about it, as opposed to the actual stuff you’re learning.

Teachers 3 and 5 also noted the use of sentence frames, turn-and-talk, pre-reading strategies, and extra time as supports for their students. Teacher 3 described the effect of sentence frames: “It’s almost like you’re giving them the benefit of leading them to where you want them to go, but they actually have to do some of the thinking themselves.” Teacher 5 described that effect as follows: “Kind of give an ELL student a chance to start their thoughts, and they might be able to, you know, answer questions a little bit more, a little bit better with the sentence frames.”
The data clearly defined the efforts educators made to implement course strategies and best practices. While there were missed opportunities and a need for improvement of course content and structure, the participants seemed to take much knowledge from it. Teachers are clearly using that knowledge to provide the best possible learning environment for all ELs.

**Research Question Two**

**Teachers’ identities, assumptions, and perspectives.** Data collection instruments that drove the development of themes for this RQ included Likert-style scaled survey questions and teacher interviews. This RQ sought to examine whether the SEI course allowed for examination of teacher’s identities, assumptions and perspectives about educating ELs. Table 4 and 5 details the survey questions; Table 6 details the themes from the data collected from this RQ.

Table 4

*Assumptions and Perspectives*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Average out of 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>70.83%</td>
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</table>

Table 5

*Experiences and Background*

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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Average out of 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
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<td>66.67%</td>
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</table>

The data revealed that the course allowed for the examination of identities, assumptions and perspectives.
Table 6

Themes from Research Question Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Course provided opportunities for examination of identities, assumptions and perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Increased knowledge created need for additional learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course provided opportunities for examination of identities, assumptions and perspectives. Survey and interview data showed that there were learning opportunities that allowed this examination to take place. The data identified a need to give teachers more opportunities to examine their own backgrounds in comparison with those of their students.

Likert-style survey. These two survey questions explored whether participants were challenged to examine their perspectives about educating ELs while reflecting on their own backgrounds in relation to these students. 70.83% of participants agreed that there were opportunities to examine their feelings about educating ELs, while 16.67% strongly agreed, and 12.5% disagreed. This, combined with the data for examining participant backgrounds, shows progress in this area but indicates more work to be done.

The data about teachers examining their own backgrounds was less strong: 66.67% agreed, 12.5% strongly agreed, 8.33% disagreed, and 12.5% answered, “Neither.” The interview responses support the presence of this effort in the course but also call for improvement in it.

Teacher interviews. All seven participants discussed activities or projects from the course that caused them to reflect on the ways they educated ELs. Five of those teachers made specific reference to the course’s capstone project and how it enabled them to incorporate the educational
strategies they had learned into actual teaching, to present teaching materials to the class, and to
learn from each other’s work.

Teacher 6 described the capstone project as follows: “At the very end, the capstone project made you analyze and see what you had done, and if you were doing anything before that, and what you could add now.”

Teacher 7 discussed applying more thought when planning lessons and said the capstone presented an opportunity to work through that lesson-planning process for the benefit of ELs:

I would say the final project helped me the most, because it made me really consider…if I’m planning lessons and its real lessons and not just doing a simple strategy… How do I adjust what I’m doing for them? And by doing an entire unit of that, it made me more aware of how I could implement that on everything that I do, instead of just doing the implementation for it to get it done for that week.

Teachers 1, 3 and 4 discussed how some of the activities within this course helped them to better understand their students. Teacher 1 discussed learning about students with interrupted education:

It seems obvious, clearly, if you only had two years of school and you’re in sixth grade, of course it makes a big difference, but really watching videos and reading articles about what that life is like and what it feels like for those students to come. That definitely changed my assumptions about ‘We can just quickly catch you up.’

Teacher 3 called for the review of WIDA Can-Do descriptors and for the comparison of them to student progress:

So, I got to see where my kids are in all of these abstract WIDA standards and see what their Can-Do statements were. And, like, you know what? Yeah, my kids are at level
three. These Can-Do statements really, really apply to them, so I think that is helpful as a learning experience for a teacher.

Teacher 4 focused on an activity in the course that blacked out multiple words in a passage and how each passage represented a different EL student development level based on the number of words that were blacked out. This participant emphasized the difficulty of understanding the passage each time more words were blacked out:

And trying to piece together the puzzle of what are they getting from this reading selection was very eye-opening to me, because, by the time you got to a level one, there’s little to no way that they could understand a reading selection by just reading it.

The responses emphasized examining EL students’ perspectives and experiences but also called for teachers to examine their own backgrounds and experiences. The latter was not seen in all their responses so it provides an opportunity for continued learning.

*Increased knowledge created need for additional learning opportunities.* The new knowledge the participants gained from the SEI endorsement course led to discussions about the inclusion of additional field-training efforts. Such efforts might include hearing from former EL students, collaboration with EL teaching experts, being observed by experts in the EL education field, and more ways to integrate the strategies gained from this course into the classroom.

*Teacher interviews.* All seven teachers interviewed identified the need to include these learning opportunities in the course, but in different ways. Teacher 2 asked for surveys at the beginning and end of the course to track progress to encourage further growth among teachers. Teacher 3 called for opportunities to see what other course participants are doing differently, as a way to track their progress in EL instruction.
Teachers 1 and 4 believed that hearing from former ELs was key to improving as educators. Teacher 1 wanted to reach out to former students and parents to gain an understanding of their experiences and find out from the students, “What was it like to walk into a classroom, where everyone speaks another language?” and from the parents, “What was it like for the parents of students to have that ESL student, and what that’s like.”

Learning from others drove most responses to how to improve teachers’ understanding of EL students. Teachers 3, 5, 6 and 7 called for more support from peers and trained professionals. The willingness of these teachers to seek help clearly sets an opportunity to continue the work this state mandate began to improve EL education.

**Research Question Three**

**Opportunities for collaboration and modeling.** Data collection instruments that drove development of themes for this RQ included Likert-style scaled survey questions and teacher interviews. Table 7 and 8 details the survey questions; Table 9 details the themes that emerged from the data collected for this RQs.

Table 7

*Opportunities for Collaboration*

<table>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>
The examination of the data revealed that the course provided opportunities for the collaboration and modeling. The outcomes of this were dependent on the class, instructor and participants for all seven teachers interviewed. Each teacher agreed and provided examples of more opportunities that could have been included in the course.

Table 9

*Themes from Research Question Three*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Course activities provided for more collaboration than modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>More opportunities could have been included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Course activities provided for more collaboration than modeling.* Overall there was some evidence of modeling of instruction within the course, but participants identified the existence of more collaboration than modeling.

*Likert-style survey.* Collaboration scored a 4.22 out of 5, while modeling scored a 3.58 out of 5. For collaboration, 47.83% agreed it was present in the course, while 39.13% strongly agreed, 4.35% disagreed, and 8.33% answered, “Neither.” Opportunities for modeling show different results: 25% disagreed that there were modeling opportunities in the course, 8.33%
answered, “Neither,” 50% agreed, and 16.67% strongly agreed. Instruction modeling had the largest percentage of disagreement. These same results were seen in the teacher interview data.

Teacher interviews. Teachers 3, 4, 6 and 7 identified instruction modeling as occurring during presentations of lessons, while Teacher 4 also identified the online module as a vehicle for modeling of instruction and implementation of EL supports. Teacher 2 said the capstone or final project enabled the participants to present their work and watch other presentations.

Teachers 4, 6 and 7 also identified their instructor’s role in creating an environment that included modeling as a means to improve instruction. Teacher 7 provided clear evidence of an instructor who used his teaching expertise to alter and deviate from the teaching script:

But he realized that it just doesn’t work the way the script is laid out, so he would actually try and use the strategy as much as he could while teaching us that we were not just sitting there, going through the slides, because that’s what he’s told to do. He said, ‘You’re being told to do all these things. Here’s how it actually works in the real world. Do this instead.’

All participants identified group work as key to collaboration in the course. Five participants described working with groups based on content or grade level. Teacher 3 discussed group work as the strength of the program: “I’ll say that was really a strength of the program, is that it really did try to get us working together as much as possible. I would say over half the time people were collaborating.” Teacher 2 described the activities completed in groups:

They had us sit by subject area and/or grade level, depending on what level you’re at. They would present us with, you know, scenarios or, like, case studies, and we would have to work together to come up with, like, how would we handle this, what strategies would we use, you know, so we’d work together and then, like, present out of the group.
Modeling and collaboration were defined as present in the course, and participants seemed to want more opportunities for both. This presents another opportunity for seeking teachers’ input for creating future learning opportunities so they can better support all students.

**More opportunities could have been included.** All seven teachers shared recommendations for promoting more collaboration and modeling within this course. Six of them provided ideas for instruction modeling: implementing mock lessons, role-playing scenarios, modeling of instruction by training EL teachers, observing more instruction, being videotaped for purposes of reviewing their teaching, etc.

Teacher 2 discussed the need for simulations that asked teachers to step into the role of an EL. This suggestion differed from those of participants interested in modeling instruction. Teacher 2 thought it would be beneficial to see instruction from an EL’s perspective:

I think that simulations are good. When you step into the role of the kids, I think that it makes it easier for you to understand what you’re supposed to do and how the kid would feel when you’re implementing the strategy. If you’re making you do it as a student, I think it would help.

Teachers 3 and 6 wanted to work with highly qualified EL teachers when modeling effective strategies. Teacher 3 reported, “But the actual modeling of it, we never got first-hand exposure to a highly qualified SEI teacher.” Teacher 6 discussed videotaping lessons to be reviewed by the instructor and peers during class: “I think it would be valuable if someone was videotaped and we watched each other.”

These educators said that more modeling of instruction would have been improved with these additions. They therefore seemed willing to come out of their comfort zones to create a
more hands-on learning environment, with the hope of improving their EL instruction effectiveness.

Collaborative activities that participants believed should have been included in the course focused on grouping of participants and observation of instruction. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 believed that more investment would have been made into co-planning and sharing of materials had the classes been grouped by grade level or content area. Teacher 1 described hesitation among participants to share during the course:

I think sometimes we were sharing what we did, but people were sort of more invested in their own projects than maybe listening or commenting on yours. Maybe if we all had a shared goal, that may have been easier.

Teacher 3 noted the opportunity to plan with other science teachers and described how that common subject area created better collaboration:

But I think the getting together with science teachers was helpful, just because, if for nothing else, it allowed us to exchange information with each other about how we approach curriculum and modification.

Teacher 4 reinforced this belief:

Oh, I think if the seventh-grade social studies teachers were together, I think you would’ve been able to… It would definitely have been more beneficial, because you’d have six different options to choose from of how you can implement a lesson.

Teacher 6 described the experience of taking the course with teachers from a team:

We got to work in groups a lot, so I think that was positive. And also, I got to take the course, luckily, with two people on my team in the middle school, so we ended up bouncing ideas and lessons off of each other and talking about different strategies that
worked with certain EL students and ones that didn’t. So, I think that was just a unique experience, whereas I don’t think it’s a norm in all of the classes.

These responses clearly indicate a need and desire among teachers to improve upon their instruction for all students, showing their willingness to learn in an environment that provides instruction modeling and collaborative learning opportunities.

**Research Question Four**

**Instructional practices affected by the SEI course.** This question focused on instructional changes taught in the SEI course. Data collection instruments driving the development of themes for this RQ included Likert-style scaled survey questions, open-ended survey questions, and teacher and administrator interviews.

Table 10 details the survey questions; Table 11 details the themes that emerged from the data collected for this RQs.

Table 10

*Changes to Instruction*

<table>
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<th>Not at All</th>
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<th>Often</th>
<th>To a Great Extent</th>
<th>Average out of 5</th>
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Table 11

*Themes from Research Question Four*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Sources</td>
<td>Strong takeaways and targeted implementation of supports for EL instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Sources</td>
<td>Shift in mindset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data revealed that participants implemented strategies from the course in their classrooms. These questions were designed to detail the tangible takeaways that can be observed during teaching and learning within participants’ classrooms. The data also revealed how this course led to changes in the way educators viewed their responsibility for educating ELs and their relationships with those students.

Strong takeaways and targeted implementation of supports for EL instruction. All survey responses, teacher and administrator interviews presented evidence of takeaways and implementation. It was these discussions around takeaways and implementation that helped to support the other findings.

Likert-style survey. The survey showed no negative responses when participants were asked if they have applied the knowledge gained in this course to their instruction. The 45.83% of participants who answered, “Somewhat,” can drive further examination of what can be done to support those educators. The teachers who participated in the interview seemed to be the “Often” or “To a great extent” responders.

Teacher interviews. All seven participants provided two or more strategies taken from the course and implemented in the classroom. They discussed changes to the structure of classrooms and lessons to support ELs. Teacher 1 said, “I have a list of ten go-to strategies I can use.” This participant discussed how the class presented one strategy per week, which allowed for effective understanding and implementation of strategies: “Sentence frames, paragraph frames, in tiering the vocabulary is something I do, I mean, every week now.”

Teachers 2, 3, 4 and 7 identified similar changes to instruction when discussing how the course helped to change how ELs are supported in their classrooms. These improvements include sentence frames, vocabulary strategies, text previewing, and student work modification. Each of
these teachers called for additional planning of materials to identify possible areas of confusion for ELs. Teacher 7 said the course should cover deliberation in planning lessons, communicating ideas to ELs and presenting materials to them:

But if it’s someone who’s struggling with the language, you can’t just go up there and start throwing things out there and expect it to go well. Because you have the ability to kind of stumble into something you didn’t mean to.

Teacher 4 identified classroom structure and student grouping as key areas of improvement, emphasizing the need for an increased focus on student grouping and peer collaboration: “So one thing that’s changed that’s huge is the level of conversation that takes place, and in order for conversations to take place, your classroom needs to be set up in a collaborative way.” Teacher 4 further discussed how allowing students to collaborate with one another has been frowned upon in the past because of classroom management issues: “And I think sometimes we used to skip that speaking step because we saw it as a management… It would test our management skills. But that’s essential.”

Open-response survey. Participant responses about takeaways from the course included strategies, student supports, tools for lessons, scaffolds, classroom practices, and vocabulary instruction. Fifteen out of twenty-three respondents referred to strategies in their responses, while all twenty-three discussed student supports in one form or another. Action verbs teachers used in their responses—differentiating, implementing, utilizing, changing, identifying, gaining, etc.—provided a clear understanding of what new tools and supports they were able to add to their teaching practices.

One participant focused on how supports can be used to help EL students: “I now use different scaffolds and supports to help my EL students learn more effectively and participate in
classroom activities.” The respondents also emphasized the identification of student strengths and weaknesses. One participant said: “Identifying what students can or should be able to do at different levels helped me adjust my supports for various lessons.” Another discussed the approach to teaching reading and vocabulary the course offered: “It made me change the way I approach reading and vocabulary. I now use a more scaffolded approach, then remove those scaffolds for those that don’t need them.”

Administrator interviews. All four administrators observed increased implementation of new supports for ELs, including sentence frames, vocabulary instruction, word walls, and tiered vocabulary. Vocabulary instruction was mentioned in detail in three of the four interviews as a key support for ELs. ADMN 1 and 3 discussed instruction differentiation to support ELs. ADMN 2 highlighted teachers’ increased awareness of the need to support ELs. ADMN 4 focused on small-group student-centered instruction.

ADMN 1 discussed the increase in common language and common instructional practices among teachers since the implementation of the SEI course, emphasizing teachers’ confidence in supporting ELs because of the course: “The classroom teachers definitely feel more comfortable and confident in their ability to differentiate instruction because of the classes that were offered, the SEI course.”

Highlighting vocabulary instruction and stronger objectives for lessons as positive changes teachers made in their instruction because of the course, ADMN 2 emphasized how the SEI course helped teachers to better incorporate existing practices into their instruction: “I think they’re more aware of what they need to do with instruction as far as their students in front of them.”
ADMN 3 focused on differentiation of instruction for all students and how the strategies taken from this course have applied to supporting all students: “It’s not a one-size-fits-all, and this is what we’re gonna do for the regular education kids, and this is what we’re gonna do for the EL kids.”

ADMN 4 emphasized how the strategies taken from the course changed classroom structure. When discussing a shift to small-group, student-centered instruction, the participant explained: “So, I think, in terms of instruction, it’s not very teacher directed, or teacher-centered anymore. It’s very much small-group instruction, student-centered work.”

The discussions on the technical components implemented from this course also signified a shift in teachers’ mindsets that administrators were observing. Takeaways from this course were seen in all participants’ responses, indicating educators’ willingness to support EIs.

**Shift in mindset.** During the examination of data about the participant’s perceived role in educating EIs, the themes of ownership, responsibility, reflecting on planning to support EL students, and deliberate actions taken to do so emerged in all seven participants’ responses.

**Teacher interviews.** Teacher 1 said EL students must be provided with appropriate grade-level material, and identified understanding their stories as key to finding ways to support their learning:

They want to talk about more meaningful things. Going back and finding a picture of,

‘This is an apple. Label the apple,’ it sort of offend them. I’m making more of an effort to find appropriate grade level content for my ELLs.

Teacher 2 emphasized the importance of EL teachers taking ownership of their students throughout the class:
These students are going to be in your class. You need to make sure that you have a strategy for it… That was my biggest takeaway from that, that you have to find a way to service these kids in your classroom.

Teacher 5 discussed how the tools gained from this course provided teachers with the confidence needed to take ownership of EL students:

Ownership, definitely, of, like, those are my students, regardless if they’re ELL or not. Like, being able to have the tools to reach them now. Trying to get a little bit more ownership. Maybe before without knowing it you kind of said to yourself, ‘Eh, I don’t know if I’ll ever get through to that kid. I don’t know if I can help him.’

Teacher 3 reflected on seeing students in the WIDA examples of EL levels presented in class: “But, like, I was seeing my student. I was seeing Eduardo.” The WIDA/Can Do statements led Teacher 3 to reflection on students’ progress and identification of their academic needs.

Teachers 4, 6 and 7 identified reflection as key to lesson planning. Teacher 4 emphasized learning objectives: “So when it comes to my own lessons and what I do every day, one of the biggest things was to have a literacy objective.” Teacher 6 emphasized the time and reflection put into implementation of strategies and proper use of learning objectives because of this course: “…’cause that’s just something that wasn’t on our radar until you took the SEI course.” Teacher 7 said the focus must be on creating multiple entry points into the data for ELs: “So it would be more of like, how do I make multiple entry points into the lesson I’m doing so that vocabulary and language isn’t a hurdle … which in math, it shouldn’t be.”

Open-response survey. The findings that drove the creation of the shift-in-mindset theme were identified from participant responses on understanding or seeking to understand the perspectives of EL students. Seventeen of the twenty-three participants included terms such as
reach, understand, support, help and aware. One said, “It has allowed me to better understand what it is like to be in an EL student’s shoes. It allows me to look at my lessons and assignments from a new perspective.” Responses indicated that teachers were more sensitive to EL students’ needs and more understanding of their struggles. This was evident in responses to how educators were approaching lesson planning after taking this course:

The course made me be more thoughtful in how I present material, taking greater care to consider how confusion could result (both for students who speak English as a second language and for everyone in the class). Good strategies for one group are often good strategies for both groups.

Another educator noted that the course revealed what is was like for EL students to learn the English language:

It made me more aware of the progression that students must go through to gain proficiency in English. It also gave me descriptors to identify how ELL students’ progress. Because of this, I am more sensitive to ELL needs as I am planning lessons, for example, providing opportunities for devices such as sentence frames.

These statements, and the actions educators took as a result of this course, clearly evinces a shift in mindset and perspective on meeting ELs’ educational needs.

Administrator interviews. This theme represents a shift from the technical interpretation of the data to a focus on actions and what they inform about a shift in educator mindset. Key terms from the data that informed this theme included accountable, comfortable, confident, aware, invested and responsible. ADMN 1 and 2 from the same school provided a positive depiction of a shift in mindset, while ADMN 3 and 4 from another school identified a shift in teacher mindsets but claimed it needed to progress further.
ADMN 1 discussed how teachers are more accountable to ELs and believe they can support their learning because of the skills and strategies they gained from the course. These teachers were described as more invested in ELs learning outcomes:

Well, the other statement is, teachers definitely feel more accountable for the EL students. They believe honestly that they have the tools and strategies to develop, to help the EL students accomplish what they need to accomplish. So, they’re invested in the outcomes of the students’ successes. Well, it creates a better classroom environment, because the kids feel that the teachers really are invested into what they’re doing.

This participant continued to stress how teachers are taking responsibility for ELs’ education, because the teachers now have a better understanding of accountability and expectations. ADMN 1 identified this change as a direct outcome of the SEI course:

Yes, I do believe the changes have improved taking on the responsibility of newcomer EL students. With the endorsement required of all teachers is deeper understanding of expectations and accountability for teaching of EL students. The change that I think is a direct outcome of the SEI class.

ADMN 2 discussed how the course helped EL teachers to improve upon the existing practices with which they were already familiar:

I think they’re more aware of what they need to do with instruction as far as their students in front of them… I think, like I said earlier, I think they’re more confident with teaching ELs. I think now that’s given them something to work with and how to make sure that the kids are learning.

ADMN 3 and 4, from another school in the district, identified a shift in mindset but stressed that it needs to go further. ADMN 3 identified differentiation of instruction as an
example of this changing mindset but said only some teachers had developed the correct attitude and mindset:

And we’re at a stage now where teachers are like, ‘Oh, the more help, beautiful! Come on in. You can work with this group. You can help these kids.’ Years ago, it was, ‘This is my classroom. What I say goes. You can go over there and help little Johnny.’ Or whatever. And that mindset has really shifted over the last few years.

This same administrator described other teachers who had yet to take ownership of the ELs in their classrooms:

And some teachers are still in a place where they need to come around to the fact that these kids are assigned to them, they’re a part of their class, they’re a part of their grade. They’re not assigned to the English learner’s teacher. They’re our students. We’re their teachers. We’re their educators.

ADMN 4 discussed the transition to a co-teaching model that supported teacher collaboration. This shift represented a move away from the teacher-centered classroom to a more student-centered model. When discussing the progress of this initiative, ADMN 4 said:

Co-teaching—warming up to it. Living the stuff, they experienced… I mean, I think they’re warming up to the idea of co-teaching with the EL teacher, but there’s still a lot that they need to get used to that they didn’t get out of the SEI course, you know? Just living it gives them that experience.

The shift-of-mindset theme started to reveal itself as participant responses shifted from a more academic viewing of the course to a more applied gains perspective. That required focusing less on what took place during the course and more on how the course shifted the participants’ perspectives. The participants did discuss various components of the course—activities,
collaboration, discussion—and how they were helpful, but those components really appeared to help create confidence in teachers, which led to a change in their mindsets.

The shift-of-mindset theme is apparent in all phases of data collection and coding. Key terms such as awareness, putting myself in their shoes, accountability, ownership, mindset, changes to instruction, differentiating, collaborating with other teachers, and co-teaching all drove the themes for the RQs. It was a combination of these themes, filtered out, dissected, and analyzed that created the overarching theme of a change in mindset.

**Research Question Five**

**District supports.** These interview questions focused on whether this effort to support ELs was an individual or district effort, what changes had to be made to the district, and where the district should be in five years. Data was collected from a Likert-style scaled survey question, a survey open-response question, teacher interviews, and administrator interviews. Table 12 details the survey question; Table 13 details the themes that emerged from the data collected for this RQ.

Table 12

*District Supports*

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Table 13

Themes from Research Question Five

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<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Foundational changes to EL instruction are still needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator Interviews</td>
<td>District-supported but school-owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Sources</td>
<td>Changes that go beyond just teaching and learning</td>
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</table>

*Foundational changes to EL instruction are still needed.* Six of the seven teachers answered the question about whether supporting ELs was a district or individual effort. Administrators were asked the same question, which produced a theme of district support.

*Likert-style scaled.* This question sought to determine if the district was heading in the right direction for EL support. Most responses were in the middle of the 5-point scale, pointing to “yes.” The interviews with teachers and administrators also showed progress but identified clear needs that must be addressed as part of the effort to support ELs.

*Teacher interviews.* Three teachers called the changes to EL instruction a teacher-driven initiative, while three others said they were district-driven. One participant said they were neither but identified changes being implemented and future steps that must be taken. All seven teachers presented similar insights and suggestions when asked about changes that needed to be made within the district and where the district needs to be in five years. Ideas for change focused on curriculum, coaching, staffing, scheduling, and professional development.

Teacher 1 called for an examination of the materials used in the district and the structure of the programs designed to support ELs, emphasizing the district’s lack of knowledge of the existence of EL support curricula: “I wasn’t even aware that there was any until my ESL teacher
shared it with me… I would love to incorporate that into my classroom in small groups.”

Teacher 1 added that improved materials must be provided to ELs.

Teachers 2 and 6 called for increased support staff for EL instruction, but Teacher 4 said additional staff was already required in a co-teaching model to keep the students in class with their peers. Teacher 7 supported Teacher 4’s view for instruction: “I’d like to see an EL teacher co-teaching with the teacher in the classroom where every student is in the SCI program.”

Multiple participants also identified the need for more coaching and feedback to ensure proper implementation of strategies from this course. Teachers 3, 4 and 7 all addressed this as a concern and stressed the need for everyone in the district to continue to build on the work done by course graduates. Teacher 3 discussed how some of the course strategies have become a daily habit in the classroom but showed concern when discussing some parts of the course that have not been applied there: “They remind you of other strategies that were talked about in the class that you may have forgotten because you didn’t use them as often.”

Teacher 4 said constant feedback would improve teaching: “The fresher it is in your mind, the better. You go to and you take one course, and you’re not a pro at it.” Teacher 4 added that there is more to learn, and one course does not create a highly qualified teacher to support ELs: “So the people who are pros at it, we have them, but we just have to have time to sit down with them and talk teaching… It can’t be one and done.”

Teacher 7 was concerned that most teachers would not be able to remember the majority of the strategies gained during this course:

It seems like even now, if you ask a teacher what strategies they used from RETELL, most of them are going to not be able to name what they learned in RETELL [because]
it’s something you do in isolation, you have the cert, you have the stamp on your certification, and then you move on.

This participant discussed the need for EL coaches in the building to work with teachers to reinforce the skills gained during the course: “I feel like that would kind of make what you learn in SCI more meaningful because there’s actually a follow-through with it.”

Survey open-response. Participants identified the need to examine professional development, staffing and curriculum/materials in an effort to improve EL instruction. All twenty-three responses to question ten in the survey referred to staffing, program structure, coursework, professional development, student data, curriculum, and teaching materials. One participant said, “Refresher courses would be beneficial. Possibly training offered for our PD hours.” Another focused on staffing and data: “I think that the EL department needs more stuff. Also, it would be beneficial to have more specific information/test results about EL students in our classrooms.”

Implementing these components to provide more meaningful learning opportunities was evident in most participant responses, which included: “More materials to help differentiate the text and other supplies (art materials, technology, etc.) [would] provide more meaningful learning opportunities.” These responses indicate that teachers are looking to build upon the knowledge they gained from this course to support ELs.

Ten of the twenty-three responses stressed the need for sharing of knowledge, working together, modeling of strategies in action, communication, co-planning, and collaboration. There was a clear indication of a need to work more consistently with trained EL educators:
I understand that the district has hired an ESL coach and having them work with more schools would be beneficial, as it would provide an opportunity to see the strategies in action, something that did not have to occur to get through RETELL.

One participant discussed using staff to improve teaching strategies:

Hearing from other teachers who can share their ideas and lessons that have worked.

Being shown simple things to add to teaching methods that can make a big difference in students making more connections.

This openness and willingness to seek out opportunities for collaboration and feedback can be seen as a positive outcome for this course.

*Administrator interviews:* Administrators detailed additional supports that were needed to support ELs and described possible changes needed in the district. ADMN 1 discussed a need for change in classroom structure, focusing on fundamental changes with a need for a building-wide focus with professional development geared toward co-teaching model and all-inclusive models:

“So they’re going to have to learn how to co-plan, co-teach because we’re going to move towards a full-inclusive program down here.”

ADMN 2 reiterated the position of ADMN 1 on the inclusion of a co-teaching model for ELs in the curriculum:

I’d like to see more development of the co-teaching model, like the EL teacher who’s the expert in those language objectives working side-by-side with that content-driven teacher to help to support all students. I think that all students would flourish from that type of model, whether it is a child that’s experiencing difficulties in learning, or that child who’s just acquiring English. I’d like to see more co-teaching models, and I think we need to work to learn more. That’s what I’d like to see improvements in that area.
ADMN 2 identified the need for the inclusion of actual EL teachers in the curriculum and also called for more training in areas the SEI course covered:

I think more work needs to be done with showing them WIDA can-do descriptors and what children can do at a certain level, or what they’re expected to do, and the domains, like the listening, speaking, reading and writing, and probably the last thing being, I see a lot of the strategies that we learned in the class being taught, so that is very positive. I think they haven’t had a chance to digest it.

Inclusive classroom practices and continued training to improve them were key components of ADMN 3’s vision, as well as giving ELs ample exposure to language:

But you know, even bolstering listening centers, getting them online, getting them as much language acquisition skills as possible. Those are thing that we’re looking for. Inclusive practices continued PD focus on listening centers, vocab, getting as much language to these kids. Focus on language acquisition skills. Parent outreach and restructuring classrooms to focus on small groups and collaboration with multiple teachers.

ADMN 4 favored of current services but identified a need for more support in other schools within the district, as well as more inclusive practices and use of data to drive implemented instruction:

As the model I think I would like to see more inclusion, instead of students being pulled out to get services. Inclusive practices, definitely in the lower grades. I don’t know how it would look, you know in grade six, seven, and eight, but I think to integrate our EL students as much as we can. I agree, and now we’re just more of a data-driven school. You know, we have all sorts of different data that tells us what our students need, and the
support that comes in, whether it’s the EL teacher, or the special education teacher. They are able to target what our students need, especially in the EL population.

ADMN 4 explained how one school is now designated for a certain population of ELs but, if more schools picked up the program, then directors and coordinators from the EL department would be able to work with more teachers. A need for organization of the program was identified when ADMN 4 said, “So the coordinator can spend time here, the director of EL can be present more often. But having a more organized flow of the SCI model.”

**District-supported but school-owned.** This theme presented itself from administrator data acquired by asking if this was a school-based or district-based initiative. All four administrators identified the need for district support but identified the role their individual schools must take to support teachers and improve EL instruction.

*Administrator interviews.* ADMN 1 discussed a joint effort between the central administration and the school to move toward full curricular inclusion for ELs, ending services that took students out of the classroom but instead providing all EL supports within the general education classroom. ADMN 1 said ownership of this effort must begin at the school level:

> But, again, it was brought to the staff, and the staff was all on board. Because, you try to create, like I said, a positive culture down here, and people want to be part of it. And they’ll know that if we’re all onboard, that success is going to come to follow.

ADMN 2, from the same school, supported this claim about involvement from central administration when discussing the role of the new EL director:

> I really, I’m impressed by our new director that we have. I feel that she’s very knowledgeable. She definitely tries to make sure that the EL students are supported, and she does that a lot through, she’s come here a couple of times to meet with our faculty
and give little presentations on what the access score means, or what the can-do descriptions are in WIDA.

ADMN 3 described this as a school-based effort with growing support from central administration. This participant described joint efforts to change the school schedule and increased involvement of other subject area directors:

I think it has to be a school-based effort. The more supports that we get from the district, the better. We’ve gotten more support this year from our central office, our EL director, even the math director came down and helped us reschedule some of their classes, and really take a hard look at the way we’ve been dividing the day, and looking at how we’ve been clustering students, so there’s been a ton of support at the school this year again in the EL program.

Changes that go beyond just teaching and learning. This theme emerged from examining teacher and administrator responses to interview questions about supports required, changes to instructional practices, and who should be involved in supporting ELs. The follow-up questions within each interview question focused on who should be involved and possible additional efforts necessary to reach ELs and their families. Teachers focused a wide variety of curriculum related topics and new learning; administrators focused on parent involvement, support from the community, connecting parents to the school, and hiring more diverse teachers.

Teacher interviews. Five of the seven participants discussed changes and future ideas for ELs outside of teaching and learning. Teacher 7 described a shift in thinking the course spurred:

When I took the course, I feel like EL students were kind of just part of the group and not really considered and targeted as someone who needed…outside of their ELL teacher. It was their responsibility to take care of it, and that’s the way it was.
This participant detailed how a change within the district has created more district ownership of EL instruction:

I would say it’s pretty district now. I wouldn’t have always said that, but I feel like, especially in this year, I’m noticing that a lot of people are trying to pull together to try to pull ELs forward.

Teacher 7 attributed this change to the SEI course and a shift in thinking about who is responsible for supporting ELs: “I feel like there’s a big shift now, where everybody knows who those students are and what needs to happen for them.”

Teacher 1 also identified a need to seek out new ways of learning while including all stakeholders in the effort to support ELs. Teacher 3 called for the acquisition of a second language as part of professional development program for teachers:

I don’t know how you would do it, but I think I would benefit greatly from being bilingual… In the next five years, it would be neat to see some type of grant or program that helps teachers learn another language.

Teachers 2, 4 and 7 focused on increasing the number of supports and people involved with the effort to improve EL instruction. Teacher 2 called for district-provided support courses to reinforce the strategies taken from the class but called for the inclusion of administrators and other support staff in these efforts. Teacher 4 called for planning, discussions and meetings with trained EL professionals: “I think it would help to have very regular check-ins with an ELL professional weekly in order to help plan, talk about progress, talk about strategies, and really talk about specific needs of particular students.”

Teacher 7 took it one step further and called for the creation of coaches to reinforce strategies taken from the course:
Even if they had, like…so the EL teachers who were in each building…if they became more coached to follow up on what you learned in RETELL…so their job wasn’t just to pull students out and actually just teach them in isolation in their room…to actually go in and make sure that those strategies are being used correctly so that every kid is getting their EL education for more than just that hour their being pulled… I feel like that would kind of make what you learn in SCI more meaningful, because there’s actually a follow-through with it.

Teacher 4 was the only participant to include extracurricular events and parent involvement as part of the effort to improve EL instruction in schools. This participant identified the opportunity to include language acquisition opportunities as part of events or activities outside of school. Teacher 4 said some students have access to learning only English in schools:

"So, whether it’s an extracurricular requirement that’s taking place outside of school, something along those lines because some of these students, the only English that they’re exposed to for a long time is just what they’re getting in school."

This participant also called on schools to create opportunities and events that created a low-stress atmosphere to encourage parents to become active participants in the schools:

"I think one thing that we need is…and it’s hard to do, but there…some sort of outside of school family involvement where parents have a low-stress atmosphere where they can come in and be part of the process."

Administrator interviews. Throughout these interviews, all stakeholders were identified as needing to contribute to the improvement of EL instruction. ADMN1 focused on including parents in their children’s education, especially since many of them do not speak English and place great trust in our schools:
We try to create a lot of cohesiveness between parents and the school. We have meetings once a quarter in the community where they come in and build together. But everyone has to be involved, the whole community of the school. It shows that we care and then the parents will back us and be onboard with us throughout the whole process of their education… So, if we have co-buy-in from the kids, the parents, the teachers, central about what we’re trying to accomplish down here, I think it will be very successful in any school.

ADMN 2 called for culturally diverse teachers as another way to connect with the diverse community in the city:

I would also like to see more culturally diverse teachers being hired. We all try to do a good job in learning about culture and different cultures, but that’s a lot of their learning, and I think we have a lot to learn about all of the different cultures that we have in this community.

ADMN 3 focused on parents feeling connected to the school:

If their parents feel more connected to the school, and it’s less confrontational for them. They really feel supported… And the outreach to the parents is an utmost concern of ours, which is why we try to stay on top of that. I think that they initially are a little bit more afraid, or they feel like they’re not in a position where they can help, but one of the strategies we try to teach them, is they can help by asking their children what they’re learning: ‘Tell me, show me what you’re learning. Tell me what you’re learning.’ And as long as their kids know they’re staying on top of them with that, that helps us. And when they’re explaining what they’re learning, there’s a better chance that they’re going to retain that information.
This administrator also identified the need to improve ELs’ connection to their school through additional extracurricular events:

I guess you know, looking at enrichment opportunities, extracurricular activities, and just trying to get the English learners involved in as many of things as we can. And one of the things that we created just for the last month of the school year is the after-school soccer program. Every kid that comes is EL, ‘cause we opened it up to grades seven and eight, and they love it. It’s just another outlet for them, and it’s not even that many kids. I think we had about fifteen kids. But they live for it.

ADMN 4 wanted parents invited into the school through comfortable activities, as a necessary step to bridge the gap or divide that may exist with parents or schools:

We’ve also hosted EL breakfasts and evenings to get our parents involved, and I think that’s a really good school base that we’ve started… And a lot of our parents I think initially are afraid to be involved, you know, not speaking English and not being familiar with what we do at the school, but ultimately, they do want to be a part of their children’s education…

Changes that went beyond teaching and learning clearly identified a shift in thinking among teachers and administrators. The surveys presented evidence of teachers applying the knowledge obtained from this course but also identified how teachers were thinking about ways to improve instruction for ELs. Interviews provided an opportunity to utilize follow-up questions to explore new activities or learning supports for EL learners. These changes identified focused on how the participants described themselves as teachers of ELs after completing the course. The participants shared a change in thinking about ELs and how that change had led to more supports for ELs throughout the district.
Summary

Identification of the themes that emerged from the research data led to the creation of three findings. The findings include: (1) the SEI course contained strong takeaways and there was targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction; (2) EL instruction was headed in the correct direction but continued and focused change needed to improve professional development, instruction and supports in place to educate ELs; (3) a shift in mindset that led to changes that went beyond just teaching and learning.

Strong takeaways and targeted instruction were driven by changes to vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary instruction was identified by 83.33% of the survey participants as a key-learning component of this course. Heading in the correct direction with continued improvement focused on current practices, needed supports and a general direction for the district. The data also identified shift in mindset among the participants. Whether this was meant as a course outcome or not, the SEI course forced educators to rethink their perspectives about how to best support ELs.

The efforts being made in the examined schools and the responses from each participant clearly identified a shift in mindset for supporting EL education. It cannot be all attributed to the SEI endorsement course, but knowledge gained from it is clearly driving the changes seen in the data. These shifts in thinking and evidence of how the course has put EL instruction at the forefront among the participants came directly from conversations about the course and can be seen in many of the themes that presented themselves from the data, which will be reviewed in more detail in the next chapter.
Chapter V: Discussion of the Research Findings

This chapter will examine the key findings from this research. The research questions provided the structure for the examination of the SEI course and its effect on instruction. The researcher identified findings from the data collected from application of these questions. These findings provided the foundation for exploring EL instruction, teacher supports and necessary EL curricula changes, as well as insights into future research endeavors related to EL instruction.

This chapter also revisits the problem of practice and research methodology. Findings will be analyzed in relation to the literature review and theoretical framework. Finally, the study’s limitations will be examined, and the researcher will personally reflect on the research effort and the next steps necessary to continue this effort to support all EL students.

Review of Problem of Practice

The problem of practice presented itself overtime within the examined district as the EL population continued to grow and teachers worked to implement the strategies gained from the SEI course to support this population. The rising number of ELs in the examined district and throughout the country is leaving many school districts unprepared to support them (Batt, 2008).

This course originated from a 2011 civil rights investigation that deemed Massachusetts programs for ELs inadequate (Maxwell, 2012). Based on its findings, Massachusetts began a professional development initiative to provide more supports for educators to better instruct ELs. Pressure from federal civil rights officials led to training for academic-content teachers (p. 8).

Designed to give teachers the knowledge and instructional practices required to better support ELs and to address the almost 45,000 teachers yet to receive specialized training for EL education, the course required math, English language arts (ELA), science and social studies teachers to receive an endorsement for SEI. The course’s goal was to qualify ELs for placement
with only trained content-area teachers by 2016 (Maxwell, 2012). The course became an issue within the examined district as teachers struggled to meet all students’ needs and the SEI course’s demands. Most teachers completed the course requirements, but continuation beyond that was lacking. In light of that, this research examined the course, discussed changes in instruction, and focused on the next steps needed to support all students.

This qualitative case study was centered on the instruction teachers received. The research problem was designed to reveal how and why this course supported teachers in their efforts to educate ELs so instruction for ELs could be altered and district supports addressed accordingly. To this end, the study addresses the lack of discussion within the examined school district about whether this course was sufficient to prepare educators to support ELs.

Review of Methodology

The researcher designed this case study to examine the learning environment within the SEI course, changes to EL instruction, and district efforts to support ELs. The case study methodology was selected to analyze teacher and administrator views and experiences. Stake (1995) deemed people’s participation crucial to a case study in an effort to hear their experiences and understand their situations (p. 1). Constructivism was identified as a component for case study research because of the interpreter’s role as a gatherer of information: knowledge must be constructed, not merely discovered (Stake, 1995). This study was not designed to examine whether the SEI course improved EL student achievement, as it focused solely on the learning environment created for educators within the course and how the course affected instructional practices. With that in mind, the research questions guiding this inquiry were devised as follows:

1. How do educators describe the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI endorsement course?
2. How did the SEI endorsement course help to create a learning environment that facilitated awareness and examination of teachers’ identities, assumptions, and perspectives about educating EL students?

3. How did the learning environment provide opportunities for collaboration, modeling of instructional practices, and self-reflection?

4. How were the participant’s instructional practices affected by the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI course?

5. How do you feel the district or school assisted, supported and contributed to your learning in the course and implementation of components of the course into your instruction?

Participants came from an urban district just outside of Boston. Purposeful sampling was used to examine middle-school teachers in all content areas, including special education instruction, as well as school administrators. Twenty-four educators participated in the survey; eleven offered to be interviewed at the end of the survey, but seven were actually interviewed. Four of the seven administrators requested were interviewed. Seidman (2013) deemed interviewing necessary because the researcher is interested in hearing the stories of others as a way to know their situations (p. 7). The interviews enabled the researcher to examine the survey data and expand upon that information. Participants were allowed to tell their own stories and clearly identify the course’s effects on their instruction and relationships with ELs. All participants were given a forum that let them discuss changes to instructional practices, district supports and additional resources needed to support ELs.

The search for strong patterns was the primary focus for all data analysis, consistent with Stake’s (1995) approach to data analysis: discovering patterns and consistency among the data,
and looking at the information repeatedly in a reflective, skeptical way that seeks meaning within the morass of data (p. 78). This approach provided the foundation and structure necessary to code and categorize data, discern patterns, identify themes, and determine key findings.

**Discussion of Major Findings**

Fourteen themes emerged from the three data sources, which were: (1) teachers who participated in the survey, (2) teachers who continued through the interview process, and (3) administrators who were interviewed. As the survey responses were anonymous, the researcher could not differentiate the teacher survey data from the teacher interview data, so each will count as its own data source. The researchers made this decision in order to include more participants in a way that protected anonymity while increasing the validity of the research.

The data was categorized by one of the five research questions and examined to identify sets of themes, which provided a platform for organizing the themes to discover the findings. These themes identified then led to the identification of three findings:

1. The SEI course contained strong takeaways, and there was targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction.

2. EL instruction was headed in the correct direction, but continued and focused change was needed to improve professional development, instruction, and supports in place to educate ELs.

3. A shift in mindset leading to changes that went beyond teaching and learning.
### Themes from the Research Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Instructors drove the classroom environment</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Online learning environments presented challenges but possible future learning opportunities</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Missed opportunities</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Strong takeaways and targeted implementation</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Course allowed examination of identities, assumptions and perspectives</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Increased knowledge created need for additional learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Course activities allowed more collaboration than modeling</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>More opportunities could have been included</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Strong takeaways and targeted implementation of supports for EL instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shift in mindset</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Foundational changes to EL instruction are still needed</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>District-supported but school-owned</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Changes that go beyond just teaching and learning</td>
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Table 15

*Three Sets of Research Findings*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings that support strong takeaways and targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction</th>
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<td>Theme 6   Course allowed examination of identities, assumptions and perspectives</td>
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<td>Theme 7   Increased knowledge created need for additional learning opportunities</td>
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<td>Theme 10  Strong takeaways and targeted implementation of supports for EL instruction</td>
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<th>Findings that support that we are headed in the correct direction, but continued and focused change is necessary to improve professional development, instruction and supports in place to educate ELs</th>
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<td>Theme 1   Course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor</td>
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<td>Theme 4   Missed opportunities</td>
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<td>Theme 8   Course activities provided for more collaboration than modeling</td>
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<th>Findings that support a shift in mindset that led to changes beyond teaching and learning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 11  Shift in mindset</td>
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<td>Theme 13  District-supported but school-owned</td>
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<td>Theme 14  Changes that go beyond just teaching and learning</td>
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**Findings that support strong takeaways and targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction.** Six of the seven teachers interviewed identified vocabulary instruction as a key takeaway from this course. All seven participants provided two or more strategies taken from the course and used in the classroom. Teacher 1 said, “I have a list of ten go-to strategies I can use.”

All survey participants discussed student supports in one form or another, while 83.33% of the survey participants said the course’s vocabulary module helped them define their roles as EL teachers. Teachers 1, 2 and 4 discussed how their lesson-planning now focuses on vocabulary instruction with the inclusion of tiered vocabulary, seven step vocabulary and word walls. These
strategies for vocabulary instruction were identified as being implemented in multiple lessons for all subject areas. The other strategies taken from this course used

- sentence frames;
- turn-and-talk; and
- pre-reading strategies.

All four administrators observed increased implementation of new supports for ELs, including sentence frames, vocabulary instruction, word walls, and tiered vocabulary. Vocabulary instruction was mentioned in detail in three of the four interviews as a key support for ELs. ADMN 1 discussed the increase in common language and common instructional practices among teachers since the implementation of the SEI course while ADMN 2 emphasized how the SEI course helped teachers to better incorporate existing practices into their instruction. ADMN 3 focused on differentiation of instruction for all students and how the strategies taken from this course have supported all students and ADMN 4 emphasized how the strategies taken from the course changed classroom structure to a small-group, student-centered learning environment.

The examination of identities, assumptions and perspectives was identified as a part of the course. Survey and interview data indicated learning opportunities that let this examination take place. Survey data showed that 70.83% of participants said there were opportunities to examine their feelings about educating ELs, while 16.67% strongly agreed, and 12.5% disagreed. The data about teachers examining their own backgrounds showed: 66.67% agreed; 12.5% strongly agreed; 8.33% disagreed; 12.5% answered, “Neither.”

All seven interview participants discussed course activities or projects that prompted them to reflect on the ways they educated ELs. Responses focused on how
• course activities created more thought when planning lessons;
• the capstone project presented an opportunity to work through that lesson-planning process for the benefit of ELs;
• activities within this course helped them to better understand their students;
• activities let them examine students with interrupted education; and
• WIDA Can-Do descriptors were used to compare progress among students.

Increased knowledge gained from the course was seen in the responses that called for additional learning opportunities to support ELs.

The new knowledge the participants gained led to discussions about integration of additional efforts into this course, including

• surveys at the beginning and end of the course to track progress to encourage further growth among teachers;
• opportunities to see which course participants are doing differently, as a way to track their progress in EL instruction;
• meeting with and hearing from former ELs to examine their experiences; and
• more observations, discussions and support from peers and trained professionals.

While findings support that we are headed in the correct direction, continued and focused change is necessary to improve professional development, instruction and supports in place to educate ELs. The themes that supported this finding from the research included: (1) the course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor; (2) instructors drove the classroom environment; (3) online learning environments presented challenges but possible future learning opportunities; (4) missed opportunities; and (5) course activities allowed more collaboration than
modeling. These themes provided additional components that could have been added to the course or areas to be addressed for any future professional teacher development.

Administrator responses to the course were based on their observations and conversations with teachers. The administrators described the course as rushed with a heavy workload, but all four identified that teachers took something from this effort and have worked to implement new supports for ELs. Responses on issues with the course identified

- disappointment with course materials and lack of new instruction techniques, but acknowledgment that most teachers had positive experiences in the class;
- concern that the course was harder than expected;
- questioning about whether the strategies taught in the course would be applied throughout the schools;
- descriptions of being overwhelmed by the course; and
- stress because of the short time period teachers were provided to complete the course.

Teachers’ responses drove most of the themes that emerged. Surveys and interviews allowed further examination of the course based on the fact that the teachers, not the administrators, had taken the actual classes. This examination identified areas from the course that could have been better implemented in the classroom, which provided suggestions for future professional development for teachers so that can better support ELs.

All seven of the interview participants discussed the role of the instructor during the course and the instructor’s effect on the learning environment. They were asked if the course was student centered or teacher centered; this drew a mix of responses. Four participants said the instructor created a student-centered learning environment within the course, focusing on how
• the instructor provided background knowledge and guidance while participants worked through the material;
• the course was task-oriented, allowing for much group work and peer reflection; and
• the instructor adapted the course to keep the participants constantly active and engaged in the material.

All interview participants also discussed the online portion of this course when examining the learning environment and assignments. Most of the feedback focused on the improvements that needed to be made, including

• the need for more feedback in online discussions on how to change or modify instruction;
• a concern about the amount of reading assignments for the online discussions; and
• the inclusion of more public and open discussions online.

Teachers also identified missed opportunities from other parts of the class, including

• central location for the storage of the participants’ lesson plans, use of the online module to access them, and the benefits this arrangement would have for implementation;
• lack of conversations with others in class;
• strong academic content, but too much focus on it;
• need for focus on practical components of ELs, such as their lives, educational backgrounds and test scores;
• more time to work with other participants, in class or online; and
• too great a range of teachers within the class, so the course should be grouped by content or grade.

Modeling of instruction was seen as needing of more attention. Six of the seven teachers interviewed suggested improving or incorporating more modeling into this course through
• implementing mock lessons;
• role-playing scenarios; and
• modeling of instruction by trained EL teachers.

Collaborative activities that participants believed the course should have offered included
• co-planning and sharing of materials; and
• teachers taking the course with other teachers from their school, grade level team or content area.

The feedback from these teachers indicated room for improvement with any initiative or large endeavor such as this SEI class. The suggestions or missed opportunities do not necessarily require an additional training effort from the state, but they could enable districts to give teachers more support in their education of ELs.

**Findings that support a shift in mindset that led to changes beyond teaching and learning.** The themes from the research that drove this finding included: (1) shift in mindset, (2) district-supported but school-owned, (3) foundational changes to EL instruction, and (4) changes going beyond just teaching and learning.

In the examination of data about the interview participant’s perceived role in educating ELs, the themes of ownership, responsibility, reflecting on planning to support EL students, and deliberate actions taken to do so emerged in all seven participants’ responses, which included
• EL students must be provided with appropriate grade-level material;
• understanding their stories was key to finding ways to support their learning;
• teachers must take ownership of their students throughout the class;
• the tools from this course gave teachers the confidence needed to take such ownership;
• World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) examples of EL levels were presented in class, and these WIDA/Can Do statements led to reflection on students’ progress and identification of their academic needs; and

• reflection was key to lesson planning.

These statements, and the actions educators took as a result of this course, clearly evince a shift in mindset and perspective on meeting ELs’ educational needs.

Key terms from the administrator data that informed this theme included: accountable, comfortable, confident, aware, invested, and responsible. Responses about mindset focused on how

• teachers are more accountable to ELs and believe they can support their learning because of the skills and strategies they gained from the course;

• teachers were more invested in ELs’ learning outcomes;

• teachers are taking responsibility for ELs’ education, because the teachers now have a better understanding of accountability and expectations;

• the course helped EL teachers to improve upon the existing practices with which they were already familiar;

• differentiation of instruction was an example of this changing mindset; and

• this shift in mindset represented a move away from the teacher-centered classroom to a more student-centered model.

The ownership school leaders took was evident when examining the data. All four administrators identified the need for district support while identifying the role their individual schools must take to support teachers and improve EL instruction. They emphasized
• a joint effort between the central administrator and the school to move toward full curricular inclusion for ELs;

• the role of the new EL director and how that has focused EL instruction; and

• a school-based effort with support from central administration.

The need for foundational changes was evident in the results for the survey question that focused on whether the district was heading in the correct direction with providing EL student support. Most responses were in the middle of the 5-point scale, pointing to “yes.” The interviews with teachers and administrators also showed progress but identified clear needs that must be addressed as part of the effort to support ELs.

Teacher interviews produced ideas that focused on curriculum, coaching, staffing, scheduling, and professional development, including the need for

• examination of the materials used in the district and the structure of the programs designed to support ELs;

• increased support staff for EL instruction;

• more coaching and feedback to ensure proper implementation of strategies from this course;

• EL coaches in the building to work with teachers to reinforce skills gained in the course;

• sharing of knowledge gained in the course;

• collaboration and communication; and

• modeling of strategies in action.

Administrators provided ideas for the district’s direction to improve EL instruction, which focused on
• a need for change in classroom structure, focusing on fundamental changes with a need for a building-wide focus, with professional development geared toward co-teaching model and all-inclusive models;

• the inclusion of actual EL teachers in the curriculum and also more training in areas the SEI course covered;

• inclusive classroom practices and continued training; and

• the use of data to drive EL instruction.

Changes in mindset emerged from examining teacher and administrator responses to interview questions about supports required, changes to instructional practices, and who should be involved in supporting ELs. Five of the seven teacher interview participants discussed changes and future ideas for ELs outside of teaching and learning. Responses focused on

• a shift in thinking about ELs and their education;

• a shift in thinking about who is responsible for educating ELs;

• an understanding of our ELs and what is needed to support their education;

• seeking new learning methods while including all stakeholders in the support of ELs;

• a new focus on the acquisition of a second language as part of a professional development program for teachers;

• creation of extracurricular events geared towards ELs and promoting inclusion of ELs in current extracurricular events;

• increased parent involvement to improve EL instruction in schools; and

• implementation of opportunities and events designed to create a low-stress atmosphere to encourage parents to become active participants in the schools.
Administrators also identified that participation of all stakeholders was necessary to improve EL instruction. Administrators’ suggestions included

- involving parents in their children’s education, especially since many of them do not speak English and place great trust in our schools;
- hiring of culturally diverse teachers to connect with the diverse community in the city;
- creating opportunities to make parents feel connected to the school; and
- inviting parents into the school through comfortable activities, as a necessary step to bridge the gap or divide that may exist with parents or schools.

**Discussion of Findings in Relation to Theoretical Framework**

Transformative learning was the theoretical framework for this research effort because of its focus on adult learning. The key tenets from this theory that aligned with this study included frames of reference, communicative learning, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection.

The Massachusetts Department of Education posted the syllabus and handbook that detailed the SEI endorsement course’s various components. These documents called for the improvement of EL instruction through modeling, teaching practice improvement, and feedback. The syllabus called for collaboration among all teachers to support ELs. These practices led to the use of TLT as a lens to examine this course and EL instruction. Elements of this theory were present in the course’s actual learning environment but were also seen in changes to instruction, administrator involvement, mindset shifts, and changes that went beyond teaching and learning.

Adult learning, collaboration, and reflection were observed in every phase of the data collected for this research. Research data examination led to three key findings:

1. The SEI course contained strong takeaways, and there was targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction.
2. EL instruction was headed in the correct direction, but continued and focused change was needed to improve professional development, instruction, and supports in place to educate ELs.

3. A shift in mindset leading to changes that went beyond teaching and learning.

Mezirow’s (1997) and Cranton’s (1992) work clearly summarized TPT and its possible role in adult education. Comparing the findings from this research to these works clearly identifies how this theory is present in each of the research findings.

For Mezirow (1997), this type of learning must result in a change in the way the learner views a particular subject, group, person, or idea, which leads to transforming habits of mind so the learner can remain aware of biases toward other cultures. The four learning processes involved with transformative adult learning include: (1) elaborating on an existing point of view, (2) establishing new points of view, (3) transforming our points of view, and (4) transforming our habits of mind (p. 7).

Transforming points of view was a key takeaway from Mezirow (1997), as it can be seen in all research findings. Implementation of strategies, redesigning lesson plans, and working to understand ELs needs all stood out as teachers and administrators transforming their points of view about educating ELs. This transformation can be seen in the suggestions for improvements to the course, instruction and future professional development all participants provided.

Finally, the changes that went beyond teaching and learning clearly relate to transforming point of view and transforming habits of mind. This mindset shift was driven by the knowledge and experiences gained from this course. Data clearly showed how participants used that knowledge to better understand their EL students and then use that understanding to work to create the best learning environment to support all student needs.
Cranton (1992) helped to identify the relationship between transformative learning and teacher education. She sought to define methods educators could readily employ to support the concept of transformative knowledge. Methods included recognizing assumptions that act as constraints, challenging learners with activities, providing guidance and sources to address them, supporting learners in this effort by encouraging them to question assumptions, guiding revision of assumptions, and creating an environment that supports this effort (p. 151-152). Cranton (1992) also focused on moving beyond self-directed learning toward transformative knowledge, which she deemed necessary for learners to examine their values, beliefs, expectations and basic assumptions, as these can inhibit, conflict with and prevent learning. For her this process was daunting for educators, as it required an environment in which learners could reflect on their assumptions (Cranton, 1992).

This work directly applied TPT to teacher education, and multiple components of Cranton’s (1992) research were evident in the research findings. An examination of takeaways and targeted implementation showed that teachers had examined their own identities and those of their students in the course: teachers described improvements needed for the course and the creation of additional learning opportunities to improve EL instruction.

Participants’ focus on changes necessary to improve EL instruction and teacher professional development indicated a level of reflection among these participants: these educators were examining and revising assumptions and working to help the district create an EL-supportive environment. This was seen when the participants described the course environment, changes needed to various parts of the course, missed opportunities, and possible future professional development.
Changes that went beyond teaching and learning displayed how these participants examined their values, beliefs, expectations and basic assumptions as Cranton (1992) described this process. Parts of this examination were seen in all participants’ answers as they identified increased supports for ELs and changes that went beyond just teaching to include ownership of students and working to understand ELs. The application of TLT for this examination of the SEI endorsement course directly relates to the learning environment created for teachers within this course. It also applies to the knowledge teachers took from this course to change instruction, understand ELs, and drive a culture of inclusion in their schools and within the district for ELs.

**Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Literature**

The literature examined as part of this research effort focused on: (1) Massachusetts’ policies; (2) successful EPD, SEI courses, and educator support efforts; (3) current practices in schools that are providing successful, positive learning environments for all students; and (4) transformative learning within EPD. The examination of policies painted a picture of the educational environment within Massachusetts schools but will not be included for purposes of examining the findings. The other three areas were seen throughout the research findings and provide strong evidence-based research to support them.

**Strong takeaways and targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction.** The literature described changes to EPD, use of consultants, collaboration, and examination of various programs.

Batt (2010) concluded that schools are investing many resources into EL professional development but questioned whether teachers were given the support needed to reach their full potential. For this training to be worthwhile, teacher’s knowledge of the SIOP model must
translate into practice. Cognitive coaching is a cost-effective way to ensure the district’s return on its professional development investments (p. 1005).

Burke’s (2013) research identified that the inclusion of consultants to support learning opportunities, inter-teacher collaboration and hands-on experiences gave teachers a different type of EPD, and that this program went beyond telling teachers what to do to provide the supports that enabled teachers to create curricula and activities with support from others (p. 259).

Gravett (2004) conducted a TLT-informed action research project to examine educators’ ability to change from a teacher-centered approach to a learning-centered dialogic one (p. 259). The results showed that changes in teaching perspectives could be altered through a process incorporating the TLT, and that action research with the TLT could be used in education.

Johnson & Fargo’s (2010) mixed-methods longitudinal study examined how middle-school science teachers’ involvement with a transformative professional development (TPD) model changed instructional practices and student learning. The authors identified how the TPD program allowed teachers and professional development providers to construct their activities (p. 23) and let teachers build supportive relationships, study effective learning strategies, and work within a safe learning environment that was crucial for teachers to support their peers’ EPD.

Pawan’s (2008) research question examined whether effective EL instruction was similar to effective instruction for all students. These findings indicated: (1) cultural competency must be a part of a teacher’s toolbox for building relationship with students; (2) educators rarely use cultural scaffolding; (3) literacy instruction is important for ELs; (4) EL instruction must involve cross-cultural relationships with students; and (5) professional development programs targeted to help teachers work with EL students are necessary (Pawan, 2008).

Tellez & Manthey (2015) findings did not identify a superior instructional approach but
suggested that the quality of the programs was crucial to student success. Four language-teaching program components identified as essential were: (1) staff capacity to address EL needs, (2) school-wide focus on EL instruction, (3) shared responsibility among all staff regarding EL instruction, and (4) an ongoing data-driven assessment of any EL program.

**Findings indicate that we are headed in the correct direction, but continued and focused change is necessary to improve professional development, instruction and supports in place to educate ELs.** The themes that supported this finding from the research included: (1) the course was seen as a positive but flawed endeavor, (2) instructors drove the classroom environment, (3) online learning environments presented challenges but possible future learning opportunities, (4) missed opportunities, and (5) course activities provided more collaboration than modeling. Literature covered creating high-quality teachers, technology and relationships among teachers.

Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009) examined multiple years of EPD to identify the requirements for high-quality teacher learning environments that included clear guidance on educating ELs and understanding how they acquired knowledge. Dove & Honigsfeld (2010) called for collaboration and co-teaching between EL and mainstream teachers, to better support educators’ professional development. DelliCarpini (2014) identified this collaborative teaching model’s positive effect on students. Participating students and teachers both wanted the model included in teacher education programs (p. 138).

Forte & Blouin (2016) focused on an online learning environment to examine the connection among educational goals, sociocultural awareness, and critical discussion within that environment (p. 782). Recommendations from this study focused on careful selection of texts
and assignments for online programs, along with the need for motivated, self-directed learners, to realize transformative learning more fully.

Kitchenham (2006) examined whether teachers had undergone perspective change based on their use of educational technology. Results showed perspective transformation of teachers when they engaged with educational technology, owing to disorienting dilemmas that occurred when working with it. These dilemmas led participants to question their assumptions about learning, and participants used discussions of technology to question their frames of reference, habits of mind and worldviews (p. 223). The researcher concluded that critical self-examination resulted in better mindsets for learning and EPD (Kitchenham, 2006).

Pawan & Craig (2011) examined EL and content-area teachers’ opinions about education, focusing on the effect of those opinions on teachers’ ability to collaborate; teacher collaboration was necessary to support ELs, and this study revealed commonalities and differences between ELs’ and content-area teachers’ viewpoints (p. 293). Pawan & Ortloff (2011) examined teachers’ perceptions of collaboration between EL and content-area teachers, focusing on factors affecting such collaboration as well as what transpired when these teachers did collaborate. The study identified key personnel opportunities for collaboration, tensions and conflicts in collaboration, and successful activities that fostered collaboration between EL and content-area teachers.

Shift in mindset that led to changes that went beyond teaching and learning. The themes that drove this finding included: (1) shift in mindset, (2) district-supported but school-owned, (3) foundational changes to EL instruction, and (4) changes that go beyond just teaching and learning. The literature examined reflection, discussions, mentors and supports for educators.

King’s (2004) study of EPD emphasized reflective practice and dialogue, reaffirming use of the TLT as a frame of reference by which to examine the efficacy of EPD (King, 2004).
Stressing that adult learners may begin to examine their own values, beliefs and assumptions when allowed to reflect on their learning, the author identified this shift in thinking as an emergence of transformational learning (p. 155). This study examined a professional development environment of transformative learning for educators. The trends observed in these students’ transformational change included a more inclusive view of the world, themselves and others. King (2004) called for recognition of facilitator and learner responsibilities, examination of institutions that provide EPD, and identification of the learner’s responsibility (p. 170-171).

Lee & Brett’s (2015) qualitative case study examined whether teacher-to-teacher discussions showed how their perspectives changed during the author’s EPD course. Perspective changes during this process included reconsidering authoritative discourses, further examining the limitations of top-down education, receptivity to the teachers’ voices, and the revelation of internal dialogues of participants during these discussions to better understand how to create better learning opportunities and environments for ELs (p. 81).

Markos (2012) conducted a qualitative teacher study of her 15-week state-mandated SEI course, which used guided reflection to enable pre-service teachers to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about ELs. She raised concerns about teacher preparation programs for ELs that de-emphasized teacher beliefs about ELs and their responsibility for educating them (p. 40).

Naidoo & Kirch (2016) focused on offering a teacher professional development model that combined reflection and teaching. The authors identified the need for teacher educators to provide environments and tools needed for this learning, in order to incorporate meaningful learning experiences within teacher certification courses.

Ross et al. (2011) examined Teacher Leadership for School Improvement (TLSI), a graduate program designed for practicing educators to mentor and support the development of
master teachers, teacher leaders and teacher researchers (p. 1214). Findings indicated that teachers believed they had transformed their habits of mind and frames of reference for both teaching and leadership (Ross et al., 2011, p. 1217).

Servage (2008) contended that transformative learning could enhance the understanding of the value of the PLC. He claimed that the inclusion of transformative learning in PLCs would elevate them from social learning environments to ones based on a communicative framework. By tapping the center of beliefs or values detrimental to schools and student learning, this process would help create a collaborative environment in schools but would also necessitate the examination of the leadership required to support this effort (Servage, 2008).

**Implications of the Findings to Professional Practice**

This research effort was designed for teachers, principals and district leaders. We are encountering a changing population of students and never-ending policies from the state and federal level. Providing a voice to the people who are doing the work will hopefully provide the assurance that people are listening and willing to support them through these challenges.

Two clear implications for this study are: (1) overview of the course and changes to instruction, and (2) changes in mindset based on new learning. When this district or other districts examine these findings, they must identify ways to build on the training we provide teachers. Their voice needs to drive changes to professional development and student supports. The second implication is based on the idea that new knowledge helped to shift the mindset of the participants. When this district or other districts examine this research, they need to notice the changes that took place beyond just teaching and learning, which must become part of any protocol used to examine new learning and how it affects staff. This examination will lead to further efforts to improve the learning environment for everyone within our schools.
Conclusion

This study examined the learning environment within the SEI endorsement course, changes to EL instruction, and district supports for ELs and gathered information from multiple sources to better understand the course and how it has affected the district examined. Five research questions guided this study:

1. How do educators describe the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI endorsement course?

2. How did the SEI endorsement course help to create a learning environment that facilitated awareness and examination of teachers’ identities, assumptions, and perspectives about educating EL students?

3. How did the learning environment provide opportunities for collaboration, modeling of instructional practices, and self-reflection?

4. How were the participant’s instructional practices affected by the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI course?

5. How do you feel the district or school assisted, supported and contributed to your learning in the course and implementation of components of the course into your instruction?

The researcher implemented a qualitative case study that gathered data from teachers and administrators through surveys and face-to-face interviews. Twenty-four teachers completed the survey, and seven took part in the interview process, along with four administrators. Data from the surveys and interviews were analyzed to uncover fourteen themes that ultimately led to the three findings taken from this research:
1. The SEI course contained strong takeaways, and there was targeted implementation of instructional supports for EL instruction.

2. EL instruction was headed in the correct direction, but continued and focused change was needed to improve professional development, instruction, and supports in place to educate ELs.

3. A shift in mindset leading to changes that went beyond teaching and learning.

These three findings all relate back to the key tenets of TLT and the literature reviewed in this research. Furthermore, the findings could be both the blueprint for examining future professional development endeavors and a potential catalyst for creating conversations about the way we support and train educators. The identification of shifts in mindset could provide an additional pathway to shifting educators’ focus from just teaching and learning to a more whole-child approach for all of our learners.

**Significance of This Research Effort**

**Recommendations based on research.** Teachers must be given the same learning opportunities and environment they work tirelessly to provide to all students. Worthwhile learning experiences must be created to address the issues educators are encountering in the classroom. There are a variety of supports and programs designed to support educators, but the way they are presented and used must be examined.

Learning must build on our educators’ knowledge and experience so they can use that knowledge and experience to improve schools. Educators throughout the country possess valuable experience and knowledge but must be given a proper learning environment for working, learning and growing collaboratively so they can translate their experience and knowledge into action.
**New knowledge gained from research.** Approximately eighty-three percent of the survey participants said the course’s vocabulary module helped them define their roles as EL teachers. Teachers and administrators clearly did more than just complete the course because of a state mandate. They worked to execute strategies, reflected on changes needed for the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Endorsement (SEI) course to be more successful, and identified missed opportunities that could support more efforts to educate ELs. These included more collaboration with others, creating a database of lesson plans and working with others to improve instruction.

New knowledge created a sense of ownership and accountability among the participants. Teachers identified the need to understand the stories of their students, stating that all educators must take ownership of ELs and expressed a sense of confidence and success in supporting these learners inside and outside of the classroom. Administrators supported these statements by observing lessons and identifying confidence, awareness and responsibility in teachers as they implemented the strategies taken from the SEI course.

The research indicates that the educators examined in this study have the capacity and willingness to incorporate new knowledge into their EL instruction. This was identified in the data with the implementation of new learning strategies, the examination of student data, and the focus on understanding ELs. Teachers continually returned to the idea that this new knowledge gave them the framework for striving to understand and support their students. Many seemed eager to see success, and that eagerness must be channeled into building on this training effort.

School-wide initiatives were seen in the form of outreach to parents, extracurricular activities, and new ideas for recruiting a diverse staff. Teachers discussed their efforts to learn another language, while administrators discussed the direction the district must take to support
all ELs. This new knowledge seemed to focus all study participants on identifying the changes that had to occur and the people responsible for making them happen.

**Importance of research and findings.** To support a changing student population, namely ELs, schools must become communities of teachers and learners, with the goal to make every part of everyday a learning opportunity for every student and teacher. To do so, we must examine how we as adult learners apply the knowledge gained from these learning opportunities. This requires involving more stakeholders in conversations about what must be done to support all learners. This shift in thinking is clearly necessary, based on the evidence this study presents about how new knowledge can be applied to create a positive learning environment in schools.

**Validity**

All questions about validity center on the research effort’s trustworthiness. The idea of triangulation guided its setup. Three separate data sources were seen as vital to properly gather information about this course and any changes to instruction. That is why the survey, teacher interviews and administrator interviews were separate data sources.

The survey was done as anonymous to recruit participants who may not have wanted to attach their names to their responses, but it also kept the data separate from the teachers who volunteered to participate in the interviews after completing the survey. The implementation of these data sources was vital to this research effort, as their use ensured the validity of the research findings.

**Limitations**

Understanding limitations is done with the focused goal of continually examining and improving the trustworthiness of this research effort. The first limitation had to do with technology issues within the examined district during the research. The district experienced
expansive outages during the online survey. Some educators discussed these issues during the interviews, but this issue was unfortunately not resolved. The survey was not extended, because some of the issues were resolved in a timely manner.

The second limitation had to do with the communication of the research effort and goals to teachers within the examined district. Emails were sent to building administrators, teachers and union representatives, but it might have been helpful to provide more time for union leaders to communicate the study to teachers. Any future research endeavors will need to focus on this portion of the data collection process to increase participant involvement.

The third limitation was based on my role as an administrator in the district examined. The research included only middle school teachers, because I have no role in evaluating, hiring and terminating those employees. There was no real option to look at other districts, because policies within my district prohibited that. But future research should be expanded to include other districts to gain more insight into global efforts to support ELs.

The fourth limitation of this study was its sole focus on one school district, which builds off of the third limitation and my role in the district. I was able to get permission for completing the research in my district based on a letter that detailed the study’s scope and purpose. The examination of other similar districts will create stronger, broader findings.

The fifth limitation focuses on the involvement of only educators in this research effort. No students, parents or community members were involved in this phase of the research. Providing a voice to other participants could provide more data needed to support ELs in all phases of their education.

The final limitation involved the survey’s rollout and timing. The research took place during May and June as educators focused on closing out the school year. This could have
prevented some from participating in the survey and then volunteering for the interview portion. Administrators seemed stressed and pressed for time.

**Future Research Endeavors**

Possible future research endeavors must focus more on how educators think about themselves, their students, and their roles in supporting students. The findings produced one glaring surprise centered on the emerging changing mindset of teachers and administrators. This theme provided the most potential for future research as a way to look beyond mere teaching strategies as ways to support ELs inside and outside of the classroom.

One idea might be to examine the implementation of training focused solely on the mindset of the people working with our students. Berger (2003) identified that high expectations are only a start, but it is the culture that drives achievement. He identified how students will enter a school and work to become part of the culture.

**Growth Mindset**

Meritocracy allows people to achieve success in ways proportionate to their talents and abilities (May, 2006). The growth mindset allows for the creation of a learning environment that confronts this meritocracy or hidden curriculum. Dweck (2014) argued that mindsets include beliefs about human attributes and the growth mindset is focused on the idea that basic abilities can be developed through hard work, good strategies and mentoring. This focus on the growth mindset can be the overarching theme to addressing teacher and educational leader mindsets.

Teacher mindsets impacts effective practice. Teachers have fixed mindsets when they refuse to acknowledge that their instructional practices can be changed. This mindset clearly defines the ineffectiveness of educators who resist changes to their teaching while remaining ineffective no matter what supports they receive (Dweck, 2014). A clear departure from this
mentality was the foundation for the growth mindset. Teachers must be viewed as capable of improvement, regardless of their natural ability. Every teacher can improve his or her teaching abilities but must value student learning over risk-free teaching and their reputation as a good teacher (Dweck, 2014).

**Educational leader mindsets.** School leaders must understand that all educators must work to respond to ELs’ cultural and social needs. Teachers must position themselves to be a critical support for these learners and realize that teacher approaches matter to EL students (Yoon, 2008). This school environment requires effective, supportive leaders for that purpose.

Hoerr (2014) described the difference between power and authority when discussing the new role of a leader in education. Power was defined as the ability to tell someone what to do, but authority requires gaining consent and support when making decisions: “Authority doesn’t come from a title, degree, or position. It comes because others believe in us and trust us” (p. 86). A school leader’s challenge is to gain the trust and support of staff so that important changes to the ways ELs are taught will be implemented.

**Personal Reflections**

Following her interview, a teacher stopped me on the way out the door and asked, “What are you planning to do with all of this information?” She then asked if I thought this would just be a paper or something the district might actually use. Those questions led me to reflect about why I chose this problem of practice and what I was planning to do with the findings.

This research was designed to motivate the voice of the people working to support ELs to examine the training, identify changes to instruction, and discuss future changes needed within the district. Originally, this research effort sought only to examine the learning environment within the course. The theory behind this intent was more of a program review of this course and
not an examination of teaching and policies within the included district. This eventually expanded to examining changes to instruction and next steps needed within the examined district. It is these last two areas that created opportunities to review takeaways from the course with teachers and administrators.

To answer that teacher’s question, I must strive to understand how to use the findings from this research. I could do so by focusing on the professional development we create for teachers. One clear example of an opportunity nearly missed was the discovery of a shift in perspective among the participants based on the new knowledge gained during the course. This shift in thinking among participants was discovered during the interviews. This data allowed for a focus on the way teacher and administrators think which identified a shift in their thinking.

This course gave people not only the strategies and the tools needed to support EL learners, but also the needed background and knowledge to change their perspectives. This change was evident in the data and involved educators changing the way they think about supporting ELs. This was evident in efforts to support students outside of the classroom: administrators opening doors to parents, teachers proposing learning a second language, teachers discussing extracurricular and community activities, administrators adding events to promote involvement in extracurricular activities for ELs, etc.

This is what other districts can take from this study: We cannot change their EL curricula, but we can empower people with the knowledge needed to support ELs. This will drive me to do more research into this change so other communities can share their gains, struggles and ideas for creating more inclusive school environments. This will also drive me to continue to be a scholarly practitioner, because this research has shown me that we must include the ideas and opinions of others if we are to ensure an effective learning environment for all students.
References


http://doi.org/10.1080/09650790400200248


http://doi.org/10.1080/09500780802152788


Appendix A
Letter of Intent to Superintendent

Dear Mr. Foresteire,

Thank you for the opportunity to conduct my research for Northeastern University in your school district. I am extremely excited about the opportunity to work with you, your school leaders and teachers. My experiences working with others in Everett has continually reinforced my belief that this district is committed to creating a positive learning community for students, teachers and parents. This district’s educators are continually creating effective lessons and assessments designed with the goal of providing students with the skills and knowledge to become successful learners. For these reasons, I would like to conduct my examination of the Massachusetts SEI endorsement course with educators from the Everett public schools.

This study examines the curriculum and learning experiences of educators in this SEI course, focusing on the learning environment created for participating educators. Interviews and surveys with teachers and administrators will be used to explore and understand these educators’ perspectives of this Massachusetts SEI course. This study is not designed or intended to examine if the SEI course improved the achievement of EL students.

As with any academic research involving human subjects, protection of their confidentiality and anonymity is of the utmost importance. This is an academic study, and not institutional research that looks to examine the practices and policies of the district. The district’s anonymity and confidentiality is of the utmost importance and will be maintained and protected throughout all parts of this research effort.

The reasoning behind interviewing teachers and administrators in Everett stems from the fact that this course is not part of any performance evaluation and is not a district initiative, but rather a state mandate for both teachers and administrators to maintain their Massachusetts’s educator’s licensure. The study will help address the efficacy of the course to address EL education in this particular context. All participant and study data from their identities to their responses will be kept completely confidential and anonymous in accordance with correct research practices.

Thank you for your support and please contact me with any questions or concerns,
William Donohue
donohue.w@husky.neu.edu

I agree to give permission to William Donohue to conduct interviews and a survey with teachers and administrators in my district for the purpose of examining the SEI Teacher Endorsement Course.

_________________________________________________        _____________________
Signature                                            Date
Appendix B

Email to Principals and Union Representative

To Whom It May Concern,

This email is in alignment with the statement of intent to research signed by the Superintendent.

This study examines the curriculum and learning experiences of teachers in this SEI course. Interviews and surveys with teachers and administrators will be utilized to explore and understand educators’ perspectives of the Massachusetts SEI course. The questions were created to identify common themes among the participants to gain a better understanding of the learning environment within this course. This study is not designed to examine if the SEI course improved the achievement of EL students as it focuses on the learning environment created for teachers within the course.

My experiences working with others in Everett has continually reinforced my belief that this district is committed to creating a positive learning community for students, teachers and parents. The teaching staff in Everett is committed to creating effective lessons and assessments designed with the goal of providing your student with the skills and knowledge to succeed as learners. For these reasons, I would like to conduct my examination of the Massachusetts SEI endorsement course in Everett. My goal for including administrators and the Everett Teacher’s association is complete transparency.

As with any research, there are possible benefits and potential risks. Participant’s anonymity is of the utmost importance for this study and participant information will not be shared as part of this study. This is a purely academic study that does not look to examine any district policies.

My goal is that your guidance and support throughout this research effort will help to mitigate those risks to teachers and school leaders. The reasoning behind interviewing teachers in Everett stems from the fact that this course is not part of their evaluation and is not a district initiative. It is a mandate from the state for both teachers and administrators to maintain their Massachusetts’s educator’s licenses. All participants will not have their responses shared with any other administrators and their names will be kept out of this research effort.

Thank you for your support and please contact me with any questions or concerns,

William Donohue
donohue.w@husky.neu.edu
Appendix C

Recruitment Email Survey

Hello,

My name is William Donohue and I am a graduate student in Northeastern University’s Doctor of Education program. I will be conducting research for my dissertation and would really appreciate your involvement in the process. Every protocol for this research effort is designed to protect your confidentiality. Your confidentiality is of the utmost importance and pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants for all documents.

My research seeks to examine the curriculum and learning experiences within the Massachusetts SEI teacher endorsement course and the effect it has had on instruction. I am planning to conduct a study of teachers and administrators in Everett and am seeking research participants. Participation in this phase of the research effort will consist of:

- Completion of a twenty-minute online anonymous survey that will provide an option for you to participate in face-to-face interviews.

You are being asked to complete this survey because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about teacher professional development in this district. I can assure you that all responses will be confidential.

At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to volunteer for the interview portion of this research effort. If you leave your name and contact information on the survey, I will contact you from Donohue.w@husky.neu.edu with the next steps and additional information. Your participation is entirely voluntary. I will not know who did or did not complete the survey unless you list your contact information there.

Please contact me at donohue.w@husky.neu.edu with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your support and please contact me with any questions or concerns,

William Donohue
Appendix D

Recruitment Email for Teacher Interview

Dear [Prospect Participant],

Thank you for completing the online survey and volunteering to participate in the next phase of this research effort.

Participation in this phase of the research effort will consist of:
- One sixty-minute interview which requires that consent forms be signed and in my possession before the interviews can begin. This process will involve the completion of the participant demographic forms.
- Review of the transcribed interviews to make any corrections and add any other thoughts.

Interviews will be utilized to explore and understand educators’ perspectives of this course. The questions were created to identify common themes among the participants to gain a better understanding of the learning environment within this course. This study is not designed to examine if the SEI course improved the achievement of EL students as it focuses on the learning environment created for teachers within the course and changes to the way EL students are educated.

All parts of your participation and any information gathered during this research effort is confidential as part of this academic research. This research does not look to examine the policies and procedures in the district. All parts of this process will be scheduled to accommodate your needs and participation is completely voluntary.

Please contact me at donohue.w@husky.neu.edu with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your support and please contact me with any questions or concerns,

William Donohue
Appendix E

Recruitment Email Administrators

Dear [Prospect Participant],

My name is William Donohue and I am a graduate student in Northeastern University’s Doctor of Education program. I will be conducting research for my dissertation and would really appreciate your involvement in the process. Every protocol for this research effort is designed to protect your confidentiality. Your confidentiality is of the utmost importance and pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants for all documents.

My research seeks to examine the curriculum and learning experiences within the Massachusetts SEI teacher endorsement course and the effect it has had on instruction. I am planning to conduct a study of teachers and administrators in Everett and am seeking research participants. Participation in the research effort will consist of:

- One sixty-minute interview which requires that consent forms be signed and in my possession before the interviews can begin. This process will involve the completion of the participant demographic forms.
- Review of the transcribed interviews to make any corrections and add any other thoughts.

Interviews with administrators will be utilized to explore and understand the course’s effect on instruction for EL students. The questions were created to identify common themes among the participants to gain a better understanding of any changes.

All parts of your participation and any information gathered during this research effort is confidential as part of this academic research. This research does not look to examine the policies and procedures in the district. All parts of this process will be scheduled to accommodate your needs and participation is completely voluntary.

Please contact me at donohue.w@husky.neu.edu with any questions or if you wish to volunteer for this study. If you do not volunteer for this study, you will not be contacted again.

Thank you for your support and please contact me with any questions or concerns,

William Donohue
Appendix F
Survey Questions

Request to Participate in Research

We would like to invite you to participate in a web-based online survey. The survey is part of a research study whose purpose is to determine what learning experiences existed for educators during the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Teacher Endorsement (SEI) course and how this course changed instruction for EL students.

The decision to participate in this research project is voluntary.

You are under no obligation to participate in this study and are free to withdraw at any time if you choose to participate. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time and your anonymity will not be compromised in any way. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the web-based online survey, you can stop at any time.

Your part in this study is anonymous to the researcher(s).

Confidentiality is the main focus for the participants who take part in this research effort. Committed protection of research participant confidentiality will be present throughout all phases of the study.

Do you agree to the terms of this survey? By clicking yes, you consent to be part of this confidential, academic research effort. If no, please exit survey and thank you for your time.

Based on your experience in the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Teacher Endorsement (SEI) course, please answer the items below.
1. There opportunities to examine your own assumptions and perspectives about educating English Language (EL) students? #5 having the most impact on teaching EL students and #1 having the least impact.

2. There were opportunities to examine your own experiences and background in comparison to your EL students? #5 having the most impact on teaching EL students and #1 having the least impact.

3. What components of the course helped you to define your role as a teacher of EL students?
   a. WIDA Overview – Examples include WIDA Can Do Descriptors
   b. Diversity Conversation – Module A
   c. Vocabulary Module
   d. Reading Module
   e. Writing Module
   f. Strategy Implementation Reports from each Module
   g. Capstone Project and Presentation

4. How did the course change the way you work to support EL students in your classroom?

5. There were sufficient opportunities for collaboration with other participants in the course. #5 having the greatest impact on teaching EL students and #1 having the least impact.

6. There sufficient opportunities for modeling of instruction with other participants in the course. #5 having the most impact on teaching EL students and #1 having the least impact.
7. To what degree have you applied the knowledge gained from this course to your own teaching practices? #5 having the most impact on teaching EL students and #1 having the least impact.

8. The district, as a whole, is heading in the correct direction as a district with providing support for EL students. #5 having the most impact on teaching EL students and #1 having the least impact.

9. What other supports or training do you feel would be beneficial to improve your instruction of EL students?

10. Please rate the overall effectiveness of this SEI course in terms of improving your instruction of EL students. #5 having the most impact on teaching EL students and #1 having the least impact.

11. Please indicate if you would like to continue to be a part of this study and participate in an interview by leaving your Everett email address. Please remember that your participation and response will be kept completely confidential as academic research.

Thank you for your time and participation in this academic research. If you have chosen to share your email, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to interview you on this subject matter.

Thanks again for your time and participation.
Appendix G
Unsigned Consent Form

Unsigned Consent Document for Web-Based Online Survey
Northeastern University College of Professional Studies
Doctor of Education Program

45 CFR 46.117(c) In certain instances, an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects. In cases in which the documentation requirement is waived, the IRB may require the investigator to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research.

Only the IRB can waive or modify the consent process. Researchers are not authorized to make this decision. Please modify the following information as necessary.

Northeastern University, Department of: Professional Studies
Name of Investigator(s): Principal Investigator: Dr. Michael Dean, Student Researcher: William Donohue

Request to Participate in Research
We would like to invite you to participate in a web-based online survey. The survey is part of a research study whose purpose is to determine what learning experiences existed for educators during the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Teacher Endorsement (SEI) course and how this course changed instruction for EL students. This will include an exploration, comprehension, and full understanding of the learning environment of the teacher endorsement course for educating EL students through the experiences of the participants. This study will also seek to understand how this course impacted the instructional practices through the experiences of teachers and administrators in the classroom.

This survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. We are asking you to participate in this study because you have completed the Massachusetts structured English endorsement course for educators.

The decision to participate in this research project is voluntary.
You are under no obligation to participate in this study and are free to withdraw at any time if you choose to participate. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time and your anonymity will not be compromised in any way.
You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the web-based online survey, you can stop at any time.

The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal.
This is minimal foreseeable risk or discomfort from participating in this study.
My role and supervision of the staff presents a risk when conducting research. Whether or not you participate is entirely up to you. If you do not participate, you will not lose any rights or privileges afforded you by this school district.

**There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study.**
However, potential benefits to others may include improved professional development for EL education, better supports for teachers to meet the needs of a diverse student population and an improved learning environment for all students.

**You will not be paid for your participation in this study.**

**Your part in this study is anonymous to the researcher(s).**
Confidentiality is the main focus for the participants who take part in this research effort. Committed protection of research participant confidentiality will be present throughout all phases of the study.
However, because of the nature of web-based surveys, it is possible that respondents could be identified by the IP address or other electronic record associated with the response. Neither the researcher nor anyone involved with this survey will be capturing those data. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being affiliated with this project. Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner.

**If you have any questions regarding electronic privacy,** please feel free to contact Mark Nardone, NU’s Director of Information Security via phone at 617-373-7901, or via email at privacy@neu.edu.

**If you have any questions about this study,** please feel free to contact the student researcher, William Donohue at 617-290-7155 (cell) or by email at donohue.w@husky.neu.edu. You can also contact the principal investigator, Dr. Michael Dean at m.dean@northeastern.edu.

**If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant,** please contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

**By clicking on the survey link below [Or the “accept” button below] you are indicating that you consent to participate in this study. Please print out a copy of this consent form for your records.**

http://_____________________________________________________

Thank you for your time.
William Donohue
Appendix H

Teacher Interview Protocol and Questions

Teacher Interview Protocol

Introduction: Thank you for your time and agreeing to be a participant in this study. I’m a doctoral student at Northeastern University and this interview is part of my dissertation work.

Overview of the Research: This study examines the curriculum and learning experiences of teachers in this SEI course. Through this study, we hope to gain more insight into the learning environment within the Massachusetts’s SEI course and discuss changes to instructional practices.

Interview: This interview should not take longer than thirty minutes. Before we begin the interview, let’s please review a few things:

All responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. Do I have your permission to record this interview? I will also be taking written notes.

I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts. I can send you the transcript from our interview so that you can add, delete, or modify whatever you wish before I proceed with analysis. All interview data will be kept completely confidential and secured until completion of the study, when it will be destroyed. Protecting your confidential participation is of primary importance.

If at any point a question makes you uncomfortable or you need me to rephrase, please just let me know. This interview should last about thirty minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. Do you have any questions at this time?

[Review consent form and obtain participant’s signature]

Thank you and the interview will begin now.
Teacher Interview Questions

1. Thinking of yourself as an adult learner, would you characterize the teaching and learning within this SEI course as teacher centered or student centered? *Why would you say that?*

2. If you were to redesign the classroom environment and online modules, what would you change if you could? What positive aspects of the course would you preserve?

3. The survey highlighted certain components of the course including the vocabulary, reading and writings modules. What strategies were you able to take from these learning experiences to better support EL students?

4. What top two learning experiences provided an opportunity for the examination of your own assumptions and perspectives about educating EL students? *How did these help your practice as a teacher of EL students? If not, can you expand on why or why not?*

5. What two learning experiences from this SEI course promoted more examination of teacher’s perspectives and assumptions about educating EL students? *What would you change or add, if anything?*

6. Can you share two learning experiences from the SEI course that promoted opportunities for modeling of effective instruction? *What would you change or add, if anything?*

7. What two learning experiences from the SEI course provided opportunities for collaboration with other educators? *What would you change or add, if anything?*

8. In your own practice as a teacher of EL students, what two to three components of the course helped you to define your role as a teacher of EL students? *How did they work to do that? What evidence supports that claim?*
9. From that same mindset of practice, what were the top three things you changed in how you support EL students in the classroom as a result of the course? *Please elaborate on how the course worked to support this effort.*

10. Would you define your work to support EL students as an individual effort or a district supported effort? *How do you feel about that and why?*

11. Thinking across the district, what three specific EL student support improvement opportunities do you feel needs to be addressed as a result of what you learned from the course? *Who do you think needs to be involved in this effort?*

12. Let’s fast forward to five years from now. What would you like to see as the model for educating EL students? *Why should the district move in that direction? Does that align with what you learned in this SEI course?*

Is there anything you would like to discuss that we have not covered during this interview? Thank you for your time and participation. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this SEI course with you today.
Appendix I

Administrator Interview Protocol and Questions

Administrator Interview Protocol

Introduction: Thank you for your time and agreeing to be a participant in this study. I’m a doctoral student at Northeastern University and this interview is part of my dissertation work.

Overview of the Research: This study examines the curriculum and learning experiences of teachers in this SEI course. Through this study, we hope to gain more insight into the learning environment within the Massachusetts’s SEI course and discuss changes to instructional practices.

Interview: This interview should not take longer than thirty minutes. Before we begin the interview, let’s please review a few things:

All responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. Do I have your permission to record this interview? I will also be taking written notes.

I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts. I can send you the transcript for our interview so that you can add, delete, or modify whatever you wish before I proceed with analysis. All interview data will be kept completely confidential and secured until completion of the study, when it will be destroyed. Protecting your confidential participation is of primary importance.

If at any point a question makes you uncomfortable or you need me to rephrase, please just let me know. This interview should last about thirty minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. Do you have any questions at this time?

[Review consent form and obtain participant’s signature]

Thank you and the interview will begin now.
Administrator Interview Questions

1. Based upon your conversations with teachers, would you describe the SEI course as a positive or negative experience for teachers? Explain why.

2. What three components or strategies from the SEI course have you observed being implemented in classrooms?

3. Based on teacher observations conducted since the SEI course was implemented, please use two statements to describe changes you have seen to instruction and supports for EL students. Why did you choose those statements?

4. Do you feel these changes have improved how teachers feel about the increasing number of EL students in their classrooms? Why?

5. What other supports or training do you feel would be necessary to improve the instruction of EL students? Why are these necessary?

6. Would you say your work to support EL students as an individual effort or a district supported effort? How do you feel about that and why?

7. Thinking across the district, what three specific EL student support improvement opportunities do you feel needs to be addressed? Who do you think needs to be involved in this effort?

8. Let’s fast forward to five years from now. What would you like to see as the model for educating EL students? Why should the district move in that direction?

Is there anything you would like to discuss that we have not covered during this interview?

Thank you for your time and participation. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this SEI course with you today.
Appendix J

Informed Consent

Informed Consent for interviews
Northeastern University College of Professional Studies
Doctor of Education Program

Northeastern University, Department of Professional Studies

Name of Investigator(s): Principal Investigator: Dr. Michael Dean, Student Researcher’s name: William Donohue

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
We are requesting your participation in this study because you have completed the Massachusetts Sheltered English Instruction Teacher Endorsement (SEI) course for educators.

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this study is to determine what learning experiences existed for educators during the course and how this course changed instruction for EL students. This will include an exploration, comprehension, and full understanding of the learning environment of the teacher endorsement course for educating EL students through the experiences of the participants. This study will also seek to understand how this course impacted the instructional practices through the experiences of teachers and administrators in the classroom.

What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to complete an interview scheduled to take place during May or June. The interview will consist of an overview, introduction, and questions about the course and changes to instructional practices. These interviews will take place at your school. Each interview will be transcribed by the researcher and emailed to you for corrections and additional thoughts.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
All interviews will take place in locations you choose. No interviews will take place in the student researcher’s assigned workspaces. These interviews should take no longer than 60
minutes. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed, but each participant will be assigned a pseudonym and your name will never be used. No meetings or interviews will take place during the school day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?</th>
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<tr>
<td>This is minimal foreseeable risk or discomfort from participating in this study. My role and supervision of the staff presents a risk when conducting research. By not conducting interviews during work hours and by not requiring your being interviewed at the school where you work, nor in my assigned workspaces, the risk of losing confidentiality is lessened. Whether or not you participate is entirely up to you. If you do not participate, you will not lose any rights or privileges afforded you by this school district.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Will I benefit by being in this research?</th>
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<tr>
<td>There are no direct benefits for participants. However, potential benefits to others may include improved professional development for EL education, better supports for teachers to meet the needs of a diverse student population and an improved learning environment for all students.</td>
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<th>Who will see the information about me?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Committed protection of research participant confidentiality will be present throughout all phases of the study. Pseudomonas will be used through all data collection, analysis, findings and conclusions. A signed consent form will clearly communicate participant confidentiality as a primary importance. The interview script will include a statement of the importance of confidentiality for all the participants. Confidentiality is the main focus for the participants who take part in this research effort. Each participant will be given a pseudonym and the identity key will be kept in a safe at the researcher’s home to be shredded upon completion of the research effort. All interviews, responses and written documents will utilize these pseudonyms. Each interview will be recorded utilizing the Rev Voice Recorder app and be transcribed through this app. All audio recordings, interview notes, questionnaires and reflective journals will be committed to a USB drive located in a safe. Consents forms will be scanned and added as archive files for up to three years after study completion. Only the principal investigator and the researcher will have access to any research data for this study.</td>
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<th>Can I stop my participation in this study?</th>
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<tr>
<td>You are under no obligation to participate in this study and are free to withdraw at any time if you choose to participate. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time and your anonymity will not be compromised in any way.</td>
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</table>

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<th>Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you have any questions, please contact the student researcher, William Donohue at 617-290-7155 (cell) or by email at <a href="mailto:donohue.w@husky.neu.edu">donohue.w@husky.neu.edu</a>. You can also contact Dr. Michael Dean at <a href="mailto:m.dean@northeastern.edu">m.dean@northeastern.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?
If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Will I be paid for my participation?
You will not be paid for participating in this study.

Will it cost me anything to participate?
There will be no financial cost if you choose to participate in this study.

Is there anything else I need to know?
All participants must be a licensed Massachusetts educator and teach one of the following content areas:

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- English Language Arts (ELA)

Participants for the survey will be required to teach one of these content areas within grades 6-12.

I agree to take part in this research.

Signature of person agreeing to take part _______________________________ Date _______________________________

Printed name of person above _______________________________

Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent _______________________________ Date _______________________________

Printed name of person above _______________________________
Table 16

Interview and Survey Question Matrix

Research Question # 1 – How do educators describe the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI Endorsement course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Questions # 4 – Selection of 7 components of the course. What components of the course helped you to define your role as a teacher of EL students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Please rate the overall effectiveness of this SEI course in terms of improving your instruction of EL students. <strong>Likert-Scale Question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Thinking of yourself as an adult learner, would you characterize the teaching and learning within this SEI course as teacher centered or student centered? <em>Why would you say that?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>If you were to redesign the classroom environment and online modules, what would you change if you could? What would you be sure to preserve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>The survey highlighted certain components of the course including the vocabulary, reading and writings modules. What strategies were you able to take from these learning experiences to better support EL students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Based upon your conversations with teachers, would you describe the SEI course as a positive or negative experience for teachers? <em>Explain why.</em></td>
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Research Questions # 2 - How did the SEI endorsement course help to create a learning environment that facilitated awareness and examination of teachers’ identities, assumptions, and perspectives about educating EL students?

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>There were opportunities to examine your own assumptions and perspectives about educating English Language (EL) students. <strong>Likert-Scale Question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>There were opportunities to examine your own experiences and background in comparison to your EL students. <strong>Likert-Scale Question</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Interview What top two learning experiences provided an opportunity for the examination of your own assumptions and perspectives about educating EL students? *How did these help your practice as a teacher of EL students? If not, can you expand on why or why not?*

Teacher What two learning experiences from this SEI course promoted more examination of teacher’s perspectives and assumptions about educating EL students? *What would you change or add, if anything?*

Teacher Interview In your own practice as a teacher of EL students, what two to three components of the course helped you to define your role as a teacher of EL students? *How did they work to do that? What evidence supports that claim?* This question worked to answer both research questions 2 and 4.

Research Question # 3 - How did the learning environment provide opportunities for collaboration, modeling of instructional practices and self-reflection?

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<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>There were sufficient opportunities for collaboration with other participants in the course. <em>Likert-Scale Question</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>There were sufficient opportunities for modeling of instruction with other participants in the course. <em>Likert-Scale Question</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
<td>Can you share two learning experiences from the SEI course that promoted opportunities for modeling of effective instruction? <em>What would you change or add, if anything?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
<td>What two learning experiences from the SEI course provided opportunities for collaboration with other educators? <em>What would you change or add, if anything?</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Research Question # 4 - How were the participant’s instructional practices affected by the learning environment and experiences within the Massachusetts SEI course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>How did the course change the way you work to support EL students in your classroom? <em>Open Ended Question</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey  To what degree have you applied the knowledge gained from this course to your own teaching practices? **Likert-Scale Question**

Teacher  In your own practice as a teacher of EL students, what two to three components of the course helped you to define your role as a teacher of EL students?  *How did they work to do that? What evidence supports that claim?*

Interview  This question worked to answer both research questions 2 and 4

Teacher  From that same mindset of practice, what were the top three things you changed in how you support EL students in the classroom as a result of the course?  *Please elaborate on how the course worked to support this effort.*

Interview  What three components or strategies from the SEI course have you observed being implemented in classrooms?

Administrator  Based on teacher observations conducted since the SEI course was implemented, please use two statements to describe changes you have seen to instruction and supports for EL students.  *Why did you choose those statements?*

Administrator  Do you feel these changes have improved how teachers feel about the increasing number of EL students in their classrooms?  *Why?*

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Research Question # 5 - How did the district or school assist, support and contribute to teachers’ education in the course and integration of its components into their instruction?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>The district, as a whole, is heading in the correct direction with providing support for EL students?  <em>Likert-Scale Questions</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>What other supports or training do you feel would be beneficial to improve your instruction of EL students?  <em>Open Ended Question</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Would you define your work to support EL students as an individual effort or a district supported effort?  <em>Define why you feel that way? How do you feel about that?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Thinking across the district, what three specific EL student support improvement opportunities do you feel needs to be addressed as a result of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
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what you learned from the course? *What do you think needs to be involved in this effort?*

**Teacher Interview**
Let’s fast forward to five years from now. What would you like to see as the model for educating EL students? *Why should the district move in that direction? Does that align with what you learned in this SEI course?*

**Administrator Interview**
What other supports or training do you feel would be necessary to improve the instruction of EL students? *Why are these necessary?*

**Administrator Interview**
Would you say your work to support EL students as an individual effort or a district supported effort? *How do you feel about that and why?*

**Administrator Interview**
Thinking across the district, what three specific EL student support improvement opportunities do you feel needs to be addressed? *Who do you think needs to be involved in this effort?*

**Administrator Interview**
Let’s fast forward to five years from now. What would you like to see as the model for educating EL students? *Why should the district move in that direction?*