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Teacher Lore Concerning Teaching English Language Learners in Urban Schools: A Reciprocal Determinist Analysis

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ABSTRACT

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Changing patterns of immigration have caused schools in the U.S., which previously encountered few to no English Language Learners (ELLs), to see classrooms filled with many ELLs (Massey & Capoferro, 2008; Walker et al., 2004). Existing research on teaching ELLs focused heavily on the work of pre-service or early years educators' teaching in secondary or post-secondary settings (de Courcy, 2011; Flynt, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018). This study uncovered the teacher lore of four veteran teachers of ELLs employed at a Title I, urban elementary school in the Rocky Mountain region. Data collection and analysis utilized techniques of narrative research, with a priori coding based in Bandura's (1989) theory of reciprocal determinism (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Kim, 2016). The stories shared by these experienced educators revealed nine categories of teacher lore about the reality of teaching ELLs. Based on the lore revealed, this study concludes that 1) teachers need the freedom to exercise their professional judgment when teaching ELLs, and 2) the amount of resources available directly influence what any teacher can accomplish. The findings of this study apply to other teachers of ELLs, professionals interested in designing teacher-led, context based professional development, and policy makers interested in improving academic outcomes for ELLs (Marlowe, 2006).

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

One afternoon during my first-year teaching, my colleagues and I congregated to review the results of the year's World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) scores and discuss class groupings for next year. We asked ourselves, "Why did multiple students' English proficiency levels decrease over the past year?" The frustration in the room was evident. Despite 45 minutes per day of dedicated English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, despite more than half of us teachers having ESL endorsements, and despite all our best efforts, our students were not progressing adequately in English proficiency. Common frustrations about the structure of our ESL instruction surfaced. We discussed what we wished we could do differently with our students to help them. We spoke of our beliefs of what English Language Learners (ELLs) needed most. Many teachers shared insights and reflections on their many years of teaching ELLs. A thought lodged in my mind: What if educational researchers asked veteran teachers about their experiences teaching ELLs? How could this deepen our understanding of the common experiences of teachers working with ELLs?

This vignette from my own teaching experience illustrates the dedication teachers have to teaching ELLs and the commiserate frustration when alleged best practices do not yield the expected advances. This inciting incident challenges us to better understand the complexity involved in teaching ELLs in low income environments.

Much of the research on ELLs utilizes a deficit lens and focuses on teachers' lack of preparation for and experience in instructing ELLs (e.g., Doker, 2010; Gándara et al., 2005). This is unsurprising due to the fact that many areas in the U.S. only recently received an influx of ELL immigrants. The recommendation of researchers such as Gay (2018) and Goldenberg

(2008) is that teachers undergo further preparation and professional development related to how to best serve ELLs. Other researchers have chosen to study the beliefs of classroom teachers of ELLs (e.g., Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Johnson, 1992; Rahman et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2012). Most research on ELLs focuses on students in secondary or post-secondary settings (e.g., de Courcy, 2011; Flynt, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018). Less research has examined elementary teachers' experiences working with ELLs from a holistic viewpoint.

Recognizing this gap in the literature, I investigated the experiences of mainstream elementary teachers with ELLs through a method that promoted deep understanding of the complex realties present in any and every classroom. Research has indicated that examination of the narratives that teachers tell and live can reveal teacher knowledge difficult to locate through other methods (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Through utilizing Bandura's (1989) theory of reciprocal determinism (RD), I was able to better understand teachers' experiences working with ELLs as well as how these experiences have shaped their personal beliefs and practices.

My research involved interviewing teachers about important events in their experiences of teaching ELLs. These important experiences revealed teacher lore that veteran teachers hold. Teacher lore is "the study of knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and understandings of teachers" (Schubert, 1991, p. 207). Teacher lore is particularly valuable for empowering the voices of teachers typically silenced in the profession (Lee & Bang, 2011). As a teacher of ELL students who works with experienced ELL teachers, I drew on the knowledge from the teachers with whom I worked. The research provides insight into the nature of classroom elementary teachers' experiences instructing ELLs. Further, RD, the theoretical foundation of this study, provided an

analytic lens to disentangle the intertwined elements within teachers' narratives and allowed me to uncover practical teacher knowledge concerning the teaching of ELLs.

   This paper focuses on exploring the following research question: What can teacher lore tell us about the nuances and complexities involved in teaching ELLs in Title I, urban classrooms? Following this section is a review of relevant literature. Next, I briefly describe my methodology. Then, I share the findings of the study. I conclude with a discussion of the significance and implication of this research study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

This literature review will begin by introducing and defining teacher lore and describing its place within the realm of narrative research. It includes a description of Bandura's (1989) theory of reciprocal determinism, the theoretical model by which narratives were interpreted in this study. Next, it will detail the three central factors of RD: environment, behavior, and personal factors, and contextualize how these factors appear in the work of teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs). Then, it will describe how RD can be applied to analysis of narratives. Finally, the literature review will discuss gaps in previous research concerning teachers of ELLs.

Teacher Lore

Teacher lore is "the study of knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and understandings of teachers" (Schubert, 1991, p. 207). There is a long tradition of teachers informally drawing from the knowledge and experiences of other teachers. Informal conversations in lunchrooms and after faculty meetings, peering into each other's classrooms, sharing reflections on an interaction with a student, all of this and more is teacher lore (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Collecting and analyzing teacher lore as formal research is a way to document and detail the insights and personal conclusions that guide teachers' lives. Such works provides insight into the knowledge teachers hold and the reality of how practice is implemented in the everyday classroom

Research that examines teacher lore is based on the assumption that teachers in the field are the best experts on teaching. Through teacher lore, teachers are given an active voice to share their rich and valuable knowledge (Schubert & Ayers, 1992). In every school and every community there are teachers who retire or leave the profession without any written record of

what they have learned. The sharing and analysis of these stories allows researchers to learn from teachers and teachers to learn from one another. Teacher lore captures teachers' discoveries and insights in context and provides a way for other teachers to reflect and improve on their own practice. In this research project, the teacher lore collected came from experienced teachers of ELLs in urban, Title I settings.

Storytelling is central to how humans express themselves (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Through teachers' stories we can better understand teachers, their knowledge, and the context in which they teach (Witherell & Noddings, 1991). The stories that successful, experienced teachers share often contain similar characteristics and themes. These characteristics include a holistic perspective on teaching, love for and enjoyment spending time with students, a clear sense of meaning and direction, and a strong belief in the importance of teaching (Schubert, 1991). Teacher lore has transformative power for researcher, teacher participant, and reader. Understanding and conclusions are drawn collaboratively with the researcher. Teachers reflect upon their own practice as they share their experiences and are motivated to improve as they read the experiences of others (Lee & Bang, 2011).

The direct voices of teachers are a neglected yet incredibly necessary part of education research (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Through carefully examining teachers' classroom experiences, researchers and practicing teachers can better understand the complexities inherent in teaching (Marlowe, 2006). Stories are often the best way to relate practical experiences; asking for stories is an indirect approach for collecting teacher lore. These stories are deeply situated in the context the teachers work in. Teacher lore reveals teachers' "understandings— their personally created, experimental knowledge bases" (Schubert, 1991, p. 211). Teacher lore provides a snapshot of the practical knowledge by which teachers in the field make daily

instructional choices (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Teacher lore shares the wisdom of practice cultivated by veteran teachers with the wider teacher and researcher world. Next, I will detail the theory by which I interpreted the meanings of the stories I collected from teachers of ELLs.

Reciprocal Determinism

This research project is grounded in Bandura's (1989) theory of reciprocal determinism (RD). RD emerged from Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory as a model to explain the interrelated nature of all human interactions. In the model of RD, there are three major influences on any single event: environment, behavior, and personal factors including individual backgrounds and beliefs. Each factor influences the other, creating what Bandura refers to as interactive determinants (Bandura, 1982). RD has also been referred to as reciprocal causation. Reciprocal does not mean that factors influence with equal strength or occur simultaneously in any given event. Instead, reciprocal refers to how each factor influences each other bidirectionally (Bandura, 1989).

RD explains human functioning through a process called triadic reciprocal causation. A person's capabilities emerge from the interaction among cognitive factors, behaviors, and environmental effects (Bandura, 2000). Each part of the triad influences the other parts. Environmental events influence cognitive processes. Cognitive processes are the lens through which individuals observe their environment and thus affect the individuals' behaviors and emotions and vice versa. Most individuals do not perceive these three factors independently, instead interpreting their effects through operating symbolically and viewing the self as one unified whole (Bandura, 2000).

Personal factors include beliefs, expectations, self-perceptions, as well as personal and group identities (Bandura, 1989). What people believe affects how they behave, and people

behave in ways they believe will provide fulfilment and self-satisfaction (Bandura, 2000). People behave in ways they believe are in harmony with their personal identities. In addition, as people repeatedly make certain choices, those choices become engrained representations of their identity. One example of the influence of behavior on personal beliefs can be seen in the theory of cognitive dissonance, which involves a situation where there is dissonance between an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. For example, an individual may strongly assert that their behaviors represent a certain belief orientation instead of acknowledging an error in their action (Festinger, 1962). The relationship between environment and personal factors can be identified as how human beliefs and expectations are influenced by the environment they live and work in. In turn, an individual's personal factors influence the treatment they receive from their environment. People choose behavior they believe reflects their personal beliefs and will result in desired changes in their environment (Bandura, 2000). The personal factors belonging to an individual affect how others in their environment react to them. For example, children who have the reputation as aggressors experience different social reactions from peers than children who are perceived to be weak (Bandura, 1989). Lastly, every day an individual's behavior both shapes their environment while environment affects behavior; as Bandura says, "people create as well as select their environments" (Bandura, 1989, p. 3). For example, a student's behavior can both affect the classroom environment and be changed by the environment. Potential environments become actual environments when individuals interact with them. RD provides a method to understand the interrelated factors at play in any experience.

RD is extremely applicable to teacher experiences. In modern complex classrooms, it is impossible to draw clear lines between where environmental effects end and where teacher beliefs begin. Further, because RD allows an examination of teacher's experiences from the

lens of environment, behavior, and personal factors, it represents an important theoretical and practical tool for uncovering teachers' knowledge concerning the teaching of ELLs.

Basturkmen (2012) described the relationship between teacher beliefs, their environment, and teacher practice as complex and interconnected. Part of this complexity is due to the incredible diversity present in modern-day American schools. Linguistically and ethnically diverse school environments include schools classified as Title I, Turn Around, and Minority-Majority. Teachers' beliefs are influenced by the teachers' own behaviors, the behaviors of administrators, and the behaviors of students, families, and community members. Classroom contingencies, defined as the many variables outside of direct teacher control that are present in a school daily, have been shown to have a strong effect on both teachers' beliefs and practices (Richardson, 1990). RD, the theoretical foundation of this study, is a lens that incorporates classroom environments, teachers' stated and implicit beliefs, and the behavior of teachers into one cohesive system (Bandura, 1989).

An individual's conscious and subconscious beliefs are a product of the three elements of triadic reciprocal causation. Subconscious beliefs are not easily recognized by the individual but have been processed and affect other cognitive processes. Bandura (1989) argued, "[W]hat people think, believe, and feel, affects how they behave . . . [and] people create as well as select their environments" (p. 2–3). Thus, one can conclude that a teacher's beliefs both emerge from teacher's environment and simultaneously influence that environment. The Vygotskian tradition similarly acknowledges the reciprocal relationship between environment and behavior. Vygotsky coined the phrase "zone of proximal development" to capture how more competent individuals assist others in their performance through modeling and feedback, among other methods. In modeling, an individual imitates (both consciously and subconsciously) the behavior of someone

seen as more competent, such as a senior teacher or specialist; that individual subsequently becomes a model for more junior teachers. In receiving feedback, individuals are given specialized critique that affects their future behavior, adjusting future feedback in a continuous cycle (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990). By examining the experiences shared with me by teachers of ELLs in this research project, I gained insight into multiple aspects of the teachers' everyday practices and classroom realities. For example, I asked teachers to provide more details on why they made a certain instructional choice in the experiences they shared with me. Through asking about a behavioral choice, I also learned more about the teachers' emotions. Individuals' emotions affect their behavior, which in turn affects other individuals' emotions. Bandura (1989) suggested that, "observers can acquire lasting attitudes, emotional reactions, and behavioral proclivities towards persons, places, or things that have been associated with the model's emotional experiences" (p. 23).

People often behave in certain ways because they believe certain outcomes will occur (Bandura, 2000). For example, a teacher may believe the best way to instruct an ELL is by maximizing their exposure to academic English language (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012). Thus, the teacher will choose instructional practices that expose their students to a variety of academic language in English. The teacher made this instructional choice because they believed it would result in their students becoming better English speakers; the teacher's beliefs affected their behavior because they believed it will result in certain outcomes. If instead the teacher's students do not progress much in English proficiency, the teacher may reevaluate their beliefs which will thus affect the instructional choices they make in the future. A teacher's belief or confidence in their ability to teach effectively can be described as self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an offshoot of

RD (Bandura, 2000). According to Bandura (2000), "[b]eliefs of personal efficacy are the foundation of human agency" (p. 331).

An additional example of how the separate components of RD influence each other is the way beliefs are spread through social interactions. Bandura (1989) noted that humans have advanced capacity for observational learning and, "conceptions of social reality are greatly influenced by vicarious experiences" (p. 15). Simply put, humans form their beliefs not just because of their own firsthand experiences, but also through experiences they have observed or have learned about from others. Neo-Vygotskyians likewise acknowledge the impact of the social world on individual behavior. The environment and social world "do not exist separately" (Rogoff, 1995, p. 140). The social world extends beyond simply one's immediate environment to the greater cultural context. Mass media and the social media revolution have amplified the influence of other people's experiences on individuals' beliefs, reminding researchers of the importance of examining the interconnected nature of individual behavior and wider society (Bandura, 1989).

Environment

While I will be discussing the three elements of triadic RD separately, in reality the three parts are constantly affecting and changing each other. Bandura (1989) used "triadic reciprocal determinism" in his initial naming of the term to emphasize that each of the three parts work together and influence each other in RD.

According to Bandura (1989), the environment is not and never can be a fixed constant. Too many factors influence environment for it to remain stable. Environmental factors include the physical surroundings an individual interacts with including roads, buildings, and other infrastructure as well as the culture of a society. Environment also includes the other people an

individual interacts with on a regular basis. However, environment is not simply a "situational entity," because as described earlier, the process of interacting with an environment inevitably changes the environment (Bandura, 1982). As I contextualized environment to teachers of ELLs, consistent care was taken to address behavior and personal factors' influence of environment.

In a classroom, environmental factors include the geographic location of the school, socioeconomic status of the surrounding community, the physical constraints of the classroom, and school, district, and national policy and curriculum. Even small interactions affect classroom environment. What teachers, administrators, and policy makers think about important issues (and how they voice those thoughts) strongly influences school workplace culture. School culture (the environment) then impacts decisions about teaching (Kelchtermans, 2005).

Since environment can vary so much, much research has focused on either identifying positive influences on environment or negative influences on environment. One necessary element to an effective learning environment is that both students and teachers feel safe and secure. When teachers exist in a safe and trusting environment, they are more willing to attempt new teaching practices (Musanti & Pence, 2010). These teachers then through their innovative teaching practices positively influence the environment. Environment strongly affects the success of new education initiatives. While teachers generally view their roles as policy enactors rather than policy creators, teacher buy-in is crucial for the successful implementation of any education policy (Hinnant-Crawford, 2016).

Numerous environmental factors can negatively impact ELLs. ELL students are more likely than their non-ELL peers to attend high poverty schools with less financial resources and less experienced teachers (Gándara & Rumberger, 2008). The reality of this school environment can create additional emotional strain on teachers and students. Teaching and learning are

emotional practices where context is essential. Teachers' emotions are embedded in the conditions and interactions of their work (Hargreaves, 2001). In this research project, I examined how the environment impacts the emotional aspect of important events teachers remember about working with ELLs.

Many teachers of ELLs (including those in my beginning vignette) struggle with rigid and often ineffective curriculum that districts and states require teachers to use. For example, the schedule of English Second Language (ESL) services is sometimes counter intuitive. ESL services are often scheduled for the same time of day every day. While this is beneficial in that it ensures ELL students receive the targeted instruction they need, it also results in ELLs missing out on valuable instruction in core curriculum. Arizona went to extremes in altering their ELL students' schedule. An Arizona law required four hours of daily English Language Development (ELD) for all ELL students. The purpose of the time was to help ELL students catch up to the language level of their English native language peers. However, out of a sample of 880 teachers, 27% strongly disagreed and 44% disagreed that the four-hour ELD-block accomplished this aim (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012), yet this was the environment in which they had to work. In a large urban district in the Southeast, Heafner and Plaisance (2016) found that by 6th grade, ELLs had large gaps compared to their non-ELL peers in the area of social studies. This gap arose because in this district ELLs almost exclusively received services during social studies instruction. The authors suggested flexible pull out-schedules that ensured ELLs did not always miss the same type of instruction. In these examples we see teachers being strongly affected by and also affecting the environment in which they teach.

Additionally, in both structure of curriculum and curriculum materials, flexibility for teachers can positively impact students. Many districts require teachers of ELLs to rigidly follow

a commercial curriculum. Rodriguez-Valls (2012) described how a California district moved from rigidly using a commercial curriculum to focusing on interdisciplinary methods and granting teachers more autonomy. Teachers' and students' satisfaction at school increased, as did state test scores. Many other studies show the benefits to increasing teacher autonomy and flexibility with curriculum (Choi, 2013; Salinas et al., 2006; Upczak-Garcia, 2012). The demand and flexibility of environmental structures, such as were imposed on teachers outlined above, are critical to examine for the influence they have on how teachers act in their classrooms.

Behavior

The second part of RD is behavior. Behavior is defined as the actions an individual consciously or subconsciously chooses to make. Behavior never occurs in a vacuum. People choose certain behaviors either because of the influence of environment, personal factors, or a combination of the two. I will now examine research on how teachers' behavior impact events they share about teaching ELLs and interpretations of those events.

Teacher behavior can be examined through the instructional decisions teachers make. Historically, teacher behavior has been studied through both quantitative and qualitative means (see Fang, 1996; Richardson et al., 1991). In many of these studies, teachers' behaviors are studied in isolation. This is counterintuitive; teaching and learning are emotional practices where context is essential (Hargreaves, 2001).

Researchers agree that ideal ESL instruction requires teachers trained specifically to meet the needs of ELLs. Adequately meeting ELL needs requires additional funding compared to monolingual students (Gándara & Rumberger, 2008). The best ESL teachers locate student and families' existing cultural and social capital and integrate it into their teaching (Gay, 2018; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012). In order to accomplish these goals, schools seek multilingual personnel and

interpretation resources so teachers can effectively communicate with families and integrate families in the wider school community (Gándara & Rumberger, 2008). In my study, I examined and analyzed how the instructional choices shared by teachers reflects the training those teachers have received on working with ELLs.

Differing ideologies also exists on best practice for teaching ELLs. Bilingual education advocates argue that beginning ELLs should receive significant instruction in their native language in addition to English language instruction. In a metanalysis of 12 districts with highly effective high school ESL programs, two-way bilingual programs were found as the most beneficial model for long term academic growth (Roessingh, 2004). Gándara and Rumberger (2008) wrote that while bilingual education was the ideal model for ELLs, it is less frequently implemented because it requires more resources, including teachers prepared to enact instructional methods that are most likely to result in success for ELLs.

On the contrary, proponents of English immersion claim that the more time students spend on task using only English, the more quickly they will learn English (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012). All of the teachers I interviewed work in an environment utilizing English immersion techniques. These teachers are required to demonstrate a certain behavior, English only ESL instruction, because of the mandates of the environment.

According to researchers such as Richardson (1990), teachers can be unwilling to incorporate research into their practice. When asked why they choose to retain old practices (despite training on the benefits of newer practices) teachers provided the following reasons. First, new practices can seem impractical based on an individual teacher's classroom contingencies. Second, there can be a high time investment needed to integrate new practice. Teachers can "exercise considerable control over the decision of whether and how to implement

a change" (Richardson, 1990, p. 13). As stated previously, while teachers overwhelmingly view themselves as simply educational policy enactors, in actuality, teachers make the decision on whether and how policy is implemented (Hinnant-Crawford, 2016).

Personal Factors

The third part of RD is personal/cognitive factors (Bandura, 1989). Personal factors include beliefs, self-concepts, goals, gender, age and more. For the purposes of this study, I will simplify personal factors to be synonymous with teacher beliefs. Beliefs are both created from and influenced by a multitude of personal factors. Beliefs are inherently complex. Beliefs are important to understand because they can persist even when they are proven inaccurate (Pajares, 1992). I will now review research on teacher beliefs and beliefs' influence on environment and behavior.

Beliefs are the "lens through which many teachers make daily instructional decisions in their lessons" (Richards, 1998, as cited in Farrell & Jacobs, 2016). Johnson (1992) also described beliefs as the lens through which teachers make crucial choices. When teachers are asked why they made a particular planning choice or responded to a child in a particular way, they usually cite their beliefs. However, Kagan (1992) asserted that unlike knowledge, beliefs are "subconsciously held assumptions" and thus more difficult than knowledge to identify (as cited in Farrell & Jacobs, 2016). Due to the less tangible nature of beliefs, professional development is less likely to affect teachers' beliefs about instructing ELLs. Belief systems are more likely than knowledge systems to predict teachers' behavior (Pajares, 1992). Researchers studying belief must use a variety of tactics to help teachers reveal and recognize their beliefs.

As previously stated, beliefs are much more likely to predict teachers' behavior than knowledge (Pajares, 1992). The teachers I studied have their ESL endorsement, minimizing

differences among them in terms of their knowledge and preparation to instruct ELLs. This is especially the case because most of the teachers I studied earned their ESL endorsement through the same district-sponsored program.

Teachers' beliefs are widely acknowledged to exert strong influence on teaching practices (Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). Beliefs impact teachers' attitudes, relationships with students, and instructional choices. In short, "teachers' attitudes and beliefs about language-minority children play a crucial role in determining . . . [the students'] educational outcomes" (Walker et al., 2004, p. 130). However, much research on teacher beliefs has been contradictory in results. Some researchers believe this is because of the wide variety of factors that shape belief (Fang, 1996).

Most researchers do agree, however, on the impact of negative teacher beliefs on students. Many teachers have been found to have negative beliefs about ELLs. Walker et al. (2004) found that 70% of mainstream teachers were not actively interested in having ELL students placed in their classrooms. Factors contributing to negative teacher attitudes included teachers' feelings of being overwhelmed with other responsibilities, a lack of time to devote to ELL students, the lack of education most teachers have about working with ELLs, and pervasive myths and misinformation about ELLs (Gándara et al., 2005). Deficit beliefs can reproduce academic disparities (Guerra & Wubbena, 2017). When teachers consciously or subconsciously hold negative beliefs concerning ELLs or ESL instruction, teaching quality suffers, as does the academic performance of ELLs. This can reinforce teachers' deficit beliefs.

Much research on teacher beliefs is contradictory. There is a long-documented history of contradictory results on research of the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices (Richardson et al., 1991). As previously stated, while many researchers have found strong

relationships between stated belief and teacher practices, others have noted inconsistencies between stated belief and practice (Johnson, 1992).

Guerra and Wubbena (2017) interviewed elementary school teachers at two different schools to determine their beliefs about cultural proficiency. While the teachers reported a mixture of culturally proficient and deficient beliefs, culturally deficient practices were found to dominate when the teachers were observed. Stated beliefs do not always match classroom practices. Many researchers have shown that there is a discrepancy between stated beliefs and classroom practices (Basturkmen, 2012; Guerra & Wubbena, 2017; Rahman et al., 2018). This discrepancy between beliefs and practices has been shown to decrease when teachers are given observational evidence of the difference between their stated beliefs and actual practices (Rahman et al., 2018).

A number of hypotheses exist on why teachers' beliefs are sometimes inconsistent with observed practice. Often the multitude of factors at play on any given school day make it difficult for teachers to remain true to their ideals. Johnson (1992), describing this struggle said, "at times the complexities of classroom life can constrain teachers' abilities to attend to their beliefs and provide instruction which is consistent with their theoretical beliefs" (p. 84). Richardson et al. (1991) proposes that the problem originates from paper-and-pencil (quantitative) methods being used almost exclusively to measure beliefs. While quantitative tools can be useful for measuring trends in teacher beliefs as a group, it does not always accurately measure the beliefs of individual teachers. Therefore, contradiction may exist partially because of incorrect measuring of beliefs. Richardson et al. (1991) also assert, "Contradiction between beliefs and practice may indicate beliefs that are currently in the process of changing" (p. 578). Experienced teachers show more correlation between their belief and their practice compared to

novice teachers. As teachers become more skilled, they can execute their instruction in a way that better reflects their beliefs as a teacher (Basturkmen, 2012). It is partially due to the inherent contradictions in the research on teachers' beliefs that in this study I examined beliefs as merely one part of a three-part system.

There is a difference between teachers' publicly declared beliefs and private beliefs (Richardson et al., 1991). Various hypotheses exist to explain this difference. To begin, many teachers are unaware of their implicit beliefs (Basturkmen, 2012; Guerra & Wubbena, 2017; Rahman et al., 2018). In some environments, teachers do not feel comfortable sharing certain beliefs (Richardson, 1990). Teachers have a multitude of belief orientations and the realities of the classroom affect what beliefs teachers are more aware of (Johnson, 1992). Teachers are often faced with dichotomous choices of equality and excellence, to cope they keep a working identity that is intentionally ambiguous, to reduce strain from feeling the necessity to violate some beliefs (Fang, 1996). When coding the experiences shared with me for the influence of teachers' beliefs, I considered when a teachers' stated belief may have differed from their implicit belief.

Reciprocal Determinism as a Method to Analyze Teacher Narratives

Teachers exist at the praxis between their own belief, ideas, and practice (Schubert, 1991). Through storytelling, these intertwined aspects begin to disentangle. Stories can act as both methodology and methodological device (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). However, when analyzing a narrative, the researcher must consider the multitude of factors influencing the story. Bandura's RD and the reciprocal relationships within the triad provide a lens for understanding the messy intermingling of environment, behavior, and personal factors present in any story (Bandura, 1989). When interpreting a teacher's concrete experience, context deepens understanding of how this narrative formed (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). In my methodology

section, I will explain in more detail how coding using RD allows researchers the opportunity to better understand teacher lives.

Gaps in Previous Research

Much of the research about the environment, behavior, and beliefs of teachers of ELLs has focused on teachers of college-aged students (e.g., Farrell & Jacobs, 2016; Payant, 2017; Peacock, 2001). There is less research on teachers of elementary-aged ELLs. Existing research likewise overrepresents the views of specialist teachers who work specifically with ELLs in pull-out style settings and of secondary school teachers (e.g., de Courcy, 2011; Flynt, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018).

While there has been significant quantitative and qualitative work on ELL teachers, the majority of studies are either quantitative or majority-quantitative mixed-methods studies (e.g., Flynt, 2018; Gándara et al., 2005; Hinnant-Crawford, 2016; Peacock, 2001; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). The quantitative aspect usually involves a survey instrument administered to teachers to measure the strength of their agreement with a variety of belief statements. These studies have found that ESL teachers hold very similar and consistent beliefs, and these beliefs rarely change over time, even with concentrated intervention. These studies are unable to provide greater insight into teachers' beliefs, however, because of their reliance on quantitative data. Several studies (e.g., Flynt, 2018; Peacock, 2001; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012) explicitly call for further qualitative research that would promote a deeper understanding of teachers' beliefs on the subject.

As in much education research, a disproportionate amount of research on ELL teachers' focuses on pre-service teachers (e.g., Incecay, 2011; Peacock, 2001; Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). Pre-service teachers have less experience teaching ELLs and teaching in general on which to

base their beliefs. Pre-service teachers' experiences also do not always accurately reflect the nature of current classrooms since pre-service teachers are rarely in charge of entire classrooms for any significant period of time. For these reasons, my study focused on full-time practicing classroom teachers who were endorsed to teach ESL and had at least five years of experience teaching ELLs.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

I conducted an in-depth exploration of my research question: what can teacher lore tell us about the nuances and complexities involved in teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) in Title I, urban classrooms by applying qualitative methods. Qualitative research is especially appropriate for research projects such as this with multiple constructed realities and subjective understandings and interpretations. Qualitative methods are also well-suited for situations where official policy and local knowledge and practice clash (Marshall, 2016), which occurred frequently in my research project. Within the qualitative genre, I utilized narrative research methods. I interviewed teachers about their experiences teaching using Schubert's (1991) description of how to collect narratives that reveal teacher lore for guidance. I then analyzed using a priori codes drawn from reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1989).

My participants were experienced teachers who also worked at the highly impacted school where I taught. The design of the study included collection of teacher accounts of teaching ELLs and the use of a priori coding based in RD to analyze the stories and uncover teachers' knowledge, or lore, concerning the teaching of ELLs. I will now describe my participants and setting in detail, followed by my measures, procedures, and research design.

Participants

This study collected narrative accounts from experienced teachers concerning their teaching of ELLs. Participants were recruited through a snowball convenience method. I interviewed teachers I worked with who had a minimum of five years' experience teaching ELLs. These teachers also held an English Second Language (ESL) Endorsement and Utah Educator License with a concentration in elementary education and taught ESL in addition to

performing their general education responsibilities. The majority of these teachers received their ESL endorsement through the same district-sponsored program, as the district requires all teachers working in the district for four years or more to hold a valid ESL endorsement in addition to their general teaching license. I focused on recruiting teachers with over 10 years of experience teaching at the school where I am currently employed or schools similar to it. In total, two out of four of my participants had over 10 years of relevant teaching experience. Similar to most schools in the United States, the majority of our faculty members are White and female; therefore, three out of four of my research participants were White and female (Hammerness et al., 2005). One of my four participants identified as male and Asian American. Participants ranged in ages from 37 to 61 years old (Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Information

Pseudonym	Years of Teacher Experience	Years Teaching ELLs	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Grades Taught
Alex	7	7	Male	37	Asian	5-6
Allie	9	7	Female	44	Caucasian	4-6
Millie	24	22	Female	53	Caucasian	K
Joan	26	26	Female	61	Caucasian	4-6

The participants in the study were all experienced teachers for three reasons: first, they had a deeper reservoir of experiences teaching in low-income urban settings from which to draw. Second, their teaching accounts were more cohesive and coherent and would contain the elements of experience RD is best able to disentangle and explore. Third, narratives of beginning teachers are more likely to focus on issues of management and establishing of routines and

practices than nuanced understandings beyond management and routine (Basturkmen, 2012).

Schubert (1991) described experienced teachers as, "connoisseurs of teaching," who provide

unique and deep levels of perception and discrimination about teaching (p. 208). Teachers who

appeared to be critical case candidates because of their length of service (over 15 years of

relevant teaching experience) or status as teacher leaders (teachers who also served in decision

making roles in the school, or were viewed by other staff members as influential) were chosen.

Critical cases are not representative of the average individual, but their unique characteristics and

experiences make them deserving of further research (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). I collected

stories from four teachers who I believe provided meaningful insights into the experience of

teaching ELLs in low-income urban settings.

The teachers I interviewed were educators I worked with, people I knew professionally as

well as personally. This provided certain advantages such as deep personal knowledge of the

context in which they taught. I also held insider status and had personal relationships with these

teachers. As a result, the teachers felt more comfortable sharing stories, and shared stories they

may not have chosen to share to a stranger. This increased the richness of the narratives shared

with me (Marshall, 2016). However, my personal connection to my research subjects and setting

also presented certain disadvantages. Teachers may not have chosen to share certain stories

because of a fear that it would affect our professional or personal relationship. My personal

feelings and background knowledge of the teachers' may have skewed my interpretation of their

narratives. However, I believed the opportunity to collect highly personalized insider narratives

outweighed the potential limitations. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) articulate the need to create

close personal relationships with participants in narrative research projects, what they describe as

living alongside those one studies. My close relationship with the teachers I interviewed

increased the credibility of this study because I used my personal background knowledge of the school to determine the accuracy of the stories.

Setting

Urban Utah is not an area typically associated with a high population of ELLs. While rural areas of Utah experienced occasional influxes of migrant agricultural workers, for most of the mid-20th century, the vast majority of Utah was overwhelmingly Caucasian and English speaking (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). However, in the 1990s, immigration to the United States changed dramatically. Instead of clustering in five major urban areas (such as Los Angeles and New York City), immigrants settled in a variety of new states, including those in the Rocky Mountain region (Massey & Capoferro, 2008). This geographic diversification of immigration, along with other factors, increased the number of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. This caused teachers and school systems that previously had few to no ELLs to have many ELLs (Walker et al., 2004). Research is necessary to understand how to best support the nation's growing population of ELLs and the teachers who instruct them.

In America, it is well known that the amount of wealth in a school district affects the quality of education provided (Condron & Roscigno, 2003). In large urban districts, while per pupil spending may be average or above average, the trend continues that schools located in poorer areas (usually with a federal Title I status) have fewer resources and perform more poorly. Some of this is due to the fact that many students in low socioeconomic status (SES), urban schools come to school lacking proper food, clothing, medical supplies, and supportive home environments (Thompson & Smith, 2004). Teachers, overwhelmed by the lack of school and community resources to adequately assist their students, frequently transfer to higher SES schools or leave the profession completely. This study examined the experiences of teachers of

ELLs who work in the neediest areas of the USA, such as the high poverty school where teachers in this study worked.

The specific school where my teacher participants worked is the school where, at the time of writing, I am currently employed. Seagull Elementary (a pseudonym) is a K-6 school in a large urban district in the Rocky Mountain region. At the time of this research project, I was in the middle of my third year of teaching. Although there are many Title I schools in the district, based on end of year state testing, Seagull Elementary is consistently one of the lowest performing elementary schools in the district (Utah State Board of Education, 2018a). According to Utah State Board of Education's (2018b) Data Gateway, there is a student population of 452 students. Of these students, 84 (18.5%) are Caucasian, 232 (51.3%) are Hispanic, 53 (11.7%) are African or African American, 9 (1.2%) are multi-racial, 39 (8.6%) are Asian, 30 (6.6%) are Pacific Islander, and 5 or (1.1%) are American Indian. The population is 228 (50.4%) female and 224 (49.6) male (Utah State Board of Education, 2018b). According to the State Office of Education, 69% of Seagull Elementary students are identified as ELLs. In the 2017-2018 school year, 92.9% of the students at Seagull Elementary qualified for free or reduced lunch. Seagull Elementary was an appropriate and applicable school to study because of the high number of students of color, poverty, and with cultural and linguistic differences. In addition, this is an area where teacher experiences and insights are often less documented (Thompson & Smith, 2004). As a result, collecting and examining teacher lore from Seagull Elementary teachers provided a unique perspective (Lee & Bang, 2011).

Seagull Elementary, along with other nearby elementary schools, delivers English Language Development (ELD) instruction in a unique way. The school employs no full or part-time dedicated ESL instructors; instead, all classroom teachers are expected to take on the duties

of teaching ELD. As mentioned previously, the district requires all teachers to obtain an ESL-endorsement within four years of initial employment. For 45 minutes a day, students in grade level bands (K, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6) are divided into separate groups based on English proficiency levels. Each teacher is assigned a proficiency level group to teach. Native English speakers received supplementary language arts instruction during this time. Recently, Seagull Elementary has moved to only splitting students by proficiency levels in independent grade levels. Besides this, the structure remains very much the same. When this study refers to ELD, it is referring to the ELD instruction style described above.

Data Sources

The main source of data for this study of teacher lore was transcriptions of recorded interviews with teachers. The interviews were semi-structured with six central questions. After asking each question, I asked probing follow-up questions to attempt to have the teacher describe as many details about the experience and the knowledge they have gained from it as possible and tell as many experiences as they were comfortable sharing (Gall et al., 2003). I probed for more details and additional experiences by asking responsive questions based on what they had already shared with me. The interview protocol began with making the purpose of the central questions clear by defining teacher lore. Teacher lore is defined as knowledge and insights held by veteran teachers that arise from practical experience teaching and working with students (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). I then asked a series of biographical questions. The interview also included questions concerning common schoolwide practices and beliefs about teaching ELLs. The participants were then asked to describe (a) successful experiences with ELLs, (b) unsuccessful experiences teaching ELLs, and (c) an experience of feeling constrained while teaching ELLs. Constrained is defined as your teaching was negatively affected by lack of

knowledge, lack of resources, or by policies, procedures, or practices. In each case I elicited as many stories as teachers were willing to share through active listening and utilizing follow up questions. The participant consent form is found in Appendix A. The interview preparation form is found in Appendix B. The complete interview protocol I used can be found in Appendix C.

No interview proceeded exactly the same way. As I conversed with each teacher, different questions became central while others were sidelined. While each interviewee was asked all six core questions, I emphasized collecting complete stories and allowing participants choice in how long they wished to discuss a particular topic over following the same rote procedure with each participant (Kim, 2016). The interview questions I chose, along with the style of interviewing I employed, were appropriate for the collection of teacher lore because they allowed the teachers to share their practical experiences, personally developed education theories, and the specific context wherein their knowledge was formed (Ayers & Schubert 1994; Schubert, 1991; Schubert & Ayers, 1992).

In addition to the interview audio and transcripts, another source of data was my handwritten fieldnotes during the interview process. These notes described the interviewees body language, affect, and other details that were not captured by the audio transcription alone (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The final source of data was my personal knowledge and experiences with the teacher before the interview process, which I included during the memoing process of data analysis.

I provided the interview questions to interviewees prior to the interview, so they had time to reflect and recall on what experience they felt most fits each question. This information paper can be found in Appendix B.

Research Design

Within the qualitative genre, I utilized narrative research methods to guide my data collection and analysis (Kim, 2016). Narrative research, like triadic reciprocation in Bandura's (1989) RD, acknowledges that teachers' experiences are both shaped by their environment and beliefs, and influence teacher behavior, environment, and belief (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I interpreted the experiences I collected of ELL teachers as narratives, since humans understand the world through story making and, "the study of narrative is the study of how humans experience the world" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). My research design utilized narrative methodologies from a variety of researchers such as Kim (2016), and Clandinin and Connelly (2000).

The stories I collected from teachers of ELLs provide a window to reveal useful teacher lore to the educational research community. Teacher lore is, "the study of knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and understandings of teachers" (Schubert, 1991, p. 207). Teacher lore provides teachers a method to reveal their understandings, "their personally created, experimental knowledge bases" (Schubert, 1991, p. 211). Teacher lore acknowledges the active role of teachers as knowledge makers and environmental influencers.

The interview questions I chose to ask my teacher participants were specifically designed to elicit their teacher lore. Teacher lore is storytelling that is particularly interested in what teachers have learned (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Teacher lore is also highly contextual. In *A Review of Narrative Methodology* (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003)*,* stories are described as the fundamental way meaning is expressed. Stories embody the cultural values and understandings of the storyteller. These understandings can only be found in context, in the praxis between personal beliefs and practice. Through the stories shared with me in this research project, I

discovered "the content of teachers' experimental repertoires of knowledge and values that give meaning and direction to their work" (Schubert, 1991, p. 223). Next, I will discuss the specific procedures I completed in this research study. Afterwards, I will discuss how I analyzed the experiences shared with me to draw conclusions about the teacher lore revealed.

Procedures

I began collecting my data by reaching out via email to potential interview candidates. The email template I used can be found in Appendix D. After receiving informed consent forms, I scheduled the interviews. Initial interviews lasted approximately one hour, and took place in the teachers' classrooms, unless they requested an alternate setting. Alternate settings included a school meeting room or outside location. I informed all teacher participants about the option for and availability of alternative interview settings. No teacher requested alternate settings, so all interviews took place in teachers' classrooms.

Prior to the scheduled interview, I provided participants with the six main questions I intended to ask during the interview. I did not collect this paper for analysis. The purpose of providing the paper was simply to ensure participants came to the interview ready to share their stories. I also acquired their signed informed consent documents. Next, I recorded the interviews on two separate audio recording devices, to ensure at least one copy was clear enough for transcription. I also used paper to write any relevant fieldnotes about the interview. Then, I sent the audio recording to a trustworthy, academic transcription service unaffiliated with my university.

Following these steps, I bound the data, identifying which part of the interviews contained key narratives relevant to my research question and reveled the beliefs entangled in these narratives. Bounding data means to set boundaries on what data collected is relevant.

Bound data includes only data "that connect directly to … [the] research question," and therefore is relevant to this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). I eliminated any extraneous conversations, keeping in mind that some exposition before the beginning of a narrative may reveal a teacher's knowledge and beliefs (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A member of my graduate committee checked my bounding to confirm I had identified the important pieces of the interview data. Next, I analyzed the data using a priori codes based in the three factors of Bandura's (1989) RD. The codes for each factor were as follows:

- environment: physical, social, and relational surroundings: E

- behavior: actions or instructional choices made by the teacher: B

- personal factors: beliefs of teacher and personal traits of teacher that may influence beliefs: P

- environment and behavior interaction: EB

- environment and personal factor interaction: EP

- personal factor and behavior interaction: PB

- environment, behavior, and personal factor interaction: EBP

Using these codes and the themes that were identified, I selected the narratives that were most emblematic of the categories of teacher lores provided by the participants. I restoried these narratives, and reviewed them with my participants (Kim, 2016). Finally, I drew conclusions about the teacher lore I discovered. I utilized peer debriefing and member checking to ensure the validity of my work. I then presented the stories I created to the teachers I interviewed through the process of a follow-up interview. Half of the follow up interviews took place in teachers' classrooms, and the other half took place via phone due to school closings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Analysis

My data analysis began as I bound the interview data to the narrative story arches and relevant exposition. A member of my graduate committee checked my bounding for validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After collecting the narrative experiences of teachers of ELLs, I bound the data by identifying the narratives and eliminating the unrelated social talk and irrelevant commentary. I sought confirmation of my bounding by having another researcher, my thesis committee chair, review my bounding. I used a priori codes based in Bandura's RD to identify the relative influence of the environment, teacher beliefs, and teacher behavior within each experience. Then I coded for when these factors overlapped and how they influenced each other. Since what people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave, and so forth, it was essential for my analysis to utilize a method that looks holistically at teacher experiences (Bandura, 1989).

In Microsoft Word, I created four separate copies of each teachers' interview transcripts. Using the highlighter tool, I begin with first-level coding for data showing the influence of the environment, followed by that of teacher beliefs, and finally for teacher behavior (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, I coded a clean copy of a single teacher's interview transcript in yellow for environment. I compiled a list of all the elements of the experience affected by environment. I created data memos for the initial impressions I saw in my analysis of environment. Next, I coded a clean copy of the same teacher's interview transcript in blue for beliefs. I compiled a list of all the elements of the experience affected by beliefs. Again, I made memos for the initial impressions I saw in my analysis. Third, I coded a clean copy of the same interview transcript in red for behavior. I compiled a list of all the elements of the experience affected by behavior. I made memos for my impressions about themes that emerge from examining behavior. Finally,

on the last document, I combined all three codes from the different factors of RD. I then reread the interview again, paying attention to areas where two or more factors of RD overlapped. The clean copy provided a way to analyze what elements of the experiences were affected by only a single factor of RD, and which elements of experiences were affected by multiple factors of RD. After coding all the narratives, I looked more carefully at each code for the themes that were evident in that code. Then, I looked for patterns among those themes, and I kept records of how the themes combined. For example, when the same theme appeared in more than one teacher's narrative. I searched for themes that were relevant to teacher lore captured by that theme. I then repeated this process with all of the interview transcripts. In order to reduce the bias of first level coding, and potentially over represent of one factor of RD, I alternated the order in which I coded each factor (Marshall, 2016).

After first-level coding and then pattern coding all the teachers' transcripts, I had a list of themes found in each teacher's interview (Maxwell & Miller, 2008). In teacher lore research, common characteristics, qualities, and knowledge are often found among experienced, successful teachers (Ayers & Schubert, 1994; Lee & Bang, 2011; Schubert, 1991; Schubert & Ayers, 1992;). When a theme existed in only a single teachers' account, I analyzed what factors influenced and resulted in that particular teacher's unique perspective. I restoried the teachers' individual narratives (Kim, 2016). I then conducted a cross case analysis and selected exemplar narratives that represented the teacher lore and were representative of the accounts of the other teachers in the study. Then I met with the teachers individually and presented my restoried accounts, which were narrative interpretations of their personal experiences, as well as the teacher lore revealed through the stories shared by all participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). We discussed the accounts and negotiated meaning until we reached agreement on the accuracy

of the restorying of their teacher lore. Finally, I summarized what this tells researchers about the teacher lore of teachers of ELLs in urban, Title I settings. Based on participant request, and in order to represent the thoughts of participants accurately, quotations as seen in Chapter 4 were revised for grammatical correctness and ease of reading.

Ethics and Trustworthiness

In the planning and execution stages of this research, ethics were prioritized**.** Respect for persons was ensured by adopting pseudonyms for interviewees. Anything revealed in response to the research question was utilized for research purposes only and held in complete confidentiality.

All reasonable measures were taken to ensure validity and reliability of data. I took a subset of the coded data and asked a member of my graduate committee to examine it. Further, in order to establish the trustworthiness of my findings, I conducted a peer debriefing. I shared the categories of teacher lore and conclusion with two other members of my graduate cohort, negotiating my findings and conclusions until consensus was reached (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also shared my conclusions with the teachers I interviewed. Through member checking the interpretations, I ensured validity of the data analysis.

Although negative effects of interviewing are usually minimal, there was a small chance of participants bringing up emotionally distressing topics. In developing questions for and relationships with the participants, I attempted to remain aware of the participants' emotional states. Some participants also may have benefited from the opportunity to speak in-depth about important and often stressful aspects of their teaching careers (Worthen, 2002).

Assurance of privacy and confidentiality were given in the recruitment email sent to potential participants. Participants signed an informed consent form before beginning in-person

questioning. Compensation in the form of a $25 Target gift card was provided to encourage

participation. Data was saved and secured on a password-protected remote hard drive. All data

will be deleted after 10 years.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Teacher lore is evident in the acts teachers take and includes all aspects of their action

and knowing in the classroom. As a result, teacher lore involves the three factors Bandura (1989)

articulated in his theory of reciprocal determinism (RD): environment, behavior, and personal

factors/beliefs, as well as the influence of their interaction with each other. None of the factors

are truly separate. For example, while individuals' behavior changes based on their environment,

"people create as well as select their environments" (Bandura, 1989, p. 3). As Bandura

articulates in this quote, behavior can be examined separately, however, these changes are

personal and occur in response to the environment. This also means that each factor can be used

as a lens to examine the narratives shared in the interviews and teacher lore could thus be

explored and uncovered systematically. Capturing the lore from each factor, then each

interaction, allowed me to reveal a fuller picture of the teacher lore of the experienced teachers in

this study and report in a way that enables teachers, teacher educators, and researchers to

recognize them and utilize them in developing deeper understandings of teacher knowledge for

teaching English Language Learners (ELLs; Schubert & Ayers, 1992). This examination

provided a window into the "real-life classroom experience … [and] complexities of what it

means to teach" (Marlowe, 2006, p. 93).

This chapter will begin with sharing the teacher lore about environment. The findings

described forthwith represent the teacher lore of the experienced teachers interviewed,

"knowledge, ideas, insights, feelings, and understandings of teachers… [that] offer aspects of

their philosophy on teaching and provide recommendations for educational policy makers"

(Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p. 9). These teachers can be characterized as experienced or master

teachers because all participants held English Second Language (ESL) endorsements, taught in a majority ELL, Title I, urban school for five or more years, and were considered by other staff members as knowledgeable. This section begins by identifying the teacher lore uncovered in the findings, then an exemplar of the lore is stated, and then an explanation is provided to further the understanding of this piece of teacher lore. Some plotlines exemplified more than one type of lore. When this was the case, an explanation of this narrative's inclusion in multiple categories of lore was explored.

In this chapter, italics are used in what some may feel is a unique way. The italicized phrases represent an articulation of specific categories of teacher lore. Italics indicated that phrases were not direct quotes from teacher participants, instead they are phrases that capture the teacher lore expressed by the teachers. In negotiating text with the participants, they were asked to approve these italicized representations of the lore. Throughout the chapter, in some cases, italics are combined with quotation marks to indicate definitions of specific categories of teacher lore that were confirmed by all the teachers in this study using member checking (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

First, the teacher lore interwoven with the environment in which the teacher participants teach is explicated. Next, an explanation of teacher lore that emerges from a consideration of behavior is provided. Then, an exploration of the teacher lore unearthed from a consideration of teachers' personal factors/beliefs is provided. Following this, an unpacking of the teacher lore arose from the entanglement of more than one factor is articulated and examined.

Teacher Lore of Not Enough

The teacher lore associated with *Not enough* includes a lament about the lack of quality materials and other resources necessary to teach well. This includes the fact teachers argue that

what districts require them to do in teaching ELLs often limits their ability to be flexible, responsive, and make curriculum coherent. The teacher lore of *Not enough* was visible in stories where teachers talked about occasions where they desired to teach student in more effective ways than resources allowed. "*When teaching Title I ELLs there is a **lack** of quality materials, teaching staff, and other resources. There is also a **limit** to the flexibility and coherence of resources available to aid ELLs,*" was lore held by all the teachers interviewed. Each reported experiences of not having enough to adequately meet the needs of their ELL students.

This teacher lore, like other examples of lore, illustrates stories of meaning in context, by capturing teacher discoveries and insights shared in narratives (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). In RD, environmental factors relevant to the classroom include the geographic location of the school, socioeconomic status of the surrounding community, the physical constraints of the classroom, and school, district, and national policy and curriculum. Environment also includes the other people an individual interacts with on a regular basis (Bandura, 1989). Thus, the teacher lore revealed under the lens of environment highlighted the lore of not having sufficient resources to teach ELLs in Title I, urban environments.

Resources

One plot line related to the teacher lore of *Not enough* focused on scarcity of resources. The narrative that most exemplified this aspect of the teacher lore of *Not enough* is Allie's experience with a newcomer student from Kenya. Allie had seven years of experience teaching ELL students in Title I, urban environments, and nine years' experience teaching the upper elementary grades. However, she described this episode as a time when she felt extremely unsuccessful as a teacher. She relates,

I had a student from Kenya who spoke Swahili, and I didn't have anybody who could help me. This young man was just wanting to learn English. He was so motivated to learn. But I could only give him 20 minutes a day of one-on-one time, and the rest of the time was computer.

Despite the fact that this situation occurred several years ago, Allie still expressed tangible regret, stating "[The student] only stayed at our school one year and I have always felt like he left to go to a different school because I did a poor job in teaching him that year."

This was not the first time Allie taught a newcomer ELL student in the upper elementary grades. However, all of her previous newcomer students spoke Spanish as their native language. For these students, Allie utilized the assistance of other Spanish speaking students, Spanish speaking staff members, as well as the limited bilingual teaching materials in English and Spanish available to her. Here Allie demonstrates the understanding of an experienced teacher, knowing that often some of the best teaching tools are other students or faculty members (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). However, when Allie welcomed a Kenyan student who spoke Swahili to her classroom, she felt at a loss as to how to adequately support this student.

Allie expressed what many experienced teachers know to be true, that limited resources mean that teachers' best efforts fall far short of students' needs. District policies and the demands of the other students she was teaching meant that she could only provide direct, one-to-one, instruction for 20 minutes each day. Of course, in addition to Allie's 20 minutes of direct instruction, the student received 45 minutes of instruction in an English Language Development (ELD) block with other students with low English proficiency. In this school, ELD referred to the 45 minutes of targeted ESL instruction provided to ELLs each day. Students from two grade levels were separated by English proficiency status and then taught by one of the classroom

teachers. Outside of ELD, he and his teacher were given no additional support. Allie saw tangible evidence of the lack of resources negatively affecting this student. While at the beginning of the year he was very well-behaved, his behavior deteriorated as the year progressed. He also showed visible frustration at so frequently being required to work independently on the computer.

During the negotiating of this narrative, Allie reflected that if this student had been provided a one-on-one aide who spoke Swahili, he could have participated in many of the tier 1 lessons, because he had been well educated in Kenya. Allie recognized that this student possessed funds of knowledge from his educational experiences in his home country (González et al., 2005). Experts on best practice for teaching ELLs agree that educating teachers on students' funds of knowledge improves educational outcomes (Gay, 2018). These researchers argue that more teacher education on this topic will lead to better results for students. However, Allie's comment on this student's education in his native language indicates the depth of her teacher lore and demonstrates that it does not matter if teachers are aware of funds of knowledge or other research on ELLs learning and the knowledge they possess, if teachers lack the resources to utilize teaching methods that build on students' knowledge funds. Allie used her knowledge, teaching, and understanding to teach this student in a culturally responsive way that incorporated the funds of knowledge he brought to her classroom. However, lack of resources such as a Swahili interpreter or an aide to work one-on-one with the student, made it almost impossible for Allie to utilize her many skills to best reach this student. Lack of resources nulled the effect of an experienced teacher.

Allie's narrative is rife in teacher lore relevant to the lore of *Not enough*. She both articulated in her stories and in her explanation exemplified how in the face of challenging

situations, expert teachers excel at make-shift solutions (Schubert & Ayers, 1992). Allie took the prerogative, independently, to find computer programs her student could use to practice English during times in the day when he could not access normal classroom instruction. She built a relationship with the student and his family even though her only tool for communication was Google Translate. These are all aspects of Allie's depth of knowledge that accompany the teacher lore of *Not enough,* namely how an experienced teacher responds to situations of scarcity. However, despite the considerable effort Allie expended working with this student, she felt unsuccessful overall. This narrative has molded Allie's view of herself as an educator and the teacher lore she holds. When asked about what she wished she could change about educating ELLs, she focused on increasing resources for newcomer students, like her former student from Kenya. Allie explained,

> The policy or procedure I would change is newcomers being immersed in an all English classroom. I think that it's unfair to do. Seven hours in a class at a school and everybody, your teacher, all the other students, they're all speaking English. You are starting a new diet. You're just starting new. I think that it's a mean thing to do to people.

Allie suggested the alternative of students either receiving instruction for one year in a separate classroom specifically focused on newcomer students or students receiving assistance from a one-on-one aide fluent in their native language. This suggests further that teacher lore such as *Not enough* also includes teachers' thoughtful suggestions for how to resolve issues surrounding the teacher lore that causes difficult experiences for them.

Background

Another plot line related to the teacher lore of *Not enough* focused on students' background. As the lore was unpacked in analysis, it was clear that teachers were aware of the

problems students faced, but their orientation pointed towards students' promise and not their risk. All teachers in this study affirmed the lore of *Not enough* by sharing experiences about and agreeing that, *"Title I ELLs have more intense needs due to a variety of factors outside of educator control. These factors can include the ELL's literacy, former schooling, parental availability, proficiency in their first language, as well as cultural differences."*

Lore containing this plot line usually involved the teacher uncovering an individual student's needs and attempting to meet those needs. All teacher participants demonstrated a deep desire to take whatever steps necessary to meet the needs of all students. This pattern supports Ayers and Schubert's (1994) claim that expert teaching is built upon knowledge of students' experiences. The teacher lore indicated that the degree of success a teacher attained at meeting student needs depended on the resources available.

While the exemplar below tells the story of a teacher feeling failure to meet a student's intense needs, this was not true across all stories. Stories where teachers had access to adequate resources showed success, and some stories simply acknowledged the reality Millie described that, "our kids in our community don't get those same opportunities [compared to high SES, non-ELL students]." Most teachers in this study believed that teachers had an obligation to provide opportunities to students in the school day that they might not receive at home.

Joan is a veteran of upper elementary; she has over 20 years of experience teaching grades 4th through 6th. She began, and plans to finish, her teaching career at an urban, Title I school with majority of students identified as ELLs. Joan told a story about a student she taught whose needs were heightened by a multitude of background factors. He identified as both ELL and learning disabled. Due to his learning disability, he received additional pull-out resource services. While the focused instruction was beneficial, Joan worried it also cemented this

student's perception of himself as unintelligent and incapable of learning. His parents neither spoke English nor possessed much formal education. Thus, while they were very kind and loving, they lacked the ability to give him additional educational support at home. She felt like these combinations of factors (as well as the impact of his learning disability on his English proficiency scores that kept him from transitioning out of the lowest proficiency ELD group) contributed to his generally negative outlook on schooling and poor behavior. Joan felt that even though she tried in many ways over the school year to reach him, nothing proved effective. Joan's teacher lore included understanding that students' background and personality could position them in ways that made it very difficult for teachers to provide sufficient help and support no matter how skilled they were as teachers. She shared,

> He liked to be a tough guy. He wanted to be a tough guy. He didn't want to learn anything because tough guys don't learn anything. He was just stuck in a rut, and he hated it …He could barely read. He could barely write… But that didn't have anything to do with him being an ELL student and everything to do with him being a resource student, and yet he could not move out of that [lowest level ELD class], being with those same kids year, after year, after year. He spoke very fluent English. He just couldn't pass the test to get out of ELD.

Notice in this quote the nuances and depths of Joan's understanding of background in the interweaving of her skill at teaching. She fully integrates into her practice understanding about students' learning and the background of experience students bring to classroom learning experiences. Joan made daily efforts to reach out to this student, hoping to help this student see past any his perceived deficits. However, nothing proved effective. She continues,

I'm trying to read with him one-on-one, trying to do math with him one-on-one … trying

to be positive and giving him … morale booster[s]. Just trying to be positive and pump-

up [his self-esteem]. But by the time he got in my classroom, he was just out. He was just

gone. He was so far gone. He wasn't interested in anything. He'd get high before he came

to school.

Notice here the depth of Joan's teacher lore concerning the interrelationship of *Not enough* and student background. Note the strategies and complexities she brings to respond to this child. Joan's struggle to meet the needs of this particular student provides a perfect example of the lore of *Not enough*.

This student likely would have benefited from a one-on-one aide, so he could continually receive the support Joan was attempting to give him during small times in the day—stolen spaces, moments of interaction and constant vigilance on Joan's part seeking those moments. However, one-on-one aides were mostly an unheard-of luxury—given the background of personality and experience this student brought into the learning environment. *Not enough* also appears in the fact that a student who has attended an English only, American elementary school from kindergarten, continued to be placed in an ELD class designed for newcomer students. The goal of a Level 1 or 2 ELD group is to help students new to an English-speaking environment gain basic conversational speaking and listening proficiency (Board of Regents of University of Wisconsin System, 2012). This student was fluent in conversational English, he simply lacked the reading and writing skills to gain the required score to enter an intermediate ELD classes. He was placed in a class designed for newcomers because the school did not have enough teachers to create a group specific to students with his type of needs. Joan suggested that with more resources, two beginning level ELD classes could be created. One class targeted to true

newcomer students, and one class for students with fluent conversational English but who would benefit from targeted reading and writing instruction. Again, as Schubert and Ayers (1992) suggest, teacher lore uncovers the depth of knowledge about students, teaching, and response veteran teachers hold.

Teacher Lore of Mirrors

The next piece of teacher lore that emerged was the lore of *Mirrors. Mirrors* refers to the understanding held by the experienced teachers in this study that, *"student behavior is a reflection of the effectiveness of instruction."* Teachers make instructional choices designed to positively affect the behavior of students. Whether the desired change in student behavior occurs depends on a multitude of factors. Just as one can put on makeup in the attempt to alter their reflection in a mirror, one is never guaranteed how the reflection will actually appear.

Most stories containing lore of *Mirrors* involved teachers feeling their instruction was ineffective based on the poor behavior of students. An exemplar of the teacher lore of *Mirrors* appear in a story "Alex" shared about a student who he felt particularly ineffective at teaching. Alex has seven years of experience teaching the upper elementary grades in a Title I, urban school with a majority of students identified as ELLs. In addition to an elementary license with an ESL endorsement, he holds a certification to teach mild to moderate special needs students and is a National Board Certified teacher. This experience occurred in his first year. Alex reportedly believed the student was so negatively affected by the strict mandated curriculum required for ELD that it ruined his relationship with Alex and limited his progress in developing English language proficiency. Alex reported,

> My first year, there was a student in my ELD class who…was literally angry at the
> activities that we had to do as part of the mandated ELD [curriculum]. He thought the

activities were so ridiculous and had nothing to do with anything…One of the units was

called a trip to the beach. The students had to practice all these vocabulary words that

were specific to the beach, and we did a virtual, simulated, field trip to the beach. It just

made him angry. Not just like, "Uh, I'm bored," like he was pissed about this virtual field

trip. And every day, because it was a unit, it added to it. So, every day he'd come in and

ask, "What are we doing today? You're going to play sounds of the ocean?" I would

respond, "Actually, yes, yes I am, but I will not turn that on this time, and we'll just talk

about it. We'll be talking about the conditional tense of verbs too applied to this beach

scenario.

In expressing his understanding about the relationship between the beach unit and student

learning, Alex reveals an important aspect of the *Mirrors* lore. Implicit in this statement is Alex's

understanding that in order to create learning experiences where ELLs will thrive, the content

and learning experiences need to be relevant to students (Choi, 2013; Goldenberg, 2008). Here

he argues that the beach unit felt especially irrelevant to the student because in the state the

student lived, there are no oceans with beaches. However, as Alex later describes, at that time, he

did not feel comfortable exercising his professional judgment because of his status as a

provisional teacher.

I just knew that I needed to not do it, but it was mandated by the district, and so I had to. I

was a first-year teacher on a provisional contract. I did not want to lose my job. And so, I

did it. I did the thing that I knew was wrong, I did it anyways because it was the best way

to secure my job. I felt guilty the whole time I was doing it. I still feel dirty and guilty

about it now, and I just promised myself that I would do a good enough job and my

students would perform high enough so I could buy myself the latitude to not do that kind

of thing again.

This experience built Alex's understanding of aspects of the *Mirrors* lore—the understanding

that his focus was creating environments that supported student learning and he needed to follow

his insight and wisdom concerning how he could make positive learning interactions between

teacher and student occur. Indeed, after his first year, Alex did choose to teach ELD in a more

flexible way, attuned to students needs and behavioral responses. This eventually led Alex to

using debate to teach ELD. Alex found great success in adapting the required components of the

ELD curriculum to teaching debate. It allowed students the freedom to express themselves while

also practicing key language structures. Alex had one student whom he taught over two years

who responded particularly well to the format of debate. She not only, "did incredibly well on

WIDA and our SAGE test the end of the year. But she just gained so much confidence in

speaking English." In these contrasting stories of success and failure, Alex provides insight into

the basic premise of *Mirrors* lore—that student behavior and learning reflects teachers teaching.

These two related stories highlight the lore of *Mirrors* held by Alex. In the story about

the beach unit, Alex was beginning to craft his understanding that students' behavior provides

signals about the effectiveness of instruction. However, despite observing his students' frustrated

face in the reflection, Alex felt powerless to make any changes. Later, when Alex felt his

teaching position was secure, he was able to use his first-year experience as a springboard for

designing and implementing a more engaging teaching approach. Here we see the subtle but

powerful effects of early teaching experiences on later choices in one's teaching career and the

ways these experiences benefit students (Schubert & Ayers, 1992). The teacher lore revealed in

these narratives also highlights the dangerous consequences when teachers are demoted from

curriculum designers to curriculum implementers (Schubert, 1991). Alex could only fully exercise his professional judgment once he no longer feared risk of termination if he veered too far away from the mandated curriculum. The exemplar stories in *Mirrors* teacher lore reveal ELL teachers' sophisticated knowledge of both the importance of the interaction of teacher learning but also the propensity of teachers to look not just to student responsibility and contribution in learning but to look clearly and critically to their own contribution. When students struggled with learning, this teacher lore indicated that teachers became more critical of themselves, their teaching, and other factors that might be resulting in students' lack of learning.

Allie provided a counterexample in her story about teaching a small group of seven newcomer ELL students. She saw evidence of the effectiveness of her instruction in the fact that while many of those students were well-known troublemakers in the school, they behaved well and worked hard in her class. The teacher lore *Mirror* emerged in this example where her exemplar narrative indicated that in this case her teaching methods worked on those particular students. However, as part of the *Mirrors* lore, Allie indicates the understanding that repeating the same style of instruction that was successful in this case will not work on every set of students. Contradictions and complexities present in the teacher lore of different educators gives us a richer understanding of complexity of teaching (Ayers & Schubert, 1994).

Teacher Lore of Adapting

The lore of *Not enough* revealed that all the experienced teachers in this study were keenly aware of their students' unique needs. The lore of *Mirrors* established that experienced teachers of ELLs recognize when instruction is and is not effective. The lore of *Adapting* occurred when these experienced teachers took their understanding from the two previously mentioned lores, as well as their accumulated knowledge about who and where they taught, to

make changes to benefit students. All four teacher participants agreed that, *"proficient teachers of ELLs must be willing to augment and adapt materials and teaching styles to accommodate all learners."*

This lore almost always appeared in stories described where teachers felt highly successful. Many research studies document the benefits of *Adapting* curriculum for the needs of ELLs (e.g., Choi, 2013; Heafner & Plaisance, 2016; Rodriguez-Valls, 2012). The lore of *Adapting* contrasted from *Mirrors* in that stories of *Adapting* showcased teachers skillfully molding instruction for the specific needs on an individual student or individual group of students. The story that most exemplified the lore of *Adapting* came from Millie. Millie has taught kindergarten to ELLs in the same urban, Title I school for over 20 years. Millie shared about one year where she chose to co-teach ELD with another experienced kindergarten teacher. Kindergarten paraprofessionals provided instruction to the non-ELL students while Millie and her partner co-taught their combined ELD classes. The curriculum mandated by the district was less than ideal. For example, while kindergarten teachers were required to teach ELD four days a week for 30 to 45 minutes, the provided materials only encompassed about 10 minutes of lesson planning materials. By co-teaching, Millie was able to make the lessons much more interactive and the kids loved ELD and talked enthusiastically about their ELD time during other parts of the day. Millie described,

> The two of us were in there together and could support each other with different activities, because with the last program, you know this, we really had to supplement it with other things because a 45 minute lesson couldn't be stretched out with the material. It was fun, and I remember we did a unit on weather and each group got a little bear and they had to dress him appropriately for whatever weather and then they had a sentence

they had to say… They [the kids] just really enjoyed that. Sometimes we'd have them say the sentence in a normal way, and then sometimes we'd say it in a different voice, and sometimes we'd sing it. We did things together that made it more fun; she and I would bounce ideas off each other. But then working together made us a little goofy and I think the kids like that. There's got to be some fun.

The teacher lore of *Adapting* present in this plotline consists of a multitude of layers. First, Millie recognized that the curriculum provided was not adequately meeting her students' needs. She knew this from closely analyzing the curriculum as she prepared lessons, and by studying how students reacted to the curriculum when it was taught with fidelity, fidelity meaning virtually no deviations from the scripted materials. Next, Millie considered different methods to meet her students' needs, and decided on co-teaching. When planning the co-taught ELD sessions, Millie infused her own belief that in teaching, "there's got to be some fun." Fun consisted of using different voices and making the lessons more concrete by adding manipulatives. Millie's lore of *Adapting* recognized that integrating effective teaching strategies into all lessons is the responsibility of the teacher. Her beliefs and her practice were completely in synch. Schubert (1991) noted that the lore of expert teachers revealed that teachers are constantly at the praxis of their own personal beliefs and their practice. Millie's belief about the best way to teach children, and her recognition of weaknesses in the mandated program, intermingled in the lore she shared about the importance of *Adapting*.

Teacher Lore of More

In the interviews, teachers frequently repeated the word *More.* "Our students need *more* field trips." "Our students need *more* teacher interaction; our students require *more* planning." The word *More* came to represent what was necessary to assure student success. Every one of

the experienced teachers shared stories highlighting the understanding that, *"ensuring the rights of urban Title I ELLs to meet their potential success requires the education they receive to be of the highest quality."*

Allie emphasized the lore of *More* when she responded to the question about what policy regarding ELLs she wished she could change. She shared her emphatic belief that ELLs have the right and need to be allocated *More* resources from the district and state level. Research supports that adequate ESL-instruction requires *More* funding allocations (Gándara & Rumberger, 2008). Her plotline from the lore of *Not enough* about her student from Kenya who spoke Swahili exemplified how much *More* urban, Title I, ELLs need. She felt strongly that some of her struggles early in her teaching career could have been mitigated with adequate funding and resources. Allie explained,

> I think in a predominantly English language learning school, there should be more support personnel to help you with language development time. I think having a teacher who is just starting an ESL endorsement, having 30 kids in a class, is really poor planning and management. I think that I could have been more successful if I had had more experience or if I had help; two people in there for that 45 minutes instead of just one person.

Allie was describing her first-year teaching at Seagull Elementary. While district policy and legal mandates insisted that only teachers holding an ELD endorsement should take on the responsibility of teaching ELD, the lack of qualified teachers resulted in Allie teaching ELD, while simultaneously beginning her ESL endorsement classes. Her lack of training, along with the large class size, made her feel like she did not successfully teach the class. Allie had taught two years previously in a charter school with similar class sizes, but very few language learners

and almost no students receiving free or reduced lunch. In this aspect, we see the crucial difference between the lore of *Not enough* and the lore of *More.* Allie's story shows that an adequate learning environment for non-ELLs can be an unfair learning environment for ELLs. This highlights that ELLs need more and sometimes different resources from their richer peers. Resources that are targeted to their needs. However, the frustrating reality many teachers shared is that their students need *More* yet their students receive fewer resources than their native English-speaking peers at different schools.

ELLs attending Title I schools receive a higher proportion of instruction from less experienced teachers (Condron & Roscigno, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). In this study, the researcher specifically sought participants who had five or more years of experience. This dramatically decreased the pool of possible candidates, since so many of the faculty in Title I schools are in their early years (Ravitch, 2010). While higher percentages of inexperienced teaching staffs may be the new norm, the lore of *More* indicates that situations suitable for the success of a non-ELL will not always result in success for ELL students. Title I, urban ELLs need and deserve *More*. While all students deserve high quality education, ELLs require the highest education to succeed on the same level as their non-ELL peers (Goldenberg, 2008). The theory of teacher lore asserts that teachers develop theories from their personal experience (Schubert, 1991). Each teacher in this study asserted, based on their firsthand experience, that Title I ELLs simply needed *More.*

Teacher Lore of Good Teaching

Lore about *Good teaching* received its name from the popular sentiment, "Good teaching is good teaching." Often, this lore appeared entwined with the plotlines of other narratives. When teachers shared stories of teaching successes, they frequently finished by repeating the idea that

good teaching helps ELLs and non-ELLs alike. All of the teachers in this study affirmed the statement, *"teaching strategies that will benefit ELLs will benefit all students and vice versa."* They asserted the belief that good teaching is universal, while also acknowledging the unique needs of ELLs.

This lore is controversial. In fact, research literature related to this lore is mixed. Some research backs the claim that good teaching is simply good teaching, that methods of teaching that benefit monolingual students will also benefit ELLs (Hertzog, 2011; Siegel et al., 2014). Other research states that ELLs require differentiated instruction specifically suited to their language learning needs (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Gándara & Rumberger, 2008; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012). Despite this disagreement in the literature, the lore of *Good teaching* was identified because every teacher participant shared at least one (and often multiple) narratives revealing, and sometimes declaring, their belief in the universality of good teaching strategies. Since one of the aims of teacher lore is to add the neglected and necessary voices of teachers to education research, the insights these teachers shared adds to the debate about the universality of good teaching strategies (Ayers & Schubert, 1994).

Alex shared his belief that, "what's good for English language learners is good for all students," when describing a year in which he taught the lowest proficiency level ELD class. Most of these students were both learning disabled and long-term language learners. This presented unique challenges in designing instruction that was both engaging and at an appropriate skill level. In this plotline, Alex expresses that *Good teaching* requires teachers to be keenly aware of the unique needs of their students. Based on his professional and personal knowledge about the students, Alex decided to utilize many of the same strategies he used in his homeroom classroom (for ELLs and non-ELLs alike) to great success,

I would pick books for them and I would provide time for independent reading where I could conference with them and talk about things like text structures and author's craft. Things that I love to do in my own homeroom class with my students…A lot of those kids, they didn't love the idea of ELD, especially at the start of the year, because they had not liked it before, and because ELD was a lot of rote practice. There was definitely skill building that we did, but they also got to have conversations about specific texts. I would also pull small groups and we would do readers. These were kids that usually didn't talk at all in class about the things we were reading.

The plotline begins with recognizing the background characteristics of the group of the students; the reality that most students came into Alex's class predisposed based on their previous experiences to not enjoy ELD. To reach these students, Alex began by integrating successful strategies he used with his homeroom class. He continued to still integrate skill building, or targeted practice that these students needed to advance in English proficiency. However, Alex showcases the mastery of teachers utilizing *Good teaching* in that he had students practice essential skills in a way that was highly engaging. He elaborated,

In the small groups, they got very good at going into a text and talking about what was affecting them within the work. They're making text to text comparisons, and talking about the texts, and writing summaries. It was a lot of what some would consider just traditional language arts instruction, but what I view as just quality instruction overall. And these kids blossomed; they did really well.

The strategies Alex used in this ELD group were all research proven methods. The lore of *Good teaching* reveals that experienced teachers transfer their expertise in one area of teaching to another. The fluidity associated with *Good teaching* supports the development of ELLs' English

proficiency throughout the entire school day. All four teacher participants shared how they incorporate strategies to aid ELLs across the curriculum, a research-based strategy to improve ELLs' academic outcomes (Goldenberg, 2008). In sharing narratives that can be characterized as the lore of *Good teaching,* Alex, like other in this study, was reportedly aware of the needs of ELL learners. They reported taking into account students' language needs when planning any form of instruction. This awareness of teaching methods specifically designed to benefit ELLs also aided the learning of all students.

Two of the four participants voiced frustrations about the mandate to teach ELD for a certain length of time each day because, "I really do feel like I teach the whole class as an ELL." They felt the rigidness of the mandated time, as well as the requirement to separate the students by English proficiency level, limited their ability to teach students in the most efficient and effective way possible. Both teachers had over 20 years of experience teaching Title I ELLs and remembered teaching before the mandate for a daily ELD block separate from normal instruction was put in place in their district. They stated a strong belief in the importance of instruction tailored for ELLs, but they opposed students being removed from their homeroom setting to receive this instruction.

Frequency of Factors

As narratives capturing teacher lore were analyzed, an entanglement emerged between the factors of RD at play and the teacher lore revealed. Every story shared about teaching Title I ELLs contained at least one, and most multiple, of the three core factors: environment, behavior, and personal factors/beliefs (Bandura, 1989). Bandura asserted that most events are created by, "interacting determinants that influence each other bidirectionally" (1989, p. 2). In other words, the complexity of human life means the presence of multiple factors of RD is the rule and not the

exception. In a similar way, teacher lore emerges from the commonalities between different teachers' narratives and shared experiences (Schubert & Ayers, 1992). A second layer of teacher lore was revealed when the narratives were examined to determine the prevalence of more than one factor, as well as the rate which factors simultaneously influenced each other. Table 2 indicates the number of stories each teacher participant shared, as well as the percentage of what factor appeared in each story. Stories could contain anywhere between one to all three factors. Each participant shared stories with a different distribution of the factors. Allie was the only participant where all three factors were evenly divided. She also shared the least number of stories; her six stories were half the average of stories shared by other participants.

Table 2

Frequency of RD Factors Appearing in Participant Narratives

Participant	Total number of stories	Environment	Behavior	Personal/ Beliefs	Multiple Factors
Allie	6	4/6 = 67%	4/6 = 67%	4/6 = 67%	5/6 = 83%
Alex	12	10/12 = 83%	7/12 = 58%	11/12 = 92%	12/12 = 100%
Joan	13	7/13 = 54%	6/13 = 46%	11/13 = 85%	9/13 = 69%
Millie	13	10/13 = 77%	6/13 = 46%	11/13 = 85%	11/13 = 85%

Overall, the factor present most frequently was personal factors/beliefs. This seems unsurprising, since so many interview questions focused on understanding teachers' opinions and perspective. The second most common factor was environment, however there was a larger range in percentages, with the least amount coming from Joan at 54%, to the most frequent being Alex with 83%. One of the study's primary aims was to uncover the teacher lore of teachers of

ELLS in Title I, urban settings. In line with this study's designs, many teachers spent extensive time discussing the impact of their teaching setting. Behavior appeared the least, with two participants, Millie and Joan, indicating behavior as a factor in less than half their narratives. The low prevalence of the factor of behavior, may be due to the fact that two of the main interview questions focused on experiences of constraint and experiences of failure. Therefore, teachers spent more times discussing experiences where they were unable to act.

Before identifying the factor for each story, the interview transcripts were coded for each factor, along with overlap between multiple factors. The interactions coded between different factors proved particularly insightful. The results and meaning of teacher lore revealed when these interactions and entanglements were considered will be identified by naming a lore, providing an explanation of the meaning, and then analyzing multiple examples of that lore.

Teacher Lore of Agency

The interweaving between environment and behavior unearthed unique pieces of teacher lore. Interaction between environment and behavior (EB) was the least common of the four possible interactions. EB appeared infrequently because often situations that included behavior and environment were also influenced by the beliefs of the teacher. Bandura (1989) characterized the influence of environment and behavior this way,

> behavior alters environmental conditions and is, in turn, altered by the very condition it
> creates… the environment is not a fixed entity… the aspect of the potential environment
> that becomes the actual environment for given individuals thus depends on how they
> behave. (p. 3)

Teachers' behaviors are affected by their environment (school, district, and state policies, curriculum mandates, classroom dynamics etc.), however, the way they react to the environment

changes the environment they teach in. This is why environment is not considered fixed, it is constantly influencing behavior and being influenced by the behavior of those who work and live in the environment. The actual environment emerges when teachers choose how to behave in their environment. The lore of *Agency* comes to light as teachers make choices that are highly impacted by the environment in which they teach.

Agency, as defined by Bandura (2000), is, "people's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives" (p. 331). People who strongly believe that they have the power to control their own lives have high self-efficacy. Thus, *Agency* as a teacher is the degree of confidence one has in their ability to control events that affect their classroom and students. An individuals' perspective on their own agency and self-efficacy affects what people choose to do and how much effort they invest in an activity (Bandura, 2000). The following plot lines associated with the influence of environment and behaviors reveal the teacher lore of *Agency*.

Narratives revealing the lore of *Agency* usually expressed experiences where teachers felt low levels of *Agency*. These narratives often involved situations where teachers were forced to make a choice based on the constraints of state or district mandates. Joan described a feeling of being stuck due to the requirement of using the mandated ELD curriculum, "I did not care for it. But I tried to stay true to the program because that's what we were supposed to do. So, I tried my best to continue to use the program." Joan's lore of agency highlighted the restriction that many teachers face making curricular decisions. Her choice was limited between only two options: to implement or not implement the district-mandated curriculum with fidelity. Joan's experience showcases a regular issue in teacher lore that teachers have knowledge that they are constrained

from using because of mandates, required programs, and the worry about potential employment consequences (Schubert, 2012).

Since so many decisions that affect teaching are made outside of the classroom, Joan would have to become a district level employee to effectively change policies on curriculum. In her role as a classroom teacher, her personal beliefs lack the power to influence decisions on curriculum choice made by the district. Her teaching methods are thus affected by the degree of *Agency* and self-efficacy she feels she can maintain in her own classroom (Bandura, 2000).

As in Joan's example, the source of a decrease in one's self-efficacy often came from mandated curriculum, groupings, or instructional style. Teachers often described simply having to make things work when teaching to a mandate. Millie stated the perennial problem of the packaged curriculum for ELD as, "what we're going to do … only takes 10 minutes, but we have another 35 we need to use." Millie's instructional freedom was limited as the deficiencies in the mandated curriculum forced her to create stop-gap instruction that simultaneously filled the remainder of teaching time and related to the initial part of the lesson. The lore of *Agency* in this plotline showcases the narrowing of many teachers' decision-making power. Teachers voiced a longing to be granted the *Agency* to determine for themselves if the mandated curriculum fit their students' needs and thus exercise the freedom to increase their instructional efficacy.

The teacher lore of *Agency* also described the ripple effects of the decisions made by other teachers. Alex voiced his frustration that many other teachers in the district did not take the administration of the World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA) seriously and did not follow the Test Administration Manual (TAM) with fidelity. When Alex began teaching, outside personnel conducted all aspects of the WIDA test administration. Eventually, this responsibility was transferred to classroom teachers. The change saved money for the district,

but Alex worried about the consequence for students. A student's test result directly affected their educational opportunities for the following year. Students receiving a passing score were free to choose any elective class in middle school, while those who did not pass were required to continue receiving ELD instruction. In conversations with teachers at other schools, Alex heard teachers describing providing levels of support he felt were inappropriate (for example, rewording a question for a student, or encouraging a student to revise their answer on a specific section). However, these schools had much higher passing rates on WIDA. Alex felt powerless in the ethical dilemma between wanting to administer the test fairly and wanting to ensure his students were able to receive more opportunities in middle school by offering additional assistance on the test. Conversely, Alex worried about students being exited too early from receiving ELD services because of the results of invalid test data. A decision that might have seemed cut and dry was complicated by Alex's knowledge of other teachers' actions. The lore of *Agency* shows that teachers daily confront the difficulty of making a choice where there is no good option. Teachers must rely on their own judgment, judgment which they have cultivated over years of experience, to choose what they perceive as the lesser of the two evils (Schubert, 1991).

The teacher lore of *Agency* reveals just how knowledgeable teachers are about the problems that most effect students. Joan and Millie described the limitations of strictly mandated package program. When teachers are unable to utilize their full breadth of skills when implementing instruction, it puts students at a disadvantage for learning. Alex's story unveils two key issues teacher of ELLs struggle with. First, it draws attention to the heavy weight placed on the results of standardized testing (Guerra & Wubbena, 2017). Then it reveals how flawed the testing data can be. Master teachers often know potential solutions: stress flexibility over fidelity

when it comes to curriculum, make sure test administrators are unbiased regarding the results of the test. However, the environment of the teachers in my study, like many teachers across the nation, limits teachers from also acting as school and district decision makers who can fully utilize their *Agency.*

Alex provided the only plotline of *Agency* where a teacher felt empowered during an EB interaction. This occurred when Alex described his frequently used instructional strategies, such as debate and a workshop checklist. Thus, while he exercised behavior in his classroom environment, the environment of his classroom was unique due to the conscious choices made based on his beliefs concerning best practices. I include this plotline in the boundaries of *Agency* because it showcases how a teacher can create a certain classroom environment where they can flourish as an educator. A different researcher may have interpreted this experience as including the factor of personal factors/beliefs. This analysis could also be appropriate because Alex's instructional choices were made on the belief that these methods would prove more effective than traditional or mandated practices. I chose to leave this story as an example of *Agency* because while it contains traces of Alex's belief about best practices, those choices have become such a part of the fabric of his classroom that his belief is enveloped by the environment he created.

Teacher Lore of This is How it is

This is how it is, as teacher lore, came from examining the interaction of environment and personal factors/beliefs (EP). Bandura (1989) described how individuals' expectations and beliefs grow from their observation of the environment and how people in the environment react to them. Different people evoke different reactions from their social environment. Individuals' experience strengthened or altered their beliefs about the environment. EP appeared more

frequently than any other interaction. This may be due to the fact interaction between personal characteristics and environment received the classification of EP.

This is how it is represented teacher's beliefs about the aspects of the environment they teach in that they believe are outside of educator influence. This lore differed from the lore of *Agency* because of the difference in emotional attachment. Plotlines associated with *Agency* often evoked frustration from the teacher participants; the constraints on environment were artificially introduced by district, state, or federal decision making. *This is how it is* appeared in areas where teachers lacked empowerment yet held strong opinions. These stories often related to challenges students faced in their personal lives. Since many of the interview questions specifically asked teachers about their beliefs on best practices, settings, and services for teaching ELLs, it is unsurprising that teacher lore of *This is how it is* appeared so frequently.

This is how it is often showcased teachers' impressions of how the environment impacted their students. Many teachers stated their beliefs that students did not receive enough time with adults at home. Millie explained,

> in these areas where we teach right now, I'm in a Title I, urban school, I know that not a
> lot of our kids get interacted with at home enough verbally. I think there's a lot of our
> kids who are placed in front of the device.

This resulted in many students arriving at school less academically prepared then their wealthier peers. For many students at Seagull Elementary, kindergarten was their first formal learning environment outside the home. They arrived at kindergarten with less skills related to literacy. The students' academic gaps continued after kindergarten and often widen (Gándara & Rumberger, 2008; Gorski, 2017). All the teachers in the study mentioned research proven

instructional methods they utilized to close this gap. However, students receiving less academic support at home was simply agreed as *This is how it is.* Allie added,

> …being a Title I school, you have families who are working longer hours, have less money, and hold multiple jobs. So, it's not always a vocabulary rich environment at home when you are having so few hours with another adult besides a teacher at school, especially in a child's formative years.

Allie's quote reveals the intricacies of this teacher lore. While teachers recognize the struggles students may face at home, they do not blame parents in Title I schools for the constraints on their schedule. Teachers understand that all families are doing the best they can to provide for their children. Many teachers shared their admiration for all that families do for their children. Joan shared, "I've always appreciated their families. They're regular families, just like us, they are just struggling a little bit harder." *This is how it is* contains the understanding of teachers of the nuanced effects of growing up in poverty. Although teachers acknowledged the struggles students faced, they remained positive in their outlook on each students' strength and potential. For example, while many teachers mentioned the difficulty of communicating with parents who had low proficiency in English, these same teachers praised parents for teaching their children their native language, and stressed that they viewed speaking a second language was an asset.

Finally, *This is how it is* involved aspects of the environment teachers had no control over, such as curriculum, yet held strong opinions about. Many teachers voiced frustrations about the flaws of curriculum mandated by the district or state. Millie stated,

> If this is a program that they've mandated, then you [the district] need to make sure it's sufficient for the time and for what my kids need. I just felt like that was another thing for us to have to add to and support on our own.

This plotline shared many similarities to the plotlines of *Agency.* However, *This is how it is* focused on the reality that there will always be large aspects of the classroom which teachers have little ability to influence. When Millie said, "another thing," she was referring to the mountain of mandates each teacher must maneuver while simultaneously attempting to actually teach. Since the earliest days of public education, outsiders have been trying to interfere, often to the detriment of teachers and students (Reisner, 1922). Experienced teachers know that less than ideal is what they can expect. Teachers must recognize this reality in order to overcome it.

In the past year, the district switched to a new curriculum, which was generally better received by teachers and students. However, the implementation of training and distribution of materials was chaotic. The lore of *This is how it is* recognized that frustrations related to new curriculum and mandates are to be expected. Alex stated that at the beginning of the school year, "no one was ready," because all the materials had not even arrived yet. He and his colleagues then had to scramble to decide what to do in the short term with their students. The new curriculum was a step in the right direction, but teachers still needed to recognize the course of public education never did run smooth. While the lore of *This is how it is* emphasized teacher's limitations, it also reveals teachers' strengths. The expert teachers I interviewed understood that you have to know how things really are and what you can't change before you start working on what you can change. By understanding the box they lived and worked in (student's home lives, the constant influence of outsiders on the classroom), teachers could then design out of the box teaching methods.

Teacher Lore of Whatever it Takes

The lore of *Whatever it takes* emerged from the second most commonly occurring interaction, Personal Factors/Beliefs and Behavior (PB). Bandura (1989) summarized this

interaction as, "What people think, believe, and feel, affects how they behave" (p. 2-3). In turn, one's behavior influences their thought patterns and emotional reactions. People typically choose a course of action with the hope of facing a predicted result (Bandura, 2000). *Whatever it takes* revealed teacher lore about strongly held convictions that teachers chose to enact in their instruction. They chose their behavior because of a belief. The lore of *Whatever it takes* appeared in plotlines where teachers emphasized that they would take these actions no matter the influence of the environment. The following two patterns appeared in plotlines of this lore: either as a story explaining a personal teaching philosophy/ideal, or as teachers became decision makers by choosing to teach ELLs in the way they believed most appropriate.

The teacher lore of *Whatever it takes* often emerged when teachers shared their beliefs about the obligations of teaching ELLs. Alex stated his feeling of obligation this way, "I personally as a professional, try to hold myself to as high a standard as I possibly can. I want to make sure that I am meeting every kid's needs in and out of ELD." Alex emphasized his belief that he must do *Whatever it takes* to meet the needs of every student. In this lore, teachers remained aware of the environment. However, unlike the lore of *Agency* and *This is how it is,* the constraints and challenges of the environment were secondary. Teachers' commitment and willingness to sacrifice for their students nulled almost any influence of the environment.

Joan's relationship to the mandated curriculum of ELD was first introduced in the lore of *Agency.* There she described her constraint in being required to implement a curriculum she found unsatisfactory. As our conversation continued, Joan showcased the lore of *Whatever it takes* through describing how she balanced her belief in the importance of following district mandates while simultaneously adapting for the needs of the students in one's classroom. She elaborated, "When I use the program, I try to use it with fidelity, but still throw in some of my

own things in there. Some poetry, some studying songs." Joan expressed her conviction that following a district mandate does not exclude the integration of engaging instructional strategies. Like the many teachers in the study, she would do *Whatever it takes* to effectively teach her students. "There's got to be some fun," was an idea repeated frequently by Millie when describing how she believed kindergarten should be taught. Similar to Joan, Millie found innovative ways to both implement the district mandated curriculum and encourage in students a love of learning. She did this by co-teaching the curriculum with a fellow kindergarten teacher, as discussed in the lore of *Adapting.* Millie believed the need for fun to be true for all students and during all times of the school day. *Whatever it takes* stands apart from the lore of *Agency* and *This is how it is* because Millie would advocate and implement fun, play-based teaching in whatever environment she taught in. That was the strength of her belief.

The lore of *Whatever it takes* also appeared in narratives where teachers made choices of their free will without feeling constrained or influenced by the environment. Through their many years of experiences, these veteran teachers had gained the depth of knowledge to teach in a way that eclipsed the influence of environment. Allie described the freedom she possessed in her lesson planning process in this way,

> So, you have to weigh where students are going to get the most benefit. What is it that you're really trying to teach them? Is it the background knowledge that's important right here? Or is it the concept? And is there an easier way to do it? I have found now that it's my seventh year teaching predominantly English language learners, that there are some areas that the background knowledge is not there, and so that's not my focus. So, I've been able to not have to make my instruction easier or dumb it down, but just use a different approach.

The full impact of this quote becomes clearer when contrasted with Allie's description of her earlier teaching experiences. In Allie's story of her first-year teaching ELLs (described in the lore of *More)* Allie felt powerless to deliver the instruction her students needed. Seven years later, Allie no longer felt like the diversity of her students' background knowledge limited the quality of her instruction. She could meet the needs of her ELL learners and teach complex content. Her story testifies that, provided the correct circumstances, ELLs are fully capable of accessing any curriculum (Gay, 2018). Allie developed this level of expertise after many years of hard work, after pouring in her whole soul, and doing *Whatever it takes.* Allie shared that during her first few years at Seagull Elementary, she would arrive at the school at seven in the morning and head home at ten in the evening. This hard work has paid off in her confidence and control in delivering targeted, high-quality instruction. Allie's experience spotlighted how veteran educators provide superior levels of teaching (Schubert, 1991). Her expertise working with ELLs did not come after one or two years of hard work. Allie shared that this confidence only came to her a few years ago; in other words, after she passed the five-year mark at this school. As in Allie's case, experiences revealing the lore of *Whatever it takes* overwhelmingly were teaching successes. Successes born from years of dedication and sacrifice.

Teacher Lore of The Perfect Storm

The most complex and detailed stories existed where all three factors interacted: environment, behavior, and personal factor/beliefs (EBP). Environmental events exert effects on an individual's cognitive processes. These alterations to one's thoughts guide individuals as they choose how to act in their given environment (Bandura, 2000). Determining which influence came first is a proverbial chicken and the egg scenario. In reality, all three factors influence each other bi-directionally. However, when, how, and to what degree each factor influences a person

constantly changes (Bandura, 1989). The teacher lore that emerged from these complex plotlines received the label of *The perfect storm.* EBP was the third most common interaction, occurring only slightly more than EB. Lore of *The perfect storm* usually emerged in one of the following subplots: when an educator described an optimal experience, or when an educator was forced to make a choice in a situation where they believed something was wrong or unjust.

A typical story revealing the lore of *The perfect storm* contained the following components: a) the experienced teacher first described the environment they taught in, b) then the educator described how they reacted to the environment and, c) would finally conclude the story by sharing their belief on why this choice was appropriate. While these events are presented in a specific sequence, the order of events was less important than the inclusion of the three aspects, the three elements of RD. Alex showcased this pattern when describing how he meets the needs of students with trauma. He explained,

> Students often bring types of trauma into the classroom that we as educators aren't always familiar with. I've had students who came up on the trains from Central America and saw all kinds of horrible things that would be triggered by just random seemingly innocuous events within the classroom. And I've had to take on the glorious challenge of understanding where it is that they're coming from. It requires more home visits and partnering with the families.

Alex began by characterizing the environment in which he teaches, one where many students deal with traumatic life events. He then expressed his belief that students facing trauma are not a negative force, but a "glorious challenge." His story concludes with sharing how he helps these students by completing more home visits and partnering with families. With less thorough inspection, this story could easily be categorized as lore pertaining to *This is how it is*. However,

Alex's firm positioning as an active decision maker makes it the lore of *The perfect storm*. Yes, students come in with trauma, but a skilled educator can help that student, just like any other student, thrive. His story highlights the possibilities when educators hold culturally positive beliefs about students (Gay, 2018; Gorski, 2017). While similar to plotlines in *Agency*, Alex's description of a, "glorious challenge," highlighted how his belief has transformed his entire experience teaching students with intense trauma. Lore of *The perfect storm* showcased some of the teachers most deeply held beliefs that developed after years of working in the classroom. These situations were often less than ideal, but teachers' drive and their deep understanding of the environment they taught in allowed them to accomplish amazing things in their classrooms (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Alex clearly demonstrated his belief that while educating students with severe trauma is difficult, the process refines him as a teacher.

Plotlines including the lore of *The perfect storm* often highlighted areas of strong conviction. Millie described how she pushed for a guarantee of unstructured playtime for her kindergarteners. She elaborates,

> I really push and advocate for even just 15 or 20 minutes at the end of the day for my kids get free time and it's free time. They can choose what to do and it allows them to problem solve. It allows them to talk with each other. It allows me as a teacher to learn more about them just on a human level.

Millie was showcasing her defiance against a push by some in education to change the focus of kindergarten from school preparation using play-based activities to kindergarten as primarily focused on teaching children to read (Repko-Erwin, 2017). We saw a glimpse of Millie's passion for fun, play-based learning in the lore of *Whatever it takes*. However, in this plot line Millie does more than simply state her beliefs, she actively pushed back against barriers to ensure the

best educational experience for her students. The lore of *The perfect storm* emerged from plotlines where teachers successfully advocated for educational policies they passionately believed in. Alex advocated for the positioning of students who had experienced trauma as possessing huge potential by promoting the building of family-school connections through home visits. Millie successfully ensured that time for free play remained protected, despite working under administrators who held conflicting beliefs. Stories of *The perfect storm* gave insights into some of teachers most deeply help beliefs. For Millie, that belief was the importance of play in early childhood education. Her story, like those of other teachers who hold this lore, demonstrated how teachers can promote philosophies they believe are in the best interest of children.

Lore of *The perfect storm* also emerged from stories where teachers felt forced to make a choice in a less than ideal situation. This differed from the lore of *Agency* because of the large influence of teacher belief about the choice they were required to make. While gut wrenching, these experiences proved highly impactful in forming teachers' beliefs and identities. This counter plotline of *The perfect storm* often spelled disaster for students. Alex described the struggle of finding adequate teaching materials in a short time period, after not receiving the ELD materials he required to teach his beginning level groups (we first saw this plotline in the lore of *This is how it is)*.

> I've got this group of newcomer Spanish speakers who speak very little English. I have to scramble to find stuff that is at their level, and I've got the sixth grade ELD stuff, but that doesn't meet their needs. So, I'm talking to my language arts coach, and we're trying to find the appropriate level stuff. Then I'm going on Teachers Pay Teachers, and I'm finding whatever the hell I can find to support them at their actual acquisition level.

This experience occurred in Alex's seventh year of teaching. Despite ample experience and knowledge, the curveball of changing curriculum without providing materials weakened him as a teacher. Alex reflected that each teacher, "only has so much juice," meaning that each teacher only has so much time and energy they can pour into providing instruction for students. He summarized the effect the increased prep time and stress had on the rest of his teaching, "Not having resources makes doable, instead of a goal that you come down to, it's a goal that you have to aspire to. That's not a good spot for students to be in." The quality of his teaching suffered because he had to spend so much time simply locating materials. Over the past several decades, the responsibilities placed on teachers has increased significantly (Naylor, 2001; Torres, 2016). As Alex observed, when too much work is put on teachers' plates, something has to go. Quality of instruction suffers.

Constraints inherent to the system often appeared in stories of *The perfect storm*. Joan's narrative about her student who was both an ELL and learning disabled (first discussed in the lore of *Not enough)* highlighted how despite a teacher's deeply held beliefs, and many attempts at intervention, sometimes the environment is simply not conducive to ensuring best outcomes for students. Joan described the end of the year with her struggling student this way,

> I honestly don't know if I taught him one single thing that year. I couldn't say, "Wow. I taught him such and such." I don't know that I did. It's not a nice feeling because he had been passed on since kindergarten, and I just passed him on with the rest because you can't do anything else.

In this plotline, Joan presented how the environment of simply passing on students (advancing a student to the next grade level despite them severely lacking grade level proficiencies) created an environment where her student faced extreme obstacles to success. Joan believed that passing on

students without providing the needed supports was unwise, yet she lacked any other choice. She was forced to "recommend" him for grade level promotion, which left her with an unsettled feeling about her impact on this student's educational trajectory. The lore of *The perfect storm* revealed the subtle side effects of instructional structures that spell disaster for certain students (Schubert & Ayers, 1992). Joan understood and acknowledged that the school had already provided all available resources, and her only option was to end the year knowing her student would continue on to middle school while lacking the skills to be successful. Her story, like Alex's story of searching for curriculum for newcomer ELLs, begs the question: why does society let education structures that harm students persist? In this way, the lore of *The perfect storm* calls out system inequities that hurt students. Hidden within these narratives lays the hope that by bringing these problems to light, changes will eventually be made. The lore of *The perfect storm,* whether in the narratives of teachers who successfully advocated for best practices, or in stories of action in the time of limitations, emphasized the power in the voices of classroom teachers (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Now that these teachers have shared, it is time for policymakers to listen.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusions

This study began as an exploration of the shared experiences of veteran teachers working with English Language Learners (ELLs). This topic drew my interest due to a common frustration voiced by teachers in my school and district: despite requiring all teachers to earn an English Second Language (ESL) endorsement and despite 45 minutes of daily dedicated English Language Development (ELD*)* instruction, ELLs were not increasing in English proficiency at an adequate rate. After reviewing the relevant research, I found relatively few scholars focused on ELLs in Title I, urban elementary schools, where ELLs comprised the majority of the student population. Deeply curious about the problems plaguing my personal teaching context, I chose to investigate the teacher lore of veteran teachers of ELLs in Title I, urban schools, and utilize Bandura's (1989) theory of reciprocal determinism (RD) as an analytic lens. This study revealed that experienced teachers of ELLs in Title I, urban elementary schools share common categories of teacher lore that reveal their understanding and action in teaching ELLs in these settings.

This study employed tools of narrative research to uncover stories that related the teacher lore of veteran teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I developed an interview protocol designed to reveal "the secret of teaching ... found in the local detail and everyday life of teachers" (Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p. v). Then I identified four highly respected veteran teachers in my building and asked each to share their stories. After collecting this data, I used RD to unearth a deep analysis of the teacher lore they held. Their lore resonated with me as a fellow educator and shared important understandings concerning teaching ELLs.

The lore revealed in this study, along with its associated factor of RD, can be seen in Table 3. The following lore emerged from examining common threads across all four teacher participants narratives: *Not enough, Mirrors, Adapting, More,* and *Good teaching.* Each of these categories of teacher lore involved only a single factor of RD. The lore of *Not enough* emphasized that lacking adequate resources, while simultaneously teaching students with intense instructional and social emotional needs, is the norm in Title I, urban schools. While teachers work hard to devise immediate solutions for students, the lack of resources regularly impacts ELLs' learning and well-being.

The lore of *Mirrors* described how student behavior is a reflection of the effectiveness of instruction. Teachers of ELLs make instructional choices with the intent to produce a certain educational outcome, however, veteran teachers understand that the unique characteristics of each student means instruction will affect each student differently. The lore of *Adapting* showcased how teachers of ELLs augment and adapt their materials and teaching styles. Diversity of student backgrounds and personal characteristics require constant flexibility and innovation from teachers.

The lore of *More* underscored that ELLs require the highest quality of education to ensure their success. Circumstances that may encourage the success of monolingual students in higher economic areas will not always adequately meet the needs of ELLs. The lore of *Good teaching* emerged from the popular sentiment, "Good teaching is good teaching." Every teacher in the study asserted that teaching strategies that will benefit ELLs will benefit all students and vice versa, often due to the fact that the monolingual students in their class often required instruction in the same areas as their ELL peers.

As represented in Table 3, the final four categories of teacher lore arose from examining where significant plotlines contained more than one factor of RD: *Agency, This is how it is, Whatever it takes,* and *The perfect storm*. The lore of *Agency* revealed that the degree of confidence a teacher has in their ability to control events that affect their classroom depends on district policies and the actions of other teachers. Teachers shared stories where they were disempowered by circumstances outside their control, yet still needed to make some sort of choice. *This is how it is* appeared in areas where teachers of ELLs lacked influence yet held strong opinions. It asserted that teachers must understand what aspects of the environment they cannot change, their metaphorical box, before coming up with an action plan.

The lore of *Whatever it takes* recognized that teachers will do whatever it takes to enact strongly held convictions in their instruction and interaction with students. These success stories showcased the possibilities present at schools staffed by dedicated, veteran educators. *The perfect storm* revealed the best and worst aspects of Title I, urban elementary schools. Sometimes the multitude of factors at play in schools prevent students' success, while other times teachers raise students up despite difficult circumstances. Teachers are simply trying to steer the ship the best they can.

Table 3

Categories of Teacher Lore and their Accompanying Significance

Category of Teacher Lore	Meaning	RD
Not enough	• Lack of quality materials, teaching staff, and other resources. Limit to the flexibility and coherence of resources available to aid ELLs. • Title I ELLs have more intense needs due to a variety of factors outside of educator control.	environment
Mirrors	• Student behavior is a reflection of the effectiveness of instruction.	behavior
Adapting	• Teachers of ELLs augment and adapt their materials and teaching styles.	behavior
More	• ELLs require the highest quality of education to ensure their success.	personal/ belief
Good teaching	• Teaching strategies that will benefit ELLs will benefit all students and vice versa.	personal/ beliefs
Agency	• The degree of confidence a teacher has in their ability to control events that affect their classroom depends on district policies and the actions of other teachers.	environment & behavior
This is how it is	• Teachers must understand what aspects of the environment they cannot change.	environment & personal/beliefs
Whatever it takes	• Teachers will do whatever it takes to enact strongly held convictions in their instruction and interaction with students.	personal/ beliefs & behavior
The perfect storm	• Sometimes the multitude of factors at play in schools prevents student success, while other times teachers raise students up despite difficult circumstances.	environment, behavior, & personal/beliefs

Implications

Research on teacher lore asserts that teachers in the field are the best experts on teaching (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). When they are not directly educating their students, teachers educate each other through mentoring relationships (both formal and informal) and casual conversations (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Despite the great depth of knowledge held by veteran teachers, their practical wisdom is rarely written down or shared with audiences outside their immediate teaching context. This study, like other studies of teacher lore, aims to share the wealth of knowledge held by veteran teachers with a wider audience (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). The understandings of this study are especially significant because it highlights the voices of teachers of ELLs in urban, Title I schools, an area where teachers' voices are often silenced (Lee & Bang, 2011).

Over and over, the teacher lore revealed in this study emphasized the importance of trusting teachers and allowing them the freedom to exercise their professional judgment. Many of the stories of frustration and failure in the lore of *Adapting, Agency,* and *This is how it is* emerged because teachers were constrained by administrative red tape from doing what they knew was best for students. The conflict felt by many teachers is evident in Alex's quote,

> I just knew that I needed to not do it, but it was mandated by the district, and so I had to. I
> was a first-year teacher on a provisional contract. I did not want to lose my job.

Most of the policies teachers disagreed with were implemented with the intention of improving academic outcomes for ELLs. However, the disenfranchisement of teachers from knowledgeable curriculum designers and engineers to simply curriculum implementers created a ceiling for the success of students (Schubert, 1991).

The second key understanding that emerged from this study was how resources affect everything teachers do. At the time of writing, many states are at historic lows for funding education (Blake et al., 2019). Teacher salaries have stagnated, contributing to the ever-growing teacher shortage, and in particular shortage of highly qualified, experienced teachers (Sutcher et al., 2019). The lore of *Not enough, More,* and *The perfect storm* all highlighted the close relationship between resources and students' success. Allie's story about trying to provide appropriate education to her newcomer student from Kenya is particularly insightful. Allie was an experienced teacher, ESL-endorsed, and well versed on research-based teaching strategies. Yet despite her qualifications, the lack of appropriate services for the student, the fact that he only received appropriate services for an hour a day and spent the rest of his time in an all English classroom, capped this student's chances for growth. Some researchers argue that the most effective way to meet the needs of ELL learners is to train teachers on appropriate teaching methods (Gay, 2018). However, Allie's example, as well as the many other stories documented in this study, emphasized that trained teachers need access to adequate resources in order to implement effective instruction for all students.

Narrative research offers many insights into the personal complexities and understandings of teachers, however there are limits to what we can know based on this study (Marshall, 2016). The lore revealed in this study, like all teacher lore, is deeply tied with the context in which these teachers teach and the experiences which these teachers have had (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). Therefore, while the lore found is applicable to a variety of teaching contexts, it is unlikely to be identical to lore present in a different setting. This research study trusted teachers, trusted that teachers hold deep knowledge and trusted that teachers can accurately interpret their own experiences. For this reason, none of the stories were verified by

outside methods. Kim (2016) states that, "narratives are context-sensitive, hence, they are not to be treated in isolation" (p. 191). However, these context-embedded narratives of teachers can be hugely beneficial in the education of other teachers (Schubert, 1991).

Significance

A central tenant of teacher lore is the belief that successful, experienced teachers develop similar traits from their extended work in classrooms. When teachers share their stories, and hear the stories of others, it helps educators reflect and reconstruct their own concepts of teaching (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). The findings of this study could be applied to the development of teacher-led, context-based professional development (Marlowe, 2006). The findings of the study also suggest that districts aiming to improve educational outcomes for ELLs should listen carefully to the wisdom and lore of veteran teachers and craft district policy and procedure accordingly. Understanding teachers is crucial to understanding curriculum (and how curriculum will eventually be implemented). Therefore, policy makers in particular could benefit from the insights shared about the perspectives of veteran teachers of ELLs (Schubert, 2012).

The results of this study contribute to researchers' understanding of generalized elementary teachers' experiences teaching ELL students. It also contributes to the articulation of teacher lore and practical knowledge held by experienced urban educators of low-income ELLs. Understanding on teaching ELLs in elementary settings has historically received less focus compared to studies on teaching ELLs in secondary settings (e.g., de Courcy, 2011; Flynt, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018). Finally, this study sheds light on issues of implementation of ESL teaching methods and constraints created by district policies as seen by educators.

Future Research

Future research could utilize similar methods to this study to uncover teacher lore in various different contexts, particularly contexts where inequities continue to exist. For example, the subtle differences in teacher lore held by teachers of ELLs in secondary schools, and urban, Title I teachers where ELL students make up a minority of the student population. Exploration of teacher lore concerning the teaching of other categories of diverse students, such as economically and racially diverse students, might also hold promise. As the number of ELLs in American public schools continues to grow, it is vital that the understanding of experienced teachers of ELLs is shared with others (Kim et al., 2015; Massey & Capoferro, 2008). The goal of this study, like all studies on teacher lore, is to allow, "educators to teach one another, through both the written and the spoken word" (Ayers & Schubert, 1994, p. 119). This research has the potential to inform educators at all levels in working with ELLs and those preparing future teachers of ELLs.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction
This research study is being conducted by **Helen Colby** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts at Brigham Young University. Assisting in the research process as a faculty advisor is Stefinee Pinnegar, Ph.D., a professor at Brigham Young University. This study seeks to explore the **teacher lore (knowledge) of teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Title I, urban settings.** You were invited to participate because **you have five or more years of experiences teaching ELLs in urban, Title I settings and are considered a knowledgeable member of the faculty.**

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- you will be interviewed for approximately sixty (60) minutes about your knowledge and experiences teaching ELLs.

- the interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in reporting your statements.

- the interview will take place in your classroom or the school meeting room at a time convenient for you. Alternate locations can be arranged if you would prefer a non-school setting.

- the researcher may contact you later to clarify your interview answers. (This should not take more than fifteen minutes).

- After your experiences have been analyzed, you will meet with the researcher to read a narrative summary of her findings to negotiate the text: giving feedback, adding details, or improving the accuracy of the account in terms of your experiences and perspectives.

The total time commitment will be approximately two and a half hours and may cause some emotional discomfort, as you will be sharing personal experiences with the researcher that may elicit emotional responses. You will be asked about experiences of success as well as failure, which will require openness and vulnerability that may lead to discomfort.

This research will be conducted after school in your classroom or another setting of your preference. Information and experiences shared within the group will be kept confidential with the exception of what is included in the write up of the research. In all written research your name will be changed to protect your privacy.

Benefits
There will be no direct benefits to you. It is hoped, however, that through your participation researchers may discover about the lore (knowledge) held by veteran teachers concerning the teaching of ELLs in Title I, urban settings which may be able to lead to a greater conversation about how schools and teachers can improve instruction of ELL students.

Confidentiality
The research data will be kept on a password-protected remote hard drive. Only the researcher, participants, and BYU faculty supporting the researcher will have access to the data. Anonymity of participants will be maintained through the changing of names of any individuals mentioned in the experiences shared. A pseudonym and generalized location will be used to refer to the school of employment. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be kept in the researcher's locked cabinet. All data will be deleted after ten years.

Compensation
You will receive a $25 Target gift card for your participation; compensation will not be prorated.

Participation
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely.

Questions about the Research
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Helen Colby at XXXXXXXX for further information.

Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants
If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

Statement of Consent
I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name (Printed): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Interview Information and Preparation Form

<u>**Introduction**</u>

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. This research study is being conducted by **Helen Colby** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts at Brigham Young University. Assisting in the research process as a faculty advisor is Stefinee Pinnegar, Ph.D., a professor at Brigham Young University.

This study seeks to explore **teacher lore (knowledge) of teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) at urban, Title I schools.** For this purpose, you will be asked to share three personal experiences teaching ELLs. You were invited to participate in this study because **you have five or more years of experiences teaching ELLs in urban, Title I settings and are considered a knowledgeable member of faculty.**

Your in person interview is scheduled for _____ (date) at

_____ (time). The interview will take place at _____ (location).

The interview will last approximately one hour.

Before coming to the interview, please be prepared to answer the following questions. You may use this paper as a reference or to write notes about these experiences. This paper will **not** be collected or examined at any time by the researcher. Its function is simply to assist you in preparing impactful and relevant stories.

<u>**Interview Questions:**</u>

1) Describe an experience where you felt successful teaching ELL(s).

2.) Describe an experience where you felt unsuccessful teaching ELL(s).

3.) Describe an experience where you felt constrained while teaching ELL(s). Constrained means you felt your teaching was negatively affected by lack of knowledge or resources and mandates or limits emerging school/district procedures and policies. defined as your teaching was negatively affected by either a lack of resources or by school/district procedures.

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocols

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. This research study is being conducted by myself, **Helen Colby,** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts at Brigham Young University. Assisting in the research process as a faculty advisor is Stefinee Pinnegar, Ph.D., a professor at Brigham Young University.

This study seeks to explore **teacher lore (knowledge) of teachers of ELLs at urban, Title I schools.** For this purpose, you will be asked to share three personal experiences teaching ELLs. You were invited to participate in this study because **you have five or more years of experiences teaching ELLs in urban, Title I settings and are considered a knowledgeable member of faculty.**

This is a voluntary research study. If for any reason you would like to end involvement in this study, you may do so at anytime. You are not required to answer any questions that you do not wish to. You may address any questions or concerns to myself, or my faculty advisor Dr. Stefinee Pinnegar. This interview is being recorded on audio recording devices. It will later be transcribed into a written digital file. All files associated with this interview will be kept in a private, secure, data storage device. Before this study is published your name will and other identifying information will be changed and/or concealed to protect your privacy and anonymity.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

[Researcher pauses to allow time for questions]

Researcher: Since I have addressed all questions and concerns, we will now begin this interview. I will begin with asking you a series of biographical questions.

What is your age?

What is your gender?

How many years of experience do you have teaching?

How many years of experience do you have teaching ELLs in urban, Title I environments?

How many years of experience do you have teaching at this school?

What active teaching qualification(s) do you currently possess?

Researcher: This research project is interested in uncovering the teacher lore of elementary teachers of ELLs in Title I settings. Teacher lore can be defined as knowledge and insights held by veteran teachers that arise from practical experience teaching and working with students (Ayers & Schubert, 1994). What are the formal policies concerning teaching ELL students at our school? In this school, what are the unwritten rules about how a teacher should teach ELLs?

How do we believe teachers should interact with and support the development of English Learners in our school? What do we think our obligations for teaching ELLs are?

Researcher: Describe an experience where you felt successful teaching ELL(s).

Potential follow-up questions:

- Can you tell me a story about an experience with one child?

- Can you think of an ESL child where you felt you were really successful in teaching that child?

- What did you do to help that child succeed?

- What happened that showed you were successful?

- Is there anything more you would like to share about this experience? Can you think of another experience?

Researcher: Describe an experience where you felt unsuccessful teaching ELL(s).

Potential follow-up questions:

- Can you think of a time when you were working with a student and you felt you hadn't taught him or her?

- Can you think of an ELL that was particularly difficult?

- What experiences did you have with the student?

- What happened that made you feel unsuccessful?

- Is there anything more you would like to share about this experience? Can you think of another experience?

Researcher: Describe an experience where you felt constrained while teaching ELL(s). Constrained is defined as your teaching was negatively affected by lack of knowledge, lack of resources, or by policies, procedures, or practices.

Potential follow-up questions:

- Can you think of a time when you were working with a student and you wished something went differently?

- If you could gain one piece of knowledge or resource concerning teaching ELLs, what would it be?

- Can you think of an experience where your teaching was negatively affected by that lack of knowledge or resource?

- Are there any policies or procedures concerning ELLs that you wished you could change?

- Can you think of a story that illustrates how a policy or procedure you were required to implement negatively affected a student?

- Is there anything more you would like to share about this experience? Can you think of another experience?

- On reflection, do you think any of the previous negative experiences you shared came about due to a lack of knowledge, lack of resources, or by policies, procedures, or practices?

Researcher: Is there anything more you would like to share with me about your experience and/or knowledge teaching ELLs?

Researcher: Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. I will contact you when I have completed my analysis of your experiences to ask about your perspective and whether you agree that my analysis is accurate. If you have any questions before that time, you may contact me via email at _____.

Follow Up Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. This research study is being conducted by myself, **Helen Colby,** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts at Brigham Young University. Assisting in the research process as a faculty advisor is Stefinee Pinnegar, Ph.D., a professor at Brigham Young University.

In this follow-up interview, I have provided for you six themes, which through analyzing your interview transcript, as well as the transcripts of other experienced teachers, describe shared understandings of the **teacher lore (knowledge) of teachers of ELLs at urban, Title I schools.** Underneath each theme, I have re-storied, or summarized, a story you shared with me in the initial interview which I believe represents the theme in question. I also included a direct quote you provided from the story.

For each theme and associated summary and quote I will ask you the following questions:

1. Does this theme seem applicable to your experience teaching Title I ELLs?
2. Does this re-storying accurately portray your thoughts and viewpoints?
3. Do you feel like I accurately captured your quote, or is there something you would like to revise or add on?
4. Does my analysis seem sound and appropriate? In other words, while you or another researcher may have come to a different conclusion, can you accept my interpretation?

The procedure of this follow up interview will be as follows. The researcher, **Helen Colby,** will read out loud the theme and associated re-storying. The interviewee will read the associated direct quote. The researcher will then ask the four aforementioned questions. This process will repeat for each theme. At the end of the interview, the researcher will give time for the interviewee to provide any additional feedback concerning the teacher lore of teachers of ELLs at urban, Title I schools.

This is a voluntary research study. If for any reason you would like to end involvement in this study, you may do so at any time. You are not required to answer any questions that you do not wish to. You may address any questions or concerns to myself, or my faculty advisor Dr. Stefinee Pinnegar. This interview is being recorded on audio recording devices. It will later be transcribed into a written digital file. The data will be transcribed by a professional service, unaffiliated with BYU. All files associated with this interview will be kept in a private, secure, data storage device. Before this study is published your name and other identifying information will be changed and/or concealed to protect your privacy and anonymity.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

APPENDIX D

Recruiting Documents

The following email was sent to all potential research participants for this study.

Dear XXXX,

I am reaching out to request your participation in a research project I am conducting on the Teacher Lore (knowledge) of veteran teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Title I, urban setting. You are being asked to participate because you have five or more years of experiences teaching ELLs in urban, Title I settings and are considered a knowledgeable member of the Seagull Elementary faculty. This research project involves a commitment of a one hour in-person interview and an one hour debriefing session where the researcher will share her summary of findings and you will give feedback on whether you agree this reflects accurately your experiences. More detailed information on the project can be found in the attachment to this email. Compensation will be provided at the end of the study in the form of a $25 Target gift card. If you are at all interested in participating in this study, please feel free to reach out to me at XXXX.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Colby