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## Perceptions of Teachers towards English Language Learners (ELLs) and Content Accessibility

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## Perceptions of Teachers towards English Language Learners (ELLs) and Content Accessibility

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### Abstract

Teachers need training in order to be adequately prepared to serve English Learners in the general education setting. The consideration of teacher perceptions becomes important when considering designing professional development for teachers of English Learners. The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' perceptions regarding educating students who are English Language Learners (ELLs), teacher training for making content accessible, and teacher willingness to follow through with student success in terms of English Learner achievement. The sample consisted of 79 teachers (25% male and 75% female) from kindergarten through twelfth grade in a rural county in the southeastern United States. Data were collected through a survey and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Study results indicated that about half of the respondents, 45% of primary teachers and 62% of secondary teachers had ever received training for teaching ELLs. Across both elementary and secondary schools, slightly more than half of the teachers (59%) indicated that they felt they had the support needed to work effectively with ELLs. Furthermore, a little less than half of the teachers (39%) felt prepared to work with ELLs. This study highlights areas of potential need in terms of teacher professional development.

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### Introduction

One skill that is vital to student success is that a teacher must possess the ability to differentiate any lesson based on individual student needs (Samson & Collins 2012). In order to make the material being taught understandable to all students, under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, public schools must ensure that English Language Learners (ELLs) can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs without discrimination. This means that all teachers must make the information the rest of the students are learning to be accessible to ELLs. The beauty and challenge of accommodations and modifications is that they are not the same in every situation and are unique to each student. This requires meticulous work on the part of the teacher to determine which accommodation is appropriate in any given situation.

There is no question about the effort required to acquire or teach a new language. There are many challenges that educators and ELLs face when teaching and learning English. ELLs are already struggling psychologically since

they have to learn a new language in a new country and may even have experienced the trauma of leaving everything that is familiar to them to begin a new life away from friends and family (Lin, 2015). Translating one language into another is overwhelming in itself. Thus, doing this in unfamiliar surroundings can make matters worse. Teachers require more training in order to understand how to be able to serve English Learners in the general education setting (Wessels et al., 2017). The new Tennessee Education Policy states that teachers must make content accessible to English Learners, forcing accountability into the classroom to protect all ELL students. Knowing which accommodations are appropriate for each individual student requires further education of teachers. This study focuses specifically on teachers' perceptions regarding ELLs, including how they think their perceptions impact student learning and content accessibility and teacher training.

### **Impact of Teacher Perceptions**

Self-efficacy is one of the most influential factors for language learning and teachers play a vital role in ensuring that students feel empowered and successful (Kim & Shin, 2021; Kosimov, 2021; Raoofi et al., 2012). Students with a higher comfort level of emotional awareness, interpersonal relationships, and problem-solving tend to be more successful in the classroom. In a meta-analysis involving 32 studies, Raoofi et al. (2012) studied how ELLs felt about their ability to be successful as well as factors that affect learners' self-efficacy beliefs in learning a foreign or second language? Self-efficacy was found to be one of the most influential factors for language learning and that teachers play a vital role in ensuring that students feel empowered and are successful. Raoofi et al. (2012) also found significant positive relationships between self-efficacy and three areas of learning styles: emotional awareness, interpersonal relationship, and problem-solving.

Teachers tend to have an influence on students' self-efficacy and motivation to learn. A teacher can have such a strong impact on the success of the students that he or she works with (Herrera-Mosquera & Tovar-Perdomo, 2017). Sometimes, it has nothing to do with the content and everything to do with the relationship the teacher has with that student at that point in his or her life. Herrera-Mosquera and Tovar-Perdomo (2017) stated that teachers also influence the students' commitment, self-discipline, and motivation for learning. Depending on the enthusiasm of the teacher, the students would either respond positively or negatively in terms of motivation for learning. Lack of motivation of ELLs could pose problems for ESL teachers (Ürün et al., 2014). Increasing students' motivation, fostering learner autonomy, and offering variety in class activities that accommodate different learning styles is one-way teachers can be effective in providing instruction to ELLs (Ürün et al., 2014). When students become more interested in the class activities and their own learning, they become more motivated and comprehend what they are hearing or seeing or reading, instead of simply memorizing (Salem, 2017). The degree of importance the teachers place on the subject areas also impact their teaching. When teachers perceive the subject as useful and meaningful to students' lives, students find the subject more relevant and place more value on learning the content (Castro-Garces & Arboleda, 2017).

### **Content Accessibility**

Teaching and preparing materials in order to make content accessible to all students requires knowledge, practice,

and skill. Teacher training and professional development would be useful for learning how to use more appropriate materials in order to differentiate for instruction (Arora et al., 2017; Chong, 2016; Rocchio, 2020). Arora et al. (2017) mention that it is also important to capture ELLs' interest and increase their confidence by making the instruction to be student-centered. Using different techniques such as small talk conversations, role play, skits, group discussions, mock interviews, speeches, and other methods facilitates interest and confidence. Using different techniques creates genuine interest, increased confidence, foster creativity, innovation, and strengthen language command and fluency (Arora et al. 2017). According to Sistani and Hashemian (2016), it is necessary to understand the types of learners each of the ELLs are and to use multiple intelligence-based instruction tailored for each student. Multiple intelligences also positively affect vocabulary learning of English Learners (Sistani & Hashemian, 2016). In the English language classrooms, it is necessary to create lessons that will reach each of the different types of learners. This would require instructors to get to know their students, value them, and understand what type of instruction makes them learn best.

The problem with teachers not following through with making content accessible may be due to poorly structured professional development or lack of appropriate training. However, teacher learning also depends on individual background knowledge and skills, interaction with the curriculum and other teachers, willingness to modify the curriculum, and ability to implement the PD content to their classrooms. Therefore, individual qualities and backgrounds play an essential role in teacher effectiveness and student success (Dingle et al., 2011; Haynes, 2007).

The purpose of this study is to address the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of primary and secondary teachers regarding making class content accessible for their ELL students?
2. How willing are the teachers to make content accessible?
3. What is the current status of training that teachers received regarding to making content accessible to English Learners?

## **Methodology**

### **Sample**

The study participants are the teachers that serve kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in a rural county of Tennessee. There are three high schools and one alternative high school in the county with approximately 170 teachers. The elementary schools in the county include both the lower grades as well as the middle school grades. Only 3.5% of the county population speak a non-English language. The sample size consisted of 76 teachers. The gender distribution of the survey respondents was 25% male ( $n = 19$ ) and 75% ( $n = 56$ ) female, excluding those who did not provide their gender. There were 47 primary teachers (62%) and 29 secondary teachers (38%). The response rate was about 16%. Among the respondents, 39% ( $n = 30$ ) had a bachelor's degree, half (50%,  $n = 38$ ) had a master's degree, 4% ( $n = 3$ ) had a specialist degree and 7% ( $n = 5$ ) had a doctoral degree. In terms of teaching experience, less than half (43%,  $n = 33$ ) of the teachers had taught for over 20 years, about one fifth (21%,  $n = 16$ ) had taught between 16 and 20 years, 14% ( $n = 10$ ) had taught between 11 and 15 years, 16% ( $n = 12$ ) had taught between six and 10 years and 7% ( $n = 6$ ) had taught five years or less.

## Design and Instrumentation

This study is an observational correlational study using survey methodology. The survey was developed by the first and second authors of the study after having reviewed the literature. After going through a few revisions, content validity was assessed by two other experts in survey research methods. The survey was administered through the online platform Qualtrics. The link was then sent through the school district's mail system after approval to conduct the study was given by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research at the authors' institution.

## Results

Data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The agree percentages presented in the subsequent results section are for the top-two box scores, where the strongly agree and agree responses have been aggregated.

### Perceptions Regarding Teaching ELLs

When asked whether ELLs are better taught by an ESL teacher rather than a regular classroom teacher, males had a higher percentage (83%) agreeing to the statement than females (70%); by school setting, a higher percentage of primary school teachers (70%) agreed with the statement than secondary school teachers (64%); by level of education, a higher percentage of teachers with an undergraduate degree agreed with the statement (71%) than those with graduate degrees (67%). These results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Perceptions Regarding Teaching ELLs by Demographic Variables (percent agree)

School Setting	Primary	Secondary	Total
	70% ( <i>n</i> = 32)	64% ( <i>n</i> = 18)	68% ( <i>n</i> = 50)
Level of Education	Undergraduate	Graduate	
	71% ( <i>n</i> = 20)	64% ( <i>n</i> = 29)	67% ( <i>n</i> = 49)
Gender	Female	Male	
	61% ( <i>n</i> = 20)	83% ( <i>n</i> = 20)	67% ( <i>n</i> = 20)

### Teachers' Perceptions Regarding ELLs

Teachers were presented with several items related to perceptions about ELLs and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of them. The top-two box scores for these items, broken by gender, are presented in Table 2. The items are arranged in descending order of the total percentage. As shown in Table 2, a majority of the teachers indicated that; it is good practice to allow ELLs more time to complete assignments (84%); newly arrived ELLs should be taught in an ESL classroom separate from a regular education classroom until they gain some proficiency with the English Language (66%); it is good practice to lessen the quantity of coursework for ELLs (64%); to aid in their education, newly arrived non-English speaking students should be trying to speak English immediately (57%); and ELLs should acquire fluency in English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools

(55%).

Table 2. Teachers' Perceptions Regarding ELLs by Gender (Percent Agree)

	Female	Male	Total
It is good practice to allow ELLs more time to complete assignments.	84% ( <i>n</i> = 47)	83% ( <i>n</i> = 15)	84% ( <i>n</i> = 62)
Newly arrived ELLs should be taught in an ESL classroom separate from a regular education classroom until they gain some proficiency with the English Language.	61% ( <i>n</i> = 34)	83% ( <i>n</i> = 15)	66% ( <i>n</i> = 49)
It is good practice to lessen the quantity of coursework for ELLs.	66% ( <i>n</i> = 37)	56% ( <i>n</i> = 10)	64% ( <i>n</i> = 47)
To aid in their education, newly arrived non-English speaking students should be trying to speak English immediately.*	50% ( <i>n</i> = 28)	78% ( <i>n</i> = 14)	57% ( <i>n</i> = 47)
ELLs should acquire fluency in English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.	52% ( <i>n</i> = 29)	67% ( <i>n</i> = 12)	55% ( <i>n</i> = 41)
Effort is more important to me than achievement when I grade ELLs work.	46% ( <i>n</i> = 26)	56% ( <i>n</i> = 10)	49% ( <i>n</i> = 36)
Because of the structure of the workday, classroom teachers do not have time to deal with the extra needs of ELLs.	46% ( <i>n</i> = 26)	56% ( <i>n</i> = 10)	49% ( <i>n</i> = 36)
Integration of ELLs will require extensive retraining of regular ed. classroom teachers.	41% ( <i>n</i> = 23)	44% ( <i>n</i> = 8)	42% ( <i>n</i> = 31)
Similar to other students, ELLs who have not acquired grade level content knowledge should be retained.	30% ( <i>n</i> = 17)	44% ( <i>n</i> = 8)	34% ( <i>n</i> = 31)
To help their child, parents of ELLs should only speak English to their children.	30% ( <i>n</i> = 17)	28% ( <i>n</i> = 5)	30% ( <i>n</i> = 22)
The extra attention ELLs require will disadvantage the other students.	25% ( <i>n</i> = 14)	22% ( <i>n</i> = 4)	24% ( <i>n</i> = 18)
ELLs who avoid using their native language at school will learn better.	21% ( <i>n</i> = 12)	28% ( <i>n</i> = 5)	23% ( <i>n</i> = 17)
ELLs should avoid using their native language at school.	21% ( <i>n</i> = 12)	17% ( <i>n</i> = 3)	20% ( <i>n</i> = 15)
Providing materials in the students' native language is not helpful to their learning.	16% ( <i>n</i> = 9)	11% ( <i>n</i> = 2)	15% ( <i>n</i> = 11)
Acclimating to a new country is a fun and exciting experience for ELLs.*	9% ( <i>n</i> = 5)	28% ( <i>n</i> = 5)	14% ( <i>n</i> = 10)
It is likely that an ELL will exhibit behavior problems in a regular classroom.	7% ( <i>n</i> = 4)	6% ( <i>n</i> = 1)	7% ( <i>n</i> = 5)

\* Denotes a significant difference in the proportions between males and females using the z test of proportions with Bonferroni correction for Type I error. However, because of small sample sizes, caution must be exercised when interpreting the results.

A higher percentage of male teachers (83%) than females (61%) indicated wanting newly arrived ELLs to be taught in an ESL classroom separate from a regular education classroom until they gain some proficiency with the English Language. Similarly, the percentage of males (78%) agreeing with the item that newly arrived non-English speaking students should be trying to speak English immediately was much higher than that for females (50%).

Almost half of the teachers (56% of males and 46% of females, and 49% overall) felt that the structure of the day does not allow enough time to deal with the extra needs of ELLs. About a quarter of the respondents (22% of males and 25% of females) felt that teaching ELLs disadvantages other students in the class.

### Perceptions Regarding Teaching ELLs by School Setting

Similar to gender, there were not major differences in perceptions between primary and secondary teachers. These proportions are shown in Table 3. The percentage of primary school teachers (36%) who felt that the extra attention ELLs require will disadvantage the other students was much higher than that of secondary school teachers (10%). Though this difference showed up as statistically significant, the frequency count, particularly for secondary school teachers ( $n = 3$ ) was too low for the test statistic to be reliable.

Table 3. Teachers' Perceptions Regarding ELLs by School Setting

	Primary	Secondary	Total
It is good practice to allow ELLs more time to complete assignments.	83% (n= 39)	86% (n= 25)	84% (n= 64)
Newly arrived ELLs should be taught in an ESL classroom separate from a regular education classroom until they gain some proficiency with the English Language.	66% (n= 31)	66% (n= 19)	66% (n= 50)
It is good practice to lessen the quantity of coursework for ELLs.	60% (n= 28)	69% (n= 20)	63% (n= 48)
To aid in their education, newly arrived non-English speaking students should be trying to speak English immediately.	53% (n= 25)	62% (n= 18)	57% (n= 43)
ELLs should acquire fluency in English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.	51% (n= 24)	62% (n= 18)	55% (n= 42)
Because of the structure of the workday, classroom teachers do not have time to deal with the extra needs of ELLs.	57% (n= 27)	38% (n= 11)	50% (n= 38)
Effort is more important to me than achievement when I grade ELLs work.	45% (n= 21)	52% (n= 15)	47% (n= 36)
Integration of ELLs will require extensive retraining of regular ed. Classroom teachers.	45% (n= 21)	41% (n= 12)	43% (n= 33)
Similar to other students, ELLs who have not acquired grade level content knowledge should be retained.	34% (n= 16)	35% (n= 10)	34% (n= 26)
To help their child, parents of ELLs should only speak English to their children.	38% (n= 18)	17% (n= 5)	30% (n= 23)

	Primary	Secondary	Total
The extra attention ELLs require will disadvantage the other students.*	36% (n= 17)	10% (n = 3)	26% (n= 20)
ELLs who avoid using their native language at school will learn better.	28% (n= 13)	14% (n = 4)	22% (n= 17)
ELLs should avoid using their native language at school.	23% (n= 11)	14% (n = 4)	20% (n= 15)
Providing materials in the students' native language is not helpful to their learning.	15% (n = 7)	14% (n = 4)	15% (n= 11)
Acclimating to a new country is a fun and exciting experience for ELLs.	17% (n = 8)	7% (n = 2)	13% (n= 10)
It is likely that an ELL will exhibit behavior problems in a regular classroom.	9% (n = 4)	3% (n = 1)	7% (n = 5)

\* Denotes a significant difference in the proportions between primary and secondary teachers using the z test of proportions with Bonferroni correction for Type I error.

### Status of Training

The teachers were also asked a number of questions related to training to be able to meet the needs of ELLs. Overall, 61% of the teachers indicated that their school emphasizes training to be able to meet the needs of ELLs. Across both settings, 59% indicated that they felt they had the support needed to work effectively with ELLs (the percentage was higher for secondary teachers 66%, than for primary teachers 55%). A little over half of all teachers (55%) felt that professional development opportunities are made available for teachers of English Learners. Less than half of both primary teachers (39%) and secondary teachers (39%) indicated being prepared to work with ELLs. Half of all teachers (51% overall: 45% of primary teachers and 62% of secondary teachers) had ever received training for teaching ELLs (see Table 4).

Table 4. Status of Training for ELLs by School Setting

	Primary	Secondary	Total
My school emphasizes training teachers to be able to meet the needs of all learners	72% (n= 33)	45% (n= 13)	61% (n= 46)
I feel I have the support needed to work effectively with ELLs.	55% (n= 26)	66% (n= 19)	59% (n= 45)
My school/ school district provides opportunities for professional development training on teaching ELLs	59% (n= 27)	48% (n= 14)	55% (n= 41)
In the last 3 years, I have attended at least one PD training for teaching ELLs	47% (n= 22)	62% (n= 18)	53% (n= 40)
Have you ever received training for teaching ELLs?	45% (n= 21)	62% (n= 18)	51% (n= 39)
I feel I have the expertise necessary for working effectively with ELLs.	39% (n= 18)	35% (n= 10)	37% (n= 28)

Note: None of the differences in proportions were statistically significant using the Z test of proportions.

## **Discussion**

As mentioned earlier, Raoofi et al.'s (2012) study found that self-efficacy is one of the most influential factors for language learning. According to Albert Bandura, a psychologist and professor at Stanford University, self-efficacy is the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1986). In this context, this would mean an English Learner's belief in his or her ability to succeed in school.

Based on the results of the survey, there is a teacher perception, shared by 66% of teachers surveyed, that newly arrived English Learners should be taught in an ESL classroom separate from a regular education classroom until they gain some proficiency with the English Language. It is interesting to note that there was a significant difference in perception regarding this between males (83%) and females (61%). In the county studied, all newly arrived ELLs were given a general education class schedule, exactly like their English-speaking peers, except by law, the English Learner receives anything between 30 minutes and two hours of instruction in a small group with a certified English as a Second Language teacher, two days a week. Individual service time is based on an English Language Proficiency assessment that ELLs are given upon arriving at the school. In a seven-hour school day, that would mean that the minimum time spent outside of instruction with a certified ESL teacher is five hours.

Having an ELL in a classroom requires the teacher to review each student's English proficiency level, review their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and know how to differentiate or make appropriate accommodations and modifications. Having an English Learner is not the same as having a student with a learning disability in a classroom in terms of differentiating. The same accommodations and modifications may not work with a student who cannot understand English. Teachers must put time and effort into making the content they are teaching accessible to each ELLs' individual needs (Colón, 2021; McFadden-Arena, 2021; Rocchio, 2020). There is a possibility that adding this type of workload to their instructional duties might feel burdensome, given the other responsibilities teachers have to attend to. It may thus not be surprising that 66% of the teachers would prefer that these English Learners should be in an ESL classroom until they can access the content with everyone else.

About 39% of teachers feel under-prepared to meet the needs of English Learners. This dovetails with the fact that almost half (47.4%) of the teachers did not feel as though they had adequate training, support, growth opportunities, or expertise to work with English Learners. Half of all teachers (51% overall: 45% of primary teachers and 62% of secondary teachers) had ever received training for teaching ELLs. A study by Chong (2016) showed that teacher training and professional development are useful means of gaining knowledge and ability to use more appropriate materials in order to differentiate instruction. With training, teachers would have better opportunities to learn about second language acquisition, native language use of ELLs, appropriate accommodations or modifications, and whether or not they have a choice about making content accessible.

Research indicates that, in 2012, there were 22.5 million adults in the US that could not speak English (Brown & Patten, 2014). Hanes (2007) suggests that parents of ELLs should be encouraged to speak their first language at home because this fosters an environment with rich vocabulary. In this current study, results suggest that about

30% of the teachers think that parents of ELLs should only speak English to their children. Although acclimating to a new country may seem like a fun and exciting experience for ELLs (14% of teachers agree), these students could be experiencing trauma from immigration, language barriers, political turmoil, war, grieving the loss of family members left behind, living in poverty, culture shock, or constant stress (Ochoa et al., 2004).

More than half of the teachers (57%) expressed that newly arrived ELLs should be trying to speak English immediately. Hill and Björk (2008) state that first step on the Stages of Language Acquisition is the pre-production, which is the first six weeks or longer silent period where student takes in the new language without speaking it. It is nearly impossible to generalize the ELLs' silent period because it varies from student to student, depends on various factors, and can last from a few months to a few years. Therefore, it is up to teachers to be better prepared and assist students with their English learning process. Then again, 23% of the teachers believe that ELLs who avoid using their native language at school will learn better, and 55% of the teachers agree that ELLs should acquire fluency within two years of enrolling in US schools. However, ELLs' fluency depends on the amount of formal schooling in native language (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Students aged 8-11 with 2-3 years of education could take 5-7 years to test at grade level and those with no schooling could take 7-10 years.

According to Peregoy and Boyle (2008) and Shim and Shur (2018), ELLs need additional time and modeling to understand academic content and teachers should accommodate instruction and assessments to make content accessible to ELLs (TNDOE ESL Program Policy 3.207 5 h). Although most teachers agree with these statements, 16% of the teachers in this study still think that ELLs do not need more time to complete the given assignments and 36% of the teachers do not agree that it is good practice to lessen the quantity of coursework for ELLs.

What is interesting is that 50% of the teachers reflect that they do not have time to deal with the extra needs of ELLs, even though TNDOE ESL Program Policy 3.207 5 h states that in content area classes, teachers shall accommodate instruction and assessments to make content accessible to ELLs. So, where does that leave ELLs? When they don't receive the extra help they need, then their learning may take longer and longer. Another interesting point in this current research is that 34% of teachers agree that ELLs who did not attain the grade-level standards should be retained for another year. Then again, Title VI of the CRA of 1964 & *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 US 563 (1974) TNDOE ESL Program Policy 3.207 5 h states that students may not be retained due to language ability. Yet, students in a bilingual program reach the 50th percentile in both their first and second languages by 4th or 5th grade in all subjects (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Differences in how males and females perceive certain things can be attributed to societal norms within their culture. Specifically, in many cultures, there is a prevailing expectation that men should adopt a "tough it out" attitude and avoid displaying any signs of weakness. This mindset might influence their perceptions and attitudes, even in contexts like teaching. In the context of education, these differences in perceptions might manifest as some male teachers being hesitant to make accommodations or modifications for certain students. This could be because they are reluctant to appear accommodating or flexible, as it might conflict with the culturally ingrained notion of not showing weakness. Maybe they feel that all students simply need to man up and take the same test. Our findings are consistent with Sadeghi et al. (2012) who found that male teachers tended to take control of

opportunities to speak more than females and did not allow females turns to participate. The females were noted to tend to be politer. Perhaps this is why the percentages for males desiring to receive training was higher.

At the primary level, there are younger students constantly entering and exiting classrooms. There are students receiving speech services, vocational skills therapy, physical therapy, special education pullout services, and others that require a revolving classroom door, so to speak. Teachers are asked to be more flexible, more patient, more nurturing, have more data meetings and for lack of a better term, are surrounded by dependent people all day. Thus, primary school teachers are a little more flexible and accepting of making changes or accepting changes to instruction than secondary level teachers.

## **Implications and Limitations**

Based on the findings of this study, particularly low percentages of teachers expressing preparedness to teach ELLs, it would be reasonable to advocate for more professional development courses related to working with ELLs. Such professional development might include training, mentoring programs, follow-ups, and re-certifications in order to stay up to date with methods of working with this population of students. This study will assist administrators to have a clear understanding of their staff's perception towards accommodations for ELLs which can be a great tool for future teacher training. Without the proper research and professional development programs in place, there could be no growth in the classroom and no significant difference in progress made by these ELL students.

Future research might explore teachers' professional development needs regarding working with ELLs. Such research could give teachers the opportunity to express themselves and indicate specific areas and skills which they lack. This would help inform the curriculum that could be used by teacher preparation programs and also through professional development programs or workshops.

This study is not without its limitations. Limitations to surveys could include biases caused by low or selective participation (Heiervang & Goodman, 2011). Some of the teachers that are willing to take ten minutes out of their day to complete a survey with the words ESL in the title, may be the same people that would be willing to take an hour out of their weekend to create accommodations and modifications to their lesson plans in order to make the content they are teaching, accessible.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study sheds light on various critical aspects related to the education of English Language Learners (ELLs) and the perceptions of teachers regarding their instruction. The research highlights the significance of self-efficacy in language learning, in line with findings by Raoofi et al. (2012), emphasizing the pivotal role of students' belief in their capabilities to succeed academically. The study also underscores the challenges teachers face in effectively accommodating ELLs' needs. A notable percentage of teachers express feelings of under-preparedness, coupled with insufficient training and professional development opportunities.

The complex nature of serving ELLs necessitates specialized skills and knowledge, as demonstrated by the nuances in accommodating these students compared to students with learning disabilities. The gender-based differences in teacher perceptions highlight the intricate interplay between cultural norms and educational practices. While male teachers might grapple with societal expectations of toughness, female teachers seem to exhibit more openness to accommodations and changes in instruction, possibly contributing to their willingness to receive training.

Ultimately, this research offers valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges and considerations that shape teachers' perceptions and actions in educating ELLs. The findings underscore the importance of fostering a holistic approach to teacher training and professional development that addresses the unique needs of ELLs, facilitates cultural awareness, and encourages adaptable instructional strategies. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, these insights can serve as a foundation for enhancing the educational experience and outcomes of ELLs, promoting inclusivity, and bridging gaps in understanding within diverse classroom settings.

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