Supporting EAL Students with Learning Disabilities: An Exploration Through Self-Evaluation of the Ability of Teachers to Organically Implement Targeted Learning Strategy Supports into the General Classroom

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Master's Thesis

Mount Saint Vincent University

2023

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Abstract

Literature reveals that supporting English as additional language students is complex on its own. However, there is a sub-population, English as an additional language students with learning disabilities, that can slip through the cracks. The co-existence of the language challenges and the neurological challenges in this population make supporting this population a unique challenge. This thesis is based on qualitative research and aimed to investigate how teachers perceive their ability to naturally apply learning strategies to assist students with special needs in regular classrooms. A total of 6 teacher participants took part in this qualitative research project and explored their participation in three self-reflective questionnaires and one online training. Through a reflexive thematic analysis, the research yielded 4 culminating themes that impact the participants' potential ability to support English as additional language students with learning disabilities through targeted learning strategies in the general education classroom. The study found that the problem of not having enough time, freedom and expectations in the profession of teaching, teachers' own personal and professional capabilities, and their beliefs regarding the general educator's role in supporting these students are the greatest commonalities impacting teachers' ability to use specific learning strategies to support English as an additional language students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom. In conclusion, the researcher identified that while 6 participants might not be ideal, the diversity of the 6 participants lends to an intriguing picture of internal and external variables that might ultimately be affecting many teachers' ability to support this unique population in the general education classroom.

Keywords: English as an additional language, learning disabilities, teacher perspectives

Acknowledgements

As with any research project, a master's thesis cannot be completed without the assistance of a slew of people. First, I would like to acknowledge my thesis supervisor, Dr. Amna Mirza, and my committee member, Dr. Jing Fu, without whom I would not have the opportunity to complete, present, and publish this thesis. Dr. Mirza has tirelessly supported my process of wrapping my head around the reality of participant research, allowing me the freedom to find my way, providing me with the support to not give up, and guiding me through frustrations and jubilations to successfully finish a product that I am proud of. Dr. Fu has championed my cause and helped me to make sure that I created a rigorous study and met publication expectations. Additionally, I want to thank all my professors at Mount Saint Vincent University with special acknowledgments to Dr. Christine Doe for connecting me to my thesis supervisor and to Dr. Ardra Cole who blazed the trail for self-study and autoethnography in education research and taught me to appreciate and respect the qualitative research process.

I also acknowledge that my family and my faith have shared in bearing this burden. A huge thank you to my husband, Jose and my children Nicole and Maria, for putting up with me through this process. You have championed me when I felt most overwhelmed and encouraged me with smiles, laughter and helping around the house so that I could be freed up to complete this. Everyone's faith process is different, but mine included tons of prayer, particularly in the deepest moments of struggle with my ADHD and intense feelings of failure and dismay. I thank God for giving me the grace to persevere and the grace to extend myself grace in this process.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Rationale

The population of students with English as an additional language (EAL), who study academic content in English, is growing across North America (Ramirez, 2017; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2021). It is not statistically surprising that some of this population presents with learning disabilities (LD). However, diagnostic difficulties for this population (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008) and a lack of special education preparation for general education teachers (García & Tyler, 2010) can impact and diminish the implementation of applicable support for EAL students with LD, potentially depriving them of appropriate education.

At the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in Paris, on December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was stated publicly (United Nations [UN], n.d.). This declaration states, in Article 26, that education is a human right (UN, n.d.). This declaration does not differentiate between neuro-normative and neuro-divergent individuals. Therefore, it is assumable that appropriate education, or education provided in a manner that meets the needs of all students, is critical to meeting the mandate of the global human right to education. This leads to the mathematically logical conclusion that the education of students with exceptionalities is protected globally. It is well known, however, that providing appropriate support for students with exceptionalities can be a challenge in the best of circumstances (Marfo et al., 2020; O'Leary, 2019; Terry, 2012). According to L. Kennedy (personal communication, October 3, 2021), a former special education department head in Virginia, these challenges include staffing shortages, non-compliance in schools, and miscommunication, or lack of communication, between school administration, general education teachers and special education departments.

Ultimately, many of these challenges arise from the typical design of special education programs which includes a combination of professional and non-professional stakeholders. These stakeholders include special education teachers, general education teachers, academic schedulers, students, parents, and in-school and out-of-school support specialists including school psychologists, behavioural therapists, speech therapists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists, (L. Kennedy, personal communication, October 3, 2021). There are also peripheral complications that arise in special education. Peripheral complications are those complications that are not directly connected to the learner's exceptionalities or the special education department but still affect the provision of appropriate support. These peripheral complications, such as language barriers (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008) or cultural barriers (García & Tyler, 2010) for EAL students make the challenge of providing appropriate supports increasingly more complicated (Marfo et al., 2020; O'Leary, 2019).

Of the exceptionalities that EAL students can present with, the ones that are of interest to this study are LD. There are a variety of LD that can be diagnosed, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia (American Psychiatric Association [APA], n.d.), but the language and cultural barriers common with the EAL student population can make diagnosis difficult or complicated (García & Tyler, 2010; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). It is important to offer remedies in the form of interventions as soon as possible for students with LD (Bailey, 2003) to ensure their right to education (UN, n.d.). However, because the language and culture barriers can prevent timely diagnoses for EAL students (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008), it is crucial to implement learning strategies in general education classrooms that can provide a more learning-friendly environment for EAL students with LD (García & Tyler, 2010). This problem of providing timely intervention for EAL students with LD, while surmountable (Swanson et al., 2020), is not limited to one

country. With the North American Trade Agreement economically joining Canada, the United States of America (United States) and Mexico, it would be wise to find educational solutions that could service these three countries to ensure continued.

Meeting the educational needs of students with special needs in a meaningful manner in a general education or inclusion classroom setting can be an enormous challenge (McCardle et al., 2005; Stinson, 2018). Each country in North America (Mexico, the United States, and Canada) has specific regulations for educating exceptional learners (Nova Scotia Education, 2008; Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.; Secretaría de Educación Pública [SEP], n.d.; U.S. Department of Education; n.d.). The existence of these regulations indicates that each of these three neighboring countries values the education of their exceptional learner population.

Each of the three North American countries has regulatory bodies that monitor the education of students with exceptionalities. Mexico has a centralized education system. The Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) is the centralized branch of government that dictates educational requirements. According to the SEP accords (SEP, n.d.), among other responsibilities, it is the responsibility of the teacher to participate in professional development regarding working with students with special needs, collaborate with the school psychology department to systematically attend to the needs of the exceptional students, and to prioritize the needs of exceptional learners. The United States has a decentralized system of education in which each state regulates education goals with some federal oversight through the Common Core State Standards Initiative that started in 2010 (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.) and laws including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). According to the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.), IDEA ensures that exceptional learners receive appropriate education. Canada has a similarly decentralized education program in which the

provinces dictate expected educational outcomes. For example, Ontario's Regulation 181/98 governs how exceptional learners are identified and placed (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.), while Nova Scotia has its policy (Nova Scotia Education, 2008). According to Nova Scotia Education (2008), provinces can receive advice from one another on policy creation, but ultimately the policies are created and adopted by the province.

Each of the three North American countries engages, to a certain degree, with EAL education as well. While some schools in Mexico naturally do not have international or immigrant EAL students, places like Santiago de Querétaro, Querétaro are increasingly international communities with many private schools that use bilingual (Spanish-English) instruction as a selling point as evidenced by school websites such as isq.edu.mx (International School of Querétaro [ISQ], n.d.a; ISQ, n.d.b; ISQ, n.d.c). At the International School of Querétaro (ISQ), the offer of bilingual education has attracted EAL international students from 26 different countries (ISQ, n.d.a). It has been the researcher's experience, teaching at ISQ, that many international students arrive in Mexico with little to no English or Spanish because the international companies based in and around Santiago de Querétaro bring in contract workers from the companies' country of origin. The United States and Canada have higher nation-wide engagement with EAL education due to English being an official language (Canada) or widely used (United States). Rinaldi and Samson (2008) highlight the language struggle in English-speaking environments, where the identification of LD for EALs is difficult due to language acquisition. Their concern is echoed by other researchers (García & Tyler, 2010; Lambert et al., 2017; Swanson et al., 2020), spotlighting the struggle schools, and therefore EAL students, face.

A review of the literature demonstrates that even in the most supportive environments, EAL students with LD can still spend the better part of a school year receiving inadequate

support (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). Simultaneously, these students need supportive intervention as quickly as possible (Rinaldi & Samson 2008). However, the response to intervention (RTI) model takes time to implement correctly, preventing quick supportive intervention from being a viable option (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). Therefore, it can be quite difficult for schools to meet the exceptional learner mandates of their governing body when it comes to EAL students with LD. However, programs and websites including ldonline.org in the United States, ldatschool.ca in Canada, and sieteolmedo.com.mx in Mexico provide information and evidence-based learning strategies to support students, some of which should be simple to integrate into a general education classroom. If quick intervention is key to success for students with LD (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008) then it is plausible that generalized learning strategies for LD should be implemented by default in all academic environments with a high concentration of EAL students.

The Purpose of the Study

This research project set out to explore teacher's self-perception regarding their ability to implementing additional evidence-based learning strategies, that would support EAL students with LD, into their classrooms. Through the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) review process, the project refined its scope and purpose. What began as a broad idea of teachers' implementation of learning strategies, and self-reflection thereof, changed to a theoretical self-evaluation of potential for new learning strategy implementation. This opened the study in scope to involve both currently employed and previously employed teachers and additionally opened the scope to include the nuanced experience of the researcher in the field of general education in the United States and Mexico.

This study sought to explore whether it is feasible, according to teachers' self-reflection, for general education teachers to organically implement evidence-based targeted learning strategies for EAL students with LD in addition to the teachers' pre-existing responsibilities. It also sought to establish a baseline of teachers' self-perception of the feasibility of organically implementing EAL-LD targeted learning strategies in the general education classroom, understanding that future studies would then be able to continue to explore which learning strategies work best in each locality or study environment. However, if this study found that teachers are too overwhelmed to incorporate EAL-LD targeted learning strategies into the classroom, the future studies needed would explore who would be the ideal stakeholders in each locality to adequately support EAL students with LD.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Literature Review

It is commonly known that appropriate instruction for EAL students has been the subject of concern for decades (Lambert et al., 2017; McCardle et al., 2005). It is also commonly known that the United States and Canada have struggled with appropriate placement for EAL students (i.e., general education vs special education) (Lambert et al., 2017; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). For the last two decades, research has shown that EAL students are under-represented in special education services (Rinaldi & Sampson, 2008) which reflects the frequent inability for these students to access appropriate assessments for disability evaluation (Stinson, 2018), and that EAL students with disabilities continue to be underserved (Swanson et al., 2020). The information yielded from 2003 through 2020 shows very little change in EAL services in some settings (Rinaldi & Sampson, 2008; Stinson, 2018; Swanson et al., 2020), while some research has shown hope for change in settings with better organized resources (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). To explore this phenomenon further and to explore the ability of teachers to organically incorporate extra bridging supports into the general education classroom, it is imperative to understand the following:

1. What is a learning disability?
2. Who are EAL students?
3. How are EAL students currently assessed for disabilities?
4. What are the current evidence-based practices for supporting students with learning disabilities in the classroom?

Learning Disabilities (LD)

The original coining of the term learning disability is credited to Samuel A. Kirk in 1963 (Tarver & Hallahan, 1976). According to Tarver and Hallahan (1976), the term was coined to cover a school-based population in need of special services which did not fall under other diagnostic criteria of the time. This population garnered much attention during the earlier part of the 20th century as multiple professional fields sought to establish a greater understanding of the phenomenon of "children who failed to learn in school in spite of average intellectual potential and adequate emotional stability" (Tarver & Hallahan, 1976, p. 4). While the nuances of the definition of LD have shifted over time (APA, n.d.; Kass, 1971) the simplicity of this initial definition remains central to the understanding of LD.

The current diagnostic name for LD, according to the American Psychiatric Association (APA, n.d.), is *specific learning disorder* commonly referred to as SLD. To receive the diagnosis, a student must meet four diagnostic criteria (APA, n.d.). Within the diagnosis, there are three types of LD: dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia (APA, n.d.). Within each diagnosis, there are three severity subtypes, mild, moderate, and severe (APA, n.d.) and diagnoses can be further specified using additional terminology (The Reading Clinic, n.d.). Dyslexia alludes to "the difficulty in acquiring and processing language that is typically manifested by the lack or proficiency in reading, spelling and writing" (APA, n.d., para. 10) and represents the majority of LD diagnoses (APA, n.d.; International Dyslexia Association [IDA], 2017). Dysgraphia refers to "difficulties with putting one's thoughts on paper" (APA, n.d., para. 12) and dyscalculia refers to problems with number related cognition (APA, n.d.). According to the International Dyslexia Association (2020), comorbidities of dysgraphia and dyslexia, and dysgraphia and oral and written language learning disability, as well as other comorbidities are possible.

According to Kass (1971), four assumptions can be made about LD: (a) they are a measurable phenomenon; (b) more programs are continuously developing to service students with LD; (c) the general education classroom does not provide appropriate support for these students without extra accommodations; (d) LD are diagnosable psychologically and educationally. The DSM-5 is used by medical professionals and mental health professionals to diagnose learning disabilities. Schools, however, can educationally diagnose through a multi-disciplinary team (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008), which includes a school psychologist or social worker. While a student with LD is typically underperforming at their expected level due to processing difficulties (APA, n.d.; Kass, 1971; Kirk, 1971) particularly regarding language use and understanding (Kirk, 1971), some LD, particularly dysgraphia, continue to be under-diagnosed in the public school system (IDA, 2020). With continued difficulties to ensure appropriate diagnoses in the general English-speaking population, it is not surprising that it can be very difficult, possibly even impossible in some circumstances, to identify the difference between a learning disability and normal language acquisition for an EAL student.

For an individual with a learning disability, the perspective is a little different. According to Higgins et al. (2002), gaining a complete understanding of LD requires an attempt to understand the personal and common experiences of students with LD. For Treviño-Casias (as cited in The Understood Team, n.d.), it is hating math and feeling inadequate. For Madison Rose (as cited in The Understood Team, n.d.), it feels like not being capable of learning. For many of the students in Higgins et al.'s (2002) 20-year longitudinal study, it is struggling with the social and emotional impact of being labelled with LD. Multiple individuals with LD simultaneously report physical coordination struggles that affect their non-academic lives (Higgins et al., 2002). As LD cannot be cured or go away over time (Learning Disabilities Association of Canada,

2015), Higgins et al. (2002) highlight the importance for students with LD to be able to reach the stage of acceptance of their diagnosis and labeling. According to Higgins et al. (2002), some students with LD are able to reach a level of acceptance in which the LD no longer dominate the narrative of their lives, meaning that they no longer see the LD as a burden but instead reframe their disability in terms of how it has made them who they are today. This perspective seems to allow students to achieve the highest level of functioning within their LD (Higgins et al., 2002). Therefore, while LD are diagnosable, uncurable, and life-changing, they are also manageable in the right atmosphere with the right perspective.

EAL Student Population

The EAL population is an incredibly diverse population with an increasing presence in North America (Cummins et al., 2012; Lambert et al. 2018; Ramirez, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2017). The EAL student population is therefore equally diverse not represented by a single language or nationality (Bialik et al., 2018). North American EAL students represent indigenous tribes (i.e., First Nations and Native Americans), residents of non-English speaking communities (i.e., Quebec, New Brunswick), recent immigrants, international students, refugees, temporary residents, undocumented immigrants, and visitors with permission to study. EAL student populations however differ slightly between the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

According to Lambert et al. (2018), EAL students in the United States tend to be marginalized and plagued with poor education, high drop-out rates, poverty, and violence. According to Bialik et al. (2018) and García and Tyler (2010), the classroom EAL student population is highly diverse and therefore does not necessarily include a first-language commonality. The EAL student population in the United States is also very culturally diverse, and “enter school with worldviews that may vary considerably from those represented at school”

(García & Tyler, 2010, p. 116). Therefore, EAL students in the United States are both marginalized and culturally non-conformed and struggling with language acquisition. One could argue that this population, based on the information gathered, enters the U.S. education system at a natural disadvantage particularly because, as García and Tyler (2010) highlight, secondary school has already progressed to reading to learn. According to Bialik et al. (2018), the highest concentration of EAL students is in the state of California, but there is no state with no EAL student population. The lowest EAL student population concentration is in the state of West Virginia with a 1% EAL student population (Bialik et al., 2018).

EAL students in Canada, in contrast to the reports from the United States, academically perform much more competitively than their native-English speaking peers (Cummins et al., 2012) and demonstrate academic resourcefulness (Mao, 2021). According to Grcic-Stuart (2014), the Canadian EAL population includes permanent residents, refugee permanent residents, students whose parents are present on study permits, students whose parents are present on work permits, and Canadian-born students. This population is continuously growing (Donohoo, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2021) but remains underserved (Donohoo, 2020). The Canadian EAL student population represents a mix of English levels, with the greatest representation being beginner and intermediate English levels (Grcic-Stuart, 2014). A table from Statistics Canada (2021), shows the number of students receiving language services across Canada and highlights where the EAL student population has a higher concentration. According to that table (Statistics Canada, 2021, para 2), Canada is continuously serving an increasing number of EAL students each year with a total of 1,954,464 in the 2015/2016 school year to 2,040,399 in the 2019/2020 school year. That growth of approximately 100,000 EAL students in 4 years highlights the trend that is common knowledge regarding the influx of immigrants to

The EAL student population is also growing in Mexico, though in a slightly different manner (Ramirez, 2017). While Mexico is a Spanish speaking country, the previous president, Enrique Peña-Nieto, proposed moving the country to bilingual English-Spanish status by 2027 (Partlow, 2017; Ramirez, 2017). English is currently one of the core subjects in Mexico (Gobierno de México, n.d.). In Mexico, there are Mexican and non-Mexican EAL students due to international hubs such as Santiago de Querétaro, Querétaro, Mexico. In bilingual schools, like ISQ, many subjects are taught in English (ISQ, n.d.b; ISQ, n.d.c). ISQ, for example, enrolls approximately 1000 international students per year, representing 26 different nationalities (ISQ, n.d.a). According to the periodical *El Universal Querétaro* (2016), there are more than 90 countries represented in Santiago de Querétaro.

According to García and Tyler (2010), the EAL student population, regardless of origin, has increased cognitive demands in the English-speaking general education classroom. EAL students learn academic concepts in English while simultaneously learning academic content in English (García & Tyler, 2010). This means that while EAL students may be very academically intelligent in their language, it does not necessarily translate to the English-speaking environment.

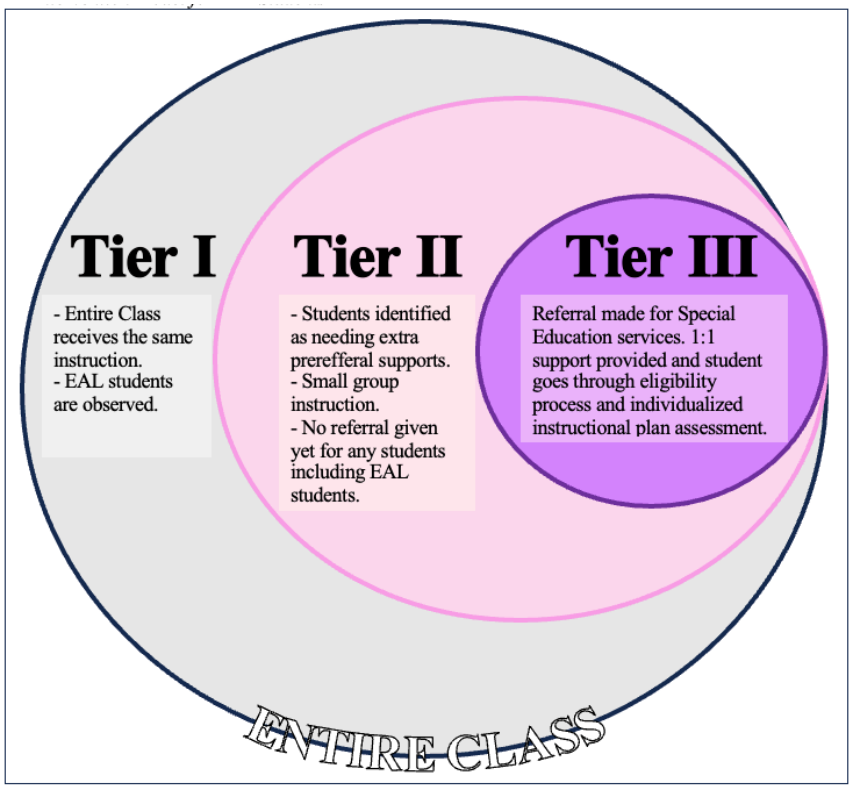
EAL Students and LD Assessment

EAL students have a history of being misrepresented in special education (McCardle et al., 2005). According to Dean (n.d.), EAL students are not more likely to have LD, however, they are less likely to receive prompt intervention due to diagnostic difficulties (Dean, n.d.; McCardle et al., 2005; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008; Swanson et al., 2020). Some of the difficulties in assessing and diagnosing EAL students with LD include the previously mentioned language acquisition struggles (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008) and cultural barriers (García & Tyler, 2010) as

well as the lack of trained staff to be able to assess and diagnose these students (McCardle et al., 2005). However, according to Swanson et al. (2020), these difficulties do not necessarily indicate impossibility. There are some assessment and diagnostic possibilities for the EAL student population (Swanson et al., 2020).

Figure 1

RTI Intervention Model for EAL Students



Note: Figure 1 was digitally created by the researcher based on the image and information from Rinaldi and Samson (2008, p. 7).

One of the very popular methods of assessment and diagnosis of LD for EAL students is response to intervention (RTI; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). RTI, according to Morin (n.d.), is not a particular intervention but a pre-emptive approach to supporting and observing struggling students. RTI is a 3-tiered approach to scaffolding or supporting student learning (Morin, n.d.;

Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). Figure 1 reimagines an image from Rinaldi and Samson (2008, p. 7) that highlights these stages. According to Rinaldi and Samson (2008), this is an instructional system in which all students receive continuous screening and students requiring more intervention receiving preventative interventions and referral to special education services occurs after increasingly direct and more intensive interventions and one-on-one (1:1) instruction. It is preferred to the traditional method of using IQ testing to assess LD (Linan-Thompson, 2010). According to Rinaldi and Samson (2008), all students are assessed continuously during Tier I according to the content or instructional benchmarks. As concerns arise, students are moved to Tier II, where they receive smaller group instruction but do not receive individualized interventions (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). Throughout the progress of the student towards a more and more individualized intervention, students continue to receive the previous interventions.

RTI, however, can be a very lengthy process leaving students waiting for appropriate intervention for a year (Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). Haager (2007) also highlights concern regarding the quality of reading instruction provided to EAL students during Tier 1 of the RTI model, which could ultimately yield a flawed assessment. Haager (2007) emphasizes that research is inconclusive regarding best practices for reading instruction for EAL students. Inconclusive research would mean that the Tier 1 interventions are not necessarily best practice for EAL students and therefore reiterates the potential flaw in the assessment system.

One intervention model, which could be incorporated as a Tier 1 intervention to improve assessment accuracy is the Sheltered Instruction Operation Protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarria, 1995). The SIOP model, used with EAL students, is not used specifically to assess students but if used for Tier 1 of RTI and could placate Haager's (2007) concerns regarding the provision of quality reading instruction for EAL students. Echevarria (1995) concludes that the SIOP model

specifically provides teachers with tools to teach content in a way that EAL students will comprehend. This requires training though (Echevarria, 1995) and according to García and Tyler (2010), there is a lack of training and insufficient support across the board, making it very difficult to accurately assess and diagnose EAL students with LD.

Evidence-based Practices for Supporting EAL Students in the Classroom

Sheltered Instruction Operation Protocol (SIOP) Model. According to Echevarria (1995), the previously mentioned SIOP model can be used to support EAL students with LD in the classroom. The SIOP model, however, is very involved. The model includes six components (Echevarria, 1995) or eight components (Texas Comprehensive Center, 2006). In the first step of the SIOP model, teachers identify and define target vocabulary, creating visuals that will remain throughout the unit of instruction (Echevarria, 1995). In step two, teachers identify key concepts that will be the focus for students, redacting texts to make them more manageable without losing these concepts (Echevarria, 1995). For the third step, teachers create context, using creativity to help students understand the context of the targeted concepts (Echevarria, 1995). Fourth, teachers are asked to create connections for their students by eliciting personal, concrete connections from the students (Echevarria, 1995). The fifth step has teachers check for understanding by asking and reframing questions to clarify the student's true understanding (Echevarria, 1995). The final step, according to Echevarria (1995), is to encourage peer interaction in which students interact with one another through planned group activities regarding the unit of instruction. The Texas Comprehensive Center (2006) breaks up the SIOP model differently, separating it into 8 steps that it excerpts from the book *Making content comprehensible for English language learners* by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (as cited in Texas

Comprehensive Center, 2006). While the components are separated differently, they communicate the same thorough, teacher-driven, process.

Differentiated Instruction. According to others (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019; Grossi, 1980; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017), differentiating instruction can meet the needs of EAL students in the general classroom. Differentiating instruction is more than just the curriculum (Grossi, 1980). To clarify confusion, Grossi (1980) delineates differentiation from the curriculum by defining the latter as the "what" of the content that is being learned and the former as "how" that content is learned or the learning process itself. Grossi (1980) highlights that differentiation can happen at the smallest level of direct instruction (differentiating activities) as well as at the greater scale of program planning at the administrative level (differentiating learning environments). In the differentiation of activities, one student may receive a redacted version of the same activity (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2019). In the differentiation of learning environments, administrators may choose to establish self-contained classrooms or employ specialists (Grossi, 1980).

Both small-scale (micro) and large scale (macro) differentiations of instruction are currently used. Educators are encouraged to assess the needs of each EAL student and proceed accordingly with individualized strategies (Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017), and EAL teachers are employed in school systems to provide specialized support. The micro differentiation in the classroom is typically taught to practicing teachers via top-down professional development programs that have a questionable success rate (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). For this paper, top-down refers to changes mandated by school administrators, to be carried out by teachers.

Cultural Connection. According to Miller (2016), cultural connection facilitates learning for EAL students. Klingner and Soltero-González (2009) explain that this cultural

connection assists EAL students in the classroom by connecting to their interests while also helping them build on prior knowledge. Part of the purpose of the incorporation of EAL students' culture into the general classroom is also cultural competency (Klingner & Soltero-González, 2009). Cultural competency occurs when the teacher considers the EAL students' culture in the academic environment, allowing the EAL students' culture to influence instruction (i.e., not requiring eye contact or understanding that some cultures value silent listening in the learning process instead of Western culture's active classroom engagement) (Klingner & Soltero-González, 2009). According to Klingner & Soltero-González (2009, as cited in Miller, 2016), this cultural connection can also include the use of EAL students' native languages in the classroom as part of the learning experience. This helps the EAL student to connect better with the content (Miller, 2016) while also adding an inclusive experience for the rest of the class. Ultimately, the use of cultural connection in the classroom reminds the teacher to build on the knowledge that the EAL student arrives with rather than expecting the EAL student to have the same background as their non-EAL counterparts (Klingner & Soltero-González, 2009).

Computer-Assisted Language Learning. In a digital world, it should not be surprising that one of the methods of evidence-based intervention with EAL students is digital. EAL students can frequently be seen in English-speaking general education classrooms with computerized translators or tablets, depending on school funding and family resources. However, computer assisted language learning (CALL) for EAL students moves far beyond the typical translator (Alonso-Belmonte & Vinagre, 2017; Yamashita, 2021). For this paper, any computerized language learning including mobile-assisted language learning will be included under the broader CALL umbrella.

One of the ways that CALL pushes beyond the individual translator experience is in collaborative activities. Yamashita's (2021) study finds success in corrective feedback in collaborative computer-based writing activities. Alonso-Belmonte and Vinagre (2017) emphasize that collaborative activities through computer-mediated communication, particularly when culturally competent, are also successful in fostering "linguistic competence" (p. 343). There are also possibilities for interactive reading and annotation through programs like eComma (Law et al., 2020).

In addition to translators and collaborative support, there are other interactive individual supports that CALL provides (Levy, 2009). Word processing tools have greatly improved and provide corrective feedback, however, should be used carefully as many are designed to correct native speakers (Levy, 2009). Other CALL tools that can help the individual EAL student include computer-assisted pronunciation tools, and authentic listening practices (Levy, 2009). Levy (2009) also highlights that CALL provides cultural competence. When EAL students access English language websites they are automatically exposed to culture and context for language, and CALL assists in providing EAL students with authentic materials (Levy, 2009). This is arguably still relevant for EAL students living in an English-speaking context, as culture and context are needed for full language acquisition. CALL is arguably becoming a dominant support for EAL students because of the ease of access in the age of technology. However, there are potential pitfalls including program design, overwhelming program diversity (Levy, 2009), and the need for the EAL learner to learn computer terminology in their target language (Alonso-Belmonte & Vinagre, 2017).

Evidence-based Practices for Supporting Students with LD in the Classroom

History of Classroom Support for Students with LD. Supporting students with LD has been a topic of discussion since the coining of the diagnostic term in 1963. Publications soared during the 1970s regarding adequate and appropriate education for students with LD (Frierson, 1976; Frostig, 1976; Getman, 1976; Hewett, 1971; Lilly, 1971; Lovitt, 1976; Rosner, 1975). Those researchers highlight, based on personal experience and professional research, the need to advocate for student-centred education (Frierson, 1976; Frostig, 1976; Getman, 1976; Hewett, 1971; Lilly, 1971; Lovitt, 1976; Rosner, 1975). Some argue that best practice involves relationship building (Hewett, 1971; Lovitt, 1976) while others add the importance of structure (Rosner, 1975) and others the importance of avoiding self-contained classrooms (Lilly, 1971). Each researcher seems to complement the findings of the others culminating in a student-centred, structured, individualized, empathic and inclusive approach to instruction (Frierson, 1976; Frostig, 1976; Getman, 1976; Hewett, 1971; Lilly, 1971; Lovitt, 1976; Rosner, 1975). Specific intervention, however, is where researchers deviate from one another.

Lovitt (1976), one of the more critical voices regarding excessive innovation and sophistication of pedagogical practice, argues that direct intervention for students with LD should be simplified not complex. Lovitt (1976) explains that some practitioners or special education teachers over-complicate the process and that simplified instruction is the most successful. Lovitt (1976) does not discount research, but advocates for it, arguing that simplified instruction is the most evidence-based approach to supporting students with LD. Lovitt (1976) explains that this simplified instruction is consistent with existing student-centered practice, tailoring education to the individual by thoroughly observing the student and meeting their needs.

Organizational Strategies for Students with LD. Other researchers recommend more specific strategies. Graphic organizers and concept maps are recommended to help students with LD connect concepts (Miller, 2016) while mnemonic devices and explicit instruction are better for remembering content (Miller, 2016). The graphic organizers can be used to demonstrate vocabulary concepts or content concepts (Miller, 2016). According to Miller (2016), repetition is key to success. Rosner (1975), however, shies away from recommending rote memorization due to the brain processes of children with LD.

Hughes (2011) argues that how learning strategies are taught is more important than the strategies themselves. Hughes (2011) explains that any strategy requires both observable and non-observable processes that learners go through to accomplish learning tasks. Hughes (2011) argues that students with LD lack good metacognition. Metacognition, according to Hughes (2011) is the non-observable process that occurs in which the learner organizes and prioritizes thoughts and decision-making strategies to elect appropriate learning strategies for successful learning in a given context (i.e., one writing strategy in a formal context and a different writing strategy for creative writing). Hughes (2011) argues that students with LD need to be explicitly taught metacognition so that they can organize their internal world and experience success with the organizational strategies they are given.

Personal Connection for Students with LD. Researchers also highlight the need for students with LD to feel a personal connection with their learning environment and their instructors (Hewett, 1971; Lovitt, 1976; Miller, 2016). Interactive activities are helpful for students with LD (Miller, 2016). Peer groupings, according to Miller (2016), are vital to students with disabilities being actively incorporated into classroom activities and becoming more

actively involved in class. Personal connection creates a foundation for the student to feel safe enough to pursue academic growth as evidenced by Hewett (1971).

The Research Gap

There are a multitude of learning strategies and supports that are appropriate for students EAL students (Klingner & Soltero-González, 2009; Miller, 2016) and students with LD (García & Tyler, 2010; Miller, 2016) and there are also ways to adapt these strategies for EAL students with LD (García & Tyler, 2010; Klingner & Soltero-González, 2009; Miller, 2016). However, there is little research regarding general education teachers' willingness or ability to implement targeted learning strategies for the EAL student population with LD. One study discusses teacher resistance to top-down professional development and the tendency of the teacher to favour their experiential learning over professional development (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). It has also been the researcher's experience that professional development days, in many teacher contexts, are the brunt of jokes resulting from the same resistance to these top-down professional development sessions. There is little research regarding teacher implementation of new learning strategies through a voluntary process. The study sought to explore this by posing the following research questions:

1. Would the participant teachers be willing to incorporate the targeted EAL-LD learning strategy into their classroom?
2. Do the participant teachers think that they could have successfully incorporated their chosen targeted learning strategy into their classroom as evidenced by their self-reflection process?
3. What variables might influence the successful or unsuccessful completion of the implementation of the targeted learning strategies?

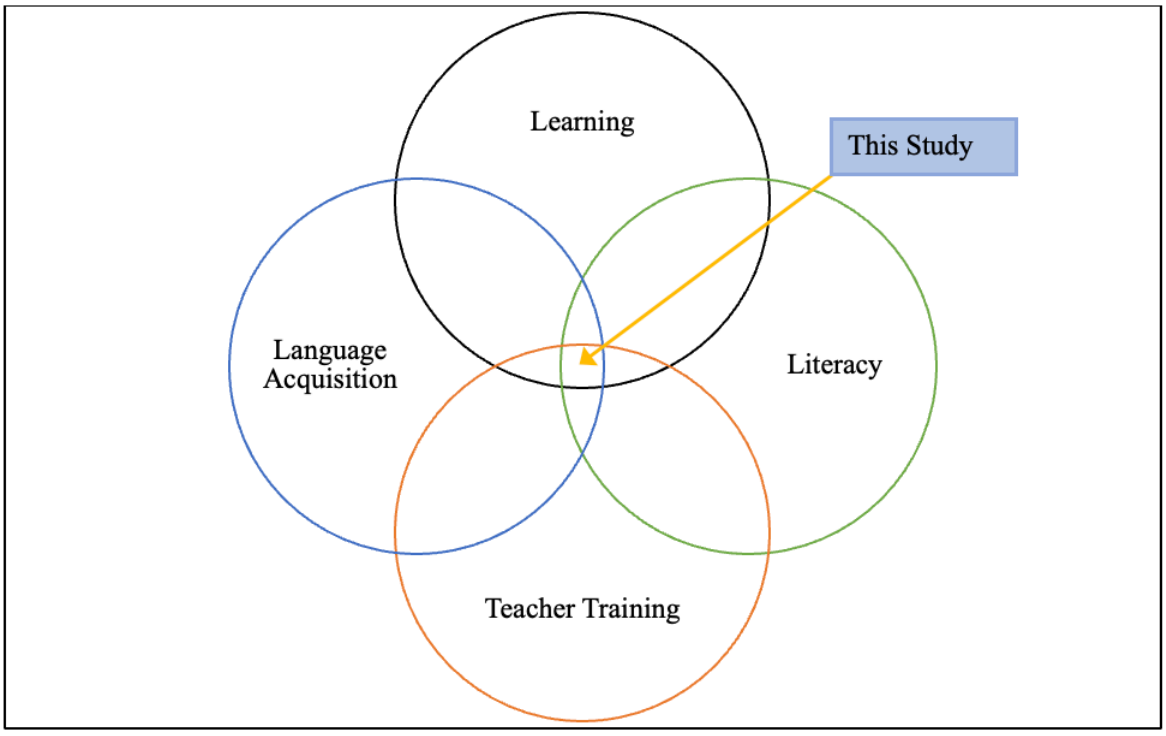
4. How do the participant teachers feel regarding the theoretical implementation of an additional learning strategy in their classroom?
5. What themes arise from the Canadian data that could apply to supporting EAL students with LD in the United States and Mexico?

Theoretical Framework

Multiple theoretical frameworks interact with the concept of supporting EAL students with LD in the general education classroom. Some macro-frameworks encompass sub-theories. Four macro-frameworks that are of specific interest to this study are the frameworks of learning, language acquisition, literacy, and teacher training **(**Figure 2). Each macro-framework contains one or more micro-theories that apply to this study, placing this study at the intersection of these frameworks (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Locating This Study within Meta-Theoretical Constructs



Learning Theories

According to the International Bureau of Education (n.d.), the prominent learning theories are behaviourism, cognitive psychology, constructivism, social learning theory, socio-constructivism, experiential learning, multiple intelligences, situated learning theory and community of practice, and 21st century learning or skills. Western Governors University (2020a) also includes Humanism Learning Theory and Connectivism Learning Theory under important learning theories. Beyond typical learning theories, there are learning theories regarding students with LD. According to Twomey (2006), theories regarding learning difficulties include "the deficit model, the inefficient learner model, and the instructional setting explanation" (p. 94). For this study, the theories focused on will be behaviourism, constructivism, connectivism, and the inefficient learner model.

Behaviourism. Behaviourism, or behavioural learning theory, focuses on learning as a result of behavioural conditioning instead of biological inclination in the nature (biology) vs. nurture (conditioning) argument (Western Governors University, 2020b). Behavioural learning theory encourages positive reinforcement and punishment intending to condition the student (Internation Bureau of Education, n.d.; Western Governors University, 2020b). For example, a pizza party is thrown for the class with the highest marks, while students who did not finish their work have extra homework. According to the International Bureau of Education (n.d.) and Western Governons University (2020b), behaviourism incorporates specific methods of teaching, including what is commonly called in education circles as the "drill-and-kill" method. This method emphasizes repetition to reinforce learning (International Bureau of Education, n.d.; Western Governors University, 2020b). This theory is found within this study with regard to the repetition of the application of the targeted learning strategy in the classroom. This study is

assuming the application of behavioral learning theory by assuming that the repetition of the targeted learning strategy will produce a behavioral change in both the students and the teachers. The teachers may observe behavioural changes throughout the unit they are teaching and they may observe behavioural changes in themselves as they plan following unit plans.

Constructivism. Constructivism argues that students construct their learning by building on past experiences (Western Governors University, 2020a). This means that students essentially scaffold their learning with previous learning. According to Western Governors University (2020a), the role of the teacher in the constructivist classroom is to be a guide while students feel their way through their learning. Constructivist learning is not as new as some might think and finds roots in much of what Lovitt (1976) argues in pursuit of demystifying education practices.

Connectivism. Connectivism is a newer theoretical model that promotes connection as a motivational tool to get students excited about working (Western Governors University, 2020a). Connectivism encourages digital platform use to engage students in meaningfully connecting to content and context (Western Governors University, 2020a). Ultimately this theoretical construct argues that "people learn and grow when they form connections" (Western Governors University, 2020a, para.15). This explains the elementary school trend of encouraging students to make connections with reading material during reading time.

Inefficient Learner Model. The inefficient learner model is one of three theoretical constructs regarding learning for students with LD (Twomey, 2006). This model argues that students with LD struggle because they are inefficient in their learning practices (Twomey, 2006). Students, according to this model, must be taught cognitive and metacognitive strategies to improve learning (Twomey, 2006). Twomey (2006) argues that this theoretical model is optimistic because it provides a workable problem along with its solution.

Language Acquisition Theories

There are many different language acquisition theories in practice today. As this study will focus on providing evidence-based learning strategies to support the EAL student population with LD, language acquisition theories must be considered. There are theories surrounding both first and second language acquisition. For this study, the neural theory of language and CALL theory will be reviewed.

Neural Theory of Language. This theory of language acquisition focuses on the brain's participation in language acquisition (Aktan-Erciyes, 2021; Grimaldi, 2012). According to the neural theory of language, native (L1) and target (L2) languages are learned in the same part of the brain, which was initially not widely accepted (Aktan-Erciyes, 2021). This theory of language acquisition would argue that if a student with LD could learn their L1, they can learn an L2. According to Grimaldi (2012), however, different aspects of language learning do occur in different parts of the brain. This means that memorizing terms occurs in one part of the brain while navigating linguistic concepts occurs in a different part of the brain. This theory focuses on scientifically and medically explaining and understanding language acquisition (Grimaldi, 2012). This theory is extremely complex, but also yielded a deeper understanding of the functioning of the brain within communication (Grimaldi, 2012).

CALL Theory. While some research has denoted the supremacy of face-to-face language learning (Ziegler, 2016) there is evidence that CALL can improve language use and encourages higher-level thinking (Alonso-Belmonte & Vinagre, 2017). CALL theory is still very much in its infancy and is being developed through different research, including computer-mediated communication research (Ziegler, 2016). What is emerging in CALL theory is the plausibility that CALL can be more effective for students than traditional practices within the

classroom (Levy, 2009). One could additionally argue that CALL could become the stanadard for foreign language acquisition as it provides opportunities to develop cultural competence that the classroom many times lacks.

Literacy

Literacy Play Theory. Literacy theories also abound as learning theories do. Literacy through play is a theory of particular interest as students with LD struggle with reading and writing. According to Mielonen and Paterson (2009), the play aspect of this theoretical construct is defined as "voluntary engagement in enjoyable activities" (p.18). This theory introduces literacy to the well-established connection between play and healthy cognitive development (Mielonen & Paterson, 2009). This theory argues that learning best happens in voluntary and enjoyable circumstances (Mielonen & Paterson, 2009). Within reading, this theory encompasses bedtime stories (Mielonen & Paterson, 2009) and for writing would then, understandably, incorporate letters to Santa. This theory capitalizes on enjoyable events that naturally occurs in the student's life (Mielonen & Paterson, 2009).

Teacher Training

Teachers receive pre-service and in-service training (Harris & Sass, 2008). There are no overarching theories regarding teacher training, however, as evidenced by the existence of in-service training and the creation of professional learning communities (PLCs), continuing education and professional development seems to be the theory. Harris and Sass (2008) argue that the most effective teacher training is content area training. This thought, along with their findings regarding the efficiency of experienced teachers (Harris & Sass, 2008), supports the construct of PLCs. Others, however, question the efficacy of top-down professional development paradigms, arguing that teachers, when being honest, are resistant to top-down reform in their

classroom (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). This, as alluded to by Gleeson and Davison (2016), seems to stem from the level of expectation set in pre-service or academic teacher-training in which teachers are being prepared towards the common end of moving into a managerial role in their classroom. Gleeson and Davison (2016) allude to this incongruency with the top-down in-service training and that change in pre-service training would need to take place to encourage teachers to more readily embrace top-down professional development. This could ultimately lead to an operational theoretical construct regarding teacher training.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Study Design

This qualitative research design employed self-reflective questionnaires that surveyed participants' perceived ability to organically implement targeted learning strategies that would support EAL students with LD. Self-reflection is critical to teaching (Awan, 2021; Weber et al., 2018) and to teacher education (Weber et al., 2018). Simultaneously, currently employed teachers are very busy and questionnaires allow for teachers to participate at their own pace. While the first survey included more demographic questions at the beginning, all three questionnaires considered the same 4 questions and allowed space for additional narrative in the 5th question (see Appendix A for the three questionnaires). The learning strategies participants selected for their training were a) targeted vocabulary using Quizlet; b) organizational chart using PowerPoint; or c) metacognitive exit slips using Microsoft Forms. While participants would not be implementing the learning strategies, their training included explanations for why the chosen strategy would help EAL students with LD as well as modifications to the learning strategy that might be helpful for different teaching environments. The two post-training questionnaires asked participants to first (Self-Evaluation 2 in Appendix A) reconsider the four self-evaluation questions through the lens of the learning strategy they trained on and then (Self-Evaluation 3 in Appendix A) reconsider the four self-evaluation questions and learning strategy specific through the lens of a unit plan or topic of instruction that they remembered teaching. Therefore, though the study did not incorporate long interviews, the multiple open-ended questions and self-reflective nature of the questionnaires facilitated the recovery of enough data to explore teachers' perceptions through the lens of these six diverse participants.

Participants

Through the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) application process, the participation inclusion and exclusion criteria solidified. While initial inclusion criteria targeted teachers currently teaching with the hopes of implementing the learning strategies, the adjusted execution of participants' implementation of the learning strategies from actual to theoretical allowed for a broader scope of participants. Therefore, as the study shifted to cease including actual implementation of learning strategies, inclusion criteria broadened to include current, former, and retired teachers in Canada.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants had to be current, former, or retired teachers who taught at least one instructional unit or topic to a general education middle school or high school class in English and had received implied or direct permission to participate. Implied permission signified that the participant was a former or retired teacher who did not currently work for a public or private school. Direct permission signified that participants had permission to participate through their RCE and public-school administrator, or through their private school administrator. As middle school and high school grades differ throughout the province and country, potential participants who were teaching or taught 6^{th} through 12^{th} grades and met the other inclusion criteria were able to participate. This means that teachers who ever taught any of the included 7 grades of instruction in a general education classroom could participate.

Exclusion Criteria

The exclusion criteria for the study indicated that teachers who did not teach at least one instructional topic for one general education class in English to students in grades 6 through 12, or who did not have permission to participate would not be considered for the study. The exclusion criteria also limited participation to teachers who had Canadian teaching experience

The inclusion and exclusion criteria allowed for special education teachers who co-taught in a general education 6-12 classroom to participate in this study. The inclusion and exclusion criteria also allowed for participants with full, provisional, limited teacher certificates as well as teachers with no certificate to participate provided that they taught an entire unit plan.

Participants at a Glance

Six teacher participants, ranging from 1 to 3 years teaching experience to more than 20 years teaching experience, from currently teaching to retired, and from bachelor's degree only through completed master's degrees, volunteered for the study. While there were few participants the only commonalities among all participants were limited to the inclusion criteria. Therefore, all of the demographic information, while similar amongst some participants, did not encompass all participants.

P1NSBC. This participant reported more than 20 years of teaching experience and taught in both Nova Scotia and British Columbia in public schools. This participant reported having had both EAL students and students with LD "this and previous years" (Self-Evaluation 1, Appendix A). This participant holds a master's degree, attended a teacher preparation program, and holds a teaching certificate or license. It is of interest to note that this participant has experience teaching in both general education as well as special education and reported experience teaching middle school and high school.

P2NS. This participant reported having 10 to 20 years of teaching experience in public school in Nova Scotia. This participant reported not having had either EAL students or students with LD in their classrooms. This participant holds a master's degree, attended a teacher preparation program, and holds a teaching certificate or license. It is of interest to note that this participant only taught high school.

P3NS. This participant reported having 1 to 3 years of teaching experience in public school in Nova Scotia. This participant reported having had both EAL students and students with LD "this and previous years" (Self-Evaluation 1, Appendix A). This participant holds a master's degree, attended a teacher preparation program, and holds a current teaching certificate or license. It is of interest to note that this participant has not taught high school.

P4NS. This participant reported more than 20 years of teaching experience in public school in Nova Scotia. This participant reported having both EAL students and students with LD 'this and previous years" (Self-Evaluation 1, Appendix A). This participant holds a master's degree, attended a teacher preparation program, and holds a valid teaching certificate or license. It is of interest to note that this teacher has taught both middle school and high school.

P5ON. This participant reported having 1 to 3 years of teaching experience in private school in Ontario. This participant reported having both EAL students and students with LD "this and previous years" (Self-Evaluation 1, Appendix A). This participant holds a master's degree, attended a teacher preparation program, and holds a valid teaching certification or license. It is of interest to note that this participant does not teach in a co-ed environment.

P6NS. This participant reported having more than 20 years of teaching experience in public school in Nova Scotia. This participant reported having both EAL students and students with LD in previous years, but not this year. This participant holds a BA and a Bed and attended a teacher preparation program but does not currently hold a teaching certification or license. It is of interest to note that this participant is not a current teacher.

Study Tool

For this study, the tool implemented to collect data was a set of three questionnaires. Each questionnaire asks participants to provide self-reflective feedback. The three questionnaires

were provided at different times during participation, which will be reviewed within the procedure section and are available in Appendix A. The format was similar for each of the questionnaires. However, Self-Evaluation 1 contained the initial demographic information questions and Self-Evaluation 3 asked participants to focus on a current or previous unit of instruction or topic that they remembered teaching. The questionnaires had the same four self-evaluation questions as well as a fifth space for comments or thoughts that they might want to share. Additionally, as participants initially answered the four self-evaluation questions in Self-Evaluation 1, they responded regarding what they thought they might be able to hypothetically do and what might hypothetically ensure or impede implementation of a new learning strategy. In Self Evaluation 2, participants reflected on the same four questions, hypothetically considering their ability to implement the learning strategy they trained on. Finally, in Self-Evaluation 3 participants were asked to reflect on the same four questions but while reflecting on a unit of instruction or topic they had taught.

Study Procedure

The study began with the establishment of a proposal and the pursuit of approval from the UREB committee. As mentioned earlier, the UREB application process was critical to the direction of this research. After UREB approval, recruitment procedures began. The proposed data collection window was January 01, 2023, to June 30, 2023, and the final data collection window was January 01, 2023, to May 31, 2023, due to lack of participant uptake.

The first stage of recruitment was twofold. A digital post was circulated on Facebook to reach out to retired and former teachers in the following Facebook groups: Nova Scotia Teachers, Retired Teachers of Canada, South Shore Nova Scotia Community Bulletin Board, The People of Ten Beaches Estates, Hubbards & Area Communication, and Nova Scotia Canada

Buy, Sell, Trade, Advertise, All. Simultaneously, the researcher applied to the seven English language Regional Centers for Education (RECs) in Nova Scotia. Digital posters were circulated on social media and to libraries across Nova Scotia. The central contacts for the public libraries in British Columbia and Ontario were also sent requests to have posters placed in those provinces.

The next stage of recruitment was direct communication with schools as well as word-of-mouth recruitment and physical posters in the community. A total of 142 schools were directly contacted (45 in Nova Scotia, 38 in Ontario, and 59 in British Columbia). The schools contacted in Nova Scotia were private and RCE approved public schools, while the schools in Ontario and British Columbia were all private schools. The researcher encouraged snowball recruitment if people mentioned friends or family that might be interested in participating in the study, explaining that some of the RCEs did not approve the study. The researcher also placed posters on physical community bulletin boards in various communities on the south shore of Nova Scotia.

Through this recruitment, prospective participants were linked directly to the informed consent form, via Microsoft Forms, which outlined the entire participation experience and expectations. The informed consent also required participants to identify their permission to participate. This was crucial as some RCEs, and some private schools, did not move forward with the study and did not want their teachers to participate without their permission. Following the informed consent submission, the researcher received an email notification from Microsoft Forms and saved the informed consent and sent the link to Self-Evaluation 1 to all participants with the exception of P6NS who requested all hardcopy versions as they wanted to participate but were not familiar with Microsoft Forms.

Self-Evaluation 1

Participants received the link to Self-evaluation 1 upon providing consent to participate in the study. They completed this digital self-evaluation, except for P6NS who completed the questionnaire on paper, prior to receiving training on their chosen intervention. The responses to this and other questionnaires were collected and digitally saved to Microsoft OneDrive, with the original answers saved to Microsoft Forms until project completion, as well as a backup copy saved as a .pdf file on a password-protected computer hard drive. This questionnaire took an average of 8 minutes and 57 second to complete digitally.

Learning Strategy Training

As part of completing Self-Evaluation 1, participants selected one of three learning strategies for their learning strategy training (see Appendix A). Participants also indicated whether or not they wanted the pre-recorded training through Microsoft OneDrive or a live training through Microsoft Teams. The training involved an overview of how the learning strategy would be specifically helpful for the EAL students with LD population and a demonstration of the learning strategy preparation and use. Each of the three training was pre-recorded with the demonstration section of the video available for use in the live trainings to ensure continuity between live and pre-recorded trainings. However, all participants that completed the training opted for pre-recorded trainings. (The pre-recorded training was provided to P6NS on a USB drive as Microsoft OneDrive was not accessible to them.) The link to Self-Evaluation 2 was in the video description. The training took approximately 6 minutes to complete.

Self-Evaluation 2

Participants completed in Self-Evaluation 2 after receiving training on their chosen intervention. Participants followed the link in the training video description to the self-evaluation also on Microsoft Forms (see Appendix A). For this self-evaluation, participants reflected on their perceived ability to be able to feasibly implement the learning strategy they received into a general education classroom. Participant P6NS received the questionnaires altogether and was able to move forward at their own pace. Their questionnaires were printed directly from Microsoft Forms. This questionnaire took an average of 4 minutes and 7 seconds to complete digitally.

Self-evaluation 3

After completing Self-Evaluation 2 digitally the researcher received an email notification from Microsoft Forms. The researcher emailed the link to Self-Evaluation 3 which asked participants almost the same questions as Self-Evaluation 2 but from the perspective of considering a unit of instruction or a topic they remembered teaching. In this way, participants reflected on the reality of if they could have actually implemented the learning strategy in a past unit or topic of instruction. This final questionnaire took an average of 3 minutes and 17 seconds to complete digitally.

Data Collection

Data from the self-evaluations was collected virtually through Microsoft Forms and physically from one participant previously mentioned. The forms collected participant email addresses, first names, school, grade(s) taught, province or provinces where teaching occurred, information regarding experience with EAL students and students with LD, information regarding education, training, and licensing, and the responses to the four self-reflection questions and the open-ended comment section on the questionnaire. Participants received the link to the Microsoft Forms for

each of the different self-evaluations, with the exception of P6NS who received the questionnaires at one time with instructions on when to complete each one (i.e., before or after the recorded training. Answers remained recorded in Microsoft Forms for the duration of the study as well as on Microsoft OneDrive and on a password-protected computer hard drive. While participants had access to their responses, they only had an opportunity to respond to each self-evaluation one time. However, a second link would have been provided for teachers who made a mistake and wanted to resubmit their self-evaluation, though none did. As each participant responded their responses were automatically loaded to the evaluator/researcher view. Only the researcher and thesis advisor with the link or permission on Microsoft OneDrive were able to access the answers and answers could not be edited.

Chapter 4: Analysis

The Researcher's Bias Explored

It is critical to remember that with qualitative research there is no avoidance of the self in research, rather an understanding of self in research and embracing the effect of the self in the research process including data analysis through reflexive thematic analysis (Delve, n.d.). To establish the lens and scope of bias it is important to understand that the researcher worked for six years as a social worker in the United States, worked for 8 years as a teacher (5.5 years in the United States and 2.5 years in Mexico). In the United States, clinical social work practice under supervision includes the assessment and diagnosis and treatment planning for mental health counselling and behavioral support (this differs from the scope of clinical social work practice in Canada which does not include assessment and diagnosis). This means that the researcher has training and experience in assessing and diagnosing LD as well as providing support for students with this diagnosis. With regard to professional teaching experience, the researcher has taught students with LD (diagnosed and undiagnosed) and EAL students in the United States and EAL students with diagnosed LD in Mexico. The lens that the researcher employs comes from the context of listening to and participating in raw, authentic discussion regarding the realities of the pursuit of providing appropriate support for EAL students with LD in the general education classroom. Finally, it has been the researcher's personal and professional experience that there are no easy solutions to providing appropriate supports for EAL students with LD in both the United States and Mexico. Therefore

Data Analysis Explored

In research and particularly in qualitative research there is an emphasis on letting the data speak for itself. In this project, the data presented has lent itself to be analyzed through reflexive

thematic analysis (reflexive TA). It was the original intention of the researcher, as the project evolved, to apply reflexive thematic analysis due to the researcher's natural bias toward the research topic as well as grounded theory analysis to compare the data across the subjects. However, further exploration yielded high criticism from Braun and Clarke (2019) regarding the misuse of their reflexive TA approach to data analysis. In an effort to stay true to this data analysis approach it is first critical to share what reflexive TA is before discussing the application of the approach.

Braun and Clarke's Reflexive TA

Braun and Clarke (2019) encourage readers to understand that there are many versions of thematic analysis (TA) in existence. However, it is important to delineate which TA is being used. Braun and Clarke (2019) explain that they previously struggled to clearly name their TA approach as naming it after themselves would not clearly identify what sets their process apart. While this might seem confusing, it is important to note because it was an important part of their process. In 2006 Braun and Clarke (2019) outlined their TA approach, assuming fellow researchers in their professional niche would clearly understand what they were communicating. However, their process went viral in the authentic sense. Their 2006 article became one of the most frequently cited articles in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2019) and unfortunately became quickly misunderstood beyond their niche. Braun and Clarke (2019) continued to work out an appropriate label for their process that would help students and researchers better understand and therefore better use their approach. This led to the coining of their work as "reflexive TA" (Braun & Clarke, n.d.b).

Six Phases of Analysis. To correctly implement Braun and Clarke's (n.d.a) reflexive, it is critical to understand their "Six phases for analysis" (para. 2). While these phases are not rigid,

they do provide a framework to accurately reproduce reflexive TA and ensure a rigorous analysis (Braun & Clarke, n.d.a). The six phases are self-explanatory ("Familiarizing yourself with the dataset…Coding…Generating initial themes…Developing and reviewing themes…Refining, defining, and naming themes…Writing up" (Braun & Clarke, n.d.a, para 2)) and are labeled throughout the next section of this chapter. This process of the writeup and editing of this data collection and analysis chapter is an active demonstration of the sixth step of Braun and Clarke's (n.d.a) process.

Data Analysis Conducted

The data analysis of the data collected for this project attempted to correctly follow Braun and Clarke's (n.d.a) six phases of analysis. Some of this process was very intentional and some of the successful compliance with the reflexive TA process was unintentional which further underpins the organic fit of this data analysis process for this project.

Phase 1. Familiarizing yourself with the dataset

The familiarization process for this data analysis unintentionally followed Braun and Clarke's (n.d.a) summary of this stage. The researcher immersed herself in the data by interacting with the data in a number of ways. The first reading generally occurred shortly after questionnaire submission as answers were copied and pasted or typed into the master Microsoft Excel spreadsheet on OneDrive (accessible only to the researcher and the thesis advisor). The next interaction with the data occurred through re-reading the questionnaire responses and thinking about themes that were starting to emerge while data was still being collected. After the data collection was completed, the researcher continued to reread the questionnaire responses and began to consider coding. Finally, possibly the most meaningful yet accidental interaction with the data was the researcher physically rewriting all of the data from the self-evaluation

questions (i.e., not the demographic questions). This was accidental as it was the result of a non-functioning printer as the researcher attempted to follow the coding example demonstrated by a Quirkos (2019) video presented by Dr. Daniel Turner. This physical interaction with the data through handwriting all of the responses would not have been possible with a larger number of participants, but it allowed for a much more intentional, word-for-word interaction with the text.

Phase 2. Coding

Much of the initial coding was conducted following Turner's (Quirkos, 2019) modeling using the Quirkos software. In the training video, Turner (Quirkos, 2019) explained the differences between codes and themes, though at times used the terms interchangeably. Turner (Quirkos, 2019) explained that while coding qualitative data is optional, it gives language to the data, making the data coherent. Turner (Quirkos, 2019) shows that different codes can be applied to the same data set to bring even more understanding to the data. After watching Turner's (Quirkos, 2019) video repeatedly as well as another Quirkos (2022) video presented by Dr. Cathy Gibbons regarding moving from coding to theme building, the researcher began to code. Initially, the codes created were *ability*, *frequency*, *ensure*, *prevent*, and *add stress* According to Turner (Quirkos, 2019), two major categories of coding are Grounded Theory Coding (GTC)and Framework Analysis Coding (FAC), the former being emergent in nature with codes, themes and theories created as the project takes shape and the latter being structured in nature with codes, themes and theories established prior to the exploration of data. These initial codes were what Turner (Quirkos, 2019) would label FAC codes because they were part of the researcher's initial framework which was also informed by her personal professional bias. According to Turner (Quirkos, 2019), it is common for researchers to implement both GTC codes and FAC codes within their data analysis, which helped form better direction for coding for this research

analysis. In addition to the 5 initial codes, another 54 GTC codes were identified (See Appendix D).

Phase 3. Generating Initial Themes

Establishing themes, according to Braun and Clarke (n.d.a), is a "recursive process" (para. 3) or a revisited and repetitive process that characterizes rest of reflexive TA. The initial generation of themes for this project is available in the first part of Appendix D. Through coding by hand, the researcher was able to identify some commonalities among codes that identified themes. One of these themes was immediately apparent due to word frequency and repetition amongst participants, the term "time" (P2NS, P4NS, P5ON, P6NS). Two other themes were dependent on commonalities among codes, for example, the codes *teaching style*, *technique*, *previous training*, *adapt*, *teacher comfort*, *previous experience*, and *established routine* were some of the codes that chunked together to create the theme of "Personal and professional ability" (Appendix D, p. 69). These themes were then further modified through the next two phases of analysis.

Phase 4. Developing and Reviewing Themes

The development and review of themes occurred through the recursive process of reviewing the codes again and returning to the raw data as recommended by Braun and Clarke (n.d.a). Reviewing the themes entailed re-reading the codes and their assigned themes as well as re-reading the raw data to verify the link between the codes and the raw data as well as the raw data to the themes. This was conducted to ensure that there was not misrepresentation of data in the themes through mistranslation of the codes. When reading codes such as *ability* or *assistance* or *excitement,* the verbiage of the codes and seeing them together can easily create a subconscious bias that could have led the researcher to mislabel themes based on subconscious

bias. The researcher's professional bias and understanding of the power of subconscious thought proved helpful in maintaining this self-awareness. Therefore, the themes were compared directly to the raw data to ensure that as much as possible meaning had not been lost or adjusted and, as Braun and Clarke (n.d.a) admonish, that the themes reflected an accurate story of the raw data.

5. Refining, Defining, and Renaming Themes

For this stage of the reflexive TA process, Braun and Clarke (n.d.a) ask the researcher to circle back and look at the big picture of the story that the themes tell about the data. To accomplish this, the researcher considered the names and connotations of the initial themes. The researcher considered the questions: a) What does this theme name tell me about the data?; b) Does this theme name communicate the truth of the data?; and c) Is there a better name that tells a more complete story about the data?. Ultimately, through this process, the theme names changed from the five in-progress titles *Time Management*, *Perceived and Real Responsibilities*, *Personal and Professional Ability*, *Feelings About Supporting EALs with LD*, and *Existing Pressure* to four final theme titles The Problem of Not Enough Time, Freedom and Expectations within Teaching, Personal and Professional Capabilities, and Beliefs Regarding General Education Teachers Supporting EALs with LD (See Appendix E). The initial theme regarding pressure was absorbed by the first two final themes as the pressures mentioned were regarding time or assessment expectations. The final theme names were still in progress during the first draft of this paper which reflects the reality of the recursive process (See Appendix E). The researcher believes, through experiencing this process, that she could continue to refine themes far beyond publication. This echo's Braun and Clarkes (2019) that this is a continuous journey and not a close-ended trip that successfully reaches a destination.

Phase 6. Writing Up

According to Braun and Clarke (n.d.a), this process involves bringing all of the previous steps together into context and relating the analysis back to literature. In essence, the writing up is the process of recording the analysis process above and the results process below and connecting them to existing literature. This process was also recursive as there is an editing process occurring between the initial thesis draft and the final thesis draft (See Appendix F).

Chapter 5: Findings and Limitations

Findings

Due to the narrative nature of the results, as opposed to primarily numeric data typical of some quantitative studies, the results and discussion sections have been combined into this section of findings. The application of the six phases of reflexive TA led to four themes that impact teachers' ability to organically implement targeted learning strategies that would support EAL students with LD in the general education classroom. These themes, explored below, were then recursively tied to the research questions (Figure 3, p. 55) and then used to tell the complete story (Table 1, p. 56).

Themes Identified

The Problem of Not Enough Time. The first theme identified through reflexive TA was the theme of time. Participants mentioned the concept of time directly and indirectly, a total of 14 times in questionnaire responses. The word "time" (P2NS, P4NS, P5ON, P6NS) was used 8 times and the word "timing" (P4NS) was used 1 time, while the phrases "student absent"/ "absenteeism" (P1BCNS), "school closure" (P1BCNS), and "busy schedule"/ "teaching hours" (P5ON) completed the other references to the concept of time. Therefore 5 of 6 participants included the concept of time with respect the self-reflection questions 3 and 4 of the questionnaires which referred to what would ensure or prevent learning strategy implementation and how their stress level might be impacted (See Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C). However, it was not only the frequency of the codes that produced the theme but also the depth of the information. Participant P5ON highlighted this depth through the following, "our school has a very busy schedule which sometimes affects our overall teaching hours per course, meaning that we need to be thoughtful and spend time on." This depth highlights three levels of

time: a) the school has a continuously busy schedule; b) at times that schedule affects teaching hours; and c) selective about how time is therefore spent during class. Participant 6NS further identified “time and effort needed to effectively implement a new learning strategy” could increase their stress and ultimately lead to them not implementing a new learning strategy. This theme carries multiple layers as it highlights teacher-driven, school-driven, and student-driven effects on the issue of time. While P2NS indicated that “in-service time would help to ensure implementation” all other references to time perceived the lack thereof. The critical aspect of the different players in this theme is concerning as it would then require three stakeholders, the teacher, the school, and the students, to work together to mitigate time being a problem. This means that the teacher by themselves cannot mitigate this perceived problem and that the problem has ramifications across provincial boarders.

Freedom and Expectations within Teaching. The second theme that arose as impacting teachers’ perceived ability to implement targeted learning strategies to support EAL students with LD, was that of the juxtaposition of the freedom and expectations that exist in teaching. Participant P5ON wrote, “as someone who is the sole [*subject 1*] teacher and primarily in charge of my [*subject* 2] education course, I have a lot of autonomy in how I structure lessons and don’t have many concerns about needing to coordinate with others.” The subjects P5ON teaches were removed from the quote to protect identifying information, but the essence is important. First, this highlights an understanding that autonomy can come from being the only teacher responsible for a certain subject matter, i.e., the only history teacher for that grade. Second, this highlights the load teachers can face in preparing multiple subjects not just multiple classes. "Multiple classes" is the concept of being the 10th-grade history teacher who teaches 4 different grade 10 classes the same content. Multiple subjects, as reported by P5ON, indicate teaching different

material and possibly completely unrelated material. An example of that would be teaching Art 10 and Biology. The freedom of autonomy in P5ON's quote is juxtaposed with the expectation of teaching multiple subjects. Participant P3NS reported, a similar juxtaposition.

> As a new teacher, I find it difficult to stick to a routine at times with all of the new information and new strategies coming my way. I think I would prevent myself from implementing this more than anything. So as long as I could stick to the routine, I think it would fit well in my classroom. (P3NS)

This participant's account elaborates on the freedom within teaching. They are free to choose from learning strategies and choose a routine that works for them. However, P3NS also reported "I often have to adapt my learning strategies based on my learners." This highlights the expectations of meeting the needs of the learners and how that impacts the strategies that can be implemented in a classroom. The student-first perspective may be very typical for teaching, but it is important to highlight that it adds a layer of nuance to the expectations teachers experience in the field and the reality of how that can impact what can be accomplished in the classroom.

Participants P1NS, P4NS and P6NS reported other professional expectations that supported this theme. Participant P1NS identifies students' "education plan" as an expectation and P4NS and P6NS both identified provincial assessment performance as a factor that would impact their ability to implement targeted learning strategies. Participant P6NS particularly highlighted the conflict between implementing new learning strategies and the "obligation to the mainstream student body." Therefore, 5 of 6 participants found freedoms and expectations within teaching to be a factor in their ability to implement targeted learning strategies in the general education classroom.

Personal and Professional Capabilities. The third theme of personal and professional capabilities was repeated through the responses of all 6 research participants. Participant P5ON highlighted the additional training that they received through a "sheltered English immersion course" and indicated that "there are already a number of strategies and routines" that they implement in their classroom. This participant (P5ON) presented both the professional capability of extra training as well as establishes an understanding of personal capabilities through listing learning strategies already in use in their classroom to indicate propensity towards implementing a new learning strategy. Participant P6NS highlighted the opposite stating, "The years it took me to reach a point where I was comfortable with my teaching technique would probably mitigate my adoption of a new learning (teaching) strategy." Participant P6NS also indicated, "this would have to be very stressful because of the necessity of identifying accurate assessments of the linguistic proficiency of the students…." These two quotes demonstrate a potential lack of personal or professional capabilities that leads to an inability of implementing new learning strategies. Participant P2NS reported the importance of learning how to implement the strategy as a variable for being able to implement a learning strategy and this could indicate both personal and professional capacity as the person and the profession are linked through training. Participant P4NS seemed to indicate that personal perspective can drive professional capability as they stated, with regard to what might ensure or impede learning strategy implementation, "I would have to defer to what I feel is best for them." Additionally, participant P1BCNS stated, "I am very excited to learn new strategies and reflect on my teaching practice" which seems to also indicate a connection between personal and professional capabilities. Finally, participant P3NS, quoted on page 51in the first paragraph, used the phrases "I find it difficult" and "as long as I

could" to demonstrate a solid connection between personal capabilities and learning strategy implementation.

Beliefs Regarding the Role of General Education Teachers in Supporting EALs with LD. The final theme impacting teacher's perceived ability to be able to organically implement learning strategies to support EALs with LD was teachers' belief regarding their role in supporting EAL students with LD. This theme surfaced through a juxtaposition of views of only three participants (P3NS, P5ON, P6NS), but the ferocity of the language used by two participants (P3NS and P6NS) drew the theme into its required place as a result of the research. With regard to self-evaluation question 4 about stress (see Appendix A), participant P3NS responded, "I don't think it would affect my stress level, if a teacher is not able to adapt to their learning environment, then they might reconsider their career," indicating that adapting to serve the EALs with LD and any other population in the classroom is paramount to the vocation of teaching. However, participant P6NS stated, in response to the same question but in Self-Evaluation 3 (see Appendix C), "Using any such strategy with any such students would have ended my career." This participant (P6NS) expressed in self-reflection question 5 in Self-Evaluation 3 that in order to implement the targeted learning strategy they trained on, an additional staff member or support member would be required. While participants P3NS and P6NS did choose different learning strategies to train on, participant P6NS indicated that in their classroom students with LD "were always accompanied by a trained support staff." In a less ferocious manner, participant P5ON, with respect to their experience with the sheltered English immersion course, stated, "approaches to support ELL students through differentiation…are focal to my planning process." In this context, ELL refers to EAL students but is the acronym for English language learners. This juxtaposition of perspectives on the onus of the responsibility of

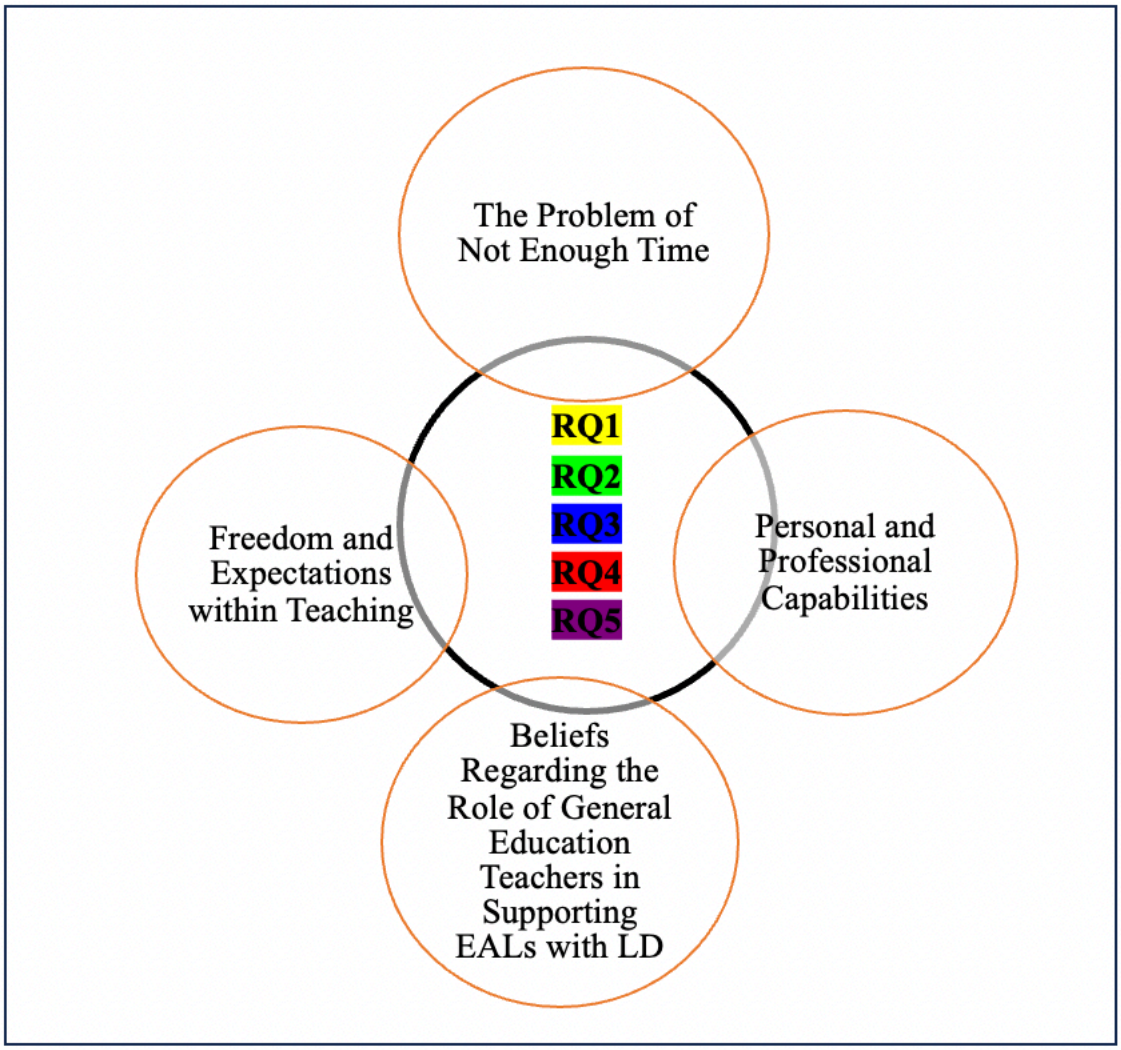
supporting EAL students with LD highlights the vast diversity of pedagogy. This diversity could expose change over time, as P6NS identified as not currently licensed with more than 20 years' experience while P3NS identified as a "new teacher" and both P3NS and P5ON reported 1 to 3 years' teaching experience. Yet, this diversity could also simply reflect pedagogical differences as P6NS repeatedly highlighted the need to avoid underserving the mainstream students in the name of serving the EAL students with LD.

Completing the Story

Each research question (RQ) was answered in a complex, overlapping manner. Each theme addressed all RQs (Figure 3), and the themes formed multiple responses to the RQs (Table 2). The completed story indicated that there were no easy or clear answers to the questions proposed. RQ1 and RQ2 (see Table 1) sought affirmative or negative answers. However, the exploration of the data yielded more honest and complex answers than a simple yes or no. RQ3 (see Table 1) seemed to yield the answer that all of the discovered themes could impact on teachers' successful or unsuccessful implementation of the EAL-LD learning strategies which also then directly impacted on how teachers felt about the theoretical implementation of the learning strategy in their classrooms (RQ4, Table 1). Ultimately, all of the themes discovered proved to be central to the profession of teaching rather than only indicative of the Canadian education system. Therefore, RQ5 (see Table 1) was unintentionally answered with the inclusion of all four themes.

Figure 3

The Intersection of Themes Identified and Research Questions



Note: RQ stands for research and the number identifies which of the 5 research questions the theme addressed and reference the labels in the "Research Question" column in Table 2 below.

Table 1

Research Questions Answered

Research Question	***Reflexive TA Response***
RQ1. Would the participant teachers be willing to incorporate the targeted EAL-LD learning strategy into their classroom?	If there is enough time, the teachers have the freedom to incorporate it as well as the personal and professional capability to, and if the teachers believe it falls withing their role to do so, teachers are willing to incorporate the targeted strategy. However, if the opposite presented in any area, willingness subsided.

RQ2. Do the participant teachers think that they could have successfully incorporated their chosen targeted learning strategy into their classroom as evidenced by their self-reflection process?	Questions of enough time, other teaching expectations, personal and professional capability, and teacher beliefs regarding their role in supporting EAL students with LD swayed the response to this question in both the *yes* and *no* directions, yielding a *maybe* response.
RQ3. What variables might influence the successful or unsuccessful completion of the implementation of the targeted learning strategies?	Each of the four themes promoted successful completion or implementation (i.e., prep-time, freedom, training, and accepted responsibility) and each theme provided roadblocks to completion or implementation (i.e., no time, too many other expectations, lack of training, and belief that it was not their role).
RQ4. How do the participant teachers feel regarding the theoretical implementation of an additional learning strategy in their classroom?	Teachers' feelings changed based on the influence of the factor of time, external expectations, their own capabilities, and their expectations of their own role in supporting EAL students with LD.
RQ5. What themes arise from the Canadian data that could apply to supporting EAL students with LD in the United States and Mexico?	All four themes can apply to both the United States and Mexico as they were not identified as specific to Canada but to the profession of teaching as a whole.

Note: Table 1 synthesizes the connection of the information yielded in the discovered themes (pp. 50-55).

Findings Versus Expectations

As with all research, the researcher cannot be a blank canvas backdrop for the data, analysis, and results to shine on their own. Instead, imagine the researcher and the research as a painting on top of a painting. While some of the data, analysis, and interpretation of the results spring forward as bold colours, visible unaffected by the underpainting of researcher bias, the truth is that most of the overpainting is tinted by the underpainting. The researcher provides the lens with which to understand and interpret the data and the analysis. Therefore, as Turner advises (Quirkos, 2019), it is critical to pay attention to the things that surprise and do not surprise the researcher. The findings of time and perceived ability affecting teachers' response to

their ability to be able to organically implement learning strategies to support EAL students with LD in the general education classroom were expected by the researcher. Her own struggles with time management in the classroom and technology seeming to work only on a whim and on days with no breeze, made these themes obvious. They collaborated her own personal findings. However, the nuances of existing pressure, personal and professional responsibility, and the theme of beliefs regarding the role of general education teachers in supporting EAL students with LD were not expected. For the researcher, who taught mainly between 2016 and 2021, the idea of seeing negative feelings towards new learning strategies had not been considered, and neither had the possibility of personal and professional capabilities being a caveat for teacher not being able to support EAL students with LD. The researcher had established a bias that all teachers simply piled on more weight to the potentially heavy load already carried. This jarring reality, of reading comments that were other to or outside of the researcher's experience, was critical to a deeper understanding of boundaries affecting teacher perception of their ability to implement more learning strategies. This reality of teacher experience opens a new direction for future considerations and future research.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the lack of participants. Although the researcher contacted 142 schools and all public library systems across Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia, applied to the 7 English education RCEs in Nova Scotia, and used social media and digital and physical poster recruitment strategies, only 6 individuals completed the informed consent to begin the study. Of those six, only 4 participants completed the training and second questionnaire, and only three of those completed the third and final questionnaire. While there were themes that were identifiable, and each theme encompassed the perspective of multiple

participants, lack of participation can skew the results. More participants might have highlighted different themes or created new themes to focus on. The lack of participation means that more exploration is needed before confidently moving forward with exploring specific learning strategy implementation in classrooms. However, this limitation may also be indicative of the reality of educational research in Nova Scotia and in private schools across Canada. This limitation, while used to ethically balance the data collected and analyzed by this study, should also be considered by master students seeking to participate in education research as well as by gatekeepers channeling research permission in RCEs and private schools.

The second research limitation of this study is in the study design itself. As this research finds itself at the crossroads of education and language, it is important to highlight the limitation of print communication. As the researcher relied solely on the sentences submitted by the participants, there is room for error in the interpretation of nuance. The participant writing their opinion simply placed words in text form. There were no facial expressions to communicate nuance nor was there a verbal back and forth for clarity. An in-depth interview could have clarified nuances present in response. Although, there is also the possibility that adding an in-depth interview would have further limited the number of participants willing to take part, and the data would have been less diverse.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

While this research project was only able to secure six participants, the participants' diversity, level of blunt honesty, self-reflection, and vulnerability led to deeper understanding of teacher's perceived ability to organically implement targeted learning strategies to support EAL students with LD. The findings led far beyond the researcher's expectations. The fortunate diversity of participants highlighted common themes of impact on teaching practice that have crossed decades of teaching experience as well as lived experiences and feelings that greatly differed. Through this diversity in the data, four themes impacting teacher's perception of their ability to implement new strategies came to light. While some teachers might argue that all general education teachers should support this population and all populations in their classrooms, the diversity in perceived onus of supporting EAL students with LD highlights the need for school leaders and administrators, curriculum designers, RCEs in Canada, school boards in the US, and the SEP in Mexico to take pause and fund further research before continuously adding to or modifying teacher workload to support exceptional learners, a job half done is not a job well done.

Recommendations

Based on the process of this study, the data collected, the understanding siphoned from that data, and the limitations explored, there is much more work needed to further explore this topic. While this current exploration focused on teachers' perceived ability, future studies should focus on teachers' ability to support EAL students with LD in the classroom while simultaneously protecting neurotypical students' education and learning process. Exploration is needed regarding appropriate boundaries for general education teachers in supporting this and other exceptional populations to avoid burnout while ensuring that the human right of education

is being effectively executed for all populations. This study has only scratched the surface of the iceberg of the issue of supporting all students present in the general education classroom. Further study is warranted for exploring who is the appropriate stakeholder to support EAL students with LD and what viable community options could be used in collaboration with schools to ensure that this population is not overlooked or underserved regardless of school resources.

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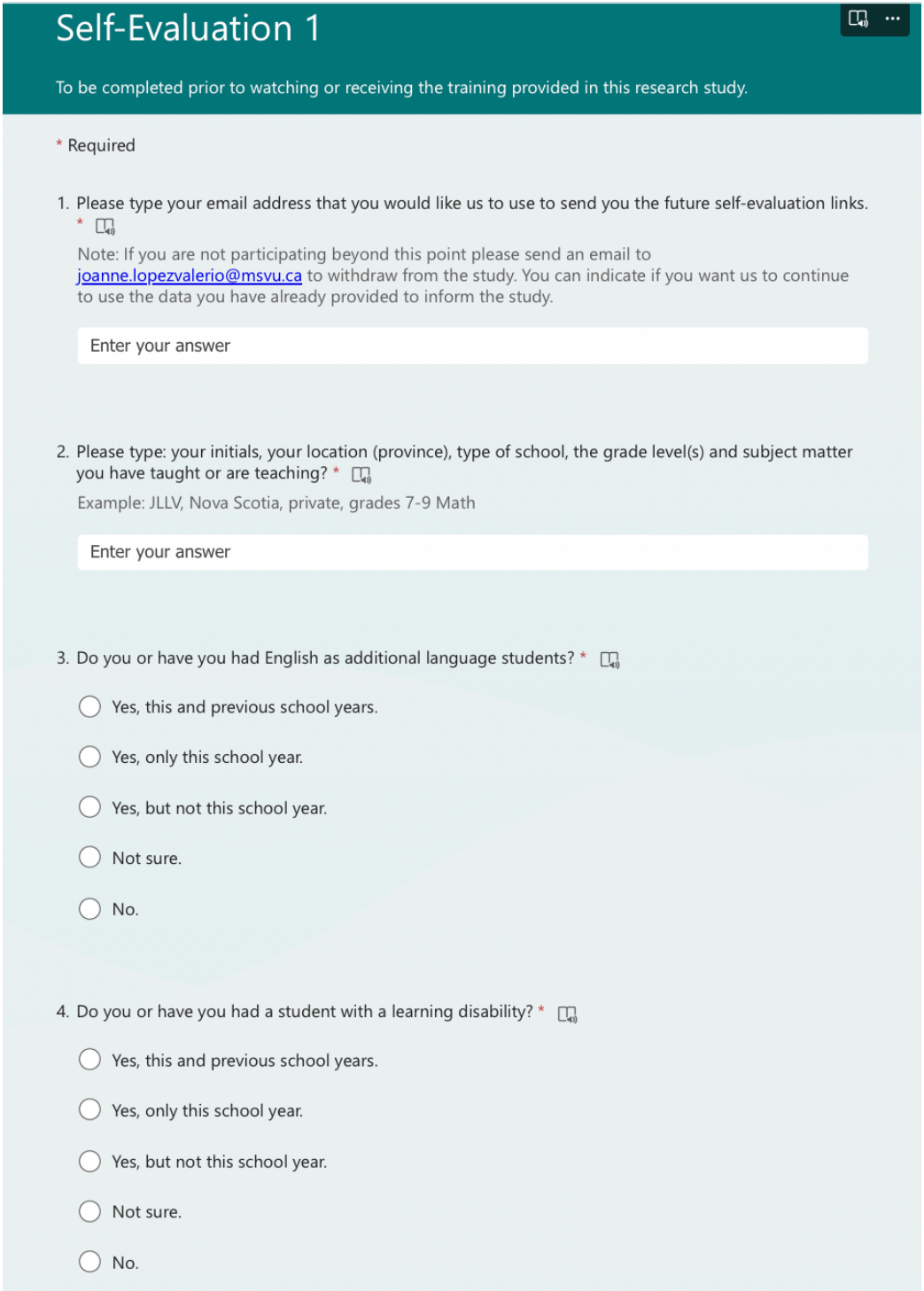
Appendix A

Self-Evaluation 1



Self-Evaluation 1

To be completed prior to watching or receiving the training provided in this research study.

* Required

1. Please type your email address that you would like us to use to send you the future self-evaluation links. *

   Note: If you are not participating beyond this point please send an email to joanne.lopezvalerio@msvu.ca to withdraw from the study. You can indicate if you want us to continue to use the data you have already provided to inform the study.

   Enter your answer

2. Please type: your initials, your location (province), type of school, the grade level(s) and subject matter you have taught or are teaching? *

   Example: JLLV, Nova Scotia, private, grades 7-9 Math

   Enter your answer

3. Do you or have you had English as additional language students? *

   - ◯ Yes, this and previous school years.
   - ◯ Yes, only this school year.
   - ◯ Yes, but not this school year.
   - ◯ Not sure.
   - ◯ No.

4. Do you or have you had a student with a learning disability? *

   - ◯ Yes, this and previous school years.
   - ◯ Yes, only this school year.
   - ◯ Yes, but not this school year.
   - ◯ Not sure.
   - ◯ No.

5. How many years have you been teaching? *

- ◯ 0-1 year
- ◯ 1-3 years
- ◯ 3-5 years
- ◯ 5-10 years
- ◯ 10-20 years
- ◯ More than 20 years

6. What is your highest degree of education? *

- ◯ High school degree
- ◯ Bachelors/University degree not in education
- ◯ Bachelors/University degree in education
- ◯ Master's degree
- ◯ Doctoral degree

7. Did you complete an education program that led to a teaching permit or license? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

8. Do you have a teaching permit or license? *

- ◯ Yes, I am fully licensed to teach.
- ◯ Yes, I have a temporary license (provisional/permit) to teach.
- ◯ No.

9. What strategy do you want to train for? *

Note: You will choose whether to train via pre-recorded video or live Microsoft Teams Meeting.

- ◯ Targeted Vocabulary using Quizlet
- ◯ Organizational Chart using PowerPoint
- ◯ Metacognitive Exit Slips using Microsoft Forms

10. How do you want to receive the training? *

- ◯ I want to watch the pre-recorded video.
- ◯ I want to attend a digital one-on-one Microsoft Teams Meeting.
- ◯ I would like the information for both options.

11. Self-reflection question 1: Do you think you could implement a new learning strategy in your classroom? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Maybe

12. Self-reflection Question 2: How frequently do you think you could implement a new learning strategy during one instructional unit or teaching topic? *

- ◯ Daily
- ◯ Weekly
- ◯ Bi-weekly
- ◯ Unsure
- ◯ Never

13. Self-Reflection Question 3: What do you think would help ensure or get in the way of you implementing a new learning strategy in your classroom? *

Note: You can explain both, what would help and what would keep you from implementing the strategy, or you can choose to just write about one. Also consider things outside of your control (i.e. assemblies, fire-drills, union regulations, etc.).

Enter your answer

14. Self-Reflection Question 4: How do you think using a new learning strategy might affect your daily stress level? *

Note: If you don't think it will affect your stress level please write that.

Enter your answer

15. Self-Reflection Question 5: Feel free to share more thoughts about your participation or expectations of this self-reflection journey.

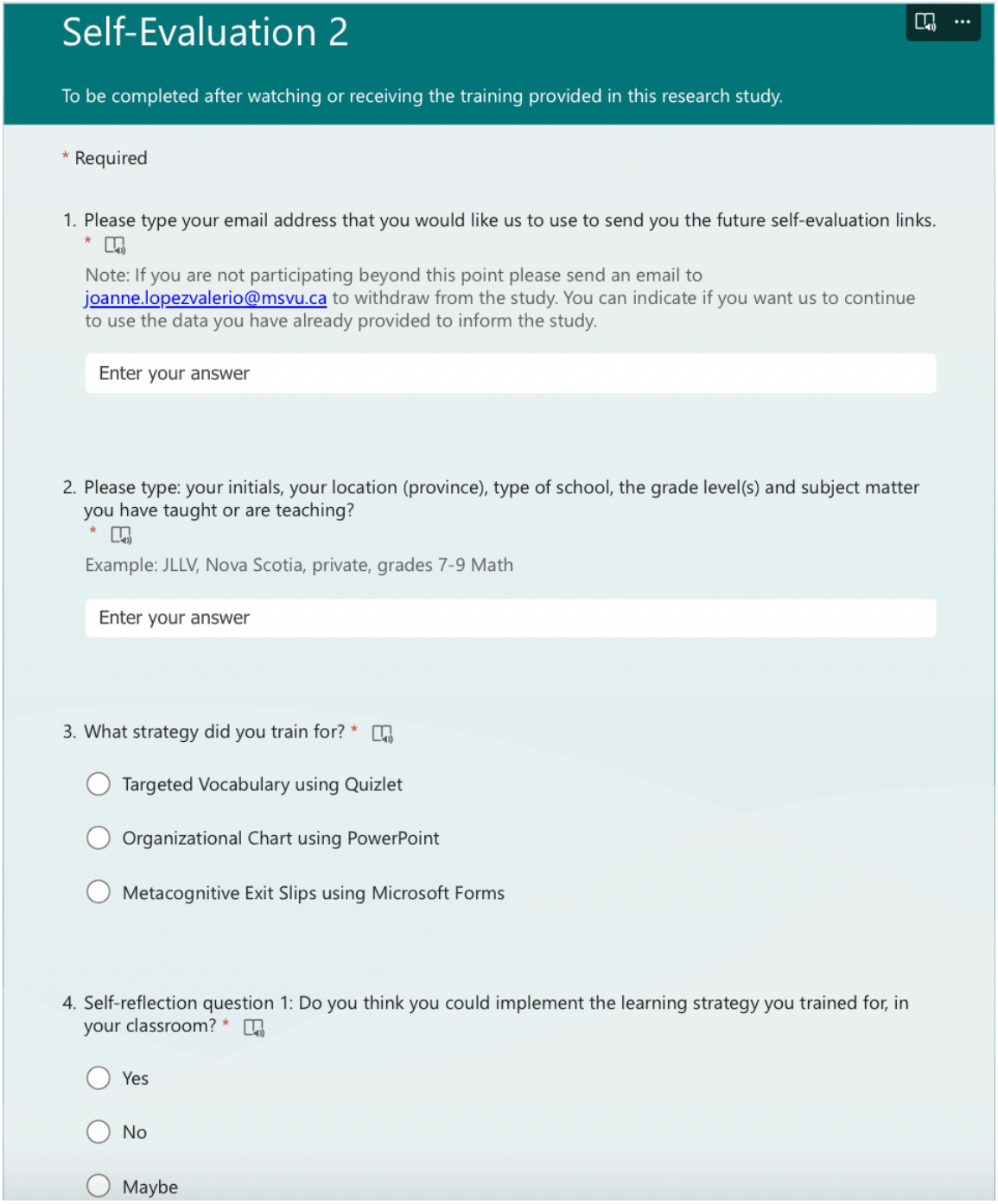
Enter your answer

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

Submit

Appendix B

Self-Evaluation 2



Self-Evaluation 2

To be completed after watching or receiving the training provided in this research study.

* Required

1. Please type your email address that you would like us to use to send you the future self-evaluation links. *

   Note: If you are not participating beyond this point please send an email to joanne.lopezvalerio@msvu.ca to withdraw from the study. You can indicate if you want us to continue to use the data you have already provided to inform the study.

   Enter your answer

2. Please type: your initials, your location (province), type of school, the grade level(s) and subject matter you have taught or are teaching? *

   Example: JLLV, Nova Scotia, private, grades 7-9 Math

   Enter your answer

3. What strategy did you train for? *

   - ◯ Targeted Vocabulary using Quizlet
   - ◯ Organizational Chart using PowerPoint
   - ◯ Metacognitive Exit Slips using Microsoft Forms

4. Self-reflection question 1: Do you think you could implement the learning strategy you trained for, in your classroom? *

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No
   - ◯ Maybe

5. Self-reflection Question 2: How frequently do you think you could implement the learning strategy you trained for, during one instructional unit or teaching topic? *

- ◯ Daily
- ◯ Weekly
- ◯ Bi-weekly
- ◯ Unsure
- ◯ Never

6. Self-Reflection Question 3: What do you think would help or prevent you from implementing the learning strategy you trained for in your classroom? *

Note: You can explain both, what would help and what would keep you from implementing the strategy, or you can choose to just write about one. Also consider things outside of your control (i.e. assemblies, fire-drills, union regulations, etc.).

Enter your answer

7. Self-Reflection Question 4: How do you think using the learning strategy you trained for might affect your daily stress level? *

Note: If you don't think it would affect your stress level please write that.

Enter your answer

8. Self-Reflection Question 5: Feel free to share more thoughts about your participation or expectations of this self-reflection journey.

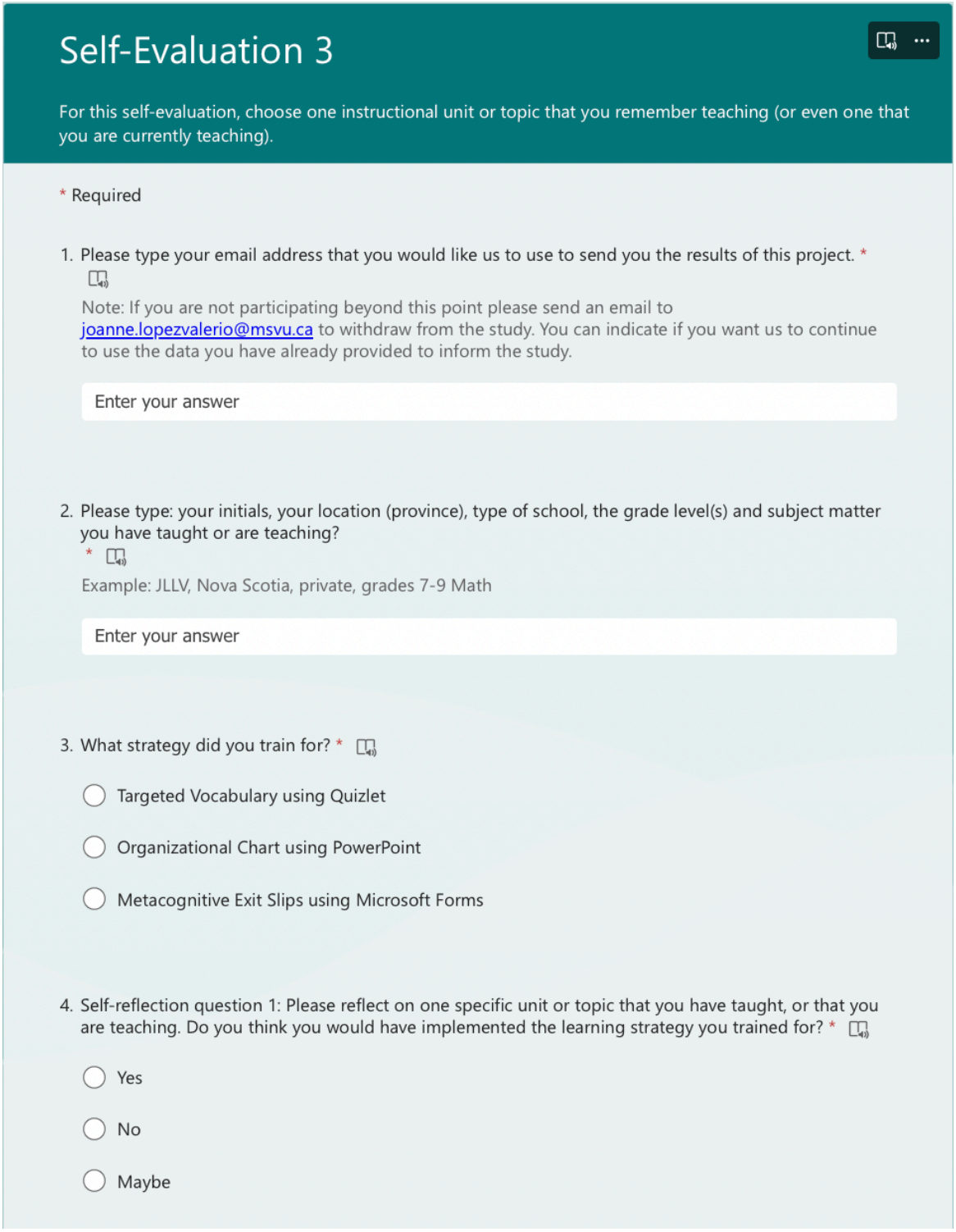
Enter your answer

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

Submit

Appendix C

Self-Evaluation 3



Self-Evaluation 3

For this self-evaluation, choose one instructional unit or topic that you remember teaching (or even one that you are currently teaching).

* Required

1. Please type your email address that you would like us to use to send you the results of this project. *

   Note: If you are not participating beyond this point please send an email to joanne.lopezvalerio@msvu.ca to withdraw from the study. You can indicate if you want us to continue to use the data you have already provided to inform the study.

   Enter your answer

2. Please type: your initials, your location (province), type of school, the grade level(s) and subject matter you have taught or are teaching? *

   Example: JLLV, Nova Scotia, private, grades 7-9 Math

   Enter your answer

3. What strategy did you train for? *

   - ◯ Targeted Vocabulary using Quizlet
   - ◯ Organizational Chart using PowerPoint
   - ◯ Metacognitive Exit Slips using Microsoft Forms

4. Self-reflection question 1: Please reflect on one specific unit or topic that you have taught, or that you are teaching. Do you think you would have implemented the learning strategy you trained for? *

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No
   - ◯ Maybe

5. Self-reflection Question 2: Reflecting on the same unit or topic you thought about in the previous question, how frequently do you think you would have implemented the learning strategy you trained for? *

- ◯ Daily
- ◯ Weekly
- ◯ Bi-weekly
- ◯ Unsure
- ◯ Never

6. Self-Reflection Question 3: What do you think would have helped or prevented you from implementing the learning strategy you trained for in your classroom during that unit or topic? *

Note: You can explain both, what would help and what would keep you from implementing the strategy, or you can choose to just write about one. Also consider things outside of your control (i.e. assemblies, fire-drills, union regulations, etc.).

Enter your answer

7. Self-Reflection Question 4: How do you think using the learning strategy you trained for would have affect your daily stress level during that unit or topic? *

Note: If you don't think it would not have affected your stress level please write that.

Enter your answer

8. Self-Reflection Question 5: Feel free to share more thoughts about your participation or expectations of this self-reflection journey.

Enter your answer

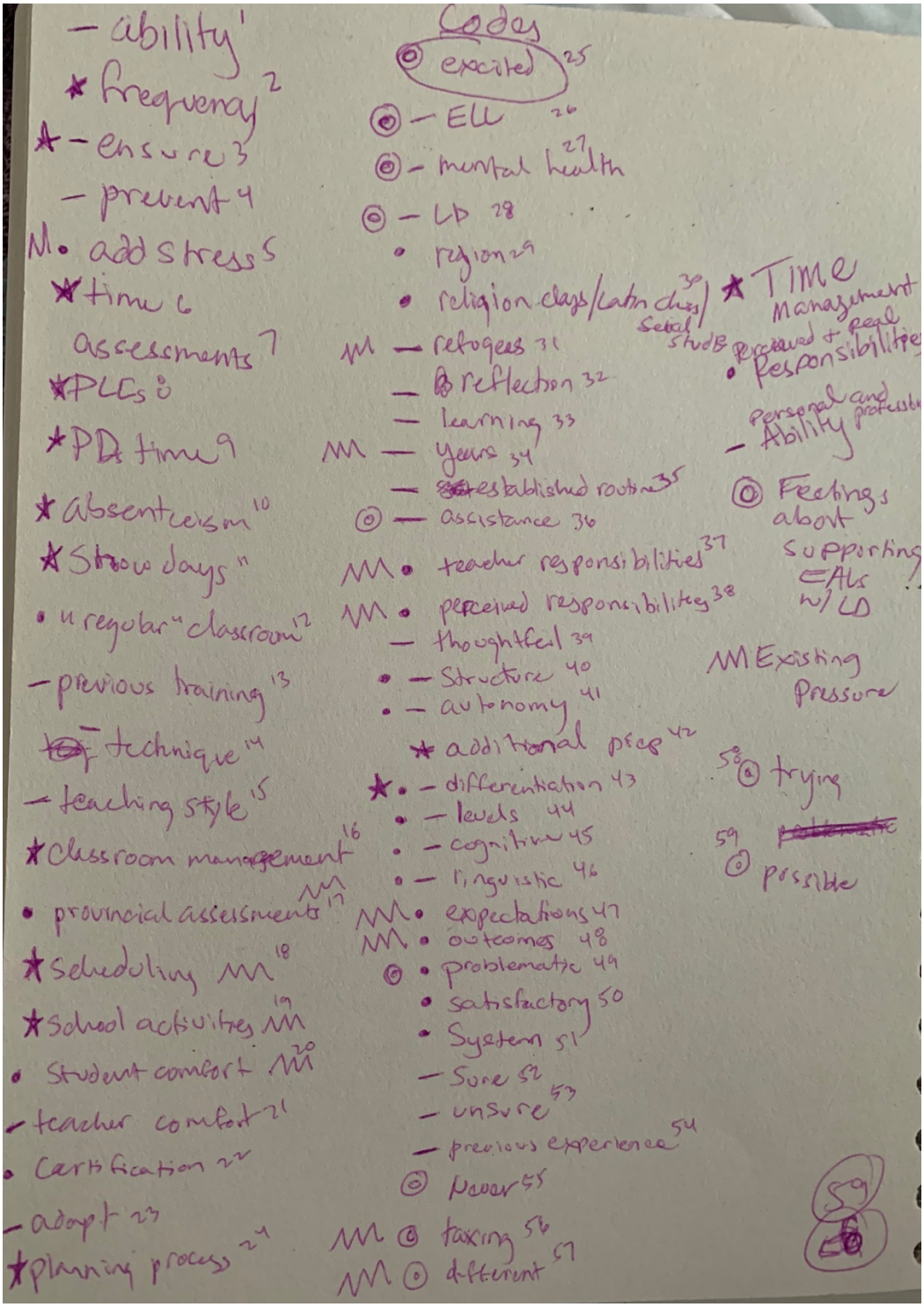
You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

Submit

Appendix D

Coding

Coding as it evolved by hand:



Coding as it evolved digitally:

– ability [1]	– teacher comfort [21]	•– autonomy [41]
* frequency [2]	• certification [22]	* additional prep [42]
* -ensure [3]	– adapt [23]	*•– differentiation [43]
– prevent [4]	*planning process [24]	•– levels [44]
•MM add stress [5]	@ excited [25] (see Appendix F)	•– cognitive [45]
* time [6]	@– ELL [26]	•– linguistic [46]
*•MM assessments [7]	@– mental health [27]	MM• expectations [47]
*PLCs [8]	@– LD [28]	MM• outcomes [48]
* PD time [9]	• region [29]	@• problematic [49]
*MM absenteeism [10]	• religion/Latin/SS [30]	• satisfactory [50]
* snow days [11]	MM - refugees [31]	• system [51]
•MM "regular" classroom" [12]	– reflection [32]	– sure [52]
– previous training [13]	– learning [33]	– unsure [53]
– technique [14]	MM– years [34]	– previous experience [54]
–@ teaching style [15]	– established routine [35]	@ Never [55]
*•MM classroom manag. [16]	@- assistance [36]	MM@ taxing [56]
•MM provincial assess. [17]	MM• teacher responsibilities [37]	MM@ different [57]
*MM scheduling [18]	MM• perceived respon. [38]	@ trying [58]
*MM School activities [19]	– thoughtful [39]	@ possible [59]
•MM Student comfort [20]	•– Structure [40]	

* Time Management • Perceived vs Real Responsibilities MM Existing pressure
– Personal and professional Ability @ Feelings about supporting EALs with LD

Appendix E

Phase 5: Refining, Defining, and Naming Themes (Braun & Clarke, n.d.a)

Initial	In Progress	Thesis Draft 1
1. Time 2. Ability 3. Teacher Centered 4. Student Centered	1. Time Management 2. Perceived vs Real Responsibilities 3. Existing pressure 4. Personal and professional Ability 5. Feelings about supporting EALs with LD	1. The Problem of Not Enough Time 2. Freedoms and Expectations within Teaching (see Appendix F) 3. Personal and Professional Capabilities 4. Beliefs Regarding the Role of General Education Teachers in Supporting EALs with LD

Appendix F

Writing Up: Tracking Changes Between the First Draft and the Final Draft

Through the editing process, code 25 "excited" in Appendix D was changed to "excitement" as it better communicated the meaning of the code and replaced the verbiage on page 47. This edit, while it did not affect the coding or theme analysis did create a clearer understanding for the reader which is part of the purpose of the recursive practice of the Writing Up section on page 48.

The other edit of consequence was the shift from the theme name “Freedoms and Expectations within Teaching” to “Freedom and Expectations withing teaching.” This change was also completed for clarity for the reader as freedoms can be associated with liberties as in human rights and constitutional rights. However, the researcher wished to convey freedom as in flexibility or autonomy.

The final edit related to the story-telling aspect of data sharing. Through the final review it was brought to the researcher’s attention that some of the story was missing connecting the research questions to the themes with more clarity. Through this final edit the section entitled “Completing the Story” was created along with Figure 3 (p.55) and Table 2 (p. 56).