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Mission

WAESOL Educator is the biannual, professional, peer-reviewed, online journal of the Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL) organization. *WAESOL Educator* publishes articles concerning the teaching of language in elementary and secondary education, higher education, adult education, and bilingual education, as well as teacher preparation for pre-service and in-service teachers.

The two main goals of *WAESOL Educator* are

- to share information related to language teaching practices, materials, research, and professional development opportunities;
- to support and mentor potential authors who teach, conduct research, administer programs, and/or study in classrooms with multilingual learners.

All manuscripts receive a double-blind review.

With thanks to our Peer Reviewers

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Letter from the President

Dear WAESOL Community,

Happy summer! I hope you are finding time to rest, recharge, and reflect. I'm excited to welcome you to the summer issue of WAESOL Educator. Whether you're enjoying a well-earned break or teaching summer classes, please know how much we appreciate the incredible work you do to support English learners across Washington state and from places far and wide.

As your 2025 WAESOL Board President, I want to take a moment to talk about the important changes happening in education—at both the state and federal levels—and what they mean for our students, teachers, and communities.

There are some major shifts in government right now that affect how we teach English learners—from kindergarten through adult education. At the federal level, funding for programs that support English learners, like Title III, is uncertain. There are discussions about cutting budgets and moving responsibilities to different departments. This could result in fewer resources for classrooms, less support for adult education, and reduced training opportunities for teachers. We're especially concerned about how these changes might impact adult learners working to improve their English to gain better jobs or support their families.

Following the guidance of TESOL International, WAESOL is expanding our advocacy efforts. Advocacy is a powerful tool for creating meaningful changes in educational policy. As WAESOL members, you can influence policies that affect English learners by engaging with lawmakers, participating in public forums, and sharing your expertise with decision-makers. Whether it's advocating for increased funding for EL programs, pushing for stronger protections at the federal level, or speaking out about the unique needs of English learners in your community, your voice matters. By staying informed, joining WAESOL's advocacy initiatives, and connecting with fellow educators, you can help shape policies that prioritize the success of all students. Your participation in advocacy efforts can drive positive changes and make a lasting impact on the future of education in Washington and beyond.

As we look ahead, one thing remains clear: your work matters. Whether you're supporting newcomers in elementary school or helping adults achieve their goals through English classes, you are changing lives. Most importantly, WAESOL is here to support you.

Even though it's summer, WAESOL is busy! We're deep into planning our annual WAESOL Conference, which will take place November 8, at Renton Technical College. This event brings together educators from across the state and beyond to share ideas, attend workshops, and learn about the latest strategies in English language teaching. We're excited to offer sessions for both K–12 and adult education professionals, so there's something for everyone.

We also encourage you to check out WAESOL's webinars (WAESOL Online), workshops, and leadership opportunities happening throughout the year. These events are a great way to grow professionally, stay connected with fellow educators, and get inspired for the year ahead.

Thank you for being part of this incredible community. I hope to see you at the conference in November—and until then, have a wonderful and restful summer.

Warm regards,

Kelli Dahmen,

2025 WAESOL Board President

Letter from the Editor

Dearest Readers,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Summer 2025 issue of WAESOL Educator, Volume 50, Issue 2. As we continue to celebrate the 50th volume of this publication, I'm struck by the richness of insight, innovation, and reflection that our contributors bring to the field of English language teaching and learning.

This issue highlights timely conversations and enduring commitments. Chi Chang's lead article, "Voice to Diverse Gender and Sexual Identities Through Gendered Literacy," invites us to rethink classroom norms and create more inclusive, affirming spaces for transnational LGBTQ+ students. In "Strategies for Building Connection with Students in Online ESL Classrooms," Qiqi Cheng offers a practical framework for relationship-building in virtual settings, an ongoing need in our evolving teaching contexts.

Technology also plays a prominent role in this issue. Jennifer Altman's piece, "Perceptions and Influences: ChatGPT in Secondary English Instruction," explores how AI tools are shifting pedagogical choices and student engagement in high school classrooms. Bertelmann, Simmons, Ellis, and Coleman further this conversation in their study of ELL students' attitudes toward AI integration, surfacing both curiosity and concern. Similarly, Secil Horosan Dogan's research provides additional perspective on how multilingual learners experience the intersection of education and emerging technologies.

Other articles focus on human connection and professional growth. Mitchell Stanberry's project-based financial literacy curriculum empowers newcomer students through culturally responsive, real-world learning. Jaimie Bin Li's "Supporting Our Teacher Colleagues Through Structured Collaboration" reflects on the power of peer relationships and shared practice, reminding us that teacher learning, like student learning, thrives in community.

In addition to these thoughtful contributions, this issue includes updates on WAESOL's professional development offerings and grant-funded projects, spotlighting innovative work taking place across our region.

I'm grateful to our authors, reviewers, and the editorial team for making this issue possible. Whether you're reading these pages at a conference table or on a quiet summer morning, I hope they offer you inspiration, insight, and encouragement in your own work with multilingual learners. We look forward to seeing many of you at the WAESOL Conference in November and we welcome your future submissions, reflections, and ideas.

With appreciation,

Grace Inae Blum, Ph.D.

Editor, WAESOL Educator

Land Acknowledgment

Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL) recognizes and honors our many diverse Indigenous and Native Peoples in the Pacific Northwest, in the United States, and globally- past, present, and future. We acknowledge that the arrival of the English language impacted the traditional languages and cultures of the Native, Indigenous, and First Nations Peoples and we celebrate the work to reclaim or maintain their languages and cultures. We stand in solidarity with the Native, Indigenous, and First Nations Peoples and respect their sovereignty, cultural heritage, and lives. May we all take a moment to honor the Indigenous tribes and Indigenous lands that we reside on and pay our deepest respects.

Voice to Diverse Gender and Sexual Identities Through Gendered Literacy

Chi Chang

Summary: This article examines the difficulties faced by individuals with diverse sexual and gender identities and suggests ways in which teachers, educators, and practitioners can create inclusive and informed classrooms in which individuals historically marginalized based on race, gender, and/or culture can thrive. This article examines best practices for gendered literacy pedagogy and their implications.

Keywords: gender identities, gendered literacy pedagogy, LGBTQ+, sexual identities, transnational students

Introduction

Transnational LGBTQ+ students (TLGBTQ+Ss)—who demand constant negotiations with language and resources between the origin and the settlement countries—want TESOL-related educators to consider their often-undervalued community and create opportunities to decrease homophobia, xenophobia, and heteronormativity in school settings (Nelson, 2010). This view validates TLGBTQ+Ss while highlighting the problem of gender inequalities and discrimination. Gender identity is closely connected with the interplay between language, semiotic resources, and capital, which may liberate individuals from gender-based exclusion and benefit scholars of applied linguistics and TESOL (Dovchin et al., 2016). This article invites conversations on gender-related issues that have rendered LGBTQ+ discourses invisible in the classroom (Nelson, 2010) and therefore, require extensive academic attention to promote inclusivity and diversity.

With the global increase in transnational education, as illustrated in writing as a social activity, attempts have been made to reinvent ideas and linguistic expressions (Dovchin et al., 2016) and reformulate the gender binary model (GBM) and heteronormative discourses to make space for equity and diversity. However, participating in gender themes in the classroom remains limited for transnational LGBTQ+Ss (Tran-Thanh, 2020), which may lead to members of heterosexual groups maintaining their ignorance and exclusionary attitudes toward LGBTQ+ communities unintentionally, resulting in gender-based deprivation and the reinforcement of gender norms (e.g., girls wear pink and boys wear blue) against LGBTQ+ communities (e.g., drag queens) based on GBM. This article highlights the importance of gendered literacy—the development of awareness and skill in socially constructed gendered narratives and performances and the need to consider students' positionalities and articulate the hidden identities—and explains the implications of classroom educators situating people who identify as TLGBTQ+Ss in the context of power, agency, and legitimacy. It calls for de-pathologizing gendered literacy and advocating for inclusivity and diversity through classroom practices.

Gender Identity Across Borders

Identity is negotiated and reconstructed through language, whereas gender is a social practice that involves negotiating identity through daily practices (Dovchin et al., 2016; Nelson, 2010). The GBM places students in specific societal and linguistic boxes— either boy or girl, male or female, and he or she. Heteronormativity remains dominant in the TESOL field, even in transnational education (Tran-Thanh, 2020). As globalization propels individuals into increasingly hyper-diverse settings, more students from [trans]lingual, [trans]cultural, and [trans]national backgrounds are coming together to highlight the interwoven identities that may create inclusive and equitable teaching practices (Nelson, 2010). Under these circumstances, the heteronormative discourses greatly hinder teachers, educators, and practitioners who intend to incorporate diversity and inclusion in curriculum and instruction (Paiz, 2020). For instance, the teacher can reframe expressing queer identities as "linguistic failure" (Moore, 2016, p. 89). Moreover, LGBTQ+ individuals are portrayed as violating social expectations (e.g., nuclear family) (Nelson, 2010; Paiz, 2020). Thus, how do educators balance social norms and de-pathologize undervalued discourses in the classroom to recognize the needs of LGBTQ+ students?

Discussion Questions: Pedagogical Consideration

Discussing the following questions may help educators understand, implement, and consider inclusion and diversity pedagogical practices within classroom contexts.

Transnational students who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community are often rendered invisible and marginalized by societal expectations (Nelson, 2010). To promote further equity and diversity within academic settings, ways to include, acknowledge, and appreciate these students in the classroom must be explored. The questions listed below are intended to provoke continued reflection into what practices may best serve the interests of diverse students and create a more supportive and communal environment for them:

- How may the LGBTQ+ community be represented in curricula and learning materials?
- If you include unwelcome gendered context in your teaching, will students consider such inclusion sufficient for their lives and needs? Do they want more of these controversial topics?
- How do you resist making assumptions about students' identities? How do you create an inclusive and diverse learning environment for invisible voices?
- How can you create spaces for gender-diverse students to explore LGBTQ+ themes through tips/clues about gender-diverse themes?

How can you encourage students to move beyond seeing differences and toward participating in larger collectivities in different contexts?

Gendered Literacy Pedagogy and Implications

The following section presents four steps to be implemented in the classroom as social and cultural practices (this can be adapted to the local context as needed) to promote equity, inclusion, and recognition of diverse voices.

1. Demystify normative discourses on gendered constraints to acknowledge diverse gender and sexual identities. This process involves the examination of stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against LGBTQ+ identities. For example, students and educators may keep journals identifying implicit biases associated with gender and sexuality. This practice shows that unconsciousness or systemic effects reinforce heteronormative discourses in one's daily practice while raising the awareness of such implicit biases.
2. Engage students (e.g., When I Was Growing Up by Nellie Wong and Eyes that Speak to the Stars and Eyes That Kiss in the Corners by Joanna Ho) with various transcultural backgrounds and translingual nuances in exploring gendered differences as their subjectivity toward gender issues and diverse gender identities varies (Nelson, 2010). This may lead to cultural conflicts due to differences in students' beliefs and values; however, such tensions can be alleviated through social negotiations and engagement, promoting diversity and inclusivity. This step is intended to help students detach from the heteronormative discourses toward the acceptance of diverse gender and sexual identities. For instance, students' clothing is a critical resource for exploring how sartorial choices relate to literacy practices between the intercultural perspective (the understanding and respect of more than one culture) and the transcultural perspective (the interplay of multiple modes of belonging and participation across different boundaries and cultures) to examine globalization and border crossing more critically. Equally important, as Dovchin et al. (2016) state, it may be used to uncover insights into how languages and cultures (re)construct understandings of [gendered differences] by integrating linguistic modes, genres, and styles.
3. Add related (sub)topics for discussion for K-12 (e.g., color or hairstyles, preferred name or nickname, choices of toys, games, and sports) and college level (e.g., domestic or transnational violence, sexual harassment in and out of school, and gendered inequalities in the digital context) and avoid the predetermined and decontextualized curriculum. Educators may introduce relevant topics centered on gender diversity while collecting feedback from their students and other educators. This must be approached cautiously, and educators may identify teachable moments to involve students in selecting locally relevant class content to meet their needs and interests (Moore, 2016). Not only does this denaturalize students from accepting certain cultural expectations as norms, but it also unsilences the gendered identities and arouses their related experiences. For instance, gendered inequalities [in the digital context] remain pervasive, where women are characterized as caregivers and homemakers (Kocaman & Ali Fuad, 2021). Educators can take this moment to include other gender identities, such as gender non-conforming individuals, and create the means and opportunities to decenter conservative thoughts and promote gendered literacy through geosocial contexts toward a broad social practice.

Employ personal storytelling activities, free writing, and interactive sharing to analyze students' experiences in larger social, cultural, and linguistic contexts. This final step should give center stage to the students and encourage them to take a dialogic stance — involving student-driven discussion—to promote collaborative and reciprocal learning. Integrating students' experiences may benefit their gender identities and gendered literacy practices. For instance, storytelling can unfold ideas about personal connections and promote engaging with peers to interpret multiple identities. Here, educators are facilitators to raise awareness of how individuals are considered differently based on their perceived gender and point out those excluded from heteronormative materials and discourses. Problematizing the non-existent in the materials and subverting the taboo associated with homosexuality will empower students to dispel ignorance and call out discrimination against gender and sexual minorities, contributing to the fact that most institutions are still heteronormative, neglecting LGBTQ+ individuals and their experiences (Kocaman

& Ali Fuad, 2021). Hence, when educators employ personal storytelling activities, free writing, and interactive sharing, it can foster collective sentiments of positivity, sympathy, and love to achieve social and public changes.

Teaching Practices

As of September 2023, I have been teaching an English composition class to undergraduate students, the majority of whom are multilingual. The act of composition involves not only writing and reading but also the ability to synchronize and convey one's position at the intersection of language, race, and gender—This class is mandatory for all major students. In it, I put gendered literacy at the center of the curriculum, coupled with identity in motion and practice against the norm of Standard English and predetermined identities, further illuminating the interwoven social power relations across linguistic repertoires.

The composition project is introduced over four weeks by advancing gendered topics in the classroom. While drafting my lesson plans, I constantly ask myself how to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of differences that are the norms. Thus, I assign the movie Everything Everywhere All at Once as part of their coursework, partially because it represents intersectional identities in a multiverse world—where one might explore parallel universes—and partially because of its critique of racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and monolingualism (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022). Analyzing the movie requires the students to engage with multimodal writing that allows marginalized communities (Dovchin et al., 2016) to dismantle gender identity constraints and promote diversity.

Through the four-week unit, learners are led implicitly and explicitly to consider their assumptions through the lens of implicit bias to understand gendered literacy and the importance of equity and diversity.

a. In the first week, I ask What is writing? How does writing affect who you are? Is there good and bad writing? How do you differentiate between genres? How do these questions (dis)connect with your identity? To answer these questions, students write freely, participate in group discussions, and share their thoughts with the class. During this step, I do not tell them directly how gender affects their perception of certain things. In doing so, questions related to gender and language identities arise naturally from discussions and questioning through writing.

b. The following week, I integrate the film into the curriculum by situating its characters' life experiences or moments regarding language, race, and gender (e.g., microaggressions, model minority, generation gaps) and further eliciting students' relevant personal experiences. I read aloud short articles (e.g., Mother Tongue by Amy Tan and 10,000 Dresses by Marcus Ewert) that examine (dis)connection to prompt their critical thinking and creativity. Subsequently, I gradually begin to problematize binary perspectives by explaining how oppressive discourses cast a shadow on the cultural, social, and linguistic understanding of marginalized groups of people, such as BIPOC and the LGBTQ+ community. One student's response was particularly impressive during the discussion: "Everyone lives differently through their interactions and prioritizations. Similar to language, ways of living sync up within cultures, giving many the misconception that some ways of living are not conceivable." Thus, the critical analysis of the film contributes to the learner's insight that one's identity is never static. Instead, the learner understands that identity is always moving, dynamic, and evolving in the face of social transformations, reflected in gendered literacy practices.

c. In the subsequent week, I ask students to foreground the social conflicts (e.g., homophobia, xenophobia) depicted in the film while synthesizing the meanings produced in the in-class readings with personal experiences through discussion and writing. The students can examine profound social issues more critically while calling into question the stereotypical and biased ideologies of their lives to steer them further away from hegemonic concepts and uphold underappreciated discourses. The intention is to explore neglected communities and question our social and cultural taboos (Nelson, 2010), promoting the awareness of hetero/homonormative discourses.

d. At the end of this project, the students turn in a reflection paper. This gendered literacy practice gives them a new space to analyze, comprehend, and reconstruct what they have learned or use their prior knowledge, including self-narrative, to reflect on explicit or implicit discourses. This teaching practice unpacks complex and silenced identities, as three of the students' reflections show (see Figure 1); despite the intensive writing practices, gendered literacy practices must be continued.

Thanks to the growing popularity of the internet, I, and many other young people, were able to educate ourselves on LGBTQ+ issues and discover things about ourselves that would have otherwise been first suppressed through offhand comments like "Boys can't wear dresses!" and then secondly internalized and repressed by ourselves (First Student, 2023).

Between in-class instruction and out-of-class drafting, I have become more in touch with who I am, forming connections I did not know existed. I have also realized that crafting these self-relevant texts made me understand those who made me who I am today. Because while I am me, the natural world that provokes my thoughts, the people I share meals with, and the people who fuel my passions are also me, and I'd be foolish not to credit them. Writing a personally valuable piece would not have been easy without reading others' stories. Learning about others' cultures, including silenced LGBTQ+, has been deeply insightful and informative. I am always a little drawn away from instruction that involves culture because I never seemed to have it. This project, however, has changed my mind. Instead of viewing my old life as lifeless and boring, I like to think of it as preparation and a site of discovery: The perfect amount of identity-building and assistance that set me up to have a meaningful cultural understanding and growth toward fulfillment (Second Student, 2023).

Joy (the main character in the film) connects to my personal life as she is a young adult trying to freely express herself and be her persona through her hidden identities. I am not a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and I can't personally relate to the struggles she faces in her life, yet it expands my understanding and sympathy for such marginalized communities as her suffering. However, I am a first-generation Mexican American and can relate to the struggles of feeling like I don't belong and having to live up to societal and cultural expectations to be a perfect girl. Growing up, I always felt like I wasn't meeting my parent's expectations of being the perfect daughter. I was considered the more rebellious child out of my sister and me, making me feel like I wasn't good enough. Similar to Joy, I felt like it would be better if I weren't in their lives, but over time, I have accepted that it's not true and that those were expectations I unconsciously built upon myself (Third Student, 2023).

Figure 1. Students' Reflections

Gendered literacy cultivates a space where TLGBTQ+Ss and heterosexual groups can see different perspectives within the classroom. This practice enlarges the voice of LGBTQ+ individuals while promoting the mental, emotional, and social growth and connection between groups in the transnational and transcultural world.

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Strategies for Building Connection with Students in Online ESL Classrooms

Qiqi Cheng

Summary: This article illustrated the importance and benefits of building virtual connection between teachers and students in online classrooms. The idea "The Four Connections" was introduced in the article: 1) Interact with Students by Name, 2) Check-In Regularly, 3) Schedule One-on-One Meetings, 4) Practice Paradox. Detailed examples of how to utilize "The Four Connections" in the online ESL classrooms in Higher Education are provided.

Keywords: virtual connection, online classrooms, ESL, Higher Education

Introduction

After the Pandemic, the demand for online and hybrid courses is rising in Higher Education in the United States, as contrasted to the stagnant overall enrollment numbers in traditional courses (Garrett et al., 2023). However, low retention rates come with the rising demand for online courses. Historically, the failing retention rate in online courses is 10% to 20% higher than traditional courses (Bawa, 2016). Researchers discovered the five common themes leading to low retention rates and one of the themes included faculty-student relationships. Five common themes for retention solutions were also found by the researchers and one of the themes addressed the benefits of faculty-student interaction brings to student success (Seery et al., 2021).

Working as an ESL instructor at Spokane Community College, I switched from in-person classes to online classes last year. I love the experience; however, I noticed the challenge of building connections with my ESL students since there were a lot of factors lacking in the online classes, such as physical presence, nonverbal cues, social presence, feedback mechanisms, spontaneous interaction, to name a few. Therefore, I started to search for effective strategies to nurture virtual connection within online classrooms.

The idea of "The Four Connections" is a research-based equity producing framework which I adapted and used in my ESL online class. "The Four Connections" was created for the Drop Rate Improvement Program at Odessa College.

Odessa College discovered that teachers who had lower drop rates possessed "a common thread of connectivity with their students." (Kistner, 2011). Four foundational principles were identified from this common thread:

- Interact with Students by Name
- Check-In Regularly
- Schedule One-on-One Meetings
- Practice Paradox

I adapted these strategies with the guidance from Lake Washington Institute Of Technology (LWTech) since LWTech offers specific approaches to implement "4 Connections" in all modalities. And I eventually tried these out in my own online ESL classes.

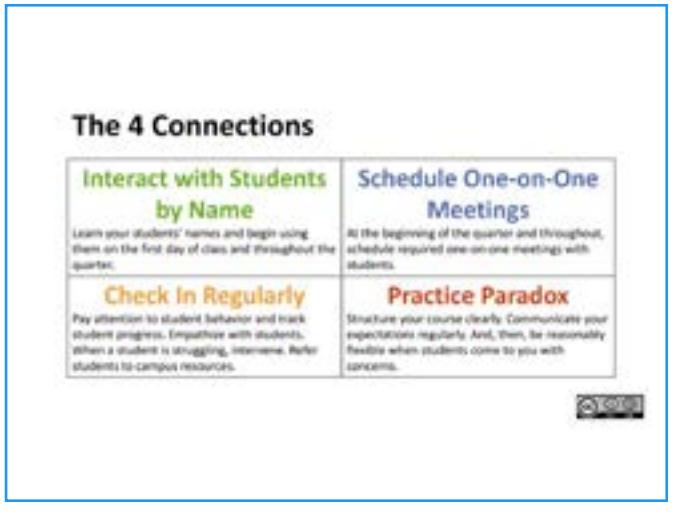

Photo credit: "The 4 Connections" by Lake Washington Institute of Technology is licensed under CC BY 4.0)

The introduction and usage of "The Four Connections"

The First Connection: Interact with Students by Name

The First Connection might sound simple, however, applying it in the online classroom is different compared to the traditional classroom. I incorporated the first connection into

mainly three platforms: Canvas, Zoom, and WhatsApp.

Canvas:

Various Learning Management Systems (LMS) are widely used in Higher Education, and "Canvas" is one of them. In my class, I encouraged students to add a short personal description as a bio on their Canvas profiles and referred students to the people area as part of their assignment so we could learn and review each other's names and bio. LMS like Canvas offers interactive features (e.g., leave individualized comments, provide personalized feedback with media) which gave me chances to use students' names in it. Besides, including students' names in comments or feedback by using different media (e.g., video, audio) created a more personal connection between us since students could hear my voice, see my face, and feel my tone.

Zoom:

Zoom is possibly the world's most popular online video meeting platform. This tool is also widely used for remote learning. In my class, students were encouraged to include their names as a part of the Zoom profile when participating in Zoom. Some of the students didn't feel comfortable turning on their cameras because of various reasons, therefore, I encouraged them to include a selfie as a portrait photo in Zoom (or any photo they feel comfortable sharing) since it's helpful for name and face familiarization within the online class. Just like Canvas, Zoom offers plenty of features. For example, greeting each student by name at the beginning of the online class by using the Waiting Room (since admitting students one by one into the main session can be helpful for a more personalized greeting and interaction between the instructor and the student compared to dealing with a large influx of students all at once with less chances to demonstrate attentiveness and establish personal connections); pairing students up and guiding them to learn each other's names by using the Breakout Room; or including students' names while interacting with them by using the Chat Box. These are great interactive features teachers can use to connect and support students in Zoom.

WhatsApp:

Social media platforms (e.g., X, YouTube) are getting popular nowadays since they have brought substantial benefits to society, such as facilitating connectivity, information sharing, community building, and real-time interaction. Therefore, I used social media platforms for connection-building in my online class. For example, WhatsApp was one of the tools I used for instant communication since it helped me improve immediacy, and eventually form a closer relationship in my online classroom by providing prompt responses, personalization, instant feedback, etc.

The Second Connection: Check-In Regularly

Checking in regularly and monitoring students' progress are essential for building up closer relationships with students in the online classroom. LWTech introduced various specific strategies to implement The Second Connection. Here are some connected strategies below I adopted to help support my students in my online class.

Formative Assessment:

One way to check in regularly is using formative assessment because it's extremely helpful since it could be used to monitor students' learning and provide ongoing feedback. There are substantial types of formative assessments which can be used in the online classroom. For example, I used game-based learning platforms (e.g., Kahoot, Quizizz) to give quizzes, and digital surveys (especially the one which was translated into students' first language) to collect feedback.

Class Meeting Greeting:

Greeting each student by saying their names and sentences like, "How are you doing?", "Nice to meet you today," or "Thank you for posting your video on Canvas (LMS)" as they joined the online classroom meeting was useful to not only check-in but also share a strong sense of caring and affirmation with them.

Available Resources:

Each school usually has various resources to support distance learning. Therefore, being able to know what resources your school offers in advance and connect students in need with the available resources is crucial for teachers to possess since students might reach out to you for help when they are either excelling or struggling. One of the things I did for my students in the online classroom was to collect all the available resources both inside and outside school and turn these resources into a webpage which my students have access to all the time.

The Third Connection: Schedule One-on-One Meetings

At first, I was confused by how similar The Second Connection and The Third Connection sounded. Fortunately, LWTech differentiated these two connections. LWTech defined One-on-One Meeting is "*scheduled with a specific topic or guiding question/agenda*", on the other hand, Checking-In Regularly "*happens more organically and consistently as you interact with students, and it is enhanced by the use of regular assessment and feedback*". Specific guidance is offered by LWTech on how to implement The Third Connection into online classrooms. Here are the main points of The Third Connection I learned and adapted. And I found the following approaches helpful for me to connect with my students.

When did I schedule One-on-One meetings?

LWTech illustrated that a brief One-on-One meeting should be scheduled at the beginning of the quarter and throughout the quarter. However, it's hard to meet this expectation in reality since meeting all students is time-consuming, particularly in a large class. Therefore, I ensured myself to meet each student at least twice every quarter. The initial meeting allowed me to get to know each student in a personal level and understand their individual goals and aspirations. The follow-up meeting served as a checkpoint to monitor each student's progress and enabled me to tailor my teaching approaches accordingly.

Where did One-on-One meetings take place?

In the online classroom setting, teachers can use various media (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet) to schedule a One-on-One meeting. I mainly used Zoom to schedule a One-on-One meeting with my students during my online office hours since office hours make space for such positive student-faculty interactions (Smith et al., 2017).

How to conduct a One-on-One meeting?

LWTech illustrated three guidelines which can help teachers plan and implement the One-on-One meeting. I followed and found these guidelines helpful for my students. First, the instructor should give students undivided attention as an individual. Second, the meeting should never be punitive. Third, an efficient meeting should be as brief as 10 minutes or less with a clear focus. Having efficient one-on-one meetings can achieved in various ways, such as setting clear objectives for the meeting (so both teachers and students can stay focused and use time effectively), preparing an agenda (so teachers can guide the conversation without getting off track and students can come prepared with topics they want to discuss), and collecting feedback from students (so teachers can assess how effective the meeting is).

What are the topics of a One-on-One meeting?

One-on-One meetings allow teachers to discuss different topics that are much more difficult to cover in large groups so students can better receive individualized feedback and support from teachers. LWTech listed various topics which can be discussed during the One-on-One meetings, such as Q&A section, post-exam review, project progress, personal challenges, and so on.

The Fourth Connection: Practice Paradox

The Fourth Connection emphasizes maintaining a balance between structure and flexibility; therefore, it can be challenging for us. There are substantial teaching approaches instructors can adapt to achieve The Fourth Connection. In my online class, I chose Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an approach to structure my course and convey the content clearly. Universal Design (UD) is a concept that originated in architecture and focuses on designing a building that, in the best way possible, any individual, in any condition, can utilize. UDL takes the same principles of UD and applies them to learning. Here are two examples of me applying UDL principles in my online class to achieve The Fourth Connection.

Applying UDL principles to convey content clearly:

While teaching content in online classrooms, I tried to use various teaching strategies to cater to different learning styles (e.g., verbal learners, visual learners, and auditory learners). I recorded a video of me teaching English vocabulary in my online class. In this video, I taught vocabulary by incorporating multimedia resources (e.g., videos, pictures, audio, markers for PowerPoint, and online texts). By appealing to different senses and learning styles, the learning process was more engaging, accessible, and authentic, therefore, the content was conveyed clearly.

Applying UDL principles to communicate my expectations clearly:

Another approach I used was transforming my course syllabus into something that my students want to look into and engage with, as opposed to something they need to read only because instructors require them to do so. This idea is called "Liquid Syllabus" which was created by Michelle Pacansky-Brock (2023). The idea of "Liquid Syllabus" is a brief reference to UDL and it's a wonderful practice to humanize online learning and build a closer relationship with my students. Sending my liquid syllabus to my students before the first day of the class helped them understand what the class looks like, comprehend my expectations, and connect with me and the class on a personal level. I strongly encourage readers to search for more details and examples about this idea from this journal or the internet since it's difficult for me to introduce and praise the idea of "Liquid Syllabus" in just a few sentences.

Conclusion

After implementing The Four Connections in my online class, I could sense a stronger sense of connection between me and my students. However, most of the results I mentioned above were relatively subjective. Therefore, I was trying to look for at least one quantitative data to verify if the strategies I used were working. I looked at the retention rate between the ESL classes I taught at Spokane Community College during Winter quarter 2024 and Spring quarter 2024. And the retention rate in Spring quarter 2024 increased by 11% compared to Winter quarter 2024. The increased percentage suggested that the strategies I used in my class helped students be more engaged, satisfied, and committed to my online class. Thus, The Four Connections have a positive effect on building

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Empowering Newcomers through Project-Based Financial Literacy Education

Mitchell Stanberry

Summary: This article outlines how a high school math teacher uses project-based financial literacy instruction to improve math engagement and language development for multilingual learners. It highlights implementation strategies, student outcomes, and critical reflections on scalability and instructional challenges.

Keywords: multilingual learners, financial literacy, project-based learning, math mindset, language development, equitable instruction

Reframing Math Classrooms for Multilingual Learners

In today's linguistically diverse secondary classrooms, teachers face mounting pressure to design instruction that is equitable, rigorous, and culturally responsive. For newcomer students—those recently arrived in the United States with little or no English proficiency—traditional high school math pathways often fail to address both content and language development needs.

In my small rural high school in Washington State where 82% of students identify as Latino, I encountered these challenges firsthand. Many of my students were classified as Level 1 or 2 on the WIDA. Drawing on research-supported practices in project-based learning (PBL) and translanguaging, I redesigned a year-long financial literacy class to allow these students to simultaneously build content knowledge, develop mathematical mindset, and support English language acquisition. This article shares outcomes, reflections, and practical insights for other educators seeking to better serve multilingual learners (MLLs) in mathematics.

Context and Instructional Design

Why Financial Literacy?

Geometry is the first math course in our traditional sequence. However, Latin American mathematics curricula often underemphasize geometry, favoring arithmetic and algebra ([ICSU] & [IMU], 2014). As a result, MLL students faced both a language barrier and a content-area mismatch. In response, we pursued alternative placements.

We identified financial literacy as a more accessible and meaningful entry point. Topics such as budgeting, credit, investing, and job skills provided real-world relevance, cultural connection, and space for language-rich dialogue. These topics transcended traditional math content, offering students agency in connecting mathematics to their future.

How PBL Works: Methodology and Rationale

To address the academic and linguistic needs of newcomer MLLs, our school has explored various placement models. The most promising emerged from a year-long financial literacy course designed around PBL. Traditionally offered as a third-year elective, this course meets daily and follows a consistent two-week instructional cycle. During the first week, students receive direct instruction using resources from Next Generation Personal Finance (NGPF.org), which includes high-quality Spanish translations. In the second week, students engage in collaborative projects aligned to that unit's theme. These cycles yield approximately 15 projects across the year, culminating in a comprehensive final presentation.

Each unit is built using a "low floor, high ceiling" philosophy—open-ended to allow multiple access points while structured to promote academic rigor and critical thinking. The themes of the course were:

- **Students as Consumers**: Banking, online safety, investing, behavioral economics, and consumer skills
- **Understanding Interest**: Types of credit, credit management, buying a car or house, and insurance
- **College and Career Ready**: Career exploration, postsecondary planning, income, taxes, and paying for college
- **Finances in the Community**: Entrepreneurship, job readiness, mock interviews, philanthropy, and final financial presentations

This PBL model creates culturally responsive entry points that

help students see the relevance in math concepts. This was demonstrated when Raul was working on his Entrepreneurship project, where he purchased and ran a simulated local farm. When He realized the business would take nearly five years to break even, he suddenly cared about expenses, revenue, and profit margin. He quickly figured out that, based on his farm projections, there was no way he could afford the brand-new Ford Lariat 250 truck he had planned to buy during his car project. Boss and Krauss (2018) emphasize that real-world contexts foster authentic communication and accelerate both content and language development.

In the Entrepreneurship project students design and pitch a small business, developing profit projections, startup costs, and marketing plans. The flexibility in presentation format (e.g., PowerPoint, trifold, video, paper, roleplay, assessment creation, podcast, blog, or poster) supported language development while increasing autonomy and engagement, two key drivers of growth in my MLL students. Choice increased student confidence by allowing students to demonstrate knowledge in their preferred format. This year, students will take the project a step further by partnering with a local bakery owned by a school alumnus. They will run marketing campaigns for the business, competing to generate the highest real-world profit. This authentic connection bridges classroom learning with tangible outcomes, reinforcing the cornerstone philosophy of PBL: creating real-world products and fostering meaningful community engagement. A recent meta-analysis confirmed that PBL, with its emphasis on autonomy and real-world connections, yields significantly higher student interest (SMD = .713) and motivation (.401) compared to traditional instruction (Zhang & Ma, 2023).

Language Supports and Theoretical Framework

Scaffolding practices were grounded in the key findings in WIDA's Essential Actions. Instructional supports are critical for helping MLLs engage with grade-level content and succeed academically. Research shows that when a variety of scaffolds are embedded into instruction and assessment—such as visual aids, strategic grouping, and sentence frames—MLLs are more empowered to access curriculum and demonstrate understanding (Gottlieb, 2013).

I remembered reading about translanguaging and thought, *why not let them think in Spanish first?* This translanguaging pedagogy from Garcia and Li (2023) informed our classroom structure: students were encouraged to process and plan in their heritage language, then present in English. This cognitive flexibility allowed students to focus on meaning and mathematical higher level financial thinking before translating into academic English.

Supports included:

- Spanish/English vocabulary charts and sentence starters
- Peer language partners or bilingual instructional aides
- Visual rubrics and bilingual exemplars of prior projects
- Teacher feedback loops with scaffolded conferencing

These strategies were intentionally implemented to reduce cognitive load and help students access both the content and academic language simultaneously. It worked—suddenly, they were explaining compound interest to each other in both languages. I learned that when students were given the space to hash out their ideas in Spanish first, it was like watching lightbulbs turn on. They were engaged, actively processing the content, and having meaningful discourse.

Implementation Challenges and Lessons Learned

Although project-based financial literacy led to strong engagement and academic growth, the process was not without its challenges. My experience revealed several key factors educators must consider before adopting a similar model. This class structure was unfamiliar to my students, so it took time, patience, and explicit instruction on PBL structures and expectations before they could succeed. It's essential that both teachers and students are given the time and space to learn how to engage in higher-level thinking, manage their time, and pursue personal interests—especially in projects where there isn't one "right" answer. Success often depends on the individual's preferences and their ability to research and justify their financial decisions.

Time and Pacing

Many students struggled to complete projects within the allocated time, particularly those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Multilingual Learner (MLL). Scaffolding and shortening projects for these students was essential for their success, but not always straightforward. Some tasks, such as researching how to buy a car, don't easily lend themselves to being simplified. While project-based learning encouraged deeper thinking, it also required more flexible timelines. This meant I had to identify which parts of a project represented the essential learning for each student. In my classroom, I found that many students had difficulty structuring their time, which often led to wasted class time. Additionally, tasks took significantly longer than I anticipated. For example, a credit card poster project I expected to take two days ended up taking a full week, even though students remained fully engaged throughout.

To address this, I broke this credit card poster into four quadrants, assigning one section due each day, followed by a final presentation. This structure helped keep students on task and moving forward. In future iterations, I plan to include more structured deadlines and project checkpoints to support consistency and productivity.

Public Speaking Anxiety

While presenting business plans, several heritage Spanish-speaking students shared that public speaking was one of their greatest academic stressors. I became aware of this during a lesson on the amygdala, where students explored the body's

response to stress and fear. As part of the activity, I asked them to place sticky notes identifying aspects of the classroom that triggered these responses. To my surprise, my heritage Spanish speakers identified public speaking as their greatest source of anxiety even more than tests they felt unprepared for. During those same classes, several students were willing to forgo credit for their projects if it meant they didn't have to present in front of the class. When I met with them individually, multiple students confided, "I can't do this in English, Mister—I'll sound stupid."

To address this, I introduced alternative presentation options, such as small group delivery or recorded presentations. These adaptations significantly reduced anxiety and increased participation—but they also required intentional planning and individualized support.

Scalability

This model was effective in two classrooms of 25–30 students, where strong teacher-student rapport had already been established. I've been at my school for nearly a decade and have taught many of these students in previous classes—I also know their parents and siblings. Scaling this approach to larger or urban settings would require additional support, such as co-teachers or instructional aides, professional development in PBL design, and time for teacher collaboration.

Measurable Outcomes and Student Mindsets

To gauge the impact on students' mathematical mindset, I administered a simplified Mathematics Attitudes and Perceptions Survey (MAPS) at the beginning and end of the first semester. This tool included quantitative (True/False) and qualitative (open-ended) items related to confidence, persistence, growth mindset, real-world relevance, and sense-making.

Figure 1. MAPS Growth by Category (Fall to Winter)

Key Findings

- 18 out of 22 students tested showed overall growth in mathematical mindset
- Average improvement exceeded 5% across survey dimensions, MLL 5.4%
- Positive Student Mindsets: Growth Mindset, Real-World Connections, and Sense-Making
- Struggling Student Mindsets: Confidence, Interest, and Persistence

Five of my students had been stuck in special education math for years. By December, four of them had an A in my class—and they were teaching their parents and siblings at home about credit cards and how to build a credit score. In total, fourteen students from our MLL program participated in one of my two project-based financial literacy classes. All but two successfully passed the course: one did not meet the attendance requirements, and the other did not complete the necessary assignments. Two students earned college credit for Personal Finance 174 through Central Washington University.

Every student who was tested in the class showed a positive shift in mathematical mindset, as measured by the MAPS survey. One newcomer student made a particularly significant gain, with a 28% increase in her mindset score—highlighting the transformative potential of this instructional approach.

Qualitative reflections revealed that students felt better equipped to manage real-world tasks, even if they still lacked confidence in traditional math settings. One student wrote, "This class made me realize I could understand money and how to use it even if I don't get every math thing."

These results support Zhang's (2023) meta-analysis showing that PBL improves motivation and understanding more effectively than traditional instruction, especially when students engage with content that is personally relevant and socially meaningful.

Practice-Based Recommendations

For Classroom Teachers:

- Start small: Implement one project connected to a real-world decision (e.g., car buying or budgeting)
- Honor student voice: Allow for choice in topics and presentation formats to boost engagement and expression
- Use translanguaging intentionally: Permit initial idea generation in heritage languages before scaffolding academic English output
- Plan for revision: Build checkpoints for feedback and opportunities to revise, even if products are not perfect the first time

For Schools and Districts:

- Provide dedicated time for interdisciplinary planning among ELD, math, and CTE teachers

- Offer PD on culturally responsive PBL design
- Invest in multilingual curricular resources and bilingual aides

Conclusion

Project-based financial literacy provided MLL students with access to rigorous mathematics content while affirming their cultural identity and supporting language acquisition. Though challenges in time, pacing, and scaffolding emerged, the model proved adaptable and meaningful for students historically underserved in traditional math tracks.

More than just a curriculum solution, this approach invites educators to rethink what it means to be "good at math" and who gets to participate in that definition. By connecting instruction to real-world relevance and language equity, we empower

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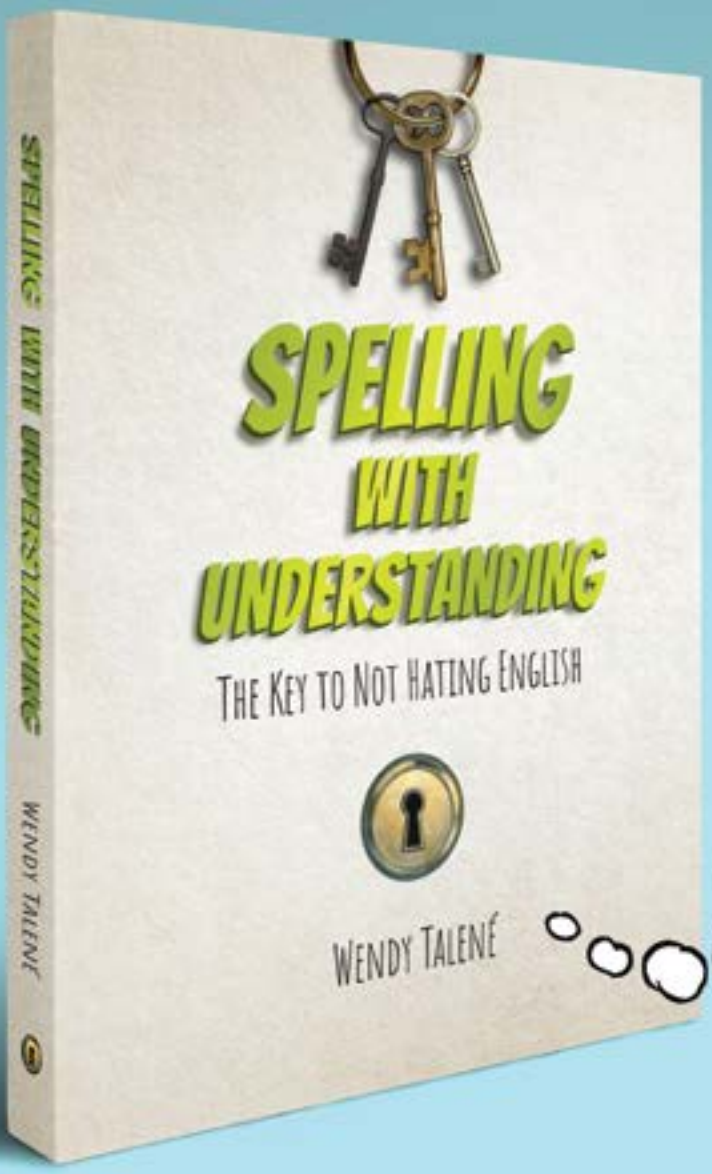

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Circumventing Plagiarism: Building Trust via Code Switching

Jennifer Altman

Summary: When English Language Teachers (ELTs) ask students to do tasks that are above their linguistic levels, they may resort to plagiarism. I will describe a case study in which I employed code-switching to circumvent the temptation to plagiarize by building trust with my students and providing comprehensible input, which resulted in improved student performance and language acquisition..

Keywords: code switching, building trust, plagiarism, ChatGPT

Introduction

How does asking language learners to do tasks above their linguistic level impact the temptation to use ChatGPT to write essays or presentation scripts? How do we as English Language Teachers (ELTs) bridge the gaps between the curriculum and our students' linguistic levels to prevent plagiarism and build trust? One way to circumvent plagiarism and build trust is to code switch. In this article, I will describe a situation in which the curricula I had to follow was asking students to work above their linguistic levels, and consequently why and how I chose to intentionally lean into code switching to build trust with my students to prevent plagiarism.

The Case Study: the Issue

Spring Quarter of 2024, I was assigned to teach two content-based instruction, English support courses on sustainability to a group of students from Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. Ritsumeikan has been sending students every Spring Quarter to the University of Washington International and English Language Programs (UW IELP) for approximately 20 years. Following the pattern over the past 20 years, the 2024 students who entered the UW program had English skills ranging from high-beginner to intermediate levels. However, the current curricula for the 2 Spring Quarter courses, Academic Preparation for Sustainability, and Academic Listening and Speaking, are currently written for students with advanced linguistic levels (UW IELP, 2024). From my personal experience, having taught Japanese students for many years in Japan and the US, Japanese students will often either shut down or plagiarize when asked to do tasks above their linguistic levels. As I planned these courses, my main goal was to build trust and bridge the gap between the curricula and my students' linguistic levels to deter them from turning to plagiarism and/or shutting down.

I wanted to build trust by using engaging, level-appropriate materials on sustainability. When I taught the Summer Quarter 4-week English support class "Business English" for this Ritsumeikan program on sustainability in 2023, I found myself code switching to quickly build trust with that cohort, who also had English skills ranging from high-beginner to intermediate. In 2024, I decided to intentionally lean into code switching mostly for the students' benefit (and somewhat to mine as a Japanese language learner).

The Case Study: the Curricula for English Support Courses

The Academic Preparation for Sustainability English support course meets Monday through Friday for 50 minutes over 10 weeks and expects the students, by the end of the course, to be able to "practice skills students use in the university classroom" (UW IELP, 2024) including:

- improving academic writing, reading, and listening skills building on sustainability,
- improving speaking skills (discussion and presentation) in the context of sustainability,
- applying critical thinking skills while analyzing issues in sustainability, and
- increasing academic vocabulary comprehension specifically for sustainability (UW IELP, 2024).

Further, the Academic Listening and Speaking course, which also meets Monday through Friday for 50 minutes per day for 10 weeks, expects the students, by the end of the course, to be able to:

- recognize relationships between main ideas and supporting details from spoken sources,
- develop note-taking skills and identify a speaker's opinion, intention, and tone,

- summarize and discuss information from spoken sources (e.g., TED Talks) using effective discussion skills,
- exchange ideas and opinions through discussion, and apply personal knowledge and experience to provide logical support, and
- become familiar with and use common phrases for use in presentations and in classroom communication (UW IELP, 2024).

In other words, the expectation for both courses is that all the students will be advanced users of English by the end of Spring Quarter. To bring high-beginning students to an advanced English level from the beginning of the quarter by the end is challenging because high-beginners enter the course being able to:

read and comprehend simple general English with short sentences, simple grammar, and simple vocabulary,

- read approximately at a US grade level 4,
- identify and understand main and supporting ideas,
- use clues to make predictions, guess meaning from context,
- identify type of text, and organization of ideas, and
- show control of basic verb tenses, simple and compound sentences in speaking (UW IELP, 2015).

For the students who are initially at an intermediate English level getting them to the advanced level by the end of the quarter is more realistic because they enter the course being able to:

- read general, academic English which has been somewhat simplified for English language learners,
- read an academic reading textbook for language learners and additional readings from magazines and websites,
- read approximately at US grade levels 7 ~ 12,
- show awareness of audience, style, and structure of texts,
- analyze ideas and information,
- connect ideas from texts to personal knowledge and experience,
- construct and discuss logically supported opinions on ideas and information in texts,
- apply increasingly sophisticated reading skills such as distinguishing fact versus opinion,
- show control of intermediate grammar (common verb tenses, a variety of sentence structures) in speaking, and
- begin to summarize (UW IELP, 2015).

Literature Review: Defining Code Switching and Its Changing Perceptions

Before I explain why I opted to lean into code switching (CS) to bridge the gap between the curricula and the students' linguistic levels, I will begin by defining code switching and then I will discuss how perceptions of CS have changed. Poplak's 1980 three-part definition of CS has been confirmed by Jendra (2010). The first type of CS is *intrasentential* CS: in which a word, phrase, or clause of a language one is learning (L2) is inserted into one's native language (L1). The second type is *intersentential* CS: characterized by inserting a word, phrase, or clause in of either the L1 or L2 into an utterance in the other language. The third and final type is *tag* CS: when L1 exclamations, terms of address, and/or discourse markers are mixed into L2 utterances.

Now that we understand how to define CS, let us turn to how the perceptions of CS have changed. Initially CS was not positively perceived by early researchers because it was viewed as an obstacle to language acquisition (Chaudron, 1988). However, more recent research acknowledges the positive role of CS as it aids in classroom management, language analysis, grammar explanations, error correction, comprehension checks, instructions, and cross-cultural issues (Gulzar, 2014).

Literature Review: Why CS?

Having defined CS and how perceptions of it have shifted, I will turn to why I chose to intentionally employ CS. I opted to lean into CS to bridge the gap between the curricula and the students' linguistic levels to build trust, provide comprehensible input, prevent plagiarism, and improve performance and language acquisition.

First, building student-teacher trust is crucial in language learning to create safe environments in which to take risks (Blum, 2020). CS enables instructors to build closer relationships with students because it allows for more natural, easier classroom interaction, which in turn encourages more active participation (Sakaria and Priyana, 2015). Furthermore, CS contributes to more supportive learning environments in which instructors can build solidarity and relationships with students (Widia, 2015). Building trust then allows teachers to focus on providing comprehensible input. Where the Grammar Translation Method is prevalent and when students' levels are low, students tend to use their L1 as a crutch (Bhatti, 2018). Thus, when instructors intentionally employ CS to improve L2 acquisition by pairing lower- and higher-level students, CS facilitates learning (Puspawati, 2018) because CS is particularly efficacious in clarifying abstract, difficult concepts (Bhatti, 2018).

Turning to circumventing plagiarism, when students' linguistic competencies are below the linguistic tasks they are being asked to do, they feel pressure to earn good grades, and/or they feel pressure to graduate, students may resort to plagiarism (Darwish and Sadeqi, 2016). Many English language learners (ELLs) plagiarize because writing is difficult: not only do ELLs lack the grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage knowledge, they also struggle to come up with ideas (Darwish and Sadeqi, 2016). While some students are ignorant of what constitutes plagiarism, others are aware but lack the summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting skills to avoid it (Selemani et al, 2018). While CS allows instructors to quickly build trust, provide comprehensible input, and prevent plagiarism, it also improves student performance and language acquisition

because it facilitates understanding and production of complex ideas like sustainability (Maluleke, 2019).

Preliminary Methodology: Leaning into CS

As we can see from the literature review above, there are multiple reasons to employ CS, so now I will explain how I incorporated it. First, I scaffolded a lot of support and examples into both courses. For example, in Academic Preparation for Sustainability, I chose an intermediate level academic reading, writing, and vocabulary unit on climate change while I opted to use listening segments with transcripts and controllable speed for Academic Listening and Speaking. For both courses, I provided organizational language for agreeing ("I agree with the author because"), disagreeing ("I disagree because"), stating opinions ("I think that"), writing reflection papers, and giving presentations; and templates for notes and reflection papers. In addition, I employed a weekly team building activity of asking them to discuss a relationship-building question (e.g. aisle or window on the airplane, what is the scariest animal, what is the best sandwich or lunch, etc.) and to organize themselves in alphabetical order and count off by 5 to put them into weekly working groups of 3. The students contributed their own team-building activity: they played the Werewolf Game between classes. Finally, every day while the students worked on tasks in their weekly working groups, I sat with each group so quieter students could ask questions one-on-one. Now that I have explained the supports that I scaffolded throughout the courses, I will turn to how I incorporated CS: I kept a running vocabulary list on the board (English-English, English-Japanese), added the words to a running list on a Canvas Discussion Board to which the students contributed, and encouraged the students to keep vocabulary lists in their notes and allowed them to CS if they wanted. I also allowed students to CS during class: to translate, explain and discuss abstract concepts in sustainability in their L1 with one another as needed.

The Result

As a result of being intentional about employing CS, my students acquired the vocabulary and organizational language to talk about the complex issues around sustainability, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Hopefully, they also returned to Japan being able to discuss the UN SDGs in English and Japanese, with positive associations of using English and thoughts of using it in daily life. On a personal level, I improved my academic competence in Japanese.

Discussion: Future Case Studies

I plan to replicate this study with the 2025 cohort of students. I plan to further clarify and define the methodology and to collect data as to how much language they acquired so that I can gather data to determine whether CS works for this group of students.

Conclusion

If you find yourself teaching a monolingual group and you have some fluency in their native language, CS might improve your relationship with your students and improve their English acquisition. If you are teaching a multilingual group, find out what your institution's policies are around CS and translating documents, and then consider allowing lower-level students to CS.

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Perceptions and Influences: ChatGPT in Secondary English Instruction

Cara Bertelmann, Brandy Simmons, Shimikqua Ellis, and Sherilyn Coleman

Summary: This study examines the perceptions and attitudes of high school English teachers in the United States regarding the integration of ChatGPT into their instructional practices. With the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in education, understanding the factors influencing teachers' acceptance or reluctance is critical. A nationwide survey was conducted, utilizing a quantitative approach to collect data from 119 teachers across 37 states. The findings reveal a general openness to ChatGPT, especially among less experienced teachers who value its potential to reduce workload and streamline administrative tasks. However, concerns about accuracy, ethical implications, and the potential erosion of pedagogical quality temper these positive attitudes. The study highlights a perspective where AI's ability to enhance educational practices is weighed against apprehensions about its long-term impact on teaching. Addressing these concerns through targeted professional development and ethical guidelines can support teachers in leveraging AI effectively for improved educational outcomes.

Keywords: Teacher Workload; Instructional Technology; AI Integration; Professional Development; Secondary Education

Introduction

ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) tool developed by OpenAI, enables human-like interaction using natural language processing (NLP). Since its release in November 2022, it has sparked discussions on AI's role in education (Miller, 2023). ChatGPT serves as a versatile platform for generating text, offering potential benefits for teaching and administrative tasks. Due to the prevalence of technological advancements and gaps in academic research regarding the integration of ChatGPT in education, there is a critical need to evaluate the teacher's perceptions of ChatGPT. With the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), there is a growing emphasis on integrating these tools into education. While there are studies on incorporating technology in classrooms for student use, there is a lack of teacher-centric research. Despite its potential to ease teacher workloads and streamline tasks, concerns about accuracy, ethics, and autonomy remain significant. This study examines high school English teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT integration, addressing both its potential benefits and educators' concerns to provide insights that inform its effective implementation in classrooms.

Possible uses of ChatGPT

ChatGPT can be used by educators to answer inquiries related to academics, develop curricula, prepare lessons, or enhance instructional techniques. Examples include: assisting in grading tasks and providing student feedback, enabling personalized instruction through data assessment and tailored lesson recommendation, assisting in creating and customizing assessments, conducting administrative tasks, including organization and communication, and offering language translation services, particularly beneficial in multilingual educational contexts (Hashem et al., 2023).

ChatGPT can assist teachers with language translation (Ali, 2020; Lo, 2023). Oftentimes, there is a disconnect between the language used by the instructor and that of the student, even when both speak the same language. AI technology can assist in overcoming these language barriers by providing "students with additional explanations and examples, enhancing their understanding of complex concepts" (Alneyadi,2023, p. 10). Additionally, Jeon and Lee conducted a study of 11 English elementary teachers in South Korea that implemented ChatGPT into their practice (2023). Jeon and Lee found that teachers used ChatGPT to bridge gaps in cultural knowledge when teaching about foreign countries (2023). This could be particularly helpful for English Language Learners (ELL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) educators. ChatGPT's use in education complements the teacher's role, as teachers remain the orchestrators of resources, making key pedagogical decisions while ensuring students are engaged and ethically aware of AI's influence.

Perceived Benefits of AI

AI could be used to drastically reduce the amount of time educators devote to instructional planning (Miller, 2023). AI could be used to generate basic content for lessons (Çelik et.

al., 2022; Lo 2023; Jeon and Lee, 2023) allowing educators to spend more time developing higher order thinking tasks (Miller, 2023). AI summarizes and aggregates information across numerous websites, drastically reducing the amount of time teachers spend planning content (Halaweh, 2023). ChatGPT can also be used to quickly create "dialogue scripts, short stories, and sample words or sentences" (Jeon and Lee, 2023, p.9). Additionally, ChatGPT can be used to create assessments (Lo, 2023; Jeon and Lee 2023). Outsourcing these tasks to ChatGPT will reduce educators' workload, reducing tasks to minutes instead of hours.

ChatGPT supports differentiation by enabling instructors to rapidly create and adapt content to meet the needs of diverse learners (Alneyadi, 2023; Huang et al., 2023; Jeon and Lee, 2023). AI technology provides insights into student strengths and weaknesses, allowing instructors to tailor learning activities and curriculum to specific student needs.(Alneyadi, 2023). AI can provide targeted feedback on student essays, significantly reducing the time required for this task (Çelik et al., 2022; Lo, 2023). By inputting a rubric and expectations, ChatGPT can provide an initial grade for written work (Jeon and Lee, 2023).

Prior to submitting written works for grading, students can submit work to ChatGPT for grammar corrections, drastically reducing teacher time on this task (Jeon and Lee, 2023). ChatGPT also provides general drafting assistance to students (Lo, 2023). ChatGPT can act as a virtual teacher assistance, providing immediate feedback to students in real time (Alneyadi, 2023; Huang et al., 2023; Jeon and Lee, 2023). This is especially helpful for instructors with large class sizes in which it is unrealistic to spend individual time daily with each student. Flipped classrooms that utilize AI technology have been found to be effective in the teaching of English language (Ali, 2020).

Methodology

This study aims at answering these research questions:

1. How do high school English teachers in the United States perceive the integration of ChatGPT in their instructional practices?
2. What factors influence teachers' acceptance or reluctance towards the use of ChatGPT?

Design and Procedure

A nationwide digital survey was conducted to explore the perceptions and attitudes of high school English teachers towards ChatGPT integration. The survey included 10 closed-ended questions designed to capture quantitative data on teachers' experiences, motivations, and concerns related to ChatGPT use in their instructional practices. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling in targeted social media groups.

Data Collection Tools and Procedures

The data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions. The survey aimed to gather information on the following:

- Demographics (state of employment, years of teaching experience)
- Integration and use of ChatGPT in teaching practices
- Factors motivating the use of ChatGPT
- Concerns and barriers to ChatGPT integration
- Perceptions of ChatGPT's advantages and long-term impacts

The data collected were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Cross-tabulation analysis was used to examine the relationship between years of teaching experience and perceptions of ChatGPT.

Participants and the Context

As shown in Figure 1, participants were 119 high school English teachers from 37 different states in the United States, with Hawaii having the highest number of participants. The participants represented a range of teaching experience from less than five years to over 20 years.

Figures 1 and 2 correspond with the demographic questions on the survey:

Question 1: Location – Please select the state you currently teach in.
Question 2: Teaching Experience – How many years have you been teaching English at the high school level?

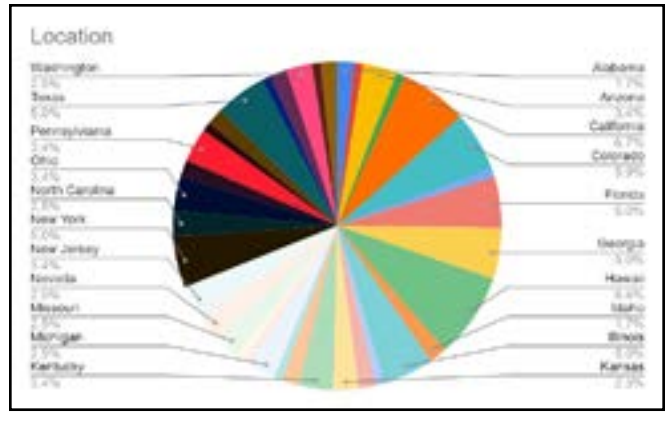

Figure 1. Participants by State

Note. The following states only had a single participant and are not represented in Figure 1: Utah, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Mississippi.

As shown in Figure 2, the participants represented an equitable cross section of experience, with 28 participants reporting teaching 5-10 years of teaching experience. The second largest demographic of participants were teachers who had less than five years of teaching experience, with 27 participants. Next, 25 participants reported 11-15 years of teaching experience. Additionally, 20 respondents reported 16-20 years of experience. Lastly, 19 respondents with 16-20

years of experience participated in the study.

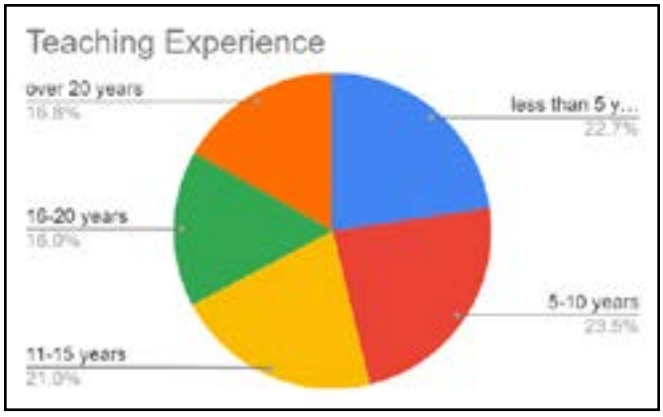

Figure 2. Participants by Teaching Experience

Results

Q3: Have you ever integrated ChatGPT into your teaching practices for your personal use?

Of the 119 participants, 78.2% reported integrating ChatGPT into their teaching practice. Newer teachers were the most likely to adopt the tool: 89% of those with less than five years of experience (24 of 27) reported use. Teachers with 11–15 years of experience followed closely at 88% (22 of 25), while 82% of those with 5–10 years (23 of 28) reported use. Integration declined among those with 16–20 years of experience (74%, or 14 of 19) and dropped sharply among those with over 20 years, with only 50% (10 of 20) reporting use.

Q4: If you have used ChatGPT, how have you used it?

Respondents were presented with eight options and asked to select all that applied. Among the 119 participants, 59% reported using ChatGPT for curriculum development or lesson planning, 47% for generating course materials, 41% for assessment tasks, and 37% each for administrative duties and differentiation. Additionally, 17% used it for providing student feedback, 10% as a virtual assistant, while 21.8% indicated they had never used ChatGPT.

Q5: What factors would motivate you to use ChatGPT?

Participants were presented with nine options and instructed to select all that apply. Approximately 71% of total participants selected time savings in creating lesson plans, assessments, and instructional materials as a motivating factor. Moreover, assistance in differentiating instructional materials emerged as the second most preferred option, chosen by 53% of respondents, with the highest interest (63%) among teachers with less than 5 years. The third most selected option, reducing time spent on student feedback, was chosen by 44% of respondents, with the highest interest (53%) among teachers with 5–10 years and 16–20 years of experience. Only 39% of participants selected automating administrative tasks, including 52% of teachers with less than five years of experience and 20% with over 20 years. Teacher assistant was the least (21%) selected option, however, it was most used (32%) by teachers with 16-20 years of experience. Only 10% of respondents reported no motivating factors for using ChatGPT, with the highest lack of interest (25%) among teachers with 16-20 years of experience.

Q6: What factors would make you reluctant to use ChatGPT?

Concerns about accuracy and reliability were the most frequently reported issue, with 94 respondents (79%) selecting this option. This concern was noted across all experience levels, ranging from 72% of educators with 11-15 years of experience to 95% of those with over 20 years in the field. The second most selected option, ethical concerns about preserving teaching authenticity, was chosen by 65% of respondents (78 participants). Concern was highest among teachers with less than five years of experience (74%) and lowest among those with over 20 years (55%). The third most selected option, concerns about the quality and relevance of ChatGPT-generated feedback, was chosen by 56% of respondents (67 participants). Concern was highest among teachers with less than five years of experience (74%) and lowest among those with 16–20 years (37%).

Q7: What advantages might teachers gain from utilizing ChatGPT?

The option most frequently chosen was "Time Management: By automating certain tasks, teachers can better manage their time and strike a balance between teaching and other responsibilities," with 82 respondents selecting it, representing approximately 69% of the participants, with highest interest among teachers with 11–15 years of experience (84%). "Lessening cognitive load" was selected by 67% (80 respondents) and most common among teachers with less than 5 years (81%). Furthermore, 63% (76 respondents) reported increased productivity, with highest interest among teachers with 5–10 years (79%). Improved organization and structuring of materials was identified by 50% of respondents, most commonly among those with 11–15 years of experience (68%). Only 8% of respondents saw no advantages to using ChatGPT, with this sentiment most common among teachers with over 20 years of experience (15%).

Q8: What advantages might teachers gain from utilizing ChatGPT? What specific concerns do you have about the long-term use of ChatGPT for teacher instructional use?

Among the 119 respondents, the most common concern about ChatGPT was over-reliance on the tool potentially diminishing teaching skills, selected by 70% of participants, with the highest concern among teachers with less than five years of experience (78%). Other major concerns included bias in generated material (56%) and privacy or data security issues (53%), both cited most frequently by newer teachers. Lack of up-to-date information was noted by 51%, particularly among those with 5–10 years of experience (57%). The least cited concern was AI displacing human teachers, selected by 44% of respondents, with the highest concern in the 16–20 years experience group (58%).

Q9: What is your general perception of ChatGPT use for teacher related tasks for high school English teachers?

Teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT were largely positive, with the majority falling under the Positive Perception category, led by educators with 5–10 years of experience (54%). Very Positive Perception was strongest among teachers with 11–15 years of experience (32%) but dropped to just 10% among those with over 20 years. Negative Perception was most common among the newest teachers (33%) and seasoned educators with 20+ years (25%). Very Negative Perception was rare among early-career teachers (7%) but peaked at 32% among those with 16–20 years of experience

Q10: How do you currently perceive the integration of ChatGPT in your high school English classroom regarding student use versus teacher use?

The majority of educators (41%) view ChatGPT primarily as a tool for teachers, a perspective strongest among those with less than five years of experience (67%). A smaller group (37%) sees ChatGPT as equally beneficial for both teachers and students, particularly among teachers with 5–10 years (54%) and over 20 years of experience (50%). Very few respondents (6%) believe it should be used mainly by students, with no support from early-career teachers. Meanwhile, 16% oppose ChatGPT use altogether, with the highest resistance among teachers with 16–20 years of experience (37%).

Discussion

The findings reveal a generally positive perception of ChatGPT, particularly among younger and less experienced teachers, who are more likely to view it as a time-saving and productivity-enhancing tool. However, experienced eductors expressed skepticism, citing concerns about accuracy, ethical considerations, and the potential for over-reliance. These mixed perceptions suggest that while ChatGPT has clear potential to support teaching practices, its adoption requires careful consideration of individual educators' needs and contexts. These findings highlight the dual nature of ChatGPT as both a valuable tool and a potential source of apprehension, emphasizing the need for professional development and ethical guidelines.

Teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT revealed a general optimism about its potential. However, a generational divide was evident: teachers with over 20 years of experience were more likely to have negative or very negative perceptions (50%), while younger educators were more open to integrating ChatGPT into their practices.

While educators appreciate the practical benefits of ChatGPT, their apprehensions about reliability, ethical considerations, and potential dependency must be addressed through targeted training and clear policies. While ChatGPT offers potential benefits, the integration of this tool in education also brings up significant ethical concerns for teachers, such as issues related to privacy, bias, and trustworthiness. These concerns align with the feedback shared by those surveyed. Educators who use ChatGPT should be aware of this pitfall and trained on how to properly protect sensitive student data.

ChatGPT in the Classroom

While the majority of educators reported using the tool, it is primarily viewed as a teacher-centric platform with limited student use. However, AI technologies can be used to assist in the teaching of reading, writing, grammar, speaking, and listening (Huang et.al., 2023). AI technology uses natural language to communicate, resulting in a tool educators can use to assess speech and language use (Ali, 2020). When instructed to "act like a person", ChatGPT can be used to engage in conversations with students, serving as an "interactive role-playing partner" (Jeon and Lee, 2023, p.9). While this method was initially used in elementary classrooms, it could easily be adapted for high school students, especially those with specific linguistic needs. Using AI technology can alleviate pressure students face when interacting with teachers, allowing students to explore weaknesses in a low stakes manner that is conducive to learning (Qin et al., 2020). When implemented intentionally and effectively, ChatGPT has the potential to positively impact education by enhancing performance, motivation, organizational skills, and collaborative learning among students. By limiting ChatGPT use to only teachers, students miss vital opportunities to interact with a critical piece of technology.

Implications for Educators and Policymakers

The study highlights the need for professional development programs that address:

- Advanced AI Integration: Training on applications such as student feedback, data analysis, and administrative automation.
- Ethical Awareness: Guidance on identifying and mitigating bias in AI-generated content.
- Data Privacy Protections: Strategies for safeguarding sensitive student information.
- ChatGPT Classroom Integration: Teachers need guidance as to how to effectively use ChatGPT as a student tool, particularly for individuals with diverse language needs, such as ELL and ESL students.

Policymakers must also establish clear frameworks to ensure equitable access to AI technologies and protect teacher autonomy in the classroom.

Limitations and Challenges

This study has several limitations. The reliance on self-reported data may have introduced response bias, as participants may have given socially desirable answers. The sample

size, though geographically diverse, was limited to digitally active educators, potentially excluding perspectives from teachers with limited internet access or digital literacy. Finally, the study's focus on high school English teachers limits generalizability to other subjects and educational levels.

Addressing these limitations in future research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions and the broader implications of AI technologies in education. The findings align with previous studies, such as Woodruff et al. (2023), which reported higher AI adoption rates among younger teachers. Similarly, the findings echo Mercader and Gairín (2020), who identified generational gaps as a key factor in technology adoption. Notably, while younger teachers embraced ChatGPT for its efficiency, experienced educators expressed greater concern about ethical and reliability issues.

Future research should explore demographic factors like gender, race, and school setting to better understand their influence on ChatGPT adoption. Additionally, the differential impact of ChatGPT across subjects such as STEM and the perspectives of school administrators on AI integration warrant further study.

Conclusion

AI technology will persist in shaping the education landscape, impacting both instructional delivery and student expectations. To adequately equip and guide students for future workforce requirements, it is imperative for educators to embrace and adapt instructional methods incorporating AI technology. The utilization and perception of ChatGPT by educators are pivotal aspects of AI technology integration in K-12 education. Educators will bear the responsibility of instructing the upcoming generation on the proper and efficient utilization of AI technology.

Although educators have started to integrate ChatGPT into their teaching methods, many teachers don't view it as a student tool. For successful integration, educators need to recognize AI's potential as a tool for both teachers and students. Despite legitimate worries about plagiarism and cheating, upcoming job markets will likely demand proficiency in engaging with AI technologies. Instead of shielding students due to concerns about cheating, educators should focus on teaching ethical and responsible usage.

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ELL Students' Attitudes toward AI Integration in the Classroom

Secil Horosan Dogan

Summary: This study examines high-intermediate adult ELL students' attitudes toward incorporating AI tools in English language learning at a community college. This mixed-methods research employed a survey, classroom observations, and a focus group interview. The findings revealed that while students appreciated AI's potential, 80% were initially unfamiliar with it. Most expressed reluctance to adopt these technologies, which was primarily due to perceived technological difficulties, highlighting the need for targeted training.

Keywords: AI in education, ELL students, technology, attitudes, language learning

Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in educational settings has the potential to revolutionize language learning (Topsakal & Topsakal, 2022), particularly for English Language Learners (ELLs). As educational institutions increasingly embrace technology, numerous studies have focused on the potential uses and challenges of using AI in language learning and teaching contexts (Alafnan et al., 2023; Baskara & Mukarto, 2023; Hong, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023).

The AI technology comes with a lot of benefits both for students and teachers, including the ease of content creatin, instant feedback, free tutoring, etc. (Hong, 2023). It is critical to understand how such technologies can be effectively integrated into language education (Baskara & Mukarto, 2023). Research has shown that students' perceptions of AI can significantly impact their willingness to communicate and overall engagement in the learning process (Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024; Zhi & Wang, 2024).

Despite recognizing the advantages of AI, many ESL students express hesitance in utilizing these technologies due to concerns about usability and technological challenges (Kohnke et al., 2023; Kruk, 2022; Zhi & Wang, 2024), privacy and security (Koraishi, 2023), and the ownership issues and bias (Pack & Maloney, 2024). This gap between awareness of AI tools and willingness to engage with them highlights the need for targeted pedagogical strategies that introduce AI while also supporting students in overcoming their apprehensions.

Understanding the ELL students' attitudes toward AI can help better tailor teachers' teaching methods to promote effective communication and improve language acquisition outcomes (Hong, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023; Zhi & Wang, 2024). Therefore, this study investigates these attitudes among a group of high-intermediate level adult ELL students at Lake Washington Institute of Technology, aiming to identify their perceptions, experiences, and willingness to engage with AI technologies in the classroom. The findings provide valuable insights that can guide educators in effectively incorporating AI into language acquisition processes.

Literature Review

The integration of AI technologies, particularly ChatGPT, into ESL settings has generated considerable interest among researchers exploring its potential benefits and challenges (Alafnan et al., 2023; Baskara & Mukarto, 2023) Hong, 2023; Kohnke, Moorhouse, & Zou, 2023; Koraishi, 2023; Topsakal & Topsakal, 2022). They discuss the advantages of AI in enhancing ESL teaching by personalized materials, instant/real-time feedback, authentic material generation, student support, engaging students in authentic conversations, instructor integration, experiential learning, authentic language use, personal language tutoring, innovative teaching methods, and shift in assessment.

However, they also pointing out some disadvantages such as ethical concerns, complexity, bias in output, need for evaluation, cheating and accuracy, digital competencies required to use ChatGPT, academic integrity and assessment difficulties. To eliminate these drawbacks related to academic integrity, Alafnan et al. (2023) recommend avoiding theory-based take-home assessments, designing case-based tasks requiring personalized, critical responses, utilizing plagiarism detection software for all submissions, and incorporating ChatGPT responses in class for discussion and evaluation.

There are studies that investigate the use of other AI tools in educational settings (Grassini, 2023; Guerrero et al., 2022; Hong, 2023; Kasneci et. al, 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023; Koraishi, 2023; Williamson & Eynon, 2020). Topsakal & Topsakal, for instance, propose a framework for developing language learning software for children that incorporates Augmented Reality and voicebots alongside ChatGPT, suggesting that such innovative tools can create immersive and engaging

learning experiences.

A growing body of research has shown that AI technologies can lead to notable enhancements in academic performance (Khan et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021). These tools contribute to improved learning outcomes and greater student satisfaction (Winkler & Söllner, 2018), ultimately optimizing learners' capabilities and overall academic success (Clarizia et al., 2018). In one study, Kohnke (2023) focused on L2 learners' perceptions on using chatbots as a language learning tool. The findings indicated that participants found the chatbot enjoyable to interact with, both in and out of class, and believed it enhanced their English language skills.

Gallacher et al. (2018) studied 253 students' perceptions of AI chatbots like Cleverbot as conversational partners in learning English. Students viewed the chatbot as a novelty rather than an effective learning tool, preferring human partners for richer interactions, natural communication, and understanding. While AI offered independence, quick responses, and exposure to new language forms, students noted its significant weaknesses, including inappropriate responses, lack of emotional cues, and inability to engage in meaningful follow-up questions.

In another study, Grajeda et al. (2024) examines the student perception of AI use in terms of its effective use of AI tools, effective use of ChatGPT, student proficiency using AI tools, teacher proficiency using AI tools advanced student skills in AI. They found potential for educational revolution with some challenges.

Many adult ESL students often struggle with language confidence and adapting to new technologies, so incorporating AI into their learning journey can help bridge these challenges. By using AI tools to build digital competencies, the goal is to empower learners to take charge of their English studies beyond the classroom. AIEd in ELL not only supports language development but also enhances essential skills like digital literacy, civic engagement, and job readiness—key components for thriving in today's tech-oriented world. Therefore, understanding learner perception and readiness is critical in this research.

Methodology

This mixed-methods research involved 15 high-intermediate ELL students (13 women, 2 men) aged 22 to 72 in a community college in the USA, selected through convenience sampling due to their availability. They were taking in-person classes every day for three hours at the time of the study. The students were from all around the world, including Russia, Colombia, China, Japan, and so on. Most of them were living in the USA from 3 months to 18 months while a few of them were there for about 4 years.

They signed consent forms and voluntarily participated, with no impact on their grades to ensure reliability. The three-month study utilized initial surveys, followed by an AI presentation which included the definition, benefits and concerns about AI, AI tools to integrate into ELL, and how to use them most effectively. After that, classroom observations and focus group interviews were conducted to explore students' attitudes toward AI tools.

Data Collection

The initial survey, adapted from Chan & Hu (2023), included Likert-scale and open-ended questions to assess participants' familiarity with AI tools before and after classroom introduction. Due to the survey's language complexity, students could use dictionaries or translators.

Classroom observations provided contextual understanding of student interactions with AI. The research, also the instructor of the class, was both teaching and taking notes while the students were involved in activities. The instructor observed her students with these critical lenses only in 5 classes when the use of AI was allowed in learning.

The whole class gathered for two focus group interviews after 5 of the classes that they used AI due to time limitation as they stayed for 30 minutes longer after classes. They discussed the instructor's questions building on each other's opinions in focus group discussions which offered deeper insights into attitudes and concerns. The questions included their experiences with AI, the difficulties they had vs the advantages they enjoyed, how they felt, and if it affected their social learning. The researcher took constant notes during discussions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize participants' responses. Mean scores for Likert-scale items gauged overall familiarity and attitudes toward AI tools, while frequency analysis identified trends in prior experience and engagement with these tools. Inferential studies were not used due to the small sample size. For qualitative data from open-ended survey responses, classroom observations, and focus group discussions, thematic analysis was conducted. This involved coding recurring themes in students' comments, such as "perceived technological difficulties," "interest in further learning," and "impressions of AI potential." The researcher went through the whole qualitative data of observation and interview notes several times to reach to these themes, which were then confirmed by another instructor working at the same college who co-analyzed the qualitative data. Combining both quantitative and qualitative analyses provided a comprehensive view of ELL students' attitudes toward AI, offering insights into barriers and facilitators to AI adoption among immigrant learners.

Findings

While we acknowledge that a lack of understanding about AI

among participants may introduce biases into survey results, we aimed to eliminate misconceptions by introducing AI to be used in ELL effectively and securely. The survey findings of the study revealed that 80% of participants (n=12) were unfamiliar with AI tools prior to the study, encountering them only during the course. Of the 15 students, only three (20%) had previously used AI tools: one daily (6.6%) and two sporadically (13.3%). After being introduced to various AI applications designed to enhance English learning, 26.6% (n=4) began integrating AI into their study routines. However, interest in further exploration of AI tools remained minimal, with only one student expressing a desire to learn more, while others felt hesitant or disinterested.

Students often answered "not sure=3" for most questions. The only meaningful differences among negative statements were observed in Q5, Q17, and Q7. The mean scores indicated that students did not believe "AI tools exhibit bias" (Q5) or that "AI tools will limit their socialization" (Q17). They also believed that "AI technologies have limited emotional intelligence" (Q7).

For positive statements, significant differences were found in Q4, Q8, Q9, and Q14. Students believed they "can understand AI tools" (Q4), that "AI will help their learning" (Q8), that "students must learn AI for their careers" (Q9), and that "AI tools are great as they are available 24/7" (Q14). Although not entirely comfortable using AI tools, they disagreed that "they need AI training for ELL" (Q22).

The open-ended questions revealed that students did not fully understand what AI is. Some mistook AI tools like ChatGPT for search engines, translators, or apps, as evident from responses like "Google" or "Duolingo." One student said, "I use AI every day because I translate new words on Google Translate." While almost all websites and app now integrate the AI technologies, we figured that the student simply assumed that any online technology is equal to AI. This misunderstanding shifted the focus to qualitative data due to the lack of knowledge about AI and insufficient language skills.

Classroom observations and focus group discussions revealed a complex landscape of attitudes toward AI among ELL students. While many expressed admiration for AI technologies, their reluctance to adopt them persisted. Observations showed that 60% (n=9) demonstrated initial enthusiasm during introductions to AI presentation, but this did not translate into regular use. One student said, "I am interested in examples of using ChatGPT for learning English," while another responded, "No, I'm good," when asked about needing training.

Focus group discussions highlighted that students' apprehension stemmed from perceived technological difficulties. 73.3% (n=11) mentioned challenges in understanding how to use the tools effectively. Although many students can use technology (mobile phones, apps, Canvas, etc.), they were reluctant and unconfident navigating new tools. They were unaware of AI tools' functions, whether they had websites or apps, or what the apps could do. For example, a student noted, "I don't have this app on my phone. Can I talk to it?" Another asked, "Is it free? I don't know because I don't want to pay."

Concerns about privacy or security were only raised by 13% (n=2). Only two students were concerned about sharing data on ChatGPT for privacy, while others were not significantly concerned, probably because of their lack of awarness. One student said, "I don't want to share my email address or phone number with them." These results were consistent with Koraishi's (2023) study.

Despite initial low awareness, students showed more interest as they were introduced and trained in using AI tools for language learning. One student was impressed, saying, "I had no idea I can have a story or resume or language learning with AI." Students expressed excitement discovering how AI can aid their learning by asking for word meanings, making sentences, creating fill-in-the-blank exercises, having conversations, creating resumes and cover letters, asking for grammar clarifications, and writing paragraphs. They were warned against asking AI to do their homework, encouraged to do it themselves and seek AI feedback for effective learning. Since the students were adults, relying purely on AI tools was not an issue. They were reminded that the instructor was there to help them improve THEIR English, not to evaluate ChatGPT's writing.

The findings indicate a significant gap between awareness and engagement with AI tools. Although students recognized potential benefits like personalized learning, their willingness to explore these tools was limited. For instance, while 80% acknowledged that AI could facilitate tailored learning experiences, only 26.6% began integrating AI into their study routines after the introduction. Only one student sought more knowledge about AI, while others felt satisfied with their current understanding or preferred to avoid additional technology. When the instructor asked if and how they practice the use of AI outside the classroom, it was revealed that only one student was practicing with ChaptGPT outside the class, except the student who is engaged with it for his professional work. Although it was heavily due to their busy family schedules, this reluctance still underscores the need for targeted training and workshops to promote AI familiarity and comfort. Students who had already used AI tools were not interested in further training, as they knew how to use them. However, reasons for reluctance among newly introduced students included lack of interest, reluctance to learn new technologies, time constraints, and a lack of urgency to improve their English. Interestingly, age did not seem to be a factor in discovering new tools.

Participants frequently mentioned frustration with unfamiliar interfaces, describing experiences as "overwhelming" and "intimidating." One student said, "I want to learn, but I just don't know where to start with these tools." This highlights

the importance of providing structured support and clear guidance in adopting AI technologies. Overall, these insights suggest that simply introducing AI tools is insufficient; educators must create supportive environments encouraging exploration and building confidence among ELL students using AI for language learning.

Discussion

The study reveals a nuanced understanding of ELL students' interactions with AI tools in language learning. Despite AI's potential, there is a significant gap between awareness and active engagement.

Familiarity and Initial Hesitance: One significant finding is the wide gap between student awareness of AI tools and active engagement with them. Despite research suggesting learners find AI tools engaging (Kohnke, 2023), this study found that 80% of students were initially unfamiliar with tools like ChatGPT and commonly confused AI with search engines or basic translation apps. Even when informed of its potential, initial enthusiasm often failed to translate into consistent use. This indicates that mere exposure or access to AI is insufficient; confidence, competence, and guided application are critical factors in sustained adoption.

Perceptions of AI Technologies: The survey results showed mixed sentiments. While students acknowledged certain limitations, such as biases and lack of emotional intelligence, they also believed in AI's positive impact on their learning practices. High mean scores for statements about AI's usefulness in enhancing learning experiences and the necessity of learning AI for future careers indicate recognition of AI's value. However, the ambivalence towards using these tools, particularly the hesitance to seek further training, underscores a complex relationship between perception and willingness to engage. Although many students reported feeling comfortable with technology, they struggled with the specific demands of using AI tools, highlighting the need for structured support and training. Compared to younger learners or those in K-12 settings, adult ESL students often show greater hesitation due to limited digital exposure and fear of failure. Unlike findings from studies involving younger or more digitally fluent participants (e.g., Topsakal & Topsakal, 2022), our data suggest that adult learners require more explicit, ongoing scaffolding to feel confident using AI tools.

Qualitative Insights

Qualitative data revealed deeper insights into students' experiences and challenges. The confusion surrounding AI tools suggests that students may benefit from explicit instruction to demystify these technologies. Concerns regarding privacy were minimal, indicating that the primary barriers to engagement stemmed more from a lack of understanding. The study also found that most students were eager to learn about AI when properly introduced. This willingness indicates that with the right support and resources, students could significantly benefit from integrating AI into their studies. This reinforces the idea that AI integration should be learner-centered, aligning it with students' immediate goals, so that it will be meaningful and enjoyable for students (Gallacher et al., 2018).

Implications for Educators

Educators should develop targeted training programs focusing on practical applications of AI tools to ensure students feel equipped and empowered (Kasneci, 2023; Rudolph & Tan, 2023). This targeted instructional design could include structured support, embedded AI literacy, peer support system, and instructor modeling. Creating institutional support frameworks, such as AI mentors, faculty learning communities, or shared repositories of AI-integrated lesson plans, can further bridge this gap.

Conclusion

This study underscores the importance of understanding ELL students' attitudes toward AI integration in education. The findings indicate that while AI tools can enhance language acquisition, current training methods may not fully engage learners, highlighting the need for improved support and training.

To maximize AI effectiveness in the classroom, educators should implement engaging and interactive learning opportunities that encourage autonomous exploration. Examples include AI-based projects, gamified learning, and collaborative tasks.

Creating a supportive environment for AI adoption can bridge the gap between awareness and practical application. Continuous support, hands-on workshops, and integrating AI literacy into the curriculum can empower students to use these tools confidently.

Future research should examine the long-term impacts of AI on language learning and explore methods to address specific barriers identified by students. Such studies can optimize AI integration and improve language learning experiences for immigrant ELLs.

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Appendix A

Survey on the Attitudes of ESL Students Toward Using AI

This is a survey conducted by Professor XXX at XXX to search the attitudes of ELL students about the use of AI technologies in learning. The survey data will only be used for this research and not shared elsewhere. You have the option to opt out from the research at any time. Your participation is solely voluntary. Please contact to Professor XXX at xxx@xxx.edu any time. Thank you for your participation.

____ I understand the above statement and give consent to participate in the research.

Name_____ Signature _____

Part A: Please read the statements and choose the best option as follows:
5: Strongly agree 4: Agree 3: Not sure 2: Don't agree 1: Strongly disagree

Statements	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
I understand generative AI technologies like ChatGPT:					
1. have limitations in their ability to handle complex tasks					
2. can generate incorrect output.					
3. can generate out of context or inappropriate output.					
4. can exhibit biases and unfairness.					
5. have limited emotional intelligence and empathy.					
6.I believe AI technologies will help my learning practices in the future.					
7.Students must learn how to use AI technologies well for their careers.					
8.I believe AI technologies can improve my digital knowledge.					
9.I believe AI technologies can help me save time.					
10.I believe AI technologies can provide me with unique ideas and perspectives that I may not have thought of myself.					
11.I think AI technologies can provide me with personalized and immediate feedback and suggestions for my assignments.					
12. I think AI technologies are great because they are available 24/7.					
13. I think AI technologies are to support students.					
14.Using AI technologies to do assignments decreases the value of university education.					
15.AI technologies will limit my interaction and socialization with others.					
16.AI technologies will prevent my development of skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership skills.					
17.I can become over-reliant (use too much/addicted) on generative AI technologies.					
18. I feel comfortable using AI tools.					
19. I want to learn to use different AI tools to improve my English.					
20. I need my college/professor to give training to use AI for ELL.					
21. I don't think AI tools know about my culture/religion. I don't think it represents me.					

22. How often do you use AI?
23. Which AI tools do you know/use?
24. When was the first time you thought/were told about using AI for ELL?
25. What did you know about AI before you started my classes?
26. What did you learn about how to use AI in ELL?
27. Are you using AI in this class? How?
28. Do you need help to use AI? Would you like your instructor to help you use AI?
29. What are some ways you can use AI in ELL?
30. Are Google and AI technologies the same?

Additional comments:

Appendix B

Resources
AI Tools

AI Tool Name	Use For
ChatGPT	AI Writing
Copilot Personal AI Assistant	AI assistant
Youchat	Chat
LanguaTalk	Speaking
Grammarly	Grammar and Editing
Talkpal: AI Language Teacher	Speaking
AI pronunciation trainer	Pronunciation
Elsa AI	Speaking
Play.ht	Speaking
Small talk to me	Speaking
Orai	Speaking
Speak	Speaking
Google speaking practice	Speaking
Yoodli	Speaking
Zaplingo AI tutors	Speaking
Mizou	Chatbot
Univerbal	Speaking
Praktika.ai	Speaking
Getpronounce	Speaking
Quizlet	Learning
Loora	Speaking
Lingvist	Vocabulary
Tutor Lily	AI tutor
Duolingo	Gamified learning
Presentation practice	Presentation with speaker
MakesYouFluent	Speaking
Quillbot	Paraphrasing
Google Gemini	Research
ChatPDF	Research
Natural Readers	Text to Speech
Mubert	Text to Music
Doctrina AI	Learning
Tutor AI	Learning
AskCodi	Coding
Hocoos	Website Building
Kickresume	Resume Building
Replika	Personal Assistance
ElevenLabs	AI Voice Generation
BypassGPT	Humanizing AI Content
Otter AI	Meeting transcription and summary
PDF AI	Chat with PDF
Gamma AI	AI Presentation
Rockett.ai	For Teachers
Lingoteach	For Teachers
Twee	For Teachers
ELTcation	For Teachers
Bypassgpt.ai	Learning
Resume	Create resumes
Ask Codi	Chatbot
Tutor.ai	Language tutor

References for the resources:
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Supporting Our Teacher Colleagues Through Structured Collaboration

Jaimie Bin Li

Summary: This study investigated the challenges mainstream teachers in British Columbia (B.C.), Canada, face in serving emergent bilingual and multilingual (EBM) students in their classrooms. The core objective of my research was to assess the effectiveness of a modified version of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) in enhancing teachers' self-efficacy when serving EBM students. My study encompassed the analysis of quantitative survey data and qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews, collaborative planning and debriefing sessions, and written reflections. The study indicated to improve EBM students' educational experiences, urgent changes are needed so that teachers are prepared and supported to better serve EBM students in class.

Keywords: SIOP, Teacher collaboration, Inclusive education, Teacher self-efficacy, Equity in Education

Introduction

The number of students enrolled in school in Canada with a home language other than English has continued to rise. In September 2023, there were 76,091 EBM students in the public and independent schools in BC, 6,886 more than the year before (BC Gov News, 2023). In many school districts in the Lower Mainland, the EBM student population is significantly larger. For example, 60% of the students speak a language other than English at home in the Vancouver school district (Vancouver School Board, 2022). Many young students arrive in kindergarten with little or no developed English language proficiency.

Current educational reforms emphasize equity, requiring a shift in addressing historical inequalities in Canadian education. Equity moves beyond equal treatment to ensuring access and removing barriers for historically disadvantaged groups (Ng, 2003). EBM students face challenges beyond nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion, including adapting to new environments and employment barriers (Vertovec, 2007), making them highly vulnerable to poor academic outcomes (Li et al., 2021).

A key factor in educational inequity for EBM students is mainstream teachers' lack of preparation to support linguistically, culturally, and racially diverse learners (Coady et al., 2016; Gilman & Norton, 2020; Li et al., 2021). Many struggle due to insufficient training, and some hold misconceptions about EBM students' learning abilities (Coady et al., 2016). Teacher education programs inconsistently require coursework on cultural and linguistic diversity (Li et al., 2021), often lacking depth in literacy engagement and identity affirmation (Cummins et al., 2012). Furthermore, EBM training frequently oversimplifies language acquisition, perpetuating misconceptions such as the belief that mere exposure to English suffices for proficiency (Webster & Valeo, 2011). Faez (2012) also noted that teachers report low self-efficacy in meeting EBM students' needs, highlighting their inadequate preparation for diverse classrooms.

My research has investigated whether the modified SIOP model can positively impact teacher self-efficacy when combined with collaborative efforts. The results of my research shed light on the potential of collaborative work to support mainstream teachers and to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for EBM students, who often face unique challenges in language acquisition and content comprehension.

Methods

The primary objective of my study was to investigate the potential of integrating a modified SIOP model into the collaborative planning and teaching processes involving three mainstream and one EBM teachers to improve teacher self-efficacy through a six-week Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. Following Langley et al.'s (2009) principles for testing changes, the PDSA framework was employed for a targeted examination of the proposed hypothesis, as illustrated in Figure 1. PDSA is an iterative process that facilitates empirical investigation and contributes to enhancing theoretical understanding (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Two research questions guided this study:

- How does the implementation of a modified SIOP co-teaching model, specifically between EBM teachers and mainstream teachers, impact the self-efficacy of mainstream teachers in serving EBM beginners in Grade 2 and Grade 5 classes?
- How do three mainstream teachers and one EBM teacher

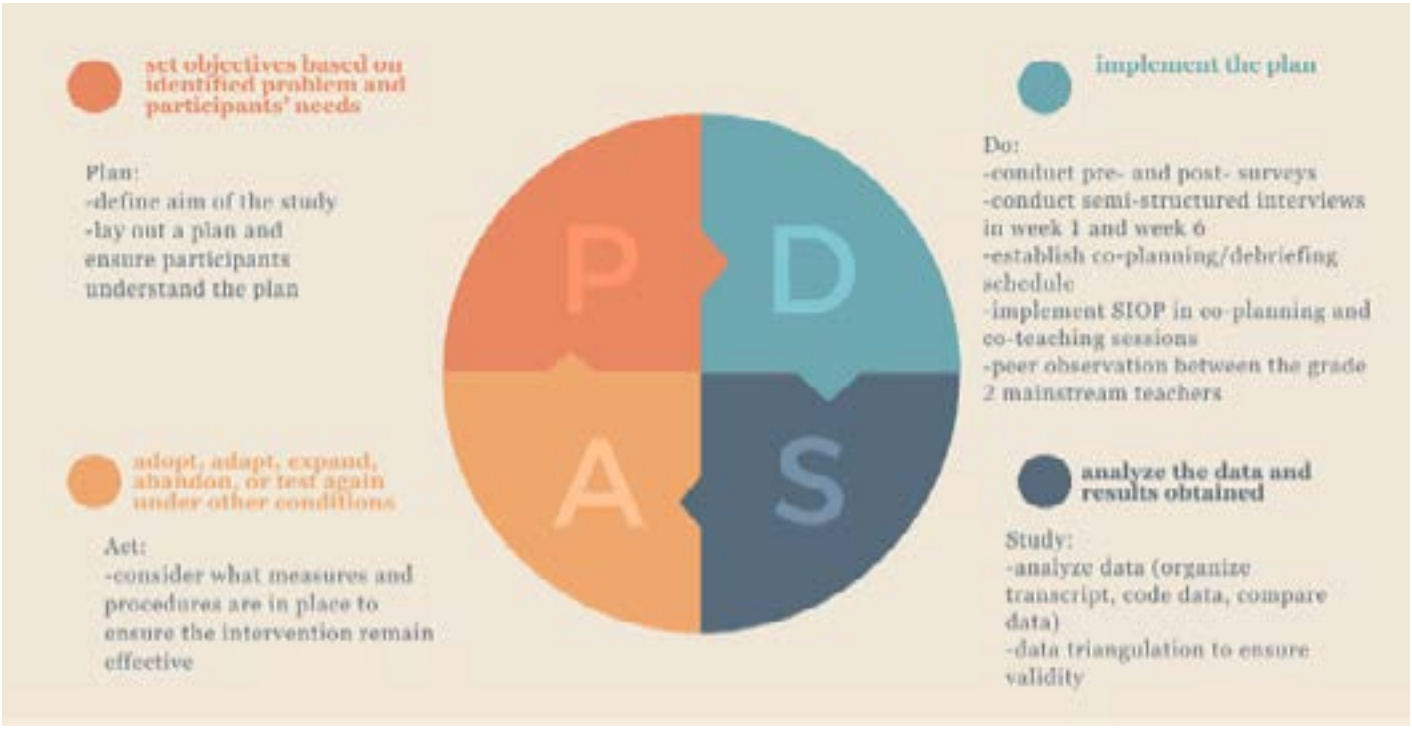

Figure 1 The PSDA Cycle for the Six-Week Implementation of SIOP

perceive the implementation of the modified SIOP model?

My study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing surveys and semi-structured interviews with four teacher participants, including one EBM teacher and three elementary mainstream teachers (see Table 1). Participants were purposefully selected based on their experience working with EBM students. Pre- and post-surveys were administered in the first and last weeks of the study, respectively, with the survey instrument adapted from Fu and Wang (2021). This Likert scale-based survey (1-never to 5-always) described participants' perceived efficacy across four subscales: assessment and evaluation of EBM students, accommodation of EBM students' learning needs, implementation of teaching strategies for EBM students, and proficiency in linguistic knowledge.

Name (pseudonyms)	School Role	Reasons to be Included in the Study
Amy	Gr.2 Mainstream teacher	Close to 10 years of classroom teaching experience; open-minded; a critical thinker; passionate about inclusive education.
Betty	Gr.2 Mainstream Teacher	Over 25 years of classroom teaching; experiences with teaching EBM students in her class; experiences working and co-teaching with EBM teachers; proactive educator in different settings
Carol	EBM teacher	Over 10 years of EBM teaching experiences; strong language teaching background; has completed SIOP training; easy to work with; open-minded; supportive
Dana	Gr.5 Mainstream teacher	Over 20 years of classroom teaching experience; open to new learning; never co-planned and co-taught with EBM teachers; interested in learning about co-teaching between EBM and mainstream teachers;

Table 1 Participants of the PDSA Study at Taylor Creek Elementary (pseudonym)

Weekly co-teaching and co-planning times for implementing the SIOP framework were scheduled. The initial co-planning session followed the modified "Coffee Talk" (Collaborative for Learning and Educational Equity, n.d.) protocol to facilitate conversations between mainstream and EBM teachers. The modified Coffee Talk protocol involved introducing a lesson plan, sharing thoughts, suggestions, and questions in a group, and collaboratively finalizing the plan within approximately 25 minutes. Subsequently, meetings from weeks 2 – 5 began with a short debriefing of the co-planned and co-taught lesson, followed by a discussion on a new lesson plan. Each lesson was prepared by the EBM teachers with some SIOP components (language objective, interactive activities, building background knowledge and comprehensible input, etc.) and modified by mainstream teachers during the meeting to improve the quality and applicability. Factors such as narrowing learning content goals, time management, grouping, and making lessons relevant to the curriculum were suggested to revise the lesson plans.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants before and after the study, and audio recording was employed during co-planning sessions. Additionally, notes were taken during co-planning and debriefing sessions to refine lesson plans, and memos were written to document incidents and emotions. The first interview, conducted in the first week, focused on teachers' perspectives on EBM education at the school. In contrast, the second interview, conducted over the subsequent three weeks, sought feedback on the study's intervention and how the collaboration process impacted their self-efficacy in serving EBM students. Data security measures included encrypted, password-protected devices and adherence to ethical considerations.

Results

Overall, the alteration in self-efficacy scores exhibited minimal change across the four teacher participants (see Table 2). The overall shift remained relatively modest.

	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Percentage Changed
Amy (Grade 2 Teacher)	3.58	3.67	2.5%
Betty (Grade 2 Teacher)	3.38	3.54	4.7%
Carol (EBM Specialist)	3.58	3.38	-5.6%
Dana (Grade 5 Teacher)	2.83	2.88	1.8%
All Participants	3.34	3.36	0.6%

Table 2 Quantitative finding: Individual Mean Score and Overall Mean Score

Four themes emerged as a result of triangulating evidence from the three sources of data– interviews, co-planning and debriefing sessions and surveys (See Table 3).

Research Questions	Themes	Indications
How does the implementation of a structured SIOP co-teaching model, specifically between EBM teachers and mainstream teachers, impact the self-efficacy of mainstream teachers in serving EBM beginners in Grade 2 and Grade 5 classes?	Theme 1: Variations in the Impact of the Modified SIOP on Teacher's Self-Efficacy	Grade 2 teachers reported an increase (Amy and Betty) Grade 5 teachers reported no increase (Dana and Carol)
	Theme 2: All Teacher Participants Acknowledged the Benefits of Collaboration	•Sharing ideas about teaching strategies •Planning and practicing the strategy with colleagues •Understanding your co-teacher better •Feeling supported
How do three mainstream teachers and one EBM teacher perceive the implementation of the modified SIOP model?	Theme 3: Teacher Participants Shared Different Impact of the Modified SIOP Model on Their Approach to Support EBM Students	• The process reminded Amy, Betty and Carol to use the strategies they already know in their daily teaching • Dana started to change her introduction and started to scaffold for her EBM students, discuss challenges, seek advice, and share resources from and with Carol
	Theme 4: Time, Relationship Building, Shared Philosophy and EBM Resources were Fundamental Factors Contributing to Successful Co-planning and Co-teaching	• Allocated time, but not too often • Good relationship with co-teachers • Similar teaching style and philosophy • Sharing resources (support EBM)

Table 3 Findings from Qualitative Research

Theme 1: Variations in the Impact of the Modified SIOP on Teacher's Self-Efficacy

Over the six-week period, teacher participants reported a modest increase in their self-efficacy in serving EBM students. However, they acknowledged the benefits of structured collaboration guided by the modified SIOP framework.

Theme 2: All Teacher Participants Acknowledged the Benefits of Collaboration

Participants identified the following benefits: structured collaboration facilitated professional dialogue, allowing teachers to learn from one another, exchange ideas, and reflect on their instructional practices.

Theme 3: Teacher Participants Shared Different Impact of the Modified SIOP Model on Their Approach to Support EBM Students

Some teachers confirmed the modified SIOP model acted as a reminder to intentionally use the strategies that they have already known more often in their daily practice. The intermediate teacher started to make changes to the introduction of her lesson and value more of her EBM teacher partner's ideas and feedback.

Theme 4: Time, Relationship Building, Shared Philosophy and EBM Resources were Fundamental Factors Contributing to Successful Co-planning and Co-teaching

Two participants identified critical areas for professional growth, including improving whole-class instructional strategies for EBM teachers and addressing the challenges faced by EBM students beyond second language acquisition. Participants also emphasized the importance of time, relationship building, a shared instructional philosophy, and accessible resources in effectively supporting EBM students.

Discussion

Connecting the findings with existing literature offered nuanced insights into the evolving nature of teacher self-efficacy when working with EBM students. Klassen and Chiu (2010) argued that teacher efficacy can be measured broadly or in specific areas; measuring specific skills helps pinpoint teachers' challenges and provides practical guidance on supporting their growth. This level of specificity is valuable for conducting a subsequent PDSA cycle and guiding school leaders and policymakers in designing targeted supports. Marzano et al. (2019) suggested that when teachers collaborate, they bring collaborative strengths to tackle specific challenges unique to their school settings, making them highly effective problem solvers. Continuous effort in sharing ideas and practicing strategies with colleagues can lead to bigger growth in teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). However, pedagogical-content knowledge is essential for teacher efficacy (Shulman, 1987). Implement strategies introduced and practiced almost immediately thereafter, promote growth in pedagogical language knowledge (Ollerhead, 2018). To support sustained growth in self-efficacy, schools should allocate dedicated time and spaces for teachers to engage in meaningful collaborative activities (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016). While schools can foster and encourage regular opportunities for teachers to connect and communicate with each other (Keefe et al., 2004), simply setting aside time for teachers to associate does not ensure that meaningful collaboration (Marzano et al., 2019). Instead, schools can facilitate regular collaboration with an intentional structure, such as teachers can showcase useful resources they have discovered or created (Clarke, 2007). Such collaboration extends beyond surface-level interactions

and fosters a mechanism for on-going professional learning that benefits both teachers and students.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggested the critical need for systemic improvements in teacher education, professional development, and collaborative frameworks to better support mainstream teachers in serving EBM students. While the modified SIOP model showed some benefits, its impact on teacher self-efficacy varied, underscoring the complexity of collaboration across diverse demographics, teaching styles, or school environment. Key factors such as time for structured collaboration, shared teaching philosophy, teacher relationship played a crucial role in shaping teachers' experiences. To effectively meet EBM students' unique linguistic and cultural needs and ultimately promo equitable and enriched educational experiences, policymakers, school administrators, and higher

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WAESOL Professional Development Grant Report

The Impact of Professional Development on my Teaching Practice: a Reflection on the use of a grant for Conference Participation

Secil Horosan Dogan

As a community college adjunct professor in the field of English language learning (ELL), I am continually striving to enhance my teaching practices to better serve my diverse student population. The recent grant I received has been instrumental in providing me with an opportunity for professional development that I might not have been able to access otherwise. The funding allowed me to attend an international conference focused on ELL education, AAAL 2025 Denver, which has had a significant impact on my teaching and my students' learning experiences.

Purpose and Use of the Grant

The grant was awarded to me for the explicit purpose of attending a professional conference out of state. I attended the AAAL 2025 in Denver on March 22nd-25th 2025. The conference is one of the two biggest meetings in the field of ELL. It gathered experts, educators, and researchers from all over the world to discuss linguistic approaches, emerging AI trends, pedagogical approaches, and best practices for teaching English language learners. This event was particularly valuable to me because it focused on the intersection of technology, cultural inclusivity, and effective language acquisition strategies—topics that align directly with the challenges and opportunities I face in the classroom.

The grant covered my registration fees and travel expenses, which made attending the conference financially feasible. Without this support, attending a high-quality, national event of this caliber would have been outside of my personal and professional budget.

Insights Gained at the Conference

One of the most impactful sessions I attended was a plenary by Dr. Hayriye Kayi-Aydar: "An Intersectional Look at Critical Applied Linguistics: Current Research, Future Directions, and Some Skeptical Remarks" This talk looked at how critical applied linguistics can help address unfairness around the world, especially by including voices and identities that are often ignored. It highlighted the importance of supporting marginalized communities through education and research. As an ELL instructor in a multicultural classroom, I learned how students' different identities affect their learning and felt encouraged to use more inclusive and fair teaching practices. I really enjoyed the session.

Another session focused on "Generative AI as a roleplay interlocutor in L2 task-based pragmatics learning". In this session, the scholars shared that Korean EFL learners who practiced L2 with ChatGPT showed greater improvement than those who worked with peers, due to the chatbot's tailored responses and detailed feedback. Learners also reported positive experiences using ChatGPT, appreciating its authentic interaction and support during communicative tasks. After this session, I was more encouraged to integrate ChatGPT as a language partner to provide students with individualized, consistent speaking practice and immediate feedback, enhancing pragmatic competence outside traditional classroom interactions.

In addition, I attended several discussions on cultural topics including diversity. One was "Relational multimodal composing: Sustaining diverse identities, cultures and communicative repertoires" This colloquium looked at how students from different cultural and language backgrounds can use digital and creative storytelling to work together, share their identities, and build confidence in different learning settings. My takeaway was the importance of honoring students' diverse voices and communicative repertoires in digital storytelling as a means of promoting inclusion, identity development, and meaningful learning relationships.

A nice surprise was that the conference chair was Professor Manka Varghese from the University of Washington. I've long admired her work on teacher identity, so it was a meaningful experience to meet someone whose research has influenced my teaching.

Implementing New Strategies in the Classroom

Upon returning to my college, I began integrating some of the strategies and tools I had learned about at the conference. One of the first changes I made was to incorporate more

technology into my lessons. I was already using ChatGPT and Copilot. After the conference, I introduced a few new language practice applications, like HelloTalk, and AI tools, like Gemini, that students could use to practice speaking and writing skills outside of class.

I also integrated culturally relevant materials into my syllabus. We watched videos from different cultures and they made presentations about their home countries. This has not only increased engagement but has also helped students see the relevance of English language learning to their everyday lives.

I also implemented collaborative learning activities in which students could work together in pairs or small groups to complete real-life tasks such as learning about and applying to RealID in the US, fostering peer-to-peer support. This approach aligns with research I encountered at the conference, which suggests that collaboration not only improves language acquisition but also builds a sense of community among learners.

Impact on Students

The changes I've made in my teaching practice have had a noticeable impact on my students. They have reported that they were involved in more real-life situations, more speaking activities and felt more confident in their language abilities. The use of technology has allowed them to practice outside of class, providing them with opportunities for additional language exposure. Students who don't have many friends outside the classroom tried to find more opportunities to make friends to practice English. Some who were shy to speak in front of the class now engage more in discussions and interactive activities.

Moreover, the incorporation of culturally relevant content has allowed my students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum, which has boosted their sense of pride and motivation. They've expressed greater interest in assignments that explore their own cultural backgrounds and the ways in which language connects to identity. This has been particularly meaningful in fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Long-Term Benefits

The grant-funded conference experience has also had long-term benefits beyond immediate changes in my classroom. Attending the conference allowed me to network with other educators and researchers in the field of English language learning. I have since been in contact with several colleagues from other institutions, exchanging ideas, resources, and advice. This professional network is invaluable as it provides ongoing support and inspiration for my teaching practice.

Additionally, the strategies I learned have helped me refine my overall approach to ELL instruction. I was also invited to share my conference experience at the administrations level at my college. It was really rewarding.

Conclusion

The grant I received has had a transformative impact on my teaching practice, my students' learning experiences, and my professional development. By attending the AAAL conference, I gained new insights, tools, and strategies that I have successfully implemented in the classroom. These changes have not only improved student engagement and language proficiency but have also created a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

I'm sincerely grateful for the opportunity and for the support I've received through the WAESOL Professional Development Grant. I'm so glad I joined WAESOL in 2024, and I'm already looking forward to WAESOL 2025 in November!

WAESOL Project Funding Grant Report

The Impact of Professional Development on My Teaching Practice: A Reflection on the Use of a Grant for Conference Participation

Dini Arini

I am grateful to have been selected as a recipient of the 2024 WAESOL Project Funding Grant to support my project, AI Integration in Science Education: Supporting Multilingual Learners. This initiative explored how artificial intelligence (AI) can assist science educators in Washington State, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia teach multilingual learners (MLLs). Through this project, I investigated current AI applications, provided practical AI tools, and equipped teachers with training to effectively integrate AI into their instruction.

The project focused on bridging the gap between AI technology and multilingual science education by helping teachers utilize AI to enhance language accessibility and student engagement. To accomplish this, I conducted surveys and interviews with science teachers to assess their current AI use, challenges, and perceptions. Findings revealed enthusiasm for AI-driven language support but highlighted gaps in AI literacy and training.

Based on these insights, AI tools—including language processing technologies, adaptive learning platforms, and real-time translation tools—were introduced. These tools were curated to enhance instruction and simplify complex scientific concepts for MLLs. To ensure successful implementation, interactive workshops were held to train educators on how to integrate AI effectively into their classrooms. These sessions covered AI's role in real-time translation, personalized learning, and ethical considerations.

Educators reported increased confidence in using AI tools to support MLLs, particularly in simplifying scientific terminology and providing adaptive learning support. AI tools facilitated interactive learning, allowing MLLs to access scientific content more effectively through translations, visual aids, and real-time feedback mechanisms. While AI was well-received, teachers emphasized the need for continued professional development to address technical challenges and ethical considerationsSome teachers faced difficulties integrating AI due to limited digital literacy and infrastructure gaps. To mitigate this, simplified guidelines and troubleshooting support were provided. Teachers also aised concerns regarding student data privacy when using AI tools. Additional training on ethical AI use and data protection strategies was incorporated into workshops.

This project successfully demonstrated AI's potential to support multilingual learners in science education while identifying critical areas for further development. Moving forward, I recommend sustained AI training programs, clear institutional policies on ethical AI usage, and further research on the long-term impact of AI on MLL learning outcomes. With the support of WAESOL, this project has contributed to advancing AI-assisted multilingual education. The results of this study have been submitted to Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Science Education Research (DISER) (https://diser.springeropen.com/) for publication, further disseminating insights on AI integration in science classrooms for multilingual learners. I look forward to further collaboration and continuing to explore innovative ways to enhance language accessibility in science education.

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September 21, 2025	**WAESOL Annual Conference, Call for Proposals Due**
October 1, 2025	**WAESOL Grants, Awards, Scholarships Application Deadline**
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