LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BILINGUAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS OF SPANISH-SPEAKING EMERGENT BILINGUALS WITH DISABILITIES: THE IMPACT OF THE STUDENTS' INTERSECTIONALITY ON TEACHERS' PRACTICES

by

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Dedication

To my parents for their love and inspiration and to my daughter, Teresa, whose condition of autism helped me to understand my life's purpose.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my professors, colleagues, friends, family, and children for standing by me and encouraging me throughout the process of working towards my doctoral degree. My special gratitude goes to my committee members: Dr. Laurie Weaver, Dr. Leslie Gauna, Dr. Elizabeth Beavers, and Dr. Judith Márquez, whose expertise, guidance, feedback, and encouragement made it possible for me to complete my dissertation. I wish to especially acknowledge and thank my youngest child, Teresa, who is living with autism, and whom I describe as my "why". I do what I do because of her. She helped me to understand my life's purpose and for that reason, I am deeply indebted to her. I reserve my deepest gratitude to God, for his grace and faithfulness because without his approval, this day would not have come.

ABSTRACT

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BILINGUAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS OF SPANISH-SPEAKING EMERGENT BILINGUALS WITH DISABILITIES: THE IMPACT OF THE STUDENTS' INTERSECTIONALITY ON TEACHERS' PRACTICES

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Abstract

Emergent bilinguals (EBs) with disabilities are in an intersectional gap; that means that on the one hand, they are learning a second language and on the other hand, they have learning challenges resulting from their disability. The implication is that the interaction between their disability and second language learning may impact how they learn and show what they know. Data have indicated special education teachers lack skills in socio-cultural and second language learning approaches (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Jozwik et al., 2020; Park et al., 2016). Bilingual education teachers are not sufficiently trained to provide special education interventions (Martínez-Álvarez, 2020). As a result, EBs with disabilities receive inadequate instruction leading to poor performance outcomes. Few studies have investigated teachers' experiences in this space between special education and bilingual education with the purpose of improving instruction for

EBs with disabilities. There are even fewer studies about teachers' experiences working with Spanish-speaking EBs who are caught in this intersectional gap. The purpose of this study was to investigate how bilingual and special education teachers described how the intersectionality of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities impacted the teachers' practices. The overarching research question was: How do bilingual and special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on teachers' practices? Clandinin and Connelly's qualitative, narrative inquiry method (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) was used to collect and analyze data from the narratives of four teachers (two bilingual and two special education) of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in elementary schools. Using the Zoom video platform, the researcher conducted two individual interviews with each of the four participants, using a structured, open-ended interview protocol. The researcher selected the four participants in the study through a purposeful, convenient sample design based on their role as certified teachers of EBs with disabilities from elementary schools. The researcher utilized member checking to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. The researcher then analyzed the data for emergent themes. The findings revealed seven emergent themes across all participants' experiences, including that of the researcher, who by virtue of the narrative method, could not remove self from the participants' narratives. The themes included: (1) teacher unpreparedness, (2) challenging and complicated practices, (3) good collaboration among teachers, (4) insufficient planning time, (5) language of instruction belief influenced preferred language for teaching, (6) confusion over unclear policies on language of instruction, (7) and inequitable instruction of EBs with disabilities. Overall, the findings suggested that participants may need more support and training within the space of disability and second language learning to adequately teach EBs with disabilities.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

The Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA] (2015) requires that all students in the United States be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2020a). Additionally, under the Civil Rights Law, schools are obligated to ensure that emergent bilinguals (EB) have equal access to education (USDOE, 2020b). EBs refer to students who are learning English as an additional language to their home language (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2021a). Schools have the responsibility to make certain that EBs have equal access to a quality education that allows them to make academic progress while they are learning the English language (U.S. Department of Justice [USDOJ] & USDOE, 2015a). However, the law does not provide specific guidance to schools on how to educate EBs within the school context (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2020). While the lack of guidance may have impacted service delivery for all EBs, it is more so for EBs with disabilities (Umansky et al., 2017). EBs with disabilities fall into an intersectional gap - they are students with disabilities, and they are learning English as a second language (Cioè-Peña, 2017); therefore, they may have unique learning needs that could have implications on how they are taught and how they show what they are learning (Cioè-Peña, 2017). Frequently, teachers lack the training needed to support EBs with disabilities (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Jozwik et al., 2020) and research on teachers' experiences in teaching EBs with disabilities are scarce. It is important to examine the lived experiences of teachers of EBs with disabilities because the findings may inform teacher training programs on how to better prepare and support teachers to address the intersectional needs of those students.

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative-method study was to examine the lived experiences of teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in elementary schools. This study was designed to contribute to the emerging body of research focused on the intersection of bilingual and special education. This chapter reviews the research problem, the significance of the study, the research purpose and questions, and the definition of key terms.

Before discussing the research problem, a definition of terms used to refer to different categories of EBs will be necessary as some sources in the literature review might refer to the same group of students using different terms. According to the definition provided by Title VII of the Improving America's School Act of 1994, a Limited English Proficient (LEP) student is “someone who has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classroom where the language instruction is in English" (as cited in Rhodes et al., 2005, p.1). The Federal Office of English Language Acquisition and many English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual programs funded by that office use the term English Learners [ELs] (Watkins & Liu, 2013); the Office of Special Education Programs uses the term Limited English Proficient [LEP] (Watkins & Liu, 2013); and scholars of bilingual education prefer the term English Language Learner [ELL] over LEP because ELL highlights accomplishments rather than deficits (USDOE, 2020c). There are also terms for related groups such as “LM” for Language Minority, and “PHLOTE” for Persons with a Home Language Other than English. Both terms refer to students who have a home language that is not English but who may not have limited English proficiency (Watkins & Liu, 2013). Other terms are “FEP” for Fluent English Proficient to refer to students who have

exited ESL services but are still being monitored for their academic success (Watkins & Liu, 2013).

In 2021, House Bill 2066 of the 87th Texas Legislature, replaced the term limited English proficient (LEP) student used in the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 29, with a new term, emergent bilingual student, effective September 2021 (TEA, 2021a). These terms refer to the same group of students in Texas who are in the process of acquiring English and have another language as the students' primary or home language (TEA, 2021a). In the revised Texas Education Data Standards (TEDS), the terms of emergent bilingual and English learner are bridged as EB/EL, but the term English learner is still used in federal regulations and guidance (TEA, 2021a). For purposes of this study, the term emergent bilinguals (EBs) is used in accordance with Texas regulations, although in this study's literature review, some sources might refer to the same group of students using different terms.

Research Problem

The number of EBs enrolled in public schools in the United States appears to be high and increasing as the following data would suggest. In fall of 2019, an estimated 5.1 million EBs attended U.S. public schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022a). This number is equal to 10.4% of the population of all students enrolled in public schools (NCES, 2022a). Also, data indicated that in 2018, Hispanic and/or Latino students made up 27.18% of the population of children ages 6–21 served under IDEA, Part B, across the country (Office of Special Education Program [OSEP], 2020). Although the data did not specifically provide the percentage of those students who were learning English, it may be safe to infer that number will be high also.

Generally, teacher education programs in the U.S. have not sufficiently responded to the demographic changes in the student population, which has seen a steady increase in

the number of EBs enrolled in public schools (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). Between fall 2010 and fall 2019, the percentage of public-school students in the United States who were EBs increased from an estimated 9.2% percent, or 4.5 million students, to an estimated 10.4 %, or 5.1 million students (NCES, 2022a). Additionally, only 20 states in the U.S. explicitly require teachers to have certification specific to teaching EBs and 19 states have unclear certification requirements for specialized training of teachers of EBs (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018).

Based on this knowledge, it is reasonable to infer that less attention has also been paid to the education of EBs with disabilities. This is despite federal laws holding schools accountable for the education of all EBs, including EBs with disabilities. For example, the Child Find mandate requires that State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must ensure that all students who may have a disability, and need services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504, are located, identified, and assessed for special education and disability-related services in a timely manner (Wright & Wright, 2019). Additionally, LEAs must provide EBs with disabilities with both language assistance and disability-related services to which they are entitled under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which addresses the rights of students with disabilities in the education context (USDOJ & USDOE, 2015b). It is pertinent to mention that most of the research studies on EBs cited in this current study did not distinguish between Spanish-speaking EBs and non-Spanish-speaking EBs, thus, the EBs referred to in the studies include all EBs speaking different languages, except in instances where a distinction is made.

Regarding educational regulations, the ESSA (2015) requires that all students in the United States be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers (USDOE, 2020a.) Additionally, in 1970, the federal Office for

Civil Rights (OCR) stated that under the Civil Rights Law, schools are obligated to ensure that EBs have equal access to a quality education that allows them to make academic progress while they are learning the English language (USDOJ & USDOE, 2015b). The law, however, does not provide specific guidance to schools on how to educate EBs within the school context (NCELA, 2020). The consequence of a lack of specific guidance may have been most impactful on the education of EBs with disabilities. The educational needs of EBs in general may be varied and complicated due to their cultural and linguistic diversity, but EBs with disabilities have additional challenges that impact their education, apart from cultural and linguistic differences (Cioè-Peña, 2017). The students' intersectionality between having a disability and learning a second language may cause them to have unique learning challenges (Cioè-Peña, 2017). Therefore, in assessing their needs, teachers need to consider the students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs as well as their cultural/linguistic needs (Liasidou, 2013).

Frequently, teachers lack the training needed to support EBs in general, much less EBs with disabilities (Park et al., 2016; Wang & Woolf, 2015). Research shows that EBs with disabilities frequently do not receive appropriate instruction that addresses their unique needs, and the primary reason is linked to inadequate teacher preparation (Cioè-Peña, 2017; Liasidou, 2013; Wang & Woolf, 2015). For example, bilingual education teachers report limited training in special education instructional interventions for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Park et al., 2016). Similarly, special education teachers frequently lack the skills to address the students' socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics, such as providing linguistic and home language support (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Jozwik et al., 2020). Therefore, the students are caught in the

middle of two separate disciplines, neither one of which can fully address the students' intersectional needs (Cioè-Peña, 2017).

Findings from research studies indicate that teachers have trouble distinguishing between students' language learning and disability related needs (Chu & Flores, 2011; Gonzalez et al., 2021; Sanatullova-Allison & Robison-Young, 2016; Wang & Woolf, 2015). Also, teachers have reported difficulties in collaborating effectively with parents and creating classroom environments that enhance students' experiences, strengths, and prior knowledge (Wang & Woolf, 2015). Previous research studies (Casey et al., 2013 Ochoa et al., 2014) have consistently suggested a need for teachers to have dual competencies in both special education and bilingual education and be trained specially to teach EBs with disabilities (Wang & Woolf, 2015). According to Sclafani (2017), culturally responsive instruction (CRI) is a concept initially advocated by Au (1993), who defined the term as "instruction consistent with the values of students' own cultures and aimed at improving academic learning" (p.1). Wang and Woolf (2015) pointed out that CRI practices positively correlated with higher levels of English proficiency. Therefore, what EBs with disabilities need are educators who have knowledge of CRI and can simultaneously provide linguistic support, while addressing their disability-related needs (Wang & Woolf, 2015). Teachers certified in bilingual special education are the most suited to have this knowledge by virtue of their training, but the field of bilingual special education is a relatively young field and few teacher college preparation programs in the country offer courses in bilingual special education (Wang & Wolf, 2015). For the first time, Texas will offer the Bilingual Special Education Teacher Certification, after House Bill (HB) 2256 was passed in 2021(Texas Care for Children, 2021). The HB 2256 is a law creating a bilingual special education certification in the State of Texas to teach students of limited English proficiency with disabilities (Texas Care for Children, 2021).

Dr. Dina C. Castro, Professor in Early Childhood Education, adequately captured the problems involved in educating EBs with disabilities, in a statement she gave in 2021 to the Texas Legislature in support of HB 2256:

> *...currently, children who are identified as English Learners and as having a disability are served by professionals who are not fully prepared to provide them with the high-quality services that meet their needs. This occurs because their teachers in both bilingual education and special education services, have limited or no understanding of how to effectively educate a bilingual child with a disability. Teacher preparation requirements to obtain a bilingual education certification do not include content to serve children with special education needs, and special education certification requirements do not include content on serving bilingual children. Furthermore, an English Learner attending a bilingual education program when identified as having a disability will most likely be referred to a special education program, and at that point lose their bilingual education support. Research on the development and education of children who are English learners and have a disability clearly indicates that English Learners with disabilities are indeed capable of dual language learning and that bilingualism is not harmful to their language development or education. In fact, when services to them are not provided considering their home language support as well as their English language acquisition, their progress may be affected or delayed. Educating an English Learner who has a disability requires knowledge and a set of teaching competencies that are particular to serving this population of children.*
>
> (Statement submitted to the Texas Legislature by Dr. Dina Castro, 2021)

Due to the shortage of qualified teachers, EBs with disabilities who receive special education services make insignificant academic progress (Ortiz & Robertson,

2018). Considering that around 45% of teachers in the United States have EBs in their classrooms (Wood et al., 2018), and that teachers are the single most influential factor on students' achievement outcomes (Wang & Woolf, 2015), there is a need to understand teachers' experiences in educating EBs with disabilities, but research in this area is scarce. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative, narrative study was to examine the lived experiences of teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in elementary schools to better understand how the students' intersectionality impacted the teachers' practices. A narrative method was best suited for this study because narrative research inquirers find ways to understand and present real-life experiences through the lived experiences that research participants tell (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The narrative inquiry approach also afforded the researcher the opportunity to provide a rich description of these experiences and explore the meanings that the participants derived from their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2020). This approach helped the researcher to answer the research questions by gathering data through in-depth interviews and researcher notes. The result of the study may inform professional development efforts on how best to prepare and support teachers to address the dual learning needs of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities.

This study is focused on only special education and bilingual education teachers that teach Spanish-speaking EBs. The special education teachers targeted for this study were those who taught students that were instructed in the standard Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Curriculum with language and content accommodations and/or modifications, as prescribed in their Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Special education teachers who teach students instructed in the alternative state curriculum were not part of the study, because there might be important differences in the academic expectations of both groups of students that each group of special educators teach.

Therefore, the teachers' training and classroom practices may be different. Similarly, the targeted bilingual education teachers were those who taught Spanish-speaking bilingual students. This study did not include teachers of English as a Second Language who taught non-Spanish-speaking bilingual students. The reason was because of the cultural and linguistic differences among the students that both groups of teachers teach. Spanish-speaking EBs were selected because they made up the highest number of EBs in the U.S. with an estimated 3.9 million enrolled in public schools in 2019; this constituted over three-quarters (76.8 percent) of overall enrollment of all EBs in public schools (NCES, 2022a). The researcher selected elementary school teachers for this study because to build a solid foundation for learning, all children should read well and independently by the end of the third grade (USDOE, 2016a). In the next section, the researcher will discuss the significance of the study.

Significance of Study

Data have suggested that EBs with disabilities do not make significant academic progress due to inadequate teacher preparation to address the students' intersectional needs (Cioè -Peña, 2017). Bilingual education teachers are not trained to provide special education interventions (Martínez-Álvarez, 2020) and special education teachers lack knowledge and skills in socio-cultural and second language learning approaches (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Jozwik et al., 2020; Park et al., 2016). To adequately meet the intersectional needs of EBs with disabilities, the students need teachers who are trained in both special education and bilingual education. In 2021, the Texas Legislature enacted a law creating a bilingual special education certification (HB 2256) to adequately prepare teachers to teach EBs with disabilities, but it is unclear when certified bilingual special education teachers would become available to teach EBs with disabilities in Texas public schools.

Data on the specific number of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in Texas public schools is unavailable because disaggregated data did not include that subgroup of students. Nevertheless, a reasonable inference can be made based on available data to suggest that the number of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in Texas public schools may be high. For example, in 2018, Spanish-speaking students made up 27.18% of the population of students ages 6–21 who received special education services across the country (OSEP, 2020) and 50% of those students were served in Texas and three other states—California, Florida, and New York [OSEP, 2020]. Though the data were not disaggregated to indicate how many of those 50% Spanish-speaking students (receiving special education services) were EBs, it is likely the number will be high, considering that in 2018, Spanish-speaking EBs made up 89.82% of the total number of EBs in Texas public-schools (OELA, 2020). The need to understand how the intersectionality of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities impacts teachers' practices, and the identification of teachers' challenges and support needs, may help to better prepare and support new bilingual and special education teachers of EBs with disabilities. Hopefully, preparing new teachers to better teach Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities may help to mitigate the dire need for teachers who can teach Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities at the intersection of disability and second language learning.

Another significant contribution of this study is its potential to increase the emotional well-being of EBs with disabilities (Cioè-Peña, 2017). Cheatham et al. (2007) found that bilingualism affords students with disabilities increased opportunities for inclusion in schools and communities by supporting more active participation in social groups and family activities. Tong (2014) also found that the combined use of the home language and English are crucial when students are developing a bicultural and bilingual identity that contributes to students' growth in agency and voice. Considering

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) proposal that the interaction between a child's characteristics and the immediate environment fuels and steers his or her development, it stands to reason that when Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities participate socially in school communities and are provided positive experiences that help to develop their bicultural and bilingual identity and voice, their emotional well-being is likely to increase, and this may contribute positively to their overall development.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative study was to examine the lived experiences of bilingual and special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, to understand how the students' intersectionality impacted the teachers' practices.

Research Questions

The researcher considered the following overarching question in this study: How do special education and bilingual education teachers of Spanish-speaking, EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?

Sub Questions:

1. How do special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?
2. How do bilingual education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the experiences of bilingual and special education teachers regarding working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities?

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms pertain to this study:

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022a)

Bilingual Education Teacher*:* A teacher who provides instruction in core academic subjects to EBs and who meets the state's applicable highly qualified requirements for the grade level and core academic subjects that are taught. English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers are also included in this group (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002).

Down Syndrome*:* Down syndrome is a condition in which a person has an extra chromosome which changes how the person's body and brain develop and can cause both mental and physical challenges (CDC, 2021).

Emergent Bilinguals: Students that are in the process of acquiring English and have another language as the students' primary or home language (TEA, 2021a).

Inclusive Education: When students with and without disabilities are educated in the same classroom environment (Yada & Savolainen, 2017).

Intellectual Disability**:** Intellectual disability is a condition characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior that originates before the age of 22 (The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities [AAIDD], 2022).

Special Education Teacher*:* A teacher who has earned full state certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through an alternative certification program), or passed the state special education teacher licensing

examination, and holds a license to teach in the state as a special education teacher (IDEA–Reauthorized Statute, Highly Qualified Teachers, 2004).

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative study was to examine the lived experiences of teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in elementary schools. This chapter presented the research problem, the significance of the study, the research purpose and questions, and definition of key terms. The next chapter provides a review of the literature pertaining to the study.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review discussed existing knowledge related to the education of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. Specifically, the discussion focused on constructs relevant to the research questions and included the following: (a) Key Special Education Laws in the U.S., (b) Bilingual Education Laws in the U.S., (c) Overview of Special Education in the U.S. and Texas, (d) Overview of Bilingual Education in the U.S. and Texas, (e) Overview of Bilingual Special Education in the U.S. and Texas, (f) Lived Experiences of Teachers, (g) Teacher Preparation, (h) Teacher Shortages in Bilingual and Special Education, (i) Gap in the Knowledge, and (j) Theoretical Framework.

Key Special Education Laws in the United States

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will be discussed in this section.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975 (formerly known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) stated that all children with disabilities must receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and must be provided with an Individualized Education Program [IEP] (USDOE, 2010). IDEA provided guidelines to states on how to provide FAPE for qualified students with special needs nationwide, in the LRE and with IEPs (USDOE, 2010). FAPE is defined as the provision of individualized special education services at no cost to parents (USDOE, 2010). LRE means that students with special needs should be provided opportunities to be educated in the general education classrooms alongside their typical peers to the extent that it is possible; and the only reason that the students would be removed from the general education classrooms is when the nature or severity of the

disability prevents the child from making progress even with accommodations and modifications (USDOE, 2010). The IEP is a written document developed by an IEP team that details the individualized education programming of a child with special needs (USDOE, 2010).

IDEA provided that a student may qualify for special education services if a formal, multi-factored evaluation finds a diagnosis in any of 13 categories of disabilities and by virtue of the identified disabilities, needs special education services. The 13 categories of disabilities include the following: intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deafness, deaf-blindness, and multiple disabilities (USDOE, 2010).

Although IDEA mandated a legal right to public education for children with disabilities, what constitutes LRE and FAPE was not clear, leaving courts to make those determinations (Yell & Drasgow, 1999). But in 1982, a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court on its first special education case provided some guidance to the lower courts on how they should rule in matters concerning what constitutes LRE and FAPE (Yell et al., 2004). In the case of Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley, the court ruled that qualified students with disabilities must have access to public school programs that meet the students' unique educational needs and be provided support services that enable students to benefit from instruction (Yell et al., 2004).

In 1990, IDEA was amended to add more provisions to the law, including supplemental funding for state and local programming, mandated services for 3 to 5-year-olds, and the addition of autism and traumatic brain injury to the existing disability categories (Yell & Shriner, 1997). But despite the expansion of IDEA, low expectations

of children with disabilities continued to be the norm in public schools (Esteves & Rao, 2008). Other issues that remained unaddressed included the absence of research-based programming and the onerous paperwork involved in special education (Yell & Shriner, 1997). Further, although between 1975 and 1990, the number of qualified students receiving special education services increased by 23% (Yell & Shriner, 1997), only 10% of students with special needs participated in statewide assessments (Thurlow, 2000).

As a partial response to the need for accountability, in 1997, IDEA was amended again with a focus on providing meaningful and measurable programs and services to students receiving special education services (Hardman & Nagle, 2004). The new IDEA requirements included the following mandates (Hardman & Nagle, 2004):

- Measurable annual goals must be written for qualified students.
- Students' assessments and measurements of students' progress must be done.
- Parents must be invited to participate in the entire process of special education.
- Efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement in the development of their child's IEP must be stepped up.
- Reporting of IEP goal progress to parents must be done periodically.
- If a student was not making enough progress toward meeting IEP goals, the plan must be revised.
- If a child was to be pulled from the general education classroom, the IEP team must state the reason.

Regarding EBs with disabilities, under IDEA (1975, 1997, 2004) amendments, EBs, just like any other students, are ineligible for services if their learning problems primarily stem from environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages (Butterfield et al., 2017). Additionally, evaluation and placement procedures must be conducted in the child's home language, except when it is not practical to do so. Also, parents must

understand proceedings of IEP meetings to provide informed consent (Butterfield et al., 2017) and must be informed about their right to have an interpreter at no cost. When developing, reviewing, or revising IEPs, a multidisciplinary team must consider the language needs of EBs (Butterfield et al., 2017).

In 2004, IDEA was revised to provide alternative models like Response to Intervention (RTI) to identify learning disabilities. RTI is a dynamic system of assessment in which students' progress are monitored to identify any risks, and to evaluate their responses to general education instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The students' unresponsiveness to classroom instruction are given more intensive instruction at a second tier, or level, inside or outside the classroom (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Data obtained from the assessments assist educators in designing early interventions and to identify students for special education services (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Mellard (2004, p. 2-3) identified some core features of RTI thus:

- universal screening of academics and behavior.
- high-quality, research-based classroom instruction and interventions.
- ongoing monitoring of student progress in response to interventions.
- multiple tiers of increasingly intense interventions.
- a differentiated curriculum; and
- differentiated instruction by various school staff, including the classroom teacher.

Although RTI was a general education initiative, it had implications for students with academic challenges because it changed how schools were required to view this group of students (Mellard, 2004). With RTI, schools needed to make concerted efforts to bridge the learning gap of struggling students by addressing their academic and behavior issues early, before such issues resulted in larger impacts on students' outcomes.

Consequently, this group of students would be less likely to be prematurely placed in special education (Mellard, 2004).

The legal mandates and efforts toward integration of students with disabilities appeared to have yielded benefits. For example, between 1980 and 2000, the number of students with special needs being educated in the general education classroom progressively increased (Whitten & Rodriguez-Campos, 2003), with 95% of students with disabilities receiving education in their local general education schools; and 75% in either full inclusion or a combination of inclusive and other special education services (Giuliani, 2012). However, challenges remained. The Every Student Succeeds Act was enacted in 2015 to address lingering challenges in the public education of all students.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

In 2015, President Obama signed the ESSA. The goal of ESSA was to "provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps." (ESSA 20 U.S.C. 6301 § 1001, Statement of Purpose, p.1.) To achieve this goal, ESSA required states to establish standards, assessments, and accountability systems designed to expand educational opportunities and improve outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities (USDOE, 2017a), but states were given more authority over what the standards, assessments, accountability, supports, and intervention would look like (Butterfield et al., 2017). This mandate was consistent with the IDEA mandate, which required states to provide individualized education services and support to students with disabilities to allow them to successfully participate in the general education curriculum (Butterfield et al., 2017). ESSA also allows states to develop Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AAS) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities; the standards align with the state's academic content standards and increase access to the

general education curriculum (USDOE, 2017a). Further, AAS must be developed in ways that would prepare the students for postsecondary education and for obtaining jobs in the future (USDOE, 2017a). For students taking the state standardized tests, ESSA requires that they be provided with appropriate accommodations (to be determined by the IEP team) and such accommodations may include the use of technology (USDOE, 2017a).

Under ESSA's Title I, state accountability plans for elementary and middle schools must include four components (Butterfield et al., 2017, p.3):

- Students' achievement on academic content assessments.
- A measure of student growth or another academic indicator.
- A non-academic indicator of school quality; and,
- EBs' progress in achieving English language proficiency.

Further, under ESSA, accountability for the performance of EBs shifted from Title III, which earmarked aid only for English language acquisition programs, to Title I, which may provide more funding to address the needs of EBs (Butterfield et al., 2017). The U.S. Department of Education provided specific ESSA guidance regarding EBs with disabilities under the new Title III requirements to guide states, LEAs, and schools on how they can utilize data to improve instruction for EBs with disabilities. The ESSA requires that some data reported under Title III be disaggregated by English learners with disabilities. Precisely, states and LEAs must report the number and percentage of EBs and EBs with disabilities in programs and activities who are progressing toward achieving English language proficiency in the aggregate and disaggregated (Butterfield et al., 2017). The data on former EBs must also be disaggregated by English learners with disabilities (ESEA Section 3121(a)(2), (a)(5)). Also, states, LEAs, and schools are encouraged (not required by Title III) to think about further disaggregating the data on EBs with disabilities' achievement of English language proficiency, and the number and

percentage of EBs with disabilities who have not gained proficiency within five years of first being classified as an EBs (Butterfield et al., 2017). The guideline also requires states, LEAs, and schools to utilize the Title III data on EBs with disabilities to inform program planning, staff professional development, and instructional decision-making (Butterfield et al., 2017). These data can also inform program improvements and help LEAs and states decide on what instruction to use to address gaps in achievement (Butterfield et al., 2017).

Under ESSA, professional development includes activities that are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays and other instructional staff the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services to the students (Butterfield et al., 2017). Supports also include positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier systems of supports, and utilization of accommodations (Butterfield et al., 2017). LEAs must provide and implement other effective activities and strategies that enhance or supplement IEPs for EB students (Butterfield et al., 2017) and such activities must include parent, family, and community engagement activities and strategies that coordinate and align related programs that were established prior to ESSA (Butterfield et al., 2017). Local Education Agencies may also use Title III funds for some allowed activities listed in Section 3115(d) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; for instance, providing community participation programs, family literacy services, and parent outreach (Butterfield et al., 2017). Other activities include improving the instruction of EBs and EBs with disabilities by using educational technology and accessing electronic networks (Butterfield et al., 2017).

Further, ESSA also provides guidance on how the new Title III reporting requirements are different from the IDEA reporting requirements for EBs with disabilities (Butterfield et al., 2017). The new Title III reporting requirements are meant

to track progress toward achieving English language proficiency for students identified as EBs, including EBs with disabilities. However, Section 618 of the IDEA does not have a similar reporting requirement; instead, it requires states to continue to report data yearly to the secretary, and the public, on the number and percentage of children with disabilities by race, ethnicity, gender, limited English proficiency status, and disability category, in specific areas (Butterfield et al., 2017). The data also include the number and percentage of children receiving special education and related services on the state-designated child count data (Part B Child Count Data); the academic setting in which students are receiving services on the state-designated child count date (Part B Educational Environments Data); and how students exit special education (e.g., graduate with a regular high school diploma, receive a certificate, or dropout) (Part B Exiting Data) [IDEA Section 618, 20 U.S.C. §1418(a)(1].

Additionally, ESSA addresses what SEAs and LEAs should consider when deciding on the effectiveness of teachers and professional development for teachers who teach EBs with disabilities (Butterfield et al., 2017). Instruction for EBs with disabilities should consider the students' dual needs, their disability-related needs and their language needs (Butterfield et al., 2017). Teachers should understand the second language acquisition process, and how it might be impacted by the student's individual development, knowledge of effective instructional practices for EBs and possibly, the child's disability (Butterfield et al., 2017). Another ESSA guideline provides information on available guidance and resources to assist states, LEAs, and school staff in providing appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations for EBs with disabilities (Butterfield et al., 2017). Support in this area from federal resources is available through department-funded technical assistance centers like the National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO) and the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) which

provide an annotated list of resources that address the use of accommodations (Butterfield et al., 2017).

Reforms such as IDEA and ESSA requiring the inclusion of students with disabilities in standard-based curriculum and assessment have yielded some positive results (National Council on Disability [NCD], 2018). ESSA placed greater emphasis on transparent accountability systems, and this contributed to an increase in the outcomes of students with disabilities; for example, data showed that by 2014, the dropout rate of students with disabilities decreased to 18.5% (NCD, 2018) compared to the data in 2003, which indicated that a third (or about 33.6%) of high school students with disabilities dropped out of school (NCD, 2018). The NCD (2018) also revealed that students with disabilities were performing better academically and graduating high school at higher rates than in the past. The reason suggested by stakeholders was that educators had become aware that children with disabilities were capable of high achievements when held to high standards (NCD, 2018).

Other influential federal regulations and case law relating to EBs in special education include the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Diana vs. State Board of Education (1970). Under the Civil Rights Act (1964), it is a violation to exclude children from effective participation in school because they lack an understanding of English (Butterfield et al., 2017). Regarding the case of Diana vs. State Board of Education (1970), the judicial decision stated that a child cannot be identified as mentally retarded based on IQ tests administered in English (Butterfield et al., 2017). The child must be assessed in his or her first language and in English, or nonverbal IQ tests may be used (Butterfield et al., 2017). This section focused on special education laws in the U.S. The next section will focus on bilingual education laws in the U.S.

Bilingual Education Laws in the United States

The following section is a summary of the historical context of bilingual education's legislation and court rulings, as well as community and government interactions that defined bilingual education and bilingual education policies in the U.S.

Second Half of Twentieth Century: Re-Birth of Bilingual Education

The period prior to the second half of the twentieth century was characterized as a time of tolerance and restriction towards foreign languages, and European immigrant communities established their own bilingual or monolingual schools to educate their children in their own languages (García, 2009a). But the second half of the twentieth century saw a re-birth of bilingual education, and it was characterized as a time of renewed tolerance (García, 2009a). Three circumstances facilitated the renaissance of bilingual education. One of them was how the effects of World War II and the Cold War underscored the importance and benefits of embracing foreign languages in the U.S. (García, 2009a). There was a great need to address the shortage of speakers of foreign languages to fulfill critical roles in the business, service, education, and national security sectors. The lack of proficiency in foreign language among government professionals became apparent and fueled a need to train professionals in foreign languages (García, 2009a). As a result, in 1958, the National Defense Education Act increased funds for the study of foreign languages (García, 2009a). Another circumstance that facilitated the renaissance of bilingual education was that educated Cuban immigrants imported Spanish-speaking teachers from Cuba to work with their children in Florida, and this action led to the establishment of the bilingual Spanish-English program in 1963, set up with assistance from the Ford Foundation (García, 2009a). After that, a few other bilingual programs began in Texas, New Mexico, California, and Arizona with no federal assistance (García, 2009a).

The third circumstance was the social movement that spearheaded school desegregation and anti-discrimination laws and led to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Brown vs. Board of Education, establishing the principle that "same was not always equal" and the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination, which stated that nobody should be discriminated against by virtue of their race, color, or national origin, and must not be denied the benefits of programs or be the subject of discrimination under any programs or activities that receive Federal funding (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). These three circumstances paved the way for future key legislation and court rulings on the education of linguistically diverse children.

In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (García, 2009a). The legislation was specific to the education of linguistically diverse children and was part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty (García, 2009a). Wiese and García (1998) shared that the BEA encouraged states to support bilingual education for students who spoke languages other than English, but even though there was federal funding available, the responsibility for funding the programs was mainly that of individual states (Wiese & García, 1998). However, the BEA persevered, and some states (New York, Texas, and California) took the lead in expanding their bilingual programs over the following thirty-four years (Cioè-Peña, 2017).

Also, schools were pressured by language diverse communities to adopt a move toward bilingual instruction and some school districts became the target of lawsuits by parents on the basis that failure to address their children's language needs in school was tantamount to failure to provide the children equal opportunity to education under the law (Crawford, 2000). In 1970, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) issued guidelines urging districts to take concrete steps to address the language deficiency

of EBs and to open their English instructional program to the students (Crawford, 2000). The guidelines became the precursor for the landmark court ruling regarding the education of EBs—Lau vs. Nichols [1974] (Crawford, 2000). Lau vs. Nichols of 1974 was a class lawsuit brought by a group of non-English-speaking Chinese students against the officials of the San Francisco Unified School District (Crawford, 2000). The students sought relief against unequal educational opportunities (Lau v. Nichols, 1974) and the court ruled in favor of the students, arguing that the school district discriminated against the students who did not speak or understand English; they felt that the district was acting as though the children had to begin school already knowing English that instead was the district's responsibility to teach (Crawford, 2000).

By 1975, the HEW issued the Lau Remedies, which were policy guidelines for the education of EBs, based on the ruling of Lau vs. Nichols which mandated school districts to comply with the civil rights requirements of Title VI (Crawford, 2000). The policy provided that federal grant money would be withheld from programs that did not comply with the guidelines (Crawford, 2000). For the following ten years, the state and federal courts' decisions favored the families of EBs and to avoid lawsuits, states began to add specifications regarding EBs in their education laws (Crawford, 2000). By the 1990s, it became a frequent occurrence for professionals such as judges, scholars, school administrators, and teachers to defend bilingual education (Crawford, 2000) and by the year 2000 school districts took concrete steps to address the language deficiency of EBs to avoid lawsuits (Crawford, 2000). Though some progress was made in support of bilingual education, challenges remained. The next two sections will focus on continued efforts to advocate for bilingual education in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

Late Twentieth Century: New Restrictions

Opposition to bilingual education gained an upper hand when in 1998, voters in California approved Proposition 227 (Crawford, 2000). Proposition 227 banned native language instruction and mandated that all students in the state of California be taught to speak English as quickly and effectively as possible (Crawford, 2000). This decision was reached based on the wrong premise that immigrant children could easily acquire full fluency in English if, at an early age, they received a lot of exposure (Crawford, 2000). Supporters of Proposition 227 argued that public schools were wasteful in spending funds on costly experimental language programs (Crawford, 2000). However, the prevalent anti-immigrant socio-political ideologies contributed to the passing of Proposition 227 and those ideologies continued for decades after the law was passed (Alfaro, 2018). After the approval of Proposition 227, other states like Massachusetts and Arizona approved similar acts and by 2007, twenty-eight states had passed laws mandating that only English be the language of instruction in public schools (García, 2009a). These restrictive language policies led to the eradication of K–12 bilingual education in many public schools and ended most bilingual teacher education programs in higher education institutions (Alfaro, 2018). The next section will focus on some new restrictions and new opportunities regarding bilingual education.

Early Twenty-First Century: New Restrictions and New Opportunities

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) legislated the education of EBs, including in the letter of the law what had been affirmed by the research community as best practice (Ortiz & Fránquiz, 2017), which was the instructional use of both English and a student's home language for the purpose of English language acquisition (García, 2009a). García noted that the NCLB Act did not use the word "bilingual" as was used in Title VII previously, but rather, used the terms

“English Language Acquisition or Language Enhancement.” Therefore, García (2009a) concluded that the Federal Government regulated and funded English proficiency, not bilingualism. García (2009a) posited that for government funding agencies, a child’s first language or native language (L1) was only viewed as a means of acquiring the English language and expressed concern that the U.S. appeared to be more interested in monolingualism in the dominant language as opposed to bilingualism.

However, due to evidence from research on the benefits of bilingualism (e.g., García & Kleifgen, 2008), many states started to introduce and expand new bilingual programs (Cioè-Peña, 2017). In 2016, California passed Proposition 58, reversing the limitations previously enacted by Proposition 227 (Simon-Cereijido, 2018). Notwithstanding, the last 50 years have seen an inconsistent pattern of funding and support for bilingual education, and this pattern has caused the linguistic needs of EBs, irrespective of ability levels, to be ignored (Cioè-Peña, 2017).

In summary, the above overview of bilingual education laws in the U.S. focused on advocacy efforts in support of bilingual education, which started prior to the second half of the twentieth century, a time characterized by tolerance and restriction towards foreign languages (García, 2009a). However, with the passing of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (García, 2009a), the use of a child’s native language for instruction became legal and schools came under pressure from language diverse communities to adopt a move toward bilingual approaches (Crawford, 2000). The next section will focus on an overview of special education in the U.S. and Texas.

Overview of Special Education in the United States and Texas

This overview of Special Education in the U.S. and Texas will discuss demographics of students in special education and educational approaches.

Demographics of Students in Special Education

According to information from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2022b), in the 2020–2021 school year, an estimated 7.2 million, or 15%, of public-school students ages 3–21 received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. However, after the beginning of the Coronavirus-19 Pandemic (2020), the number of students receiving special education services dropped by 1% in the 2020–2021 school year compared to the 2019–2020 school year (NCES, 2022b). This drop marked the first decrease in the number of students receiving special education services since the 2011–2012 school year (NCES, 2022b). Also, in the 2020–2021 school year, the percentage of students served under IDEA was highest for American Indian/Alaska Native students (18%), followed by Black students (17%), and students of two or more races (15%) (NCES, 2022b). The percentage was lowest for Pacific Islander students (11%) and Asian students (7%) (NCES, 2022b). The most common category of disability among all students was specific learning disabilities (33%) (NCES, 2022b). The percentage distribution of students receiving special education services for various types of disabilities differed by race/ethnicity in the 2020–2021 school year (NCES, 2022b). Specific learning disabilities and speech or language impairments were the two most prevalent types of disabilities for most racial/ethnic groups, accounting for an estimated 43% of students receiving IDEA services (NCES, 2022b). In the 2020–2021school year, specific learning disabilities and speech or language impairments together accounted for 50% or more of Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander students ages 3–21 who received special education services (NCES, 2022b). In contrast, the most common disability for Asian students was autism (25%) (NCES, 2022b). The percentage of students from other racial/ethnic backgrounds receiving IDEA services due to autism ranged from 7% to 12%

(NCES, 2022b). Black students and students with two or more races had the lowest percentage for specific learning disabilities and speech or language impairments, but a higher percentage of students from these two groups were reported as having emotional disturbances (7% each) and other health impairments (16% each) than for the overall student population (5% and 15%, respectively) (NCES, 2022b).

Separate data on special education services for males and females were available only for students ages 6–21 (NCES, 2022b). In the 2019–2020 school year, a higher percentage of male students (18%) than of female students (10%) received special education services under IDEA in public schools (NCES, 2022b). The percentage distribution of 6–21-year-old students who received various types of special education services in 2019–2020, also differed by sex (NCES, 2022b). For instance, the percentage of students served under IDEA who received services for specific learning disabilities was higher for female students (44%) than for male students (33%), whereas the percentage who received services for autism was higher for male students (14%) than for female students (5%) (NCES, 2022b).

Regarding the educational environment, 95% of students ages 6–21 served under IDEA in the fall of 2019 were enrolled in regular schools while 3% of students were enrolled in separate schools (public or private) for students with disabilities (NCES, 2022b). An estimated 1% of students were placed by their parents in regular private schools and less than 1% each were homebound or in hospitals, in separate residential facilities (public or private), or in correctional facilities (NCES, 2022b). Between the fall of 2009 and the fall of 2019, the percentage of students ages 6–21 served under IDEA who spent most of the school day (80% or more of their time) in general classes in regular schools, increased from 59% to 65% (NCES, 2022b). In contrast, during the same period, the percentage of students who spent 40% to 79% of the school day in general

classes decreased from 21% to 18% (NCES, 2022b). The percentage of students who spent less than 40% of their time in general classes also decreased from 15% to 13% (NCES, 2022b). In fall 2019, the percentage of students served under IDEA who spent most of the school day in general classes was highest for students with speech or language impairments (88%) (NCES, 2022b). The next highest group of students served under IDEA who spent most of the school day in general classes were those with specific learning disabilities (73%), followed by students with visual impairments (69%), students with other health impairments (68%), and students with developmental delays (67%) (NCES, 2022b). Less than one-third of students with deaf-blindness (26%), intellectual disabilities (18%), and multiple disabilities (14%) spent most of the school day in general classes (NCES, 2022b).

A total of 423,000 students ages 14–21 served under IDEA exited school in the 2018–2019 school year (NCES, 2022b). Approximately 72% of these students graduated with a regular high school diploma, 16% dropped out, 10% received an alternative certificate, 1% reached the maximum age to receive special education services, and less than one-half of 1% died (NCES, 2022b). During the same period, the percentages of students receiving services under IDEA who graduated with a regular high school diploma, received an alternative certificate, or dropped out differed by race/ethnicity and type of disability (NCES, 2022b). Regarding race/ethnicity, the percentage of students who graduated with a regular high school diploma was highest for Asian students (78%) and lowest for Black students (65%) (NCES, 2022b). The percentage of students who received an alternative certificate was highest for Black students (12%) and lowest for American Indian/Alaska Native students (4%) (NCES, 2022b). The percentage of students who dropped out was highest for American Indian/Alaska Native students (24%) and lowest for Asian students (7%) (NCES, 2022b). Regarding type of disability, the

percentage of students who graduated with a regular high school diploma was highest for students with speech or language impairments (85%) and lowest for students with multiple disabilities (45%) (NCES, 2022b). The percentage of students who received an alternative certificate was highest for students with intellectual disabilities (32%) and lowest for students with speech or language impairments (3%) (NCES, 2022b). The percentage of students who dropped out was highest for students with emotional disturbances (33%) and lowest for students with autism (7%) (NCES, 2022b). In Texas, the percentage of students served in special education programs increased from 9.8% in 2018-2019 to 10.7% in 2019-2020 (TEA, 2020a). In 2019-2020, the total enrollment of students receiving special education services in Texas public schools was 587,987 (TEA, 2020a). The next section of this study will focus on the educational approaches for students with disabilities.

Educational Approaches

The following section includes a review of the literature associated with the identification of students for special education, legal issues, special education services, and evidence-based practices.

Identification of Students for Special Education

According to Texas Education Agency (2019), a Federal Child Find mandate requires school districts to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities residing within their jurisdictions who need special education and related services. Children covered under this mandate include every child from birth to age 21, including: infants (ages 0-2 years) suspected of being deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), having a visual impairment (VI) and being deaf-blind (DB) (TEA, 2019). In Texas, the Child Find mandates regarding children 0-2 are addressed through Early Childhood Intervention

(ECI) and address any delay, disability, and conditions/contexts which are considered "at-risk" [such as premature births] (TEA, 2019).

Also covered under the Child Find mandate are students who are homeschooled or attend private schools, students who are suspected of having a disability even though they may be advancing from grade to grade, as well as children who are traditionally underserved, such as those experiencing homelessness, who are highly mobile including migrant, in foster care including wards of the state, and children involved in the criminal justice system (TEA, 2019). Anyone connected to the education or care of a child, including the parent or legal guardian, school personnel, or any other persons involved in the child's education and care, can request a referral for special education (TEA, 2019). If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services, the school district must respond no later than 15 school days after the request is received (TEA, 2019). Then the school district must provide the parent with a prior written notice. The purpose of the prior written notice (scheduling a first meeting) is to determine if the school will proceed with the initial evaluation and obtain parental consent for the evaluation (TEA, 2019). There are processes for informing a parent if a district does not wish to proceed. The school will also provide the parents with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards (TEA, 2019). Should the district agree to evaluate the child, the district must receive written consent from the parent before the evaluation is conducted (TEA, 2019). A request for a special education evaluation could be verbal and does not have to be in written form (TEA, 2019). However, verbal requests do not require school districts to respond within 15 school days, though school districts are still required to follow all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements (TEA, 2019).

Before referrals are made, students who are struggling academically in the general education classroom should be considered for all support services available to all students, like: tutorial, remedial instruction, compensatory instruction, dyslexia general education services, accommodations under Section 504, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support [MTSS] (TEA, 2019). A MTSS is a school-wide framework that provides different levels of support to meet the academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs of students; an example of a MTSS is Response to Intervention (TEA, 2019).

Also, school districts are required to conduct a review of existing evaluation data (REED) prior to conducting a full evaluation (TEA, 2019). REED is a process of looking at a child's existing data to determine if additional data are needed as part of a full and individual initial evaluation (FIIE), if appropriate, or as part of a reevaluation (TEA, 2019). A REED assists schools in deciding if current information about a student can be utilized to determine the student's eligibility for special education (TEA, 2019). To determine a need for evaluation, multiple data sources should be considered, the cumulative impact of which should rise to the level of suspected disability, and the need for special education services (TEA, 2019). Some examples of data sources that could be reviewed include the student's lack of expected gains during intervention progress monitoring, more substantial supports needed as general education curriculum becomes more difficult, hospitalization, a gap between expected academic growth and actual growth, documentation of interfering behaviors and/or discipline referrals, outside evaluation/diagnosis provided by a parent, and parental concerns regarding a child's struggles (TEA, 2019). When reviewing these data, two questions must be answered (TEA, 2019). The first is: Is there a reason to suspect that the student has a disability? (TEA, 2019). The second question is: Is there reason to suspect that because of the disability the child will need special education and related services? (TEA, 2019). If the

answer to each of those two questions is “Yes”, then the child should be referred for a FIIE (TEA, 2019).

To conduct a FIIE, the school district must utilize several assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant developmental, academic, and functional information (TEA, 2019). This includes information shared by the parent (TEA, 2019). All the information should help to determine whether the child is a child with a disability in need of special education services (TEA, 2019). The information should also help to determine what the content of the student’s individualized education program (IEP) would be, and how the child will be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (TEA, 2019). Additionally, evaluators must not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for the determination for special education or related services and the child must be evaluated in all areas related to the suspected disability (TEA, 2019). Evaluators must also use technically sound instruments that are free of racial or cultural bias and evaluation must be conducted in the student’s native language (TEA, 2019). Also, the instruments must be used for the purposes for which they are reliable and valid, administered as designed by trained and knowledgeable personnel, and tailored to the area of educational need (TEA, 2019). When making recommendations about whether a child requires special education, the evaluation should consider the support a student is already receiving (TEA, 2019). If the data show that a student is making expected progress with current general education support, that is an indication that the child does not need special education (TEA, 2019).

However, if it is determined that the child needs special education services, then, an IEP will be created for the child (USDOE, 2019). An IEP is a written document that describes a student’s specialized instruction and related services designed to address the student’s needs that result from the student’s disability (USDOE, 2019). The IEP is

developed during a meeting of members of the IEP team, which is composed of the following required members—a LEA administrator or staff who has authority to assign resources needed to implement the IEP plan, the parent of the student, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a staff member specialized in evaluation and assessment of students with disability, related services professionals, and when appropriate, the child with a disability (USDOE, 2019). Schools must develop and implement an IEP for the child, under IDEA (USDOE, 2019). However, if a child is not eligible for services under IDEA, other supports and services can be provided for the child through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (USDOE, 2020d). Depending on the individual needs of students, a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under Section 504 could involve regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of their nondisabled counterparts are met (USDOE, 2020d). Although Section 504 and IDEA are different statutes provided in the Department of Education's statutes, one of the ways the requirements of Section 504 are met is by implementing an IEP that is created in accordance with IDEA (USDOE, 2020d). This section discussed the process involved in finding students eligible for special education services. After students have been identified as eligible to receive special education services, some important legal considerations that need to be borne in mind will be discussed in the next section.

Legal Issues

The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), renamed, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed by Congress in 1975 (Bateman & Yell, 2019). The law provided federal grants to states to help towards the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities (Bateman & Yell,

2019). The primary purpose of the statute was to ensure that all students (3-21years) with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education with emphasis on special education and related services, individualized to meet the unique needs of the students and prepare them for further education, jobs, and independent living (Bateman & Yell, 2019). Part B of the IDEA (1975) statute states that to receive Federal funding, school districts must comply with six main principles set out by the statute:

- Every child is entitled to a free appropriate public education. The law mandated that states receiving federal grants through the IDEA must ensure that all eligible students with disabilities living in the state receive a FAPE. The IDEA defined FAPE as special education and related services that are provided at public expenses, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; meet the standards of the state education agency; include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the state involved; and are provided in conformity with the individualized education program or IEP (IDEA, 1975).
- When a school professional believes that a child between the ages of 3 and 21 may have a suspected disability that substantially impacts the student's educational performance or behavior, the child is entitled to an evaluation in all areas related to the suspected disability (IDEA, 1975).
- When a child is eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Program must be created for the child (IDEA, 1975). The purpose of the IEP is to establish specific actions and steps through which educators, parents, and the students themselves may attain the child's stated goals (APA, 2017).
- The education and services for children with disabilities must be provided in the least restrictive environment, and if possible, those children should be placed in a

"typical" education setting with their non-disabled peers (APA, 2017). Public school districts must ensure that “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled.” [IDEA, 1975, Sec. 300.114, LRE requirements] (USDOE, 2017c).

- The statute also states that “special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” [IDEA, 1975, Sec. 300.114, LRE requirements] (USDOE, 2017c).
- Input of the child and their parents must be considered in the education process (IDEA, 1975). When a parent feels that an IEP is inappropriate for their child, or that their child is not receiving needed services, they reserve the right under IDEA to challenge their child's treatment [due process] (USDOE, 2022).

In summary, this section reviewed the legal issues involved in educating students with disabilities who qualify for special education services. Students must be provided education in the least restrictive environment and an IEP must be created for each student eligible for special education services. Services for students eligible to receive special education services are guided by some of the IDEA regulations just discussed above. A summary of the program models is discussed below.

Special Education Services

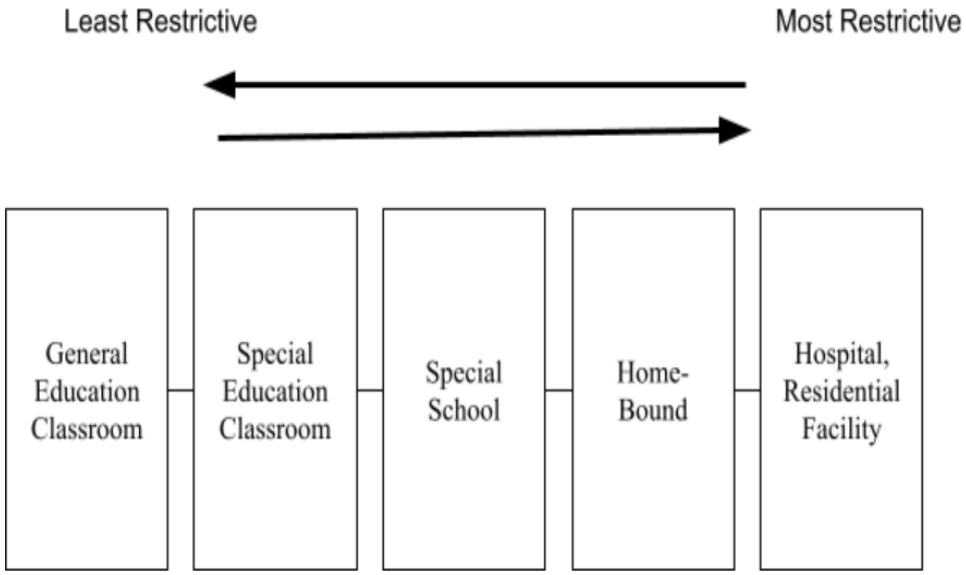
IDEA provides for both early intervention and school-aged services for children in the U.S. (CDC, 2022b). Part C of IDEA provides for early intervention services (birth through 36 months of age) and part B deals with services for school-aged children [3 through 21 years of age] (CDC, 2022b). The services covered under IDEA include

special education; related services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapy; and supplementary aids and services, such as adaptive equipment or special communication systems (CDC, 2022b). According to the definition included in IDEA (at§300.42), “Supplementary aids and services means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.” (USDOE, 2017b, p.1). IDEA (2004) requires that supplementary aids and services be provided in the LRE (USDOE, 2017c). According to IDEA (2004), LRE means that students with disabilities must receive their education alongside their typical peers to the maximum extent appropriate and students must not be removed from the general education classrooms unless learning is impossible to achieve even with the use of supplementary aids and services (USDOE, 2017c). The LRE for a student is determined by the IEP committee (USDOE, 2022).

IDEA (2004) also requires that school districts must create a continuum of alternative placement options that represent a range of educational placement choices for eligible students with disabilities, where the students’ IEPs can be implemented (USDOE, 2017d). These placement options range from the least restrictive setting (the general education classroom) to the most restrictive placements [for example, residential facilities] (USDOE, 2017d). Figure 2.1. shows the Special Education Continuum of Alternative Placement Options.

Figure 2.1

Special Education Continuum of Alternative Placement Options



Before placement decisions are made for a child, the IEP team must first consider a general education placement with needed supports (IRIS Center, 2021). There are five main placement options in the continuum of services, starting from the least restrictive to the most restrictive. They include general education classroom (least restrictive), special education classroom, special school, homebound, and hospital/ residential facility [most restrictive] (IRIS Center, 2021). The general education classroom may not necessarily be the least restrictive setting for some students (IRIS Center, 2021). Also, placement options are fluid, which means that a student might be provided services in multiple settings (IRIS Center, 2021). Additionally, placements can change over time depending on factors like changes in the progress towards students' goals or needs (IRIS Center, 2021). This section briefly outlined the special education services. The IDEA requires schools to create a continuum of alternative educational placement options for students with disabilities, ranging from the least restrictive to the very restrictive. The next section

will focus on evidence-based practices for students with disabilities within those placement options.

Evidence-Based Practices for Special Education

Some evidence-based practices found to be effective for students with learning disabilities will be discussed in this section. They include mnemonic instruction, the establishment of clear rules and expectations, explicit instruction, visual learning and communication, peer tutoring, and behavior specific praise.

Mnemonic Instruction. A mnemonic or mnemonic device, is any learning technique that aids the retention of information, and its purpose is to translate information into a form that the human brain can retain better than its original form (Lubin & Polloway, 2016). Mnemonic strategies can be utilized across subject areas for content that require the recall of factual information or learning of the names of people, places or things, new vocabulary, technical terms, and number patterns and formulae (Lubin & Polloway, 2016). The strategies have been found to be effective with students having varying ability levels (Lubin & Polloway, 2016) and empirically validated instructional practices for students with learning disability (Berkeley & Scruggs, 2010). Mnemonic instruction helps to improve the academic achievement of students with learning disabilities as well as help them to acquire concepts in science and social science (Lubin & Polloway, 2016; Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). The many benefits of the use of mnemonics make it a significant tool for classroom instruction (Lubin & Polloway, 2016).

Establishment of Clear Rules and Expectations. Effective positive behavior management starts with the establishment of clear rules and expectations (Monaghan, 2012). Students' expectations are the desired, appropriate behaviors expected of students, and rules are the framework for achieving those desired behavioral expectations

(Monaghan, 2012). From the first day of school, classroom rules and student expectations must be discussed with students, and this should include both the written rules and the unwritten rules (Monaghan, 2012). Teachers can maintain a positive classroom environment by recognizing and acknowledging students' appropriate behaviors, encouraging class participation, providing students frequent opportunities to respond to class discussions, and occasionally, reiterating the importance of appropriate behavior (Allday, 2011). Teachers must also emphasize the rewards and consequences that students will receive for following or disobeying the rules, respectively (Monaghan, 2012). Research studies have shown that in classrooms where teachers establish clear rules and expectations, students perform classroom obligations and routines efficiently, with few interruptions (Boyle & Scanlon, 2010).

Explicit Instruction. Hughes et al. (2017, p. 143) offered a conceptual definition of explicit instruction that embraced several components typically associated with explicit instruction:

> Explicit instruction is a group of research-supported instructional behaviors used to design and deliver instruction that provides needed support for successful learning through clarity of language and purpose, and reduction of cognitive load. It promotes active student engagement by requiring frequent and varied responses followed by appropriate affirmative and corrective feedback and assists long-term retention through use of purposeful practice strategies.

An important component of explicit instruction is breaking down or segmenting tasks into bits or chunks of information to make the task more manageable for students (Hughes et al., 2017). Segments of the information are taught, following a logical sequence (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Doabler et al., 2012). When students master the first segment, they are moved to the next until the entire task is mastered (Hughes et al.,

2017). This kind of chunking of instruction is usually used to teach strategies or information that require multiple steps, such that each step is taught one at a time (Hughes et al., 2017). Hughes et al. (2017) pointed to other research (e.g., Graham et al., 2012) that found explicit instruction to be effective for teaching students with learning disabilities in math, reading, and writing.

Visual Learning and Communication. Visual Learning and Communication (VLC) refer to the creation and use of visual representations (VR) to support students' learning and expression (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Visual learning involves the use of objects and strategies to provide visual representations that support the acquisition of new skills and concepts; examples are mind maps, flow charts, and schedules (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Visual communication refers to visual stimuli that supports the understanding of language and expressive communication (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Visual communication strategies include pictures, images, symbols, print that represents words or concepts, and sign language (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Visual learning and visual communication share many similarities and are frequently hard to distinguish from one another (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020).

Visual representation (VR) is considered a crucial evidence-based intervention practice in special education; therefore, special education teachers are strongly encouraged to utilize it in their mathematical instruction for students with disabilities (Gersten et al., 2009). Also, visual supports are key components in literacy programs designed to assist children with varying ability levels to develop skills in reading, writing, and spelling (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Many people, including children, comprehend things better when they see them than when they hear them (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Visual supports can therefore be beneficial for children when they are incorporated into all parts of the school day (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020).

Peer Tutoring (or Peer-Mediated Intervention). Peers have a crucial role to play in supporting one another and this is based on the notion that children can learn from one another and are motivated by each other (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Peer tutoring may take different forms (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Pairs of students can be combined in different forms based on their age and ability level; for example, a more competent student may be paired with a less competent student of the same age, for tutoring purposes (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Another form is when an older student tutors a younger student (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Also, there could be a class-wide peer tutoring format, where all students in a classroom would be paired and each student would take the role of either a tutor or a tutee (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Therefore, peer tutoring can be helpful in mitigating the difficulties that large classes can present (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Peer tutoring has also been found to be effective for enhancing the overall effectiveness of teaching in inclusive environments and in all curriculum areas, like reading, math, science, social studies, physical education, and other subject areas (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Peer tutoring can be beneficial to both the tutor and the tutee; for example, the tutee receives individual attention, and the tutor's skills are reinforced in the process of tutoring and his or her self-confidence is enhanced (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Thus, students with mild disabilities who serve as tutors can gain academically as well as have their emotional and social well-being boosted (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Mitchell and Sutherland pointed to several research findings (see e.g., Alzahrani & Leko, 2018; Calhoon, 2005; Hattie, 2009) that showed that peer tutoring had positive effect on students with various forms of disabilities, including learning disabilities, emotional disorder, and mild intellectual disabilities.

Behavior Specific Praise (BSP). Behavior-specific praise is a practice where a teacher praises a student for a specific behavior, like staying on task, as opposed to giving

general praise without a focus on a particular behavior (Royer et al., 2019). According to Ennis et al. (2020), it is important that as part of teaching social behaviors, teachers should acknowledge students who engage in appropriate behaviors. This is because acknowledging appropriate behaviors is just as essential as giving instructional feedback when teaching academic skills (Ennis et al., 2020). One effective way that teachers can acknowledge and reinforce students that are engaged in appropriate behaviors is by providing praise based upon desired behaviors (Ennnis et al., 2020). Ennnis et al. explained that praise is an effective reinforcer for appropriate behavior when it is specific. As a result, BSP is a central part of many positive behavioral interventions and supports, and serves as an effective, preventive tool for mitigating students' misbehaviors (Royer et al., 2019). BSP is also frequently used to increase students' academic outcomes (Royer et al., 2019).

Moreover, Royer et al. (2019) found that in addition to reducing inappropriate behaviors, and increasing academic outcomes, BSP also increased student time on task and reduced student tardiness. Ennis et al. (2020) summarized BSP as a low intensity strategy that is effective, efficient, and a foundational classroom management practice. Ennis et al. (2020) noted that BSP does not require any materials except perhaps a pen and paper if the praise were to be given in written form. Ennis et al. (2020) concluded that perhaps the ease of use and effectiveness of BSP made it a widely utilized and studied form of positive reinforcement. The preceding section focused on evidence-based practices (EBP) for students with learning disabilities. EBPs discussed included mnemonic instruction, the establishment of clear rules and expectations, explicit instruction, visual learning and communication, peer tutoring, and behavior specific praise. The next focus would be an overview of bilingual education in the U.S. and Texas.

Overview of Bilingual Education in the United States and Texas

This section will present current knowledge relating to bilingual education in the U.S. and Texas under the following sub-headings: Demographics of EBs, Misrepresentation of EBs in Special Education, and Educational Approaches.

Demographics of EBs

According to the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2022a), the percentage of all EBs from different cultural/linguistic groups in U.S. public schools was higher in the fall of 2019 (10.4%, or 5.1 million students) than in the fall of 2010 (9.2%, or 4.5 million students) (NCES, 2022a). Also, in the fall of 2019, the percentage of EBs in public school ranged widely in the U.S. from coast to coast, for instance, the range was from 0.8% in West Virginia to as high as 19.6% in Texas (NCES, 2022a). Additionally, the percentage of all EBs in public-schools was 10.0% or more in 12 states, most of which were in the West and the District of Columbia; they included California, Delaware, Alaska, Maryland, Colorado, Nevada, Texas, New Mexico, Washington, Illinois, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts (NCES, 2022a). The highest percentage of EBs in public schools was reported in Texas (19.6%), followed by California (18.6%) and New Mexico (16.5%) (NCES, 2022a). Twenty-two states had percentages of EBs between six percent and ten percent (NCES, 2022a). In contrast, five states reported a percentage of EBs between three percent and six percent; they include Wyoming (2.9%), New Hampshire (2.8%), Mississippi (2.5%), Montana (2.4%), Vermont (2.2%), and West Virginia (0.8%) (NCES, 2022a). Urban districts reported higher percentages of EBs in public schools than less urbanized districts in the fall of 2019, and EBs made up an average of 14.8% of total public-school enrollment in cities. In suburban areas, the number was 10% and rural areas recorded 4.4% (NCES, 2022a).

The NCES (2022a) also indicated that in the fall of 2019, there were about 3.9 million Hispanic EBs in U.S. public-schools, and this constituted over three-quarters (76.8%) of overall enrollment of all EBs in public schools. The next largest racial/ethnic group among EBs were Asians with 528,400 students [10.2% of EBs] (NCES, 2022a). Additionally, 332,400 were White EBs (6.5% of EBs) and 221,000 were Black [4.3% of EBs] (NCES, 2022a). Further, 792,000 EBs were identified as students with disabilities in the fall of 2019, and this number represented 15.5% of the total EB enrollment (NCES, 2022a). Regarding home language spoken, Spanish was the home language of 3.9 million EBs in U.S. public schools in the fall of 2019, constituting 75.7% of all EBs and 7.9% of all public K–12 students (NCES, 2022a). About grade levels, in the fall of 2019, a higher percentage of EBs in U.S. public schools was reported in the lower grades compared to the upper grades. For instance, 15.0% of kindergarten students were EBs compared to 9.6% of sixth graders and 7.7% of eighth graders (NCES, 2022a). Among 12th-graders, 5.5% of students were EBs (NCES, 2022a). This pattern may partly be explained by the fact that students who were identified as EBs when they entered elementary school, may have obtained English language proficiency before they reached the upper grades (NCES, 2022a). The demographic data reviewed above suggest a significant number of EBs (10.4 percent, or 5.1 million students in 2019) from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds attend the nation's public K-12 schools (NCES, 2022a). It stands to reason that this significant number of EBs in public schools brings up important questions regarding the training, skills, and support of teachers, and whether they are qualified to effectively teach and support EBs.

Regarding the state of Texas, at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, the most spoken home language among EBs in Texas public schools was Spanish, with an estimated student enrollment of 978,963 (TEA, 2021b). The four other commonly spoken

languages were Vietnamese (17,301 students), Arabic (13,455 students), Urdu (6,113 students), and Mandarin Chinese (5,497 students) (TEA, 2021b). According to the TEA (2020a), between 2009-2010 and 2019-2020, the number of students identified as EBs increased by 296,462, or 36.3%, and in the 2019-2020 school year, 20.3% of students were identified as EBs, compared to 16.9% in 2009-2010. Also, in 2019-2020, 84.9% of EBs participated in state-approved bilingual or ESL instructional program models, while 11.0% of EBs participated in alternative bilingual or ESL language programs (TEA, 2020a). The most common special language program instructional models among EBs receiving bilingual or ESL services, were ESL/pull-out (31.2%) and dual immersion/one-way (15.1%) (TEA, 2020a).

In summary, in the 2019-2020 school year, 20.3% of students were identified as EBs in Texas, compared to 16.9% a decade earlier (TEA, 2020a), and Spanish-speaking EBs make up the largest group of EBs in the state (TEA, 2020a). The implication of having many Spanish-speaking EBs in Texas public schools is the need to train teachers in culturally responsive teaching, with particular emphasis on the Spanish culture and language. Additionally, with the large number of EBs in the nation's public schools (Wood et al., 2018), scholars have expressed concern over empirical evidence indicating that EBs may be overrepresented or underrepresented in special education (DeMatthews et al., 2014). A summary of research findings about the misrepresentation of EBs in special education will be the focus of the next section.

Misrepresentation of EBs in Special Education

The findings of a longitudinal study conducted by Morgan et al. (2015) found that often, minority students were less likely than their native English-speaking peers to be identified with a disability and receive special education services. Morgan et al. (2015) also reported that racial- and ethnic-minority students in kindergarten through middle

school were less likely to be identified as having learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, intellectual disabilities, health impairments, or emotional disturbances. Ortiz et al. (2020) posited that the representation in special education of students based on their demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, age, and grade level) varied widely across states, district, and schools. As an example, Ortiz et al. (2020) referred to Artiles et al.'s (2005) research which revealed that in urban school districts in California, elementary EBs were usually under-represented in the areas of specific learning disability (SLD) and speech/language impairment (SLI), but EBs in upper grades were by far over-represented in those areas. Further, EBs who were neither proficient in their home language (Spanish) nor English were more likely to be placed in special education compared to their peers who were English-proficient (Ortiz et al., 2020). Also, students in English immersion programs had a higher probability of being placed in special education than their counterparts in bilingual education programs or in English immersion programs that have been modified to allow for native language support (Ortiz et al., 2020).

This wide variability in representations of students in special education was also evident in Yamasaki and Luk's (2018) research. They reported that underrepresentation was found for linguistically diverse EBs and English proficient bilinguals who were identified with speech and language disability and autism, irrespective of socio-economic status (Yamasaki & Luk, 2018). Also, EBs from low-income and non-low-income backgrounds were found to be overrepresented among children identified with intellectual and communication disabilities (Yamasaki & Luk, 2018). Relatively stable eligibility rates were observed across grade levels for native English speakers (NES), except for a higher rate in grade four compared to third grade for Specific Learning Disability (Yamasaki & Luk, 2018). The overall result of this study demonstrated a

pattern of shift from under identification-to-overidentification most especially among students from low-income families (Yamasaki & Luk, 2018). Ortiz et al. (2020) opined that these variabilities in representations in special education, within groups of students, implied that EBs are not a monolithic group and therefore, to better understand representations in special education, there is a need for data to be disaggregated across national, state, district, and school levels. Ortiz et al. (2020) also proposed that data be disaggregated across student characteristics, language instruction programs, disability areas, and special education programs and services.

Ortiz et al. (2020) cautioned that whether EBs are over-, under-, or proportionately represented in special education was predicated on the supposition that prevalence means accurate identification but insisted that this was not always true. The scholars pointed out that the findings of prior research (Ortiz et al., 2011) about EBs with reading-related specific learning disabilities, revealed that 41% of EBs had primary disabilities in an area other than learning disability (e.g., speech/language impairment) and 36% of the cases studied did not have enough data to determine a diagnosis of learning disability, or qualification for special education services (Ortiz et al., 2020). Ortiz et al. (2020) noted that up to 77% of those students may have been misdiagnosed.

Research has identified several reasons for the misdiagnosis of EBs. Educators and schools have reported that it is a highly challenging task to provide appropriate assessments in two languages, as well as differentiate language learning from language-related disabilities (DeMatthews et al., 2014). Consistent with that knowledge, Abedi (2014) emphasized that appropriate identification of the students will be a challenge if their disability is masked by their limited English proficiency, or vice versa. Similarly, Sanatullova-Allison and Robison-Young (2016) proposed that EBs are underserved in the public schools due to lack of services and support, or misclassification of students with

language acquisition difficulties as students with learning disabilities. Expanding on this knowledge, Chu and Flores (2011) stated that misclassification may occur because it is hard to differentiate between second language acquisition issues and learning issues, as both may present with similar characteristics, such as low comprehension, difficulty following directions, syntax and grammar errors, and difficulty completing tasks.

Additionally, federal or state policies and regulations may partly be responsible for the challenges involved in assessment, identification, and disproportionality (DeMatthews et al., 2014). DeMatthews et al. explained that the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) provided guidelines for disability classifications and eligibility processes, but a gap existed between the expectations of federal policy and implementation at the local level due to the broadness or lack of clarity of the language used in IDEIA (DeMatthews et al., 2014). DeMatthews et al. further explained that federal policies provided limited guidance regarding the determination of how EBs with disabilities should be selected for special education services. The absence of adequate guidance on policies meant that states, districts, and schools had the latitude to implement education policies and programs as they deemed fit (DeMatthews et al., 2014). Additionally, DeMatthews et al. found that at the state level, there was an acute shortage of data on how states provided guidance to districts. Also, school and policy documents lacked clarity and specificity about how to address disability issues for EBs (DeMatthews et al., 2014).

The consequences of misdiagnosis can be significant. For example, misdiagnosis may cause teachers to have a low expectation of students' performance, irrespective of the students' real academic outcome (Ortiz et al., 2020). This might contribute to limiting the students' social, academic, and economic opportunities, in the long run (Ortiz et al., 2020). Another implication of misdiagnosis is that it may cause the students to receive

inappropriate instruction, assessment, and accommodation, and seriously hinder the academic performance of students (Abedi, 2014). This section focused on the misrepresentation of EBs in special education. Research found that EBs were frequently under or over-represented in special education (Ortiz et al., 2020; Yamasaki & Luk, 2018) and the reasons were the difficulty of distinguishing between a learning disability and academic challenges that arose from the language acquisition process (Chu & Flores, 2011; Sanatullova-Allison & Robison-Young, 2016) and unclear policy guidelines (Abedi, 2014; DeMatthews et al., 2014). Educational approaches for EBs will be discussed next.

Educational Approaches

The following topics will be discussed under educational approaches: identification of EBs, legal issues, bilingualism, issues of inequity, educational program models for EBs, bilingual education program effectiveness, and instructional strategies.

Identification of EBs

Typically, children are identified as EBs through a multi-step process that requires parents to complete a home language questionnaire when children are enrolled in school (Sugarman & Geary, 2018; Watkins & Liu, 2013). If parents report that a language other than English is spoken at home, students are given an English language proficiency screening test to determine whether they are eligible for ESL or bilingual education (Sugarman & Geary, 2018; Watkins & Liu, 2013; Wright, 2019). Although parent consent for language screening is not required, parents have the right to refuse English language or bilingual services (Sugarman & Geary, 2018; Watkins & Liu, 2013). English Learners who are not yet proficient in English and are eligible for English language support services are typically provided services in English as a Second Language (ESL) or/and bilingual education (Watkins & Liu, 2013). ESL services prioritizes language

instruction while bilingual programs integrate content instruction in the native language as well as instruction in English; however, both types of programs share a common goal of increasing students' English proficiency to allow them to succeed in English-only content classrooms (Watkins & Liu, 2013). School districts across the nation use the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) in foundation and enrichment instruction in grades kindergarten through twelfth (Wright, 2019). The ELPS is a federally required instructional standard designed to ensure that EBs are taught the academic English they need for school purposes (Wright, 2019). Texas has its own ELPS standards and language proficiency assessment tool (TEA, 2021a).

Also, every year in Texas, students are assessed using the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)-a federally required assessment program designed to measure the annual progress of the English proficiency of EBs in grades kindergarten through twelfth while they are learning the English language (TEA, 2021a). The ELPS and TELPAS include four language domains, namely, Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing and each domain has four proficiency levels-Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High (TEA, 2021a). Based on students' English proficiency on the assessment, they may be exited from the English language acquisition program and redesignated as fluent English proficient [FEP] (TEA, 2021a). Students may not be exited from EB status in kindergarten, but in 1st through 12th grade, students may be reclassified based on their scores on a state-approved oral and written language proficiency test (usually the TELPAS), the STAAR or other state-approved standardized reading test, and a teacher evaluation (Sugarman & Geary, 2018).

The language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) is established to make assessment decisions for EBs in accordance with administrative procedures established by the TEA (TEA, 2020b). Assessment decisions are made on an individual student basis.

Additionally, the LPACs must determine and document the number of school years in which an EB has been enrolled in a U.S. school (TEA, 2020b). The information is reported to the TEA along with data on the TELPAS and the TELPAS Alternate, all of which are used for reporting, and accountability and performance-based monitoring measures (TEA, 2020b). After students have been identified as EBs, certain legal issues must be taken into consideration in planning educational programming. Those legal issues will be the focus of the next section.

Legal Issues Regarding Educating EBs

An important court case that supported Equal Educational Opportunities for EBs was the *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) case in which Chinese American students sued the San Francisco Unified School District because the students were placed in mainstream classrooms despite their lack of proficiency in English (Yllades et al., 2021). The Court sided with the plaintiffs and ruled that the school district ignored the needs of EBs (Yllades et al., 2021). Although the ruling did not require any specific approach in how to educate EBs, the court required school districts to implement bilingual education programs for all EBs (Yllades et al., 2021). The implication of this law is that the first language of all students must be considered to provide educational opportunities to them and allow them to be successful (Yllades et al., 2021). Also, educational agencies cannot deny equal opportunities to all the students irrespective of race, color, sex, background, or disability (Yllades et al., 2021).

Similarly, in *Diana v. State Board of Education*, filed in 1969, a group of Spanish-speaking Mexican students were inappropriately placed in a classroom for the intellectually disabled based on an English-only IQ assessment conducted by a monolingual English-speaking school psychologist (Yllades et al., 2021). The plaintiffs argued that the IQ test was written and administered in English and the children could not

understand the test solely because of language differences (Yllades et al., 2021). The court stipulated that the students should have been tested in their primary language, if their primary language was not English, and that the school psychologist should have used the necessary intelligence assessment to reflect Mexican American culture (Yllades et al., 2021). A major implication of this case to EBs in special education is that it eliminated IQ tests as sole measure of assessment for special education placement and increased the focus on culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education (Yllades et al., 2021). Another implication is that any results of assessments conducted in a language that the students are unfamiliar with or uncomfortable in may be rendered invalid (Yllades et al., 2021). Further, before evaluation is conducted for special education services, students' language proficiency must be evaluated to determine if they are able to read, write, and comprehend English (Yllades et al., 2021). According to Walsh et al. (2015), in the absence of bilingual practitioners who can evaluate the students in their home language, the students may be evaluated using nonverbal tests, or interpreters may be used.

Additionally, the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act* (EEOA) of 1974 requires that practitioners take necessary action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation of EBs (Yllades et al., 2021). Further, practitioners cannot legally prohibit the use of students' home languages unless they can show educational justification (Yllades et al., 2021). Practitioners may also not discriminate against students based on disability, race, or ethnicity (Yllades et al., 2021).

This section discussed legal issues regarding educating EBs. An important legal requirement is that school districts must implement bilingual education programs for all EBs and the use of first language of all students must be considered to provide educational opportunities to them, and ensure their academic success (Yllades et al.,

2021). Also, educational agencies cannot deny equal opportunities to students based on race, ethnicity, color, or disability (Yllades et al., 2021). Bilingualism will be the focus of the next section.

Bilingualism

Grosjean (2010) defined bilinguals as individuals who know two or more languages to different degrees and use these languages for a variety of purposes. Gort (2019) suggested that an understanding of bilingualism has greatly evolved since Bloomfield's (1933) proposition that bilinguals have native-like control of two or more languages; however, this conception about bilinguals has resulted in prevailing myths based on monolingual norms and assumptions about how well bilinguals should know (or do know) their languages (Gort, 2019). A common assumption is that children develop into perfectly balanced bilinguals, which means that they can do everything comparably in two languages (Gort, 2019). This assumption is based on the premise that because monolinguals are seen as fully fluent in one language, therefore, bilinguals must be seen as fluent in two languages (Wright & Baker, 2017). However, Gort (2019) stated that being bilingual is not all about proficiency in two languages; it also involves the use of languages and the experiences of languages. Each language of a bilingual serves different purposes, functions, and uses (Genesee, 2015; Gort, 2012). This complementary relationship between the languages of a bilingual individual may help to explain the utilization of a bilingual's languages for different purposes over a period, or why a bilingual's dominant language may change depending on contexts, such as work, school, or home (Wright & Baker, 2017). The degree of a bilingual's competence in both or more languages is significantly influenced by the way each language is supported and used; this differs from person to person and changes over time (Gort, 2019). Considering that bilinguals use their languages in differing contexts and with different individuals, Gort

(2019) opined that it may be unrealistic to expect that they can possess the same language skills and experiences as monolinguals, who only use one language in all facets of communication.

Issues of Inequity

Globally, data have suggested that the most disadvantaged ethnic minority students learned and gained least from increased rates of school participation; this meant that school participation did not necessarily result in a commensurate increase in learning (Bianco, 2017). What is significant for learning is the language of choice for instruction and the overall perception and attitudes towards the students' home language (Bianco, 2017). A few studies (e.g., Benson & Kosonen, 2013; Bialystok, 2001; Hovens, 2002; King & Mackey, 2007) support the notion that the best educational outcomes for ethnic minority students arises when the language of instruction is the students' home language and educators, schools, and communities have positive attitudes towards the home language of the students.

However, language settings are hierarchical and unequal (Bianco, 2017). Speakers of the dominant language tend to stigmatize minority languages and sometimes, speakers of the minority languages internalize those external prejudices against their language (Bianco, 2017). The home language of minority linguistic students is frequently ignored or treated superficially in education (Bianco, 2017). But by far the greatest challenge is probably that for minority students, schooling is fraught with numerous barriers that are much greater than those of their peers who are native speakers of the dominant language. One hurdle that linguistic minority students face is the requirement to gain literacy mastery in academic content that is usually in the dominant language and not in their native language (Bianco, 2017). Bianco emphasized that the literacy development of students is crucial to their educational achievement and a key element to that outcome is

providing or denying education to students in their home languages. According to Bianco (2017), having a strong literacy foundation in their home language is an effective way to help students to learn to read in a second language. If English is used as the language of instruction too early, there is a high chance of failure to learn both the home language and English, but if English is introduced after reaching the threshold of native language acquisition, children have a high chance of success in learning both languages (Bianco, 2017).

Further, Bianco (2017) posited that language education efforts should not only be geared toward educational attainment but should also consider its potential for easing social tension and conflict. Bianco (2017) explained that considering that language settings are hierarchical and unequal, efforts must be made to promote multilingualism to mitigate social conflict and foster equality, social participation, and cultural diversity. Bianco (2017) suggested that to accomplish these efforts, there needs to be an integrated approach to language and education. Additionally, Bianco (2017) proposed that since English is an international language that has a significant impact on global educational systems, it is necessary that TESOL practitioners and associations support the integration of language planning that promotes multilingual development at all levels (e.g., local, district, state, national, and international levels). This means that the maintenance and preservation of language would be supported. It also means that schools and educational systems would implement explicit multilingual support practices (Bianco, 2017).

Educational Program Models for EBs

The Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is a mandate under IDEA (1975) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and ensures that children with disabilities, including EBs, have free education developed to meet their individual needs (Yllades et al., 2021). FAPE requires school districts to provide other services to students

in addition to special education, like dual language education programs to culturally and linguistically diverse students at no cost to their families (Yllades et al., 2021). The Bilingual Education Act (1968) defined a bilingual education program as one that provided instruction in English and in the home language of EBs to allow the students to progress effectively through the educational system. The goal of a bilingual education program is to prepare EBs to participate effectively in the regular classroom as quickly as possible (Bilingual Education Act [BEA], 1968). According to Gandara and Escamilla (2017), the primary goal of bilingual education in the U.S. has been to teach English rather than to develop bilingualism or biliteracy. Most bilingual programs in the U.S. are designed for students who come to school speaking home languages other than English and who are learning English as a second or additional language (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). Some models of bilingual education programs are discussed below.

Transitional Bilingual Programs. Most bilingual education programs in the U.S. are Transitional Bilingual Programs (TBE), serving non-English-speaking students, although most TBE programs usually serve Spanish-speaking students (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). Typically, there are two types of TBE: early-exit and late-exit programs and both types of programs are designed for EBs (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). As the term suggests, the program is designed to assist students' transitions to English (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). The early exit programs aim to reach this transition in one to three academic years, while the late exit programs strive for a longer transition of four to five academic years (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). Ultimately, the goal of both types of programs is to have students acquire English (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). The underpinning for TBE programs is to use students' native languages to teach core subjects like math, science, social studies, reading, and language arts, to ensure that the students do not lag in their learning of content while they are learning English (Gandara

& Escamilla, 2017). Thus, TBE programs are planned in such a way as to transition students from learning core content in a non-English language to learning core content in all English (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). Most TBE programs in the U.S. are Spanish/English programs and offered at the elementary school level.

Dual Language Education Programs (DLE). The goal of the dual language bilingual program is to develop bilingualism or biliteracy and cross-cultural competence (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). The program includes both students who are learning English as a second language and those who are monolingual speakers of English (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). In contrast to the goal of the TBE programs, the goals of the DLE program are to: develop bilingualism, or the ability to speak fluently in two languages; develop biliteracy, or the ability to read and write in two languages; ensure academic achievement that is comparable to those of students in nondual language bilingual programs; and develop cross-cultural competence (García, 2009b). All students learn at least two languages; they also learn content area subjects in English as well as in another language (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). The DLE programs are additive in nature because they strengthen and expand students' existing language proficiency and seek to extend students' linguistic repertoires (Gandara & Escamilla, 2017). Like the TBE programs, most DLE programs in the U.S. are Spanish/English programs, offered at the elementary school level, though a few DLE programs exist in the middle and high schools, with numbers growing (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2014). Programs involving languages other than Spanish are also offered in middle and high schools (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2014). In terms of the number of dual language programs in the U.S., thirty-five states and the District of Columbia reported having a dual language program in the 2016–2017 school year (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2019). Puerto Rico and fourteen other states reported not having a dual

language program and South Carolina did not provide a report (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2019).

Bilingual Programs in Texas. School districts are required to serve EBs through bilingual education programs or ESL (TEA, 2022a). In the state of Texas, six program models are approved for EBs: four of the models are bilingual education program models while the other two are English as a Second Language (ESL) program models (TEA, 2022a). The four bilingual education program models are Transitional Early Exit, Transitional Late Exit, Dual Language Immersion One Way, and Dual Language Immersion Two Way (TEA, 2022a). The Two ESL program models are ESL Content-Based and ESL Pull-Out (TEA, 2022a). In the elementary grades, schools that have fewer than 20 EBs must service the students through the ESL model and schools that have 20 or more EBs at the same grade level and primary language must service the students through bilingual education programs (TEA, 2022a). Elementary schools in Texas refer to schools with pre-K through fifth grade [or through sixth grade if clustered with elementary] (TEA, 2022a). The above section reviewed the educational program models for EBs in the U.S. and Texas. The programs included the transitional bilingual program, dual language bilingual program, and ESL. The next focus will be on bilingual education program effectiveness.

Bilingual Education Program Effectiveness

Research has shown that bilingualism is beneficial to students. The prevailing findings from the last 40 years of research is that when students learn to read in their native languages, their reading skills in English are augmented (Goldenberg, 2013). According to Cheatham et al. (2012), the dual language bilingual programs are the most promising because of their research base and the fact that instruction can be provided in inclusive classrooms. The children receive the benefit of learning two languages while

excelling academically (Cheatham et al., 2012). Further, students who maintained bilingualism are less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to secure higher level job positions in the workforce (Rumbaut, 2014). Notwithstanding these benefits of bilingual education, Cheatham et al. (2012) cautioned that although dual language programs can be effective and may be favored by many school districts, there are usually challenges with establishing the programs. Examples of the challenges may be community opposition and availability of appropriate resources (Cheatham et al., 2012). The above section discussed program effectiveness of bilingual education programs. Studies found that bilingual education programs are beneficial to students. The instructional approaches found to be effective for EBs will be the focus of the following section.

Instructional Approaches for EBs

The instructional approaches for EBs will be presented in the following order: translanguaging, biliteracy, and classroom strategies.

Translanguaging. García (2009b, p.140) defined *translanguaging* as the "act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential." Put in another way, translanguaging is an observable practice of bilingualism that is centered on the communicative actions of bilinguals to construct meaning of their multilingual worlds (García, 2009b). García also posited that more than any other language system, the practice of translanguaging results in children's bilingual acquisition and learning. Consistent with García (2009b), Sclafani (2017) posited that translanguaging is an approach that affords students greater control of the language acquisition and usage process by providing them the flexibility and free choice to select features in their linguistic repertoire to enable them to communicate appropriately. The

students can use both their home language and the dominant language of school to different degrees and may shift between languages depending on the situation (Sclafani, 2017). Sclafani also maintains that translanguaging is an important factor to consider as an accommodation for EBs in their second language learning programs.

Biliteracy. Biliteracy is "the acquisition and learning of the decoding and encoding of and around print using two linguistic and cultural systems in order to convey messages in a variety of contexts" (Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 1996, p. 54). Escamilla et al. (2014) proposed a holistic biliteracy framework based on the notion that literacy instruction is comprised of a system that involves not only reading and writing, but rather, encompasses oracy and metalanguage as well. Oracy is the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech. Metalinguistic awareness enhances children's abilities to develop their conceptual knowledge and capabilities to utilize language for expressing what they have learned (Reyes & Kleyn, 2010). To implement a holistic biliteracy framework in an educational environment, an adequate amount of time must be given to listening, speaking, reading, writing, and metalanguage (Escamilla et al, 2014), all of which are interrelated during instruction. Also, in a holistic biliteracy framework, literacy instruction must be simultaneously provided in both languages (Escamilla et al., 2014). Students will benefit from explicit instruction on how to access their full linguistic repertoire to comprehend their reading materials because skills and knowledge learned in one language can help to augment what they know and can do in an additional language (Escamilla et al., 2014). Zapata and Laman (2016) proposed that educators with dynamic and holistic philosophies consider students' experiences, practices, and understandings as resources and leverage such resources for further language and literacy growth. In so doing, they would facilitate student's biliteracy

development, even if the educators are not bilinguals, or if English is, by policy, the primary language of instruction (Durán, 2016; Zapata & Laman, 2016).

Classroom Strategies. Sclafani (2017) proposed several direct strategies for educators' use in the classroom. One such strategy is the use of *language buddies,* or child translators for EBs (Sclafani, 2017). The language buddy can translate or broker thoughts and ideas to ensure that adequate learning and support are taking place for EBs (Sclafani, 2017). For successful implementation, buddies must be trained on specific expectations of the buddies and the partners (Sclafani, 2017).

Another direct strategy is the use of *events* to celebrate different ethnic backgrounds (Sclafani, 2017). These events provide opportunities for bilingual students to have more footing with their peers and position them and their families in a positive spotlight (Sclafani, 2017). *Cooperative Learning Groups (CLG)* is another classroom strategy proposed by Sclafani (2017). The use of CLG allow educators to create a framework which small groups of students can use to complete learning activities (Sclafani, 2017). Sclafani explained that social language develops before academic language, and cooperative learning grants opportunities to students to align social and academic languages in one experience. Sclafani (2017) noted that the idea of cooperative learning is consistent with some other prevailing educational strategies, like reading and writing workshops, where students are allowed autonomy in their learning based on the premise that the best learning may take place when students are given real practice time. These experiences also allow for translanguaging and discussion of biliteracy-related events (Sclafani, 2017).

Further, Sclafani (2017) proposed that educators set up *culturally responsive classrooms*; these classrooms can be important scaffolds for bilingual students. Sclafani (2017) posited that if room construction, materials, and resources are appropriately

organized and aligned to students' needs, classrooms can become strong assets to both teachers and students. García and Wei (2014) recommended that *word walls* in English and students' home languages be placed in clear sight to allow students to have repetitive exposure to vocabulary words. Wood et al. (2018) recommended *chunking the number of words* to be learned at a time and integrating the small number of words across instruction for many days, during daily activities, and in various contexts. Sclafani (2017) added that the daily exposure of students to word walls helps students to develop increased confidence in their knowledge and comprehension of the words. Another recommendation by Sclafani (2017) was that educators should leverage the current availability of *technology* (e.g., iPads, computers, and online literacy websites) to help bilinguals in the classrooms. Finally, Sclafani (2017) suggested that the *classroom library* can be organized in ways that would foster a culturally responsive classroom. The author explained that multiculturalism can be made a realistic part of daily experiences through children's literature. Teachers can share stories with students throughout the year, including different genres that expose them to different cultural worlds (Sclafani, 2017). In the process, students may form personal connections to the various story experiences and acquire greater understanding of the world of others (Sclafani, 2017). This valuable cultural awareness can augment a culturally responsive classroom (Sclafani, 2017).

Continuing with the theme of classroom strategies, Pappamihiel and Lynn (2016) suggested the use of *instructional and linguistic accommodations* for EBs. *Instructional accommodations* are geared toward how content is altered, taught, made accessible, and assessed (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). Examples of instructional content accommodation include *Think-Pair-Share* (TPS) to review new vocabulary in science, and a *Jigsaw* activity to introduce students to new characters in a book (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). Other instructional strategies that are typically used for all students may also qualify as

instructional accommodations if they are linked to specific content types; for example, teaching EBs *memory strategies* to learn new vocabulary, different ways for *notetaking*, and techniques to *summarize* paragraphs (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). These strategies and accommodations are part of the teacher's method of teaching content irrespective of the language proficiency of the students (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016).

Linguistic accommodation is focused on a direct manipulation of language such that second language acquisition theories can be infused into classroom practice (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). A *linguistic accommodation* is about language support geared towards specific linguistic characteristics of various EBs (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). Though there might be overlaps of both types of accommodations, the purpose of a *linguistic accommodation* is to ameliorate a language difference, and unplanned overlaps are unlikely to occur (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). Examples of *linguistic accommodations* include using simple vocabulary to introduce a new lesson or to test students' understandings of content and reading aloud to a student whose reading skills are not advanced (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). Other *linguistic accommodations* include translating directions, using clarification techniques like rephrasing, and taping a lesson; these accommodations consider the language needs and content needs of EBs (Pappamihiel & Lynn, 2016). This section was focused on instructional approaches for EBs. Some of the approaches included translanguaging, biliteracy, and various classroom strategies. The focus of this discussion will move from an overview of bilingual education to an overview of bilingual special education in the U.S. and Texas.

Overview of Bilingual Special Education in the United States and Texas

This section will focus on the demographics and educational approaches for EBs with disabilities.

Demographics of EBs with Disabilities

Approximately 1.6% of students enrolled in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools are dually identified with a disability under IDEA and as EB (OSEP, 2022). The number of EBs with disabilities in the U.S. also grew by close to 30% between school year, 2012 and school year, 2020 (OSEP, 2022). In 2018, Hispanic and/or Latino students made up 27.18% of the population of children ages 6–21 served under IDEA, Part B, across the country (OSEP, 2020). Data also showed that 50% of those students were served in California, Texas, Florida, and New York (OSEP, 2020).

Educational Approaches

This section will discuss legal issues, misunderstanding about EBs with disabilities, collaboration, and parent partnership.

Legal Issues Regarding EBs with Disabilities

In 2016, a publication of the USDOE summarized the following key points based on the IDEA regarding EBs with disabilities:

> LEAs must identify, locate, and evaluate ELs with disabilities in a timely manner.
>
> LEAs must consider the English language proficiency of ELs with disabilities in determining appropriate assessments and other evaluation materials.
>
> LEAs must provide and administer special education evaluations in the child's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, to ensure that a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability-related needs.
>
> LEAs must not identify or determine that EL students are students with disabilities because of their limited English language proficiency.

> LEAs must provide EL students with disabilities with both the language assistance and disability-related services they are entitled to under federal law (USDOE, 2016b, p. 1.).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 addressed the rights of students with disabilities in all educational settings in the United States (USDOE, 2016b). If an EB is suspected of having one or more disabilities, the LEA is required to conduct an evaluation of the student in a timely manner to determine if he or she has a disability and whether the student needs special education and/or related services; the services could be provided either under IDEA (special education) or Section 504 [general education] (USDOE, 2016b). A student's evaluation for determining disability may not be delayed due to his or her limited English language proficiency (ELP) or participation in a language instruction education program (USDOE, 2016b). Additionally, evaluators must not make a disability determination based on a child's ELP; thus, it is important that evaluators make an accurate determination of eligibility for disability-related services (USDOE, 2016b).

Additionally, LEAs must ensure that the special education evaluation of students must be provided and administered in the students' home language or other mode of communication and must be in a manner that is most likely to achieve accurate information about the students' strengths (what they know and can do), unless it is clearly not practical to do so (USDOE, 2016b). When educators assess students in their own home language or other mode of communication to ascertain whether they have a disability, they can better determine whether a need results from lack of ELP and/or students' disability-related educational needs (USDOE, 2016b).

Further, when an EB student is determined to have a disability, as defined in IDEA, or a student with a disability under the wider definition of disability in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the student's English language and disability-related educational needs must be met (USDOE, 2016b). Practitioners must also ensure that EBs receive equal opportunities as their non-EB peers and that they are making progress towards attainable goals (Yllades et al., 2021). Educators, practitioners, and administrators must monitor students' goals after they have been established and progress should be tracked through continuous data collection (Yllades et al., 2021). The child's IEP team must include participants who have knowledge of the student's language needs (USDOE, 2016b). Additionally, it is necessary that the IEP team include professionals with training or expertise in second language acquisition as well as knowledge of how to determine when a child's need stems from a disability or lack of ELP (USDOE, 2016b).

Further, the LEA must ensure the parents of EBs found to be eligible for disability-related services understand the proceedings of the IEP team meeting (USDOE, 2016b). Arrangements must also be made for an interpreter for parents with limited English proficiency (LEP) or parents who are deaf (USDOE, 2016b). Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, for a parent with limited language proficiency to have meaningful access to an IEP or Section 504 plan meeting, it may be essential to have the IEPs, Section 504 plans, or related documents translated into the parent's primary language (USDOE, 2016b). If a parent declines disability-related services under IDEA and Section 504, the state department of education and school district are still obligated to provide appropriate language assistance services to EBs (USDOE, 2016b). Should parents decline specific English language programs and services but grant consent to the provision of disability related services, the LEA remains obligated to provide such services as required in the IEP or Section 504

plan, and to conduct ELP monitoring and/or provide language assistance as appropriate (USDOE, 2016b).

In addition to having knowledge about policies that guide practitioners in the service delivery to EBs with special needs, practitioners should also be mindful of the cultural practices, language, and beliefs of this population (Yllades et al., 2021). One case law that protects culturally, linguistically diverse (CLD) students with disabilities involved an EB in the case of Marple Newtown School District v. Rafael N. [2007] (Yllades et al., 2021). Rafael, 17, from the Dominican Republic but living in Pennsylvania, was diagnosed with mild to moderate intellectual disability and was eligible for special education and ESL instruction (Yllades et al., 2021). His Spanish-speaking parents could neither speak nor write in English, but the school did not communicate with his parents in his native language; consequently, the parents filed a due process challenging the educational program and compensatory education (Yllades et al., 2021). The court found in favor of the parents and stated that the district denied FAPE to the student because his IEP did not include his language needs to receive a meaningful education (Yllades et al., 2021). The above section reviewed the legal issues pertaining to EBs with disabilities. Among the issues addressed were the rights of EBs with disabilities and certain legal requirements for the education of EBs with disabilities. The next section will focus on some misunderstandings about EBs with disabilities.

Misunderstandings about EBs with Disabilities

There are several common misunderstandings about EBs with disabilities (Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017). The first misunderstanding is that students with disabilities cannot be bilingual, but research suggests otherwise. For example, according to Cheatham et al. (2012), students with disabilities, including disabilities that affect students' cognitive and linguistic skills, can and do become bilingual, including students

with Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, and language and learning disabilities. Cheatham and Hart Barnett (2017) concluded that the presence of disability does not appear to preclude students from being bilingual, and even when students present with various disabilities and functioning levels, they are able to be bilingual.

A second misunderstanding that students with disabilities should not be bilingual is also refuted by Cheatham and Hart Barnett (2017). Cheatham and Hart Barnett (2017) proposed that linguistically diverse students with disabilities should be bilingual because of the importance of their native languages and English and the necessity for two languages in their lives. For example, bilingualism can support students' active participation in social groups and family activities, like playing games with peers, conversing during dinner with family, or shopping (Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017). Jegatheesan (2011) pointed out that families valued bilingualism for the outlined reasons. Additionally, Tong (2014) posited that English, and the home language were important for the development of students' bicultural and bilingual identities, which in turn, contribute to students' growth in agency, voice, and the promotion of language learning.

A third misunderstanding is that students with disabilities will most effectively learn English when taught only in English (Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017). Several studies counter this misunderstanding (Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017); for example, research showed that high quality bilingual instruction was just as efficacious as English-only instruction, if not better, for students with disabilities (Cheatham, Santos, & Kerkutluoglu, 2012; Thordardottir, 2010). Baker (2011) also reported that bilingual instruction boosts students' linguistic skills, as opposed to English-only instruction which limits their linguistic skills. Further, Verhoeven et al. (2012) found that learning the native language may accelerate learning a second language. Based on this evidence,

Cheatham and Hart Barnett (2017) concluded that bilingual instruction is more likely than not to contribute to the educational success of EBs with disabilities.

The last misunderstanding identified by Cheatham & Hart Barnett (2017) is that pull-out services for EBs with disabilities are the best way to achieve successful educational outcomes for the students. However, Odom et al. (2011) indicated that inclusion models bring about good learning outcomes for students with various forms of disabilities. The implication of this evidence in support of bilingualism for EBs with disabilities is that those students do not need to give up their rights to bilingual education when found qualified for special education services (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). The above section summarized some misunderstandings about EBs with disabilities. One of the misunderstandings was that EBs with disabilities cannot be bilingual, but research suggested otherwise (Cheatham et al., 2012). Collaboration among educators will be the next focus.

Collaboration among Educators

Ortiz et al. (2020) stressed the need for educators of EBs to assume a collaborative responsibility to plan and implement instruction to address the needs of EBs with disabilities. Working together allows educators to better understand the multiple and interconnected variables contributing to students' success (Ortiz et al., 2020). Therefore, bilingual educators need to share their expertise about language acquisition and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy with their special education colleagues, and special educators need to share their knowledge about disability and effective practices for working with students with disabilities (Ortiz et al., 2020).

Additionally, collaboration needs to happen at the departmental level, where discussions need to take place about how to enhance the education of EBs with disabilities (Ortiz et al., 2020). Therefore, educators must move away from working as

separate departments (e.g., bilingual educators address native language and English proficiency, and special educators address disability-related needs) to working as an integrated whole (Ortiz et al., 2020). Ortiz et al. (2020) explained that working separately ignores the fact that EBs come with several identities. For example, a Latino student who is from an economically disadvantaged home may also classify as an emergent bilingual and a child with a disability. Ortiz et al. (2020) insisted that educators must acknowledge the various identities of students in all programs and classrooms where the students receive services. Ortiz et al. (2020) also stressed the importance of a shared knowledge base as crucial for the success of EBs, adding that collaboration across departments and programs allowed educators to focus attention on the intersectional spaces that students are in, and plan appropriate interventions to address those intersectional needs. This section discussed collaboration among educators. Collaboration among educators and across departments and programs is beneficial for students' success (Ortiz et al., 2020). The next focus is on parent partnership.

Parent Partnership

Collaborative relationships between parents and professionals are necessary for meaningful and effective inclusion of students with disabilities (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). However, collaborative relationships with parents from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are hard to achieve partly because educators do not appear to know how to leverage the skills that the parents may bring to the collaborative efforts (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). Another possible reason for this challenge in collaboration between parent and school is that the routine use of English by educators can marginalize parents during IEP meetings (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018).

Consistent with this knowledge, Ortega (2014) posited that considering that English is the predominant language in the U.S., a language hierarchy may occur that can

lead people with limited English-speaking abilities to be viewed negatively compared to fluent English speakers. As a result, the English language skills of bilingual parents may be perceived as inferior, which makes teachers' efforts to pursue partnerships more difficult (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). Additionally, bilingual parents might be viewed negatively by school staff when they do not speak fluent English (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). For example, immigrant, bilingual parents who are not fluent in English during IEP meetings may be primarily viewed with reference to their less-than-fluent English (Ortega, 2014). Their language skills and knowledge of their children's strengths may also be perceived as less valuable if teachers make linguistic judgments about their disfluency in English (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). Teachers' beliefs and presumptions about immigrant, bilingual parents can negatively or positively impact equitable partnerships between school and families (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). According to Kalyanpur and Harry (2012), partnerships with parents can be difficult when parents perceive that the school does not value their input.

The implication of these challenges is that parents may be left out as full participants in making important IEP decisions; they may be left to comply and adopt the teachers' opinions (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). More significantly, bilingual parents may be unaware of the cultural assets and particular knowledge of their children that they bring to the table and may falsely think of themselves as incapable of communicating effectively during IEP meetings, rather than expecting to receive appropriate communication supports from the teachers (Correa-Torres & Zebehazy, 2014). Cheatham and Lim-Mullins (2018) concluded that, as a result, the perspectives of parents may be unheard, causing both students and parents to be vulnerable to receiving inequitable special education services. To mitigate this problem, Cheatham and Lim-Mullins (2018) suggested that educators can reflect on their practices and minimize

wrong assumptions about parents by supporting communication during IEP meetings. The above section was about parent partnership. Although collaborative relationships between parents and professionals are necessary for meaningful and effective inclusion of students with disabilities (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018), in practice, it is hard to achieve for various reasons. One is that educators have not learned how to leverage the skills that the parents may bring to the collaborative efforts (Cheatham & Lim-Mullins, 2018). The next section will focus on the lived experiences of teachers.

Lived Experiences of Teachers

Nieto (2015) discussed how teacher and school practices contribute to student learning. Based on this notion, this section will discuss lived experiences of teachers regarding teaching EBs and EBs with disabilities under the following subheadings: lived experiences of special education teachers and lived experiences of bilingual education teachers. It is necessary to note that the term EB in the reviewed literature refers to all EBs unless it is otherwise explicitly stated that the research is about teachers teaching Spanish-speaking EBs. Also, bilingual education teachers refer to all bilingual education teachers that teach languages other than English, unless otherwise specified that they are teachers of the Spanish language.

Lived Experiences of Special Education Teachers

The findings of Orosco and Abdulrahim (2017a) highlighted the benefits of professional development in improving the competence of special education teachers. Orosco and Abdulrahim described how a special education teacher's knowledge of mathematics pedagogy and instruction changed after she received professional development. The teacher, Mrs. Casemiro, reported that her students struggled with understanding specialized language in mathematics word problems and explained that though she could teach mathematical symbols to do mathematics, she did not understand

how to teach mathematics language, specialized vocabulary, and mathematical concepts (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017a). Casemiro was provided professional development that taught her how mathematics learning is mediated through language, and then provided teaching examples in helping her students develop their English language proficiency and word problem solving comprehension (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017a). As a result, her instruction improved, promoting her students' vocabulary growth, as well as their word problem solving efficiency (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017a).

In line with the issue of teacher competence, Jozwik et al. (2020) reported on special education teachers' perceptions of their levels of competence for teaching EBs with disabilities. The teachers were asked to rate their competence using a four-point scale (e.g., none, emergent, proficient, and advanced) within seven broad categories: language development, learner characteristics, assessment, instruction, environment, collaboration, and professional practices (Jozwik et al., 2020). The findings revealed that generally, the teachers' self-assessment ratings showed emergent levels of competence across the seven broad categories (Jozwik et al., 2020). Also, both the preservice and the in-service special education teachers reported similar scores (Jozwik et al., 2020). Additionally, the special education teachers who were bilingual or multilingual (with or without bilingual or ESL credentials) recorded higher ratings on the four-point scale when compared to their counterparts who were monolingual special education teachers (Jozwik et al., 2020). Jozwik et al. concluded that there was a need to find new ways to develop the necessary competencies for special education teachers to meet the intersectional needs of EBs with disabilities.

Consistent with the findings of Jozwik et al. (2020), Gonzalez et al. (2021) found that special education teachers self-reported experiencing limited readiness to work with dual language learners. The teachers reported that they received fewer opportunities to

work with dual language learners during preservice training when compared to their experience as in-service teachers. As a result, the teachers shared that they had limited knowledge of how to support dual language learners using the students' native language as an instructional resource (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Other areas where the teachers said they felt unprepared included differentiating between disability and language acquisition, utilizing the student's culture in instruction, and dealing with the challenges connected to the diversity of dual language learners (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Considering the feelings of incompetence felt by the teachers, Gonzalez et al. (2021) posited that the preparation of special education teachers to work at the intersection of ability and linguistic difference was a crucial social justice issue and concluded that there was a need to make intersectional approaches an important focus in special education teacher preparation.

Still on the issue of teacher preparation, Chu (2013) found that 42% of teachers felt their teacher education program was slightly effective in terms of preparing them to successfully teach culturally and linguistic diverse (CLD) students with disabilities. Another 58% of participants felt that the professional development training they attended in the past five years had been slightly effective in preparing them to work with CLD students with disabilities (Chu, 2013). Chu concluded that the findings called attention to the need for special educators who serve students from CLD backgrounds to receive adequate preparation related to bilingual education and/or English as a second language.

In a related study about teacher preparation and diverse learners, Orosco and Abdulrahim (2017b) examined and described the culturally responsive instruction of one special education teacher, Mrs. Estrella, in teaching EBs with learning disabilities. Mrs. Estrella believed that culture mattered in special education and expressed a belief that the field of special education had not included a significant sense of cultural consciousness in the discipline (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017b). She adapted her instruction by drawing

from the cultural experiences of her students using culturally relevant materials, covering a range of topics and events familiar to, or of interest to her Latino EBs; these strategies helped to support the students' specific needs as well as motivate them to participate in challenging activities and discussions (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017b).

Further, on reflection, Mrs. Estrella shared that a critical part of the literacy development and engagement of EBs was an affirmation of their identity due to the frequent devaluation of the students' cultural, linguistic, and racial identity in U.S. schools (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017b). She believed that Latinas are part of the great cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity in the U.S. and therefore, educators should not choose conformity over diversity in literacy instruction (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017b). She underscored the necessity for educators to use culturally relevant and familiar materials, images, and characters, relevant to the students' identity development, as these would provide the students the necessary enrichment to grow their reading stamina, deepen their understanding of story elements, and improve their reading comprehension (Orosco & Abdulrahim, 2017b). Orosco and Abdulrahim (2017b) concluded that the success of special education teachers working with EBs at the elementary level may be dependent on how well the teachers integrate culturally responsive and evidence-based instruction with the EBs' sociocultural needs. Despite the benefits of culturally responsive instruction as portrayed by Orosco and Abdulrahim (2017b), special education teachers appear to be unprepared to teach EBs (Chu, 2013). Chu reported that most special education teachers (68%) who teach EBs with disabilities are monolingual, speaking only English; most of the teachers teach the students in English (Chu, 2013).

In addition to the findings relating to teacher preparation discussed so far, transition of teachers also emerged in the review of literature. Schuck and Lambert (2020) reported on the experiences of two elementary special education teachers of EBs

with disabilities as they navigated the transition to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) due to COVID-19 Pandemic. The teachers identified three distinct stages of ERT: making contact, establishing routines, and transitioning to academics (Schuck & Lambert, 2020). According to the teachers, challenges experienced during this period included inequity in resources amongst their students, the need to rely on at-home support to meaningfully engage students in instruction, and adjusting to teaching online as opposed to face-to-face instruction (Schuck & Lambert, 2020). The teachers admitted they were not in favor of online learning, but they were hopeful that the experience would help to increase communication between teachers and parents (Schuck & Lambert, 2020).

Another study about teacher transition was by Somma and Bennett (2020), who described the experiences of ten special educators when they transitioned from teaching in a self-contained, specialized special education class to an inclusive classroom. The findings showed that all the teachers experienced a shift in their overall beliefs and teaching methods (pedagogy) after teaching students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Somma & Bennett, 2020). Notwithstanding their training in special education, the teachers reported that they were challenged by their own beliefs and expectations, the attitudes of others, and systematic barriers within the education system (Somma & Bennett, 2020). Key points of their change process included the positive performance of students with disabilities, the growth and development of the other students, and their overall pedagogical self-reflection (Somma & Bennett, 2020).

This section discussed findings about special education teachers' lived experiences teaching EBs with disabilities. Orosco and Abdulrahim (2017a) shared how the professional development of a special education teacher improved the teacher's instruction. Jozwik et al. (2020) found that special education teachers' self-assessment ratings showed emergent levels of competence across seven broad competency

categories. Gonzalez et al. (2021) reported that special education teachers received far fewer opportunities to work with dual language learners during preservice training when compared to their experience as in-service teachers. Orosco and Abdulrahim (2017b) described how a special education teacher implemented CRI in her classroom. Schuck and Lambert (2020) reported on the transition of two elementary, special education teachers of EBs with disabilities, from a face-to-face instruction to an Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and found that the teachers had several challenges, one of which was inequity in resources for their EB students. The next section will discuss bilingual education teachers' experiences teaching EBs/EBs with disabilities.

Lived Experiences of Bilingual Education Teachers

Henderson and Palmer (2021) reported on the disagreement that some bilingual education teachers had over the language of instruction policy for the Gómez and Gómez Dual Language Enrichment (DLE) model. Henderson and Palmer (2021) found that while some bilingual education teachers agreed with, and implemented the program's strict language separation requirement, other teachers were opposed to the policy and adapted the model in their classrooms. The implementation of the Gómez and Gómez DLE model required that language of instruction must be by content area and fidelity to the model was stressed (Dual Language Training Institute, 2018). In the Henderson and Palmer (2021) study, two teachers who opposed the model did so because they preferred to utilize their full linguistic repertoire across all their languages; and to be asked to implement the DLE program with fidelity meant that they would have to use only one named language for a given lesson (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). This conflict between program requirement and teachers' opposing views caused widespread and prevalent tensions and contradictions among the teachers (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). Due to their objection to the policy, the two teachers did not maintain fidelity to the program model's

requirement; rather, they adapted and changed the model to incorporate more linguistic flexibility in their classrooms (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). As an example, one of the teachers who opposed the model's language use policy, frequently practiced translanguaging in her classroom, as opposed to strictly using one language in instruction. Also, this teacher recognized that her students were at different levels of bilingualism, therefore, she felt that she needed to make adaptations to the model (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). As a result, her classroom language practices modeled dynamic bilingualism; for example, although math was designated as an English-only period, the teacher deliberately utilized Spanish for clarifying instructions (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). She also utilized both English and Spanish to ask students if they had any questions and switched back and forth between Spanish and English, contrary to the DLE program requirement (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). Henderson and Palmer (2021) reported that this teacher, along with another teacher, felt that they owed it to their students and students' families to expose the students to different varieties of English and Spanish as well as maintain their home language.

On the contrary, a different pair of teachers in the same study expressed strong support for the program model and implemented the program with high fidelity in their classrooms (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). One of those teachers said she believed that the DLE program should be implemented with fidelity and attributed the program's success to high fidelity practices (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). She explained that the program was effective when teachers followed the prescription of the program (Henderson & Palmer, 2021).

The language of instruction does not seem to be the only issue over which the teachers disagreed with policy. Henderson and Palmer (2021) revealed that the school's policy on transitioning EBs quickly, from their home language to English, also met with

disagreement from the bilingual education teachers. Some bilingual education teachers did not favor their administration's policy of transitioning EBs to English as quickly as possible because they felt that frequently, the students were not ready for the transition (Henderson & Palmer, 2021).

Regarding the provision of resources, Amanti (2019) found that most bilingual education teachers in a Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLE) program reported inadequate provision of resources and materials for teaching their students. The teachers identified science as the subject with the least number of available resources and materials; teachers had to find or create 90% to 100% of science materials to use in instruction (Amanti, 2019). To make up for the lack of materials, the teachers translated English resources and created original materials in their assigned language of instruction (Amanti, 2019). The teachers reported that even in the few cases when materials were available, those materials still needed to be adapted before use because the vocabulary and language levels were too advanced for the students to understand (Amanti, 2019). Other ways that the teachers filled the gap in resource availability included borrowing from other teachers, purchasing curriculum materials with their own money, or asking school and district administrators to provide the materials (Amanti, 2019). Many of the teachers also searched online for ideas on creating materials (Amanti, 2019).

According to Amanti (2019), the teachers described the translation and creation of materials as their most challenging tasks because the process was time-consuming. Steps that the teachers took in the process of translating or creating materials included researching unfamiliar vocabulary terms (e.g., in math), aligning the materials with curriculum standards to ensure authenticity of the materials, ensuring that the materials were an accurate representation of the culture of their students, and considering the background knowledge, interests, and skills of the students (Amanti, 2019). The teachers

also pointed out that because students came in at different levels and with different knowledge bases, the materials may not necessarily be useful from year to year (Amanti, 2019).

The lack of materials and resources impacted the teachers' practices in several ways. One teacher said that due to a lack of variety of materials in Spanish, instructional activities in her classroom were usually boring to students as she frequently used the same activities more than once (Amanti, 2019). She explained that there were only so many activities/materials she could create considering the time involved in doing so (Amanti, 2019). She also revealed that contrary to what her students experienced, the students in the English classroom enjoyed a wider variety of interesting educational games. Amati's (2019) finding about inadequate provision of resources for bilingual education teachers is consistent with those of Henderson and Palmer (2021) and Kennedy (2020), who stated that bilingual education teachers reported insufficient instructional materials compared to their monolingual (English) teacher counterparts.

Amanti (2019) also reported that teachers in the DLE programs pointed out that despite the amount of work and effort the teachers put into translating and creating instructional materials, none of them were provided opportunities to attend courses or workshops to prepare them for creating curriculum materials for the DLE classroom. Amanti (2019) posited that the lack of access to courses may have contributed to the perception that this type of "invisible work", or behind the scenes work, that the teachers of the DLE program were frequently engaged in, was a normal part of the work of DLE teachers. In other words, Amanti (2019) contended that people might take for granted that this invisible work was just something that bilingual education teachers did, and as such, the teachers did not need any special preparation or training for the work. However, some of the teacher respondents said they would like to have access to coursework or

workshops that would teach them how to create quality curriculum materials in languages other than English; but the teachers were not sure whether such courses even existed (Amanti, 2019). Amanti concluded that for such workshops to materialize, the time, effort, knowledge, and expertise that DLE teachers put into translating and creating materials for their classroom would need to first be acknowledged and recognized.

Amanti's (2019) notion of the invisible or behind the scenes work that bilingual education teachers frequently engaged in may have been expanded upon in the findings of Kennedy (2020). Kennedy reported that in addition to the translation and creation of materials, other factors also contributed to bilingual education teachers' workload. Examples of those other factors included teaching in two languages (e.g., the home language and the dominant language) and double testing (e.g., testing students in both languages).

Despite dealing with work overload, one other task that bilingual education teachers may need to engage in is collaboration with their special education colleagues (Kangas, 2018). Collaboration between special education and bilingual education teachers is critical to promoting the academic and linguistic growth of EBs with disabilities, yet many special education and bilingual education teachers work independently and concentrate on their own specialized roles (Kangas, 2018). Kangas contended that because of this lack of collaboration, EBs with disabilities received fragmented, inadequate special education and English language services. Consistent with this finding, Delgado (2010) described the collaborative experiences of Mrs. Carrillo, a fourth grade, bilingual education teacher of a Spanish-speaking EB with a disability. Mrs. Carrillo reported that one of the fundamental difficulties she experienced in her practice was limited collaboration between bilingual and special education teachers (Delgado, 2010). As a result, her EB student with a disability did not receive the instructional

services that met her cultural, linguistic, and disability-related needs (Delgado, 2010). The failure to implement integrated services across special education and bilingual education was largely due to limited opportunities granted to teachers for systematic, ongoing planning and collaboration (Delgado, 2010).

In summary, this section focused on the lived experiences of bilingual education teachers. Henderson and Palmer (2021) found that some bilingual education teachers of a DLE program disagreed with the strict policy of separation of the languages of instruction, and, as a result, did not implement the DLE program with fidelity. Amanti (2019) found that most bilingual education teachers felt they did not receive adequate supplies of materials and resources for instruction, therefore, they spent much of their time in translating and creating materials, leading to work overload. Kangas (2018) and Delgado (2010) found that frequently, bilingual education and special education teachers did not collaborate due to insufficient time for planning, and as a result, students did not receive adequate, systematic instruction. The next section will focus on teacher preparation for teaching EBs with disabilities.

Teacher Preparation

In this section, teacher preparation for teaching EBs with disabilities will be the focus. First, special education teacher preparation will be discussed, followed by bilingual education teacher preparation.

Special Education Teacher Preparation

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) defines what a special educator candidate must know and be able to do to start teaching. At a minimum, high-quality preparation programs preparing candidates to meet these standards must provide a bachelor’s degree, enough opportunities to develop and demonstrate appropriate pedagogical skills, including extensive field experiences and clinical practice, and

preparation in core academic subject areas (Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2020). Additionally, the CEC expects that professional special educators in new positions undergo a systematic and structured discipline-specific period of induction, which is frequently the responsibility of the state or school district. The CEC's initial preparation standards for special educators include a demonstration of understanding and competence in the following key areas: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Curricular Content Knowledge, Assessment, Instructional Planning and Strategies, Professional Learning and Ethical Practice, and Collaboration (CEC, 2020). In Texas, a classroom teacher who holds a bachelor's degree in an area other than special education, but holds a valid Texas classroom teaching certificate, can obtain an additional certification in special education by taking an exam (TEA, 2022b).

Gonzalez et al. (2021) posited that discussions about special education teacher preparation have been focused on teacher shortages, but limited attention has been paid to the preparation of special education teachers to teach at the intersection of disability and language for EBs with disabilities. This has resulted in a lack of a joint effort for bilingual-special education teacher training/certification (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Gonzalez et al. argued that discussions about joint efforts between bilingual and special education is critical because effectively meeting the academic needs of EBs with disabilities requires a range of specialized practices that must incorporate deep knowledge of both disability and language acquisition (Ochoa et al., 2014). Gonzalez et al. (2021) however, acknowledged that there is an insufficient empirical base regarding the specific practices and beliefs that teachers need in the space between special education and bilingual education, and the extent to which teachers are prepared to address this intersectional space is also not clear. The limited attention paid to the preparation of special education teachers to address the specific needs of EBs with

disabilities is a concern because the language development of EBs with disabilities may require more complex and specialized knowledge than what may be required for students with disabilities who are not learning a second language (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Gonzalez et al. concluded that more research is needed on special education teachers' readiness to work with EBs with disabilities.

Consistent with the findings of Gonzalez et al. (2021), Miranda et al. (2019) investigated special education teacher candidates' preparation to teach EBs with disabilities, to determine the effectiveness of departmental programs as well as guide program improvement efforts. The results showed a scattered and disjointed approach to preparing preservice special education teachers to teach EBs with disabilities (Miranda et al., 2019). The consequence of this approach has led to a lack of mastery of essential content and a sense of efficacy in teaching EBs with disabilities (Miranda et al., 2019). Also, in line with this knowledge, More et al. (2015) pointed to findings from a national review of Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs (SETPPs) which revealed that only a few programs included course content connected to supporting the needs of EBs with disabilities. More et al. (2015) proposed the need for teacher preparation programs to train special education teachers to understand language acquisition and development and understand how culture influences understanding and perceptions of a school system. Teachers who are knowledgeable about EBs can be proactive in working toward removing existing barriers connected to students' sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds (More et al., 2015). This section discussed special education teacher preparation. Data indicated that most programs did not adequately prepare teachers to teach EBs at the intersection of disability and language (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Miranda et al., 2019; More et al., 2015). The next section will discuss bilingual education teacher preparation.

Bilingual Education Teacher Preparation

The state of Texas requires five professional examinations for candidates who wish to obtain certification to teach bilingual education in Texas' elementary schools (TEA, 2021c). One exam is the Core Subjects Early Childhood (EC)-Six exam, which covers content subjects from early childhood to sixth grade (TEA, 2021c). Another exam is the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities which assesses the candidate's knowledge and ability to perform adequately in the teaching profession (TEA, 2021c). The candidate must also take and successfully pass the Bilingual Education Supplemental Exam, which assesses the candidate's knowledge and ability to perform adequately as a bilingual education teacher (TEA, 2021c). Additionally, the candidate must take the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) for Spanish (TEA, 2021c). This test assesses a candidate's knowledge and ability to perform adequately in teaching bilingual proficiency in Spanish (TEA, 2021c). A fifth test, Science of Teaching Reading was added in 2021, when House Bill 3 was passed by the 86th Texas Legislature, establishing the requirement that all prospective teachers who teach students in grades prekindergarten through sixth grade must demonstrate proficiency in the science of teaching reading (TEA, 2022c). Science of Teaching Reading is a standalone certification exam which took effect on January 1, 2021 (TEA, 2022c).

Ortiz and Robertson (2018) outlined eight areas of competency needed by teachers of EBs and EBs with disabilities to provide linguistically and culturally responsive instruction, geared toward meeting the language, literacy, and/or disability-related needs of the students. The competency areas include language and linguistics, cultural variability, educational contexts, literacy foundations, language and literacy assessment, Instruction/Intervention, collaboration, and professional and ethical practice (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018).

Regarding Language and Linguistics, teachers of EBs must understand the stages of second-language acquisition, language variation, the relationships between L1 and L2, and between language and literacy acquisition to plan language and literacy instruction (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). For Cultural Variability, teachers of EBs must be culturally competent by being aware of their own cultural identity and how it influences their beliefs, values, and worldviews. They must also endeavor to gain understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and work to incorporate students' cultural experiences in instruction and intervention (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014). Further, teachers must know how to help students understand that people have different cultural rules and exhibit different behaviors across people and context; therefore, when students adapt to contexts, it does not mean that they are devaluing their own culture-based behaviors (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). Concerning Educational Contexts, to be effective, teachers of EBs must gain familiarity with theories, philosophies, approaches, policies, and laws about educating EBs and EBs with disabilities (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). They must also understand local, state, and national language and literacy performance standards for students across programs in which they teach (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). They must be capable of applying the principles of universal design in the classrooms (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2017). Regarding Literacy Foundations, teachers of EBs must understand the essential components of literacy instruction for EBs, and the relationships between listening, speaking, reading, and writing development (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). They must also understand the significance of developing academic language proficiency in the process of literacy instruction (Robertson, Ortiz, & Wilkinson, 2017). With Language and Literacy Assessment, teachers of EBs must be able to conduct assessments in oral language skills in L2 (English), as well as in L1 (home language), when possible (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). Teachers must also be

equipped to conduct assessments in literacy skills in English and in L1, if the student has had literacy instruction in LI (Robertson, Ortiz, & Wilkinson, 2017). To understand the performance of EBs who are experiencing significant learning difficulties, teachers of EBs must be equipped to analyze data about students' language and literacy skill performance, over a period, taking into consideration the developmental and schooling histories of EBs (Robertson, Ortiz, & Wilkinson, 2017). Teachers must also be able to use performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional practices and adjust these practices when necessary to improve students' language and literacy outcomes (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). For Instruction/Intervention, to be effective, teachers of EBs must utilize evidence-based literacy instruction, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). Also, when EBs experience difficulties, or are identified as having language or literacy-related disabilities, teachers must be skilled in providing interventions that involve oral language development in L1 and/or in L2 (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). On Collaboration, the expectation is for teachers of EBs to share their knowledge and expertise across programs and work with other professionals to plan and implement instruction geared toward addressing the complex needs of EBs, including EBs who need more intensive interventions (García & Ortiz, 2008; Ortiz et al., 2011). Regarding Professional and Ethical Practice, teachers of EBs must engage in continuous assessment of their own strengths and needs regarding EBs, including those with disabilities, and/or having language- and/or literacy-related difficulties. Teachers must also participate in ongoing professional development and communities of practice (Mak & Pun, 2015) and look for opportunities for increasing knowledge and skills to improve their teaching practices.

Ortiz and Robertson (2018) pointed out the implications of these competencies for teacher education programs. First, representatives from different programs can review the

competencies and identify those being currently addressed in their programs (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). Then, they can identify the gaps that need to be added or improved (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). After that, a matrix can be created to pinpoint the competencies to be mastered within and across programs (Robertson, Ortiz, & Wilkinson, 2017). Finally, those competencies can be mapped to syllabi and field experiences, and the mode of assessment to measure the competencies in specific knowledge and skills could be determined (Robertson, García, McFarland, & Rieth, 2012).

Additionally, Harvey et al. (2015) and Robertson, García, and Rodriguez (2016) suggested that field experiences play a significant role in bridging the gap between theory and practice and are critical for skill acquisition related to core instruction and intensive intervention. Therefore, the scholars concluded that teacher educators must provide opportunities for preservice teachers to engage in practical fieldwork to observe and experience what effective instruction and intervention looks like for EBs and EBs with disabilities. Robertson, McFarland, Sciuchetti, and García (2017) also proposed that teacher education programs should find ways to expose preservice teachers to experiences that foster their understanding of diversity and disability; for example, this could include opportunities to be in contexts with dissimilar language and culture from their own. Teacher educators in discrete programs should also consider creating shared assignments that require continuous collaboration among their preservice teachers as well as connecting those assignments to real-life experiences (Robertson, García, & Rodriguez, 2016). That way, preservice teachers can be exposed to the intersectionality between language, culture, and special needs for EBs (García & Ortiz, 2013). Finally, teacher educators should find professional development to increase their skills in creating programs for EBs (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018).

This section reviewed bilingual education teacher preparation. Ortiz and Robertson (2018) proposed eight competency areas needed by teachers of EBs and EBs with disabilities. The implication is that teacher educators may need to make some necessary changes in their approach to preparing preservice teachers to teach EBs and EBs with disabilities (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). The next section will focus on teacher shortages in special education and bilingual education.

Teacher Shortages

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) posited that special education and bilingual education teachers are among the group of teachers that have a higher turnover rate compared to other teachers. This section will discuss bilingual education and special education teacher shortages. Special education teacher shortage will be discussed first, followed by bilingual education teacher shortage.

Special Education Teacher Shortage

Since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL. 94-142) in 1975 (reauthorized as IDEA), researchers in the field, administrators, and policy makers have struggled with how to maintain the number of qualified teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Landrum et al., 2019). Initially, the main concern was the hiring and training of qualified special education teachers who taught in specialized programs like the resource room, self-contained (life-skills) classrooms, and other more restrictive settings (Landrum et al., 2019), therefore, many unqualified special education teachers were hired to fill the gap (Landrum et al., 2019). However, towards the end of the twentieth century when schools began to move towards more inclusive education, there was a simultaneous emphasis on standards-based accountability and the need for content areas to be taught by highly qualified teachers (Landrum et al., 2019). This meant that teachers would not only be held to high academic standards, but they would also

need to deal with a broader and more diverse group of students, including those with disabilities (Landrum et al., 2019). Additionally, the special education teacher's role evolved from teaching only students with disabilities in isolation, to following students with disabilities into the general education classrooms and bilingual education classrooms, where they either engaged in co-teaching or served in other collaborative roles (Landrum et al., 2019). This presented tremendous challenges to school districts to find qualified special education teachers (Landrum et al., 2019). The American Association for Employment in Education's (AAEE) annual survey of colleges and school districts to assess demand for educators across various fields of teaching, reported that in 2020-2021 school year, there were "considerable shortages" for a wide range of areas of special education certification [e.g., learning disabilities, mild/moderate disabilities, severe/profound disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorder, visual impairment, cognitive disability, multicategory disabilities, early childhood special education, and hearing impairment] (AAEE, 2022). The ranking of "considerable shortages" was the survey's highest ranking category indicating demand, and this ranking was consistent in all geographic regions in the country (Landrum et al., 2019). For the 2015-2016 year, Sutcher et al. (2016) reported that 48 states and the District of Columbia reported shortages in special education and based on these reports, Sutcher et al. (2016) opined those shortages may get worse in the next decade.

Research findings identified reasons for special education teacher shortages: one is that not enough special education teachers are being prepared; and two, too many special education teachers leave the profession yearly (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The most significant reason why the teachers leave the profession is poor working conditions, including inadequate support from administration, a lot of paperwork, and a lack of collaboration with other educators (Carver-Thomas & Darling-

Hammond, 2017). Considering that special education has historically and consistently been among the areas with the highest need for teachers, Landrum et al. (2019) suggested that to address teacher shortages and attrition, more emphasis needs to be given to teacher retention than hiring and training teachers to fill vacancies.

It may be pertinent to mention here that Chambers (2015) pointed to the study of Webster et al. (2010) that indicated that schools increasingly hired more paraprofessionals to relieve some of the work of special education teachers partly due to the shortage of those teachers. However, the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2020c) cautioned that local education agencies must pay keen attention to the kinds of certification that paraprofessional hold when making decisions as to what assignments they would be given. TEA has a guideline that assists school districts to ensure that duties assigned to paraprofessionals fall within the scope of the certification of those paraprofessionals. According to TEA (2020c) roles and responsibilities must be made clear when two or more adults are in a classroom. TEA (2020c) also designated the classroom teacher as the primary teacher. The assistance of a paraprofessional is necessary because it fosters the involvement of all students in classroom routines and instruction (TEA, 2020c). To guide educators in their use of paraprofessionals, TEA (2020c) listed the following as non-negotiables regarding the tasks of paraprofessionals:

Paraprofessionals may not engage in the following activities:

- *develop lesson plans*
- *introduce new material/content*
- *provide the direct teach portion of the lesson*
- *select materials for the implementation of the lesson*
- *assign final grades*

• *be responsible for any IEP-related responsibilities without the supervision of a certified special educator*

• *develop IEP goals and objectives*

• *design the classroom management system*

• *be responsible for determining or reporting student progress (general class progress or IEP- goal progress). When paraprofessionals provide services required by a student's IEP, they must do so under the supervision of a certified special education teacher* (TEA, 2020c, p.7).

This section focused on special education teacher shortage. Landrum et al. (2019) indicated that special education consistently records the highest need for teachers. Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond (2017) reported that poor working conditions may be the primary reason teachers leave the profession. To mitigate teacher shortages and attrition, more emphasis needs to be given to teacher retention efforts (Landrum et al., 2019). The next section will focus on bilingual education teacher shortage.

Bilingual Education Teacher Shortage

Kennedy (2020) explored how school district administrators, principals, and teachers in one Texas school district experienced and responded to the Spanish, bilingual education teacher shortage and found that the school district faced several challenges when trying to attract, recruit, and retain bilingual teachers. One major challenge was the difficulty in the recruitment process (Kennedy, 2020). For instance, there was a lower application volume for Spanish, bilingual education teacher openings, compared to monolingual openings, resulting in many bilingual education teacher position vacancies (Kennedy, 2020). Also, many of the vacancies remained unfilled despite the use of numerous strategies to recruit teachers, such as international recruiting trips to Mexico and Spain, bilingual teacher stipends, and partnerships with local teacher preparation

programs (Kennedy, 2020). Additionally, the study found that the district's adoption of a Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLE) program increased the district's demand for bilingual education teachers. This made it increasingly difficult to find bilingual education teachers who demonstrated advanced levels of Spanish proficiency and the specialized skills required to teach academic content in two languages, at all grade levels (Kennedy, 2020).

Another major challenge that the school district faced was the difficulty in retaining the teachers they recruited (Kennedy, 2020). Due to the challenge of finding bilingual education teachers, poor hiring decisions were made to fill vacancies and those decisions resulted in midyear staff dismissals and teacher separations (Kennedy, 2020). Common reasons for the dismissals or teachers' voluntary separation were because teachers were not a good fit for the schools, or their Spanish language proficiency was poor (Kennedy, 2020).

A third major challenge had to do with certification (Kennedy, 2020). The Spanish language proficiency test for bilingual teachers in Texas (BTLPT) was a major obstacle to obtaining certification because aspiring teachers did not always pass the test on the first attempt (Kennedy, 2020). Additionally, experienced bilingual education teachers from other countries were unable to obtain teacher certification in Texas due to immigration hurdles (Kennedy, 2020). Another certification-related barrier to entry was the strict admissions criteria put forth by the district-housed Alternative Certification Program (ACP) (Kennedy, 2020). Respondent administrators in the study reported that the strict admissions standards in year two of the program's implementation led to the failure to create a teacher cohort for the upcoming hiring season (Kennedy, 2020). The respondents also mentioned that paraprofessionals in the district were encouraged to train as bilingual education teachers, but most of them indicated no interest and the main

reason for their lack of interest was the BTLPT; the paraprofessionals did not think that they were strong enough in academic Spanish to pass the test (Kennedy, 2020). Related to this finding, Wang and Woolf (2015) reported that in the last decades, school districts in the U.S. have experienced challenges in the recruitment, support, and retention of ethnically and culturally diverse teacher candidates due to numerous factors. Some contributing factors to this challenge included absence of financial resources, difficulty balancing work and family, and a lack of proficiency in English, reading, and writing skills at a level required to pass standardized, state teacher licensure and credential exams (Wang & Woolf, 2015).

The effects of the shortage of bilingual education teachers were numerous and detrimental to the schools and the students (Kennedy, 2020). Due to unfilled positions, teachers were sometimes hired mid-year and that meant that the students in those classrooms were without a bilingual education teacher for an extended period (Kennedy, 2020). Also, poor administrative hiring decisions caused mid-year separation of teachers and that further threw off the educational services for the students (Kennedy, 2020). The teacher shortage impacted the intervention process too because the school's interventionists were pulled to the classrooms to fill the shortage of bilingual education teachers; as a result, the interventionists were scampering to work as temporary classroom teachers and as interventionists (Kennedy, 2020). The bilingual education teachers reported that actions that may increase retention include administrators' explicit acknowledgment of the teachers' efforts, increased support from administrators (e.g., provision of more planning time and resources in Spanish) and allowing teachers to engage in greater flexibility in their DLE classroom practices (Kennedy, 2020). This section focused on the shortage of bilingual education teachers. The findings indicated that school districts faced several challenges when trying to attract, recruit, and retain

bilingual education teachers. Chief among the challenges were issues relating to recruitment, certification, and retention (Kennedy, 2020). The next section will discuss a gap in the current study.

Gap in the Knowledge

Studies about the intersection of bilingual education and special education have generally focused on the benefits of bilingual special education which considers the combined use of the home language and the dominant language in instruction, along with special education related services (Kangas, 2017). Research has suggested that bilingual special education is the solution for the challenges involved in delivering disparate services to EBs with disabilities from special education and bilingual education (Cioè-Peña, 2017; Kangas, 2017; Liasidou, 2013; Wang & Woolf, 2015). However, there is a shortage of bilingual special education teachers. For instance, it is only recently that Texas created the Bilingual Special Education Teacher Certification, after House Bill (HB) 2256 was passed in 2021(Texas Care for Children, 2021). The HB 2256 created a bilingual special education certification in the state of Texas to teach students of limited English proficiency with disabilities (Texas Care for Children, 2021). It is therefore reasonable to infer that in Texas public schools, prior to 2021, there were no Texas certified, bilingual special education teachers or teachers who were knowledgeable about and competent in the critical bilingual and special education pedagogies identified by the professions. Due to the shortage of bilingual special education teachers (Wang & Woolf, 2015), many EBs with disabilities continue to be caught in the intersection between special education and bilingual education and neither the special education teachers nor the bilingual education teachers can simultaneously address the dual needs (disability-related needs and learning a second language) of the students. This gap in services has resulted in inadequate progress of the students (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018). There are

limited studies on the lived experiences of bilingual and special education teachers regarding teaching EBs with disabilities, with particular emphasis on how the students' intersectionality impacts teachers' classroom experiences. This dearth of research is especially concerning granted that service provision for EBs with disabilities is on the top 10 noncompliance issues in the education of EBs with disabilities (Kangas, 2018).

Additionally, though there is a dearth of research about the lived experiences of bilingual and special education teachers regarding teaching EBs with disabilities, even more scarce are studies about the lived experiences of bilingual and special education teachers who teach Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. Most studies in the current literature focused on teachers' experiences regarding EBs in general, but few focused on experiences regarding working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. A focus on teachers' experiences with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities is necessary because data indicated that in 2018, Hispanic and/or Latino students made up 27.18% of the population of children ages 6–21 served under IDEA, Part B, across the country, which would make them the largest ethnic group of students receiving special education services in the nation (OSEP, 2020). Data also showed that 50% of those students were served in California, Texas, Florida, and New York (OSEP, 2020). Though the data did not specifically provide the percentage of those students who were learning English, it may be safe to infer that number will be high also.

Studying the lived experiences of bilingual and special education teachers regarding teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities is necessary to better understand the teachers' experiences and determine any needs that they might have relating to the students' intersectionality, and how those needs can be addressed through teacher training. Also, there are few narrative method studies about the lived experiences of special education and bilingual education teachers teaching Spanish-speaking EBs

with disabilities. The methods of design used in the literature reviewed for this current study were mostly qualitative case studies, qualitative interviews and surveys, and focus groups.

Considering the gap in the literature outlined above, this current study seeks to fill the gap and contribute to the literature by conducting an in-depth, narrative inquiry of the experiences of bilingual and special education teachers who teach Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in elementary schools. The narrative method is most suitable for this study because in narrative inquiry, participants share their lived experiences through the narratives that they tell (Clandinin, 2006). This allows for a deeper conversation between the researcher and the teachers; thus, the researcher may be more able to gain a better understanding of teachers' experiences (Clandinin, 2006). The researcher may also be able to potentially gather more important information from the teachers about any needs they might have regarding the intersectionality of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. All the information obtained from the teachers may inform teacher educators on how to more effectively train teachers to address the students' intersectional needs.

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007) provided the theoretical framework for interpreting and applying the research findings reported in this current research. To understand human development, Bronfenbrenner proposed the need to examine how four nested environmental systems influence an individual: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) explained that the microsystem, which represents the first level, involves the immediate environment with which a child interacts such as family, school, peers, and neighborhoods. Bronfenbrenner (1994, p. 1645) defined the microsystem in this manner:

A microsystem is a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit, engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment.

The second level, the mesosystem, was defined by Bronfenbrenner (1981, p. 209) as "a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person becomes an active participant." In other words, the mesosystem refers to relations or connections among microsystems, such as the relationship between family experiences and peer experiences, between family experiences and school experiences, or between school experiences and neighborhood experiences (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). In the case of a child for example, a child who is bullied in school [school experiences] might withdraw from his or her parents [family experiences] at home (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013).

The third level, the exosystem involves influences from the community (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2007). The definition of this system by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 24) is below:

The exosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives.

In other words, the exosystem is characterized by the connections between social settings in which the person does not have an active or direct role in at least one of the social settings (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2007). Examples cited by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) were the network of families that arose through a child's peer

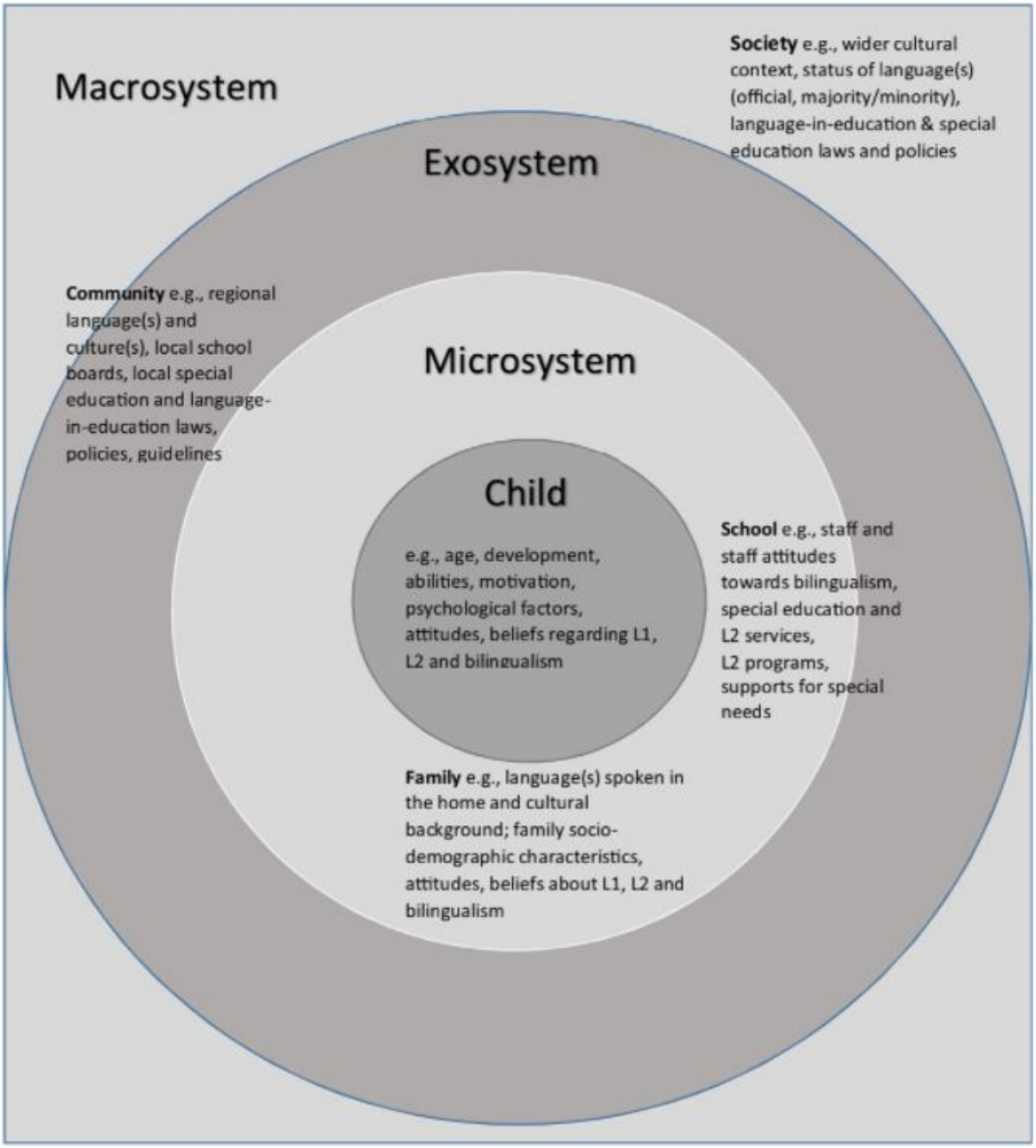
relationships, or precisely, the parenting practices of those peers' parents (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Regarding the fourth level, the macrosystem, Bronfenbrenner proposed that macrosystems are developed temporally, meaning that they evolve over time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Bronfenbrenner explained that regarding children, instability, and unpredictability of events over time can influence a child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). In other words, the enduring forms of interaction (or proximal processes) among people in the immediate environment cannot function effectively in environments that are unstable and unpredictable across space and time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). The cumulative effect of unstable environments (e.g., frequent family moves, changes in day care or school arrangements, long absence of family, divorce, and remarriage) may negatively influence a child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Bronfenbrenner and Morris referred to a longitudinal study conducted by Pulkkinen (1983) that found that the more unstable the family environment was, the more likely children in later childhood and adolescence, would show more aggressiveness, anxiety, and social problems. Also, Bronfenbrenner proposed that considering that all four systems are interconnected, disruptions in any of the interconnected systems tend to reinforce one another and may cause an escalating effect at the highest level of the environmental structure, the macro level (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

However, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) stressed that the microsystem has the most influence on a child's development due to its direct interaction with the child. Considering this significance of the microsystem, the implication of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Model (2007) is that the classroom success of EBs with disabilities may depend on the degree to which teachers understand their unique role as influencers within a child's microsystem. By understanding how student's learning may

be impacted by teachers' actions, the classroom environment, and the school environment; and by knowing how to translate that understanding into practical actions for the benefits of students, teachers may be able to create classroom environments that maximize the likelihood of effective learning of students (Taylor & Gebre, 2016). Figure 2.2 presents an interpretation by Kay-Raining Bird et al. (2016, p. 64) of Bronfenbrenner's Ecobiological Systems model, as it applies to bilingual development. At the center of the representation is the child. The other components represent layers of contextual factors that may impact the child's opportunity and ability to become bilingual. Many different interconnected influences may work together to define the space in which a child with developmental disability may (or may not) become bilingual and the space or landscape will change over time depending on the child's situation (Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2016).

Figure 2.2

A representation of context for bilingual access and participation and avenues for bilingualism of an individual within the family, school, community, and larger society. (Diagram taken from: Pulling it all together: The road to lasting bilingualism for children with developmental disabilities [Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2016, p. 64])



Conclusion

This chapter focused on the literature review for this study. Topics discussed included special education and bilingual education laws, overview of special education and bilingual education in the U.S. and Texas, lived experience of special education and bilingual education teachers, teacher preparation and shortage, the gap in the study, and the theoretical framework. The methodology for the study will be discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of bilingual and special education teachers in teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, to better understand how the students' intersectionality impacted the teachers' practices. The results of the study will potentially inform how teachers are trained to better educate Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. This qualitative narrative study utilized individual interview data from a purposeful, convenient sample of two bilingual education teachers and two special education teachers in grades first through fourth, within a large urban school district in southeast Texas. The researcher conducted interviews through a Zoom video conference to protect the participants against any potential exposure due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher asked the teachers to respond to 16 overarching, semi-structured interview questions about their experiences with teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. Inductive and deductive thematic coding processes were used to identify emergent themes from the participants' individual narratives. This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, research purpose and questions, researcher's role, research design, participant selection, data collection procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness, privacy and ethical considerations, and the research design limitations of the study.

Overview of the Research Problem

Based on research data, the number of EBs enrolled in public schools in the United States is high and increasing (Wood et al., 2018). An estimated 5.1 million (or 10.4%) EBs were enrolled in U.S. public schools in fall 2019; this was an increase from an estimated 4.5 million (or 9.2%) in fall 2010 (NCES, 2022a). Also, data indicated that in 2018, Hispanic and/or Latino students made up 27.18% of the population of children

ages 6–21 served under IDEA, Part B (OSEP, 2020a). The number of EBs with disabilities in the U.S. also grew by close to 30% between school year 2012 and school year 2020 (OSEP, 2022a). The educational needs of EBs in public schools may be varied and complicated due to their cultural and linguistic diversity, but EBs with disabilities have additional challenges that impact their education, apart from cultural and linguistic differences (Cioè-Peña, 2017). EBs with disabilities fall into an intersectional gap-they are students with disabilities, and they are learning English as a second language (Cioè-Peña, 2017). The interaction between their disabilities and their second-language learning processes may cause the students to have unique learning needs that may have implications on how they are taught and how they show what they are learning (Cioè-Peña, 2017).

It is reasonable to assert that teachers may be the key personnel to foster students' successes. Therefore, an important part of ensuring high academic achievement for EBs with disabilities may be to prepare teachers to adequately address the students' needs (Cioè-Peña, 2017; Kangas, 2017). Frequently, teachers lack the training needed to support EBs with disabilities (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Jozwik et al., 2020; Martínez-Álvarez, 2020; Park et al., 2016) despite an estimated 45% of public-school teachers in the U.S. having EBs in their classrooms (Wood et al., 2018). Based on these data, there is a need to understand teachers' experiences in educating EBs with disabilities. However, research in this area is scarce, and even more scarce are studies focused on teachers' experiences working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to examine the lived experiences of bilingual education and special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities to better understand how the students' intersectionality influenced the teachers' practices.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative study was to examine the lived experiences of bilingual education and special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, to better understand how the students' intersectionality impacts teachers' practices. The researcher considered the following overarching question in this study:

> How do special education and bilingual education teachers of Spanish speaking, EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?

Sub Questions:

1. How do special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?
2. How do bilingual education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the experiences of bilingual education and special education teachers regarding working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities?

Researcher's Role

The researcher conducting this study is a retired elementary school special education teacher, who spent the last 18 years teaching in the target school district under study. During the span of the 18 years prior to her retirement, she taught students in grades kindergarten through fourth grade in a special education resource classroom across several campuses, and some of her students were Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. As a special education teacher of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, the researcher knows and understands the challenges that teachers of EBs with disabilities

face (Park et al., 2016). In addition to being a special education teacher, the researcher is also a mother of a child with a disability and a first-generation immigrant. As a result of the combination of these shared attributes with teachers in this study and some families of EBs with disabilities, the researcher had a desire and felt a personal responsibility to ensure that elementary teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities were well prepared to address the intersectional needs of the students.

The researcher conducted this research study at the targeted school district in southeast Texas because in 2019, it had a high enrollment of Spanish-speaking students (83%). Though enrollment data for Spanish-speaking students was available, data for sub-categories on how many of those children were EBs and how many were EBs with disabilities were not part of the disaggregated data. However, a reasonable inference can be made that considering the high number of Spanish-speaking students, the number of Spanish-speaking EBs and Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities may also be high. Considering the researcher's experience in the field of special education working with EBs with disabilities, a goal of this study was to find out areas where teachers may possibly be better trained to be more effective in teaching EBs with disabilities.

Research Design

For this study, the researcher used a qualitative, narrative research method to examine the experiences of bilingual education and special education teachers regarding teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, to better understand how the students' intersectionality impacted the teachers' practices. Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 20) defined narrative inquiry this way:

> Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and

progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving, and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social.

The conceptual root of narrative inquiry is founded on the Deweyan ontology of experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Drawing upon Dewey's ontology of experience, narrative inquiry is described as having three dimensions: *Temporality, Sociality,* and *Place* (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). *Temporality* refers to Dewey's notion of *continuity* in experience which means that experiences emanate from other experiences and those experiences result in other experiences (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Irrespective of the location where one positions oneself in that continuum, each location has roots in the past and current experiences may become roots to future experiences (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). *Sociality* is linked to Dewey's idea of interaction which proposes that individuals are constantly in interaction with their situations in any experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Dewey believed that experience is both personal and social and both experiences are always present (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Therefore, though individual experiences need to be understood, they cannot be understood as standalone experiences because they are usually in relation to social contexts (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Also, the relationship between the inquirer and participants is an important dimension in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). This is because inquirers and participants are in a constant relationship during the process of inquiry and cannot separate from one another during the process (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). As inquirers and participants negotiate the outcomes of the inquiry, they may become subjected to contextual influences (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006).

Place, or sequence of places, is about the centrality of the actual, physical, and topological boundaries of place where the experiences happen (Clandinin & Rosiek,

2006). This dimension acknowledges that all events happen somewhere, in some place; and the specific place, the quality of the location, and its impact on the experiences of participants are significant (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). To further explain the criticality of place, Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) shared the argument of Basso (1996), which stated that when places are actively recognized, the physical landscape becomes inextricably joined to the landscape of the mind and to the wandering imagination, and it is hard to tell where that imagination might lead. Place may change as an inquiry ensues temporally, and narrative inquirers may need to be vigilant to how place may change life narratives as they unfold (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) posited that these commonplaces or touchstones of narrative inquiry are ideas that hold narrative inquirers together and allow them to understand that their research occupies a unique place on the methodological landscape.

In summary, narrative inquiry is a collaboration between the inquirer and participants, over time, in a place or places, and in social interaction with the environmental context (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Therefore, narrative inquiry is a relational kind of inquiry, and its purpose is to describe how individuals make sense of their experiences within their contexts, as well as contribute to making continuous sense out of new experiences (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). The implication is that the relationship between the participant and the inquirer becomes an essential dimension of sociality (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Narrative inquirers are constantly in an inquiry relationship with the lives of participants, and therefore cannot subtract themselves from relationships; rather, they remain in relationships the whole time they are in inquiry, during which they negotiate purposes, texts, outcomes, next steps, and other issues involved in inquiry relationships (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Also, through research

questions and texts, inquirers can share who they are relative to the participants (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006).

It is remarkable to point out that the dimensions of narrative inquiry tie in with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Narrative inquiry is about the intricate connection among three dimensions- temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007) is also about intricate connections among nested systems. The narrative inquiry dimensions and Bronfenbrenner's model appear to emphasize the significance of social contexts, time, and place in human experiences.

The narrative inquiry method was the most suited method for this study because narrative inquiry is about the study of experience (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). Therefore, based on this knowledge, narrative inquiry allowed this researcher to understand how teacher knowledge was narratively composed and expressed in practice. Specifically, narrative inquiry enabled this researcher to explore participants' experiences (knowledge, feelings, attitudes, concerns, success, interests, and ideas) about working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. Therefore, by positioning herself beside the individual participants and engaging in deep conversations with each of them as they narrated their experiences (Clandinin, 2006), this researcher was placed in a position where she was able to capture what may be learned from the participants about how teachers might be better trained to work with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. To accomplish this purpose, the semi-structured interview protocol was used to elicit data with participants as the source of information. By gathering the narrative experiences of individual teachers about teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, the researcher became part of the process of re-telling the narratives of the teachers.

To better understand the role of the researcher in narrative inquiry, Gauna et al. (2014) likened the role of a narrative inquirer to that of a conductor in Playback Theatre (PT). Playback Theater is an art form created by the first Playback Company, in New York, five decades ago (Munjuluri et al., 2020). It is an improvised form of art, and generally, its performance involves a master of ceremony or conductor, a musician, and a few actors (Munjuluri et al., 2020). The conductor first introduces the actors to the audience and then asks for volunteers among the audience to share an experience or moment from their life (Munjuluri et al., 2020). After a volunteer or storyteller shares his or her experience, the ensemble of actors and musician play-back the experiential moment with a short dramatization using any theatrical form (Munjuluri et al., 2020). The chosen form of enactment enables the actors to retell the moment using various techniques including poetry, humor, narrative, or abstract (Munjuluri et al., 2020). Though the purpose of PT was to entertain, its essence was to honor the human experience as opposed to ridiculing it (Munjuluri et al., 2020). One rule of PT was that the story tellers must share moments, feelings, or experiences in their lives that were true. In some cases, a theme could be set for all the experiences (Munjuluri et al., 2020).

Just like a conductor orchestrates a performance, a narrative inquirer negotiates the points of entries and exits within the narrative inquiry space (Gauna et al., 2014). Both the research inquirer and the conductor have the responsibility of non-intrusively evoking the lived stories while allowing the storyteller the freedom to tell his or her lived story, with guidance from the inquirer (Gauna et al., 2014). Another similarity between the roles of the conductor and the researcher is that a conductor provides lived stories to the actors to act out in front of the audience, and similarly, a researcher transforms field texts into research field texts for others to read (Gauna et al., 2014). Ultimately, both the researcher and the conductor would like the outcome of their work (text or dramatization)

to be well represented so that the readers or audience can be inspired to think about how they, too, can contribute to this process and be useful. Gauna et al. (2014) noted that the difference between a field text and a drama is that lived stories represented in field texts take far longer to tell due to the back and forth involved in the process of composing field texts, transforming it to research interim field text, having the readers read it, and going back to recompose or revise the text; and this process could take years. On the other hand, Playback Theater may only take hours to be accomplished (Gauna et al., 2014).

The current study's narrative design consisted of an overarching, semi-structured interview protocol, administered individually to the four participants. The researcher held two individual interview sessions per participant. The first interview lasted for about one hour for each participant. The second interview, which was a follow-up of the first interview, lasted about 30 minutes for each participant. The merit of selecting this design was that it was best suited for the study's purpose (Creswell, 2007) which was to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' real-life experiences teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. Individual interviews allowed the researcher to build rapport, evaluate the participants' body language, and ask follow-up questions based on the participants' responses.

The researcher interviewed the four purposefully and conveniently selected teachers using the interview protocol. Overarching, open-ended questions in the interview protocol were focused on teachers' experiences in teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. The sessions were recorded for accuracy during the transcription process. After the first interview was transcribed with the aid of a transcription software, and analyzed, each participant was provided with what Clandinin (2006) termed field text, which consisted of the researcher's written composition and data collected during the interview process. The purpose of providing the field text to the participants was to give

them the opportunity to evaluate the researcher's interpretation of the interview and provide feedback. This form of member-checking strategy ensures the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2003). In the process of providing this copy of the transcript to the participants, the researcher requested feedback and asked for a second interview. The second interview was based on follow-up questions regarding the first interview. Examples of open-ended clarifying questions used were, "Please tell me more about___", "Would you care to elaborate on __when you said__?", "Please explain with an example or a memory what you meant when you referred to __".

After the second interview, the recording was transcribed, and each participant was provided another field text consisting of the analysis of the second interview; this allowed participants the chance to again evaluate the researcher's data interpretation and provide feedback. Participants were assured that all recordings and notes would be private and confidential. The data collected were stored on a password-protected computer in the researcher's home and in a locked file cabinet. The researcher will maintain the data for three years as required by the CPHS and school district guidelines. After the deadline has passed, the researcher will destroy all data files associated with the study.

Participant Selection

A purposeful, convenient sample of four teachers (two special education teachers and two bilingual education teachers) from two elementary schools in the target school district were invited to participate in two semi-structured individual interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences regarding teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. The researcher determined that for a narrative method-study, four participants was an adequate number to allow for an in-depth interview of each participant. The criteria for participant

selection were that teachers would be elementary, bilingual education and special education teachers, who were certified to teach the subjects and grade levels that they were assigned to teach in Texas. The special education teachers targeted for this study were those who taught students that were instructed in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Curriculum, with academic content and language accommodations and/or modifications, as prescribed in their IEPs. Special education teachers who taught students who were instructed using an alternative state curriculum were not part of the study. The reason for focusing on teachers who instructed students in the TEKS curriculum (with accommodations and/or modifications) and not those who taught an alternative state curriculum was because there might be significant differences in the academic expectations of both groups of students that each group of special educators taught. Therefore, the teachers' training and classroom practices may be different. The targeted bilingual education teachers were those who taught Spanish-speaking bilingual students. English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers who taught non-Spanish-speaking bilingual students were not part of this study due to the cultural and linguistic differences among the students that both groups of teachers instruct.

The researcher solicited all four interviewed teachers from two campuses within the targeted school district. The two special education teachers were from one campus and the two bilingual education teachers were from another campus. The researcher sent emails to all special education and bilingual education teachers in grades one through four in the target district to solicit their participation in the study. Only five teachers responded to the request. One of the teachers did not meet the set criteria to be eligible for the study, but the other four teachers did. The researcher selected the four teachers (two special education teachers and two bilingual education teachers) who met the criteria for the study. The two special education teachers taught students in grades one

through four in the special education resource program. One of the special education teachers had been teaching for six years and was in her late twenties. The other special education teacher had 17 years of teaching experience and was in her early fifties. One of the bilingual education teachers taught second grade, had been teaching for four years, and was in her twenties. The other bilingual education teacher taught first grade, had 19 years of teaching experience, and was in her fifties.

Following the receipt of emails from the four teachers, confirming their willingness to participate in the study, the researcher met with each of the teachers in person (researcher was masked and maintained social distance due to the COVID-19 pandemic) to pick up their signed consent forms. At that meeting, the first interview was scheduled, and the researcher informed the participants that the study was for a doctoral dissertation, their participation was voluntary, and there would be two interviews conducted through a Zoom video conference. The researcher also informed participants that the first interview was estimated to last sixty minutes and the second interview was also estimated to last sixty minutes or less. Further, the participants were assured that their demographic information would remain confidential. By the end of this pre-interview meeting, the researcher and participants agreed upon the time and format for the first interview.

Following the pre-interview meeting with each participant, the interview protocol was sent to the participants before the first interview took place, to allow the participants time to review the questions and think through their responses. The researcher felt that this was necessary because teachers may not remember details of experiences that occurred earlier in the school year, or a few years back. By sending them the questions ahead of time, some of the experiences that may have been forgotten, may be remembered as they would have had time to reflect on the questions.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection began once all requirements were met. The researcher sought approval from the University of Houston-Clear Lake's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) and from the target school district's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher used Gauna et al.'s (2014) Sequence of often used questions in Playback Theatre as a guide during the data collection procedures. Table 3.1 shows Gauna et al.'s (2014) Sequence of often used Questions in Playback Theatre. In the next section, the data collection tools used for the study would be presented in the following order: piloting protocol, interview protocol, field texts and interim research texts, and researcher's autobiography.

Table 3.1

Sequence of often used Questions in Playback Theatre (Table taken from: Stories of languages and teaching: First year bilingual Spanish/English teachers' narratives. University of Houston [Gauna et al., 2014, p.79-80])

Sequence of often used Questions in Playback Theatre	
Attention to the temporal dimension	Begin by thanking the teller and pose very open-ended question such as, "When does your story begin?"
Attention to place	"Where does your story begin?"
Attention to the story line	"Then, what happens?"
Attention to people	"Could you describe yourself or (so & so) in this situation?" What did you do or what did you say in this situation?"
Request clarification for meaning and attention to context	With questions such as, "when you say that you were in (Harlem), what does it mean for you?" (Attention to context). Avoid commonplace assumptions.
Paraphrase or re-story to check for understanding	"Let me see if I heard you right." Do not ask about feelings, it brings up red flags as if the participant was in a therapy session without the proper therapist and in public
Explore meaning of the story	"How does the story end? What's the title of your story?"

Piloting Protocols

The researcher conducted a pilot study prior to the current study. The interview protocol was used to interview five purposefully, conveniently sampled elementary school teachers-one special education teacher and four bilingual education teachers. The same protocol was used for all the teachers. During the interviews, the researcher noticed that some questions were repetitive, and some others were unclear. Other questions did not seem to help in answering the research questions. Following the pilot study, repetitive questions were eliminated from the protocol and unclear questions were rewritten for clarity. The researcher reviewed, revised, and fine-tuned the piloted interview protocol several times to make it concise, clear, non-repetitive, and focused on answering the research questions. The final interview protocol consisted of 16 semi-structured, overarching interview questions, with some flexibility built into it to allow for follow up questions should they arise.

Interview Protocol

The researcher purposefully and conveniently solicited four teachers (two bilingual education teachers and two special education teachers) from two campuses within the target district. A total of 16 overarching, open-ended questions were used in an interview protocol that focused on teachers' experiences in teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. The researcher conducted two interviews with each of the four participants through Zoom video conferences, using the interview protocol. The first interview for each participant lasted 60 minutes and the length of the second interview varied among the participants (between 30 minutes and 45 minutes). Both interview sessions were held approximately a week apart.

At the onset of each interview session, after each participant was comfortably seated, the researcher introduced herself. The researcher informed the participant about

the purpose of the study and reiterated that the interview would be anonymous and that names and all information shared would remain confidential. Then, the researcher asked for permission to record the interview and explained that the session needed to be recorded for accuracy of the transcription process. The researcher assured the participant once again that all recordings and notes would be private and confidential. After obtaining permission for recording the interview, the researcher turned on the recording button in the Zoom video session. Once it was established that the participant did not have any questions, the researcher conducted the interview. This procedure was followed for each of the four participants during both interview sessions.

The first interview consisted of 16 overarching semi-structured questions compiled into an interview protocol. However, the researcher did not strictly follow the protocol as some of the participants' responses needed to be followed up by a different set of questions. Thus, some flexibility was built into the interview questions to clarify certain information or to obtain more information. The session was recorded for accuracy of the transcription process. After the first interview was transcribed, with the aid of transcription software, and analyzed, each participant was provided a field text, or an analysis of the interviews to evaluate the researcher's data interpretation. This is a type of member-checking strategy (Creswell, 2003) that ensures accuracy of the findings. After the participants confirmed that the data were an accurate representation of their narratives, the researcher requested a second interview as a follow-up to the first one; thus, the second interview was based on follow-up questions regarding the first interview. Following the second interview, the recording was transcribed, and each participant was provided a field text consisting of the analysis of the second interview so they could evaluate the researcher's data interpretation. This entailed another round of member-

checking to further validate the data (Creswell, 2003). Participants were assured that all recordings and notes would be private and confidential.

On concluding the second interview, the researcher uploaded and saved the interviews on her password-protected personal computer for safekeeping. Each interview version was saved separately using a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality of the participants. All data collected, including the researcher's notes, were stored on a password-protected computer in the researcher's home and in a locked file cabinet. The researcher will maintain the data for three years as required by the CPHS and school district guidelines. After the deadline has passed, the researcher will destroy all data files associated with the study.

Field Texts and Interim Research Texts

The researcher compiled field texts during each interview. Field texts are notes composed in the field during the inquiry process. Field texts compiled for this study included records of both interviews, the researcher's personal notes, and the researcher's observations and thoughts regarding the participants' body language, or verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Clandinin, 2006). The collection of notes captured the essence of the scene and allowed the researcher to actively participate in the inquiry process, rather than being a mere observer (Clandinin, 2006). Field notes became interim research texts when the researcher rewrote the interpretations of the field texts; therefore, the researcher's field notes were not stagnated texts (Clandinin, 2006). Also, the interim research texts were not close to the action or experience and were open to further recomposing. This meant that the researcher revised and rewrote the texts several times as new understanding came to mind. (Clandinin, 2006).

Autobiography

My story as the researcher is not separate from, but inclusive of, the participants in this study. Like the participants, I was a special education teacher of EBs with disabilities and taught special education for 22 years. However, my entry point into this narrative did not begin 22 years ago. It began much earlier; 33 years ago, when I gave birth to my youngest child, Teresa. Teresa was diagnosed with autism just before she turned four. We were new immigrants to the United States from Nigeria, therefore, I was thrown into an emotional turmoil fueled by a time and place when I was adjusting to a new culture, had no support network of friends or family, and had to care for my three young children all of whom were below age 5, with the youngest being disabled. Further, my husband was not of much help with the children because he needed to work long hours to pay the bills in the expensive city of New York. All those experiences prepared and inspired me to enter the field of special education and devote my work to enhancing the educational lives of EBs with disabilities, especially the ones whose parents were immigrants, just like me.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) proposed that no experience is an isolated experience. That means that all experiences connect to the past and the future, and mine is a clear example. That story of ours that unfolded in New York 33 years ago had roots in Nigeria, where my child with autism was born, and our lived stories are still being told today, because today's lived story cannot be complete without those past stories. Our lived stories have moved places, the times have changed, but the lived stories continue to evolve and change. The different parts of our lived story at each place, each time, and each context, are part of one thread that permeates the entire story line that is endless. My background as a teacher and my shared experiences and connection to the participants' lived stories allowed me to easily enter a trusting relationship with the participants during

our conversations and that enabled me to delve deeper for pertinent information that was helpful in answering the research questions for this study.

Data Analysis Procedure

After each interview, the researcher transcribed the recorded interview using transcription software, analyzed the data, and summarized each participant's narrative by removing all unessential elements and retaining only the crucial elements of the story. Unessential elements included remarks or any other spoken words not relevant to the study. The crucial elements included data that related to a description of the participants' experiences in teaching EBs with disabilities and how the students' intersectionality impacted the teachers' practices.

Then, a copy of the transcript analysis, or field text, was sent by email to each participant to evaluate the researcher's data interpretation. This member-checking strategy (Creswell, 2003) ensures accuracy and validity of the findings. The second interview followed the same procedure as the first one. That meant that it was transcribed, analyzed, summarized, and sent to the participants for validation and feedback. Participants were assured that all recordings and notes would be private and confidential. Each interview version was saved separately using a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality of the participants. All data collected, including the researcher's notes, were stored on a password-protected computer in the researcher's home and in a locked file cabinet.

To begin the process of conducting thematic coding, the transcripts were entered into a qualitative data management program (NVivo). A single-case analysis of each participant's interview was created. This allowed the researcher to reduce each interview into a separate, individual experience (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher then read and reread all the field texts collected during the inquiry process and constructed a

chronology, or summarization, of what the various field texts contained (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This involved careful coding of field texts with notation of dates, time, the contexts in which the field texts were written, the teachers involved, and the topic categories discussed (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By delineating the dates, time, and contexts in which the field texts were composed, the researcher positioned the field texts within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space—the temporal, the personal and social, and the place—all of which are elements of a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). After constructing a chronology of the field texts, the researcher coded the interim research texts for individual participants. Codes used by the researcher included the participant's pseudonym, demographics of the participant, and participant's narrative experiences under predetermined categories: teacher preparation, planning and collaboration, IEPs, administrative support, classroom instruction, students' outcomes, and parent partnership. Then, a detailed, narrative account was written about each teacher's experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in teaching EBs with disabilities, using the participant's own words when possible.

Following the writing of the narrative account for each teacher, the researcher also added her own narrative account to the data because by virtue of the narrative inquiry method, she could not separate herself from the inquiry process. After that, the researcher conducted a thematic coding of each participant's narrative using a combination of inductive and deductive coding. The researcher looked for patterns and themes within each teacher's experience. During this process, the researcher listened to the interview recordings many more times and recorded her thoughts as well as her impressions about the participant. Also, the researcher noted the interactions between herself and the participant as the interview unfolded. The researcher attached her recorded thoughts and impressions to each participant's narrative file.

Following the thematic coding of the individual narratives, the researcher reread all the participants' narrative accounts and further looked for patterns, narrative threads, and themes across those individual narratives. Throughout the process, the researcher used both inductive and deductive thematic coding. A total of seven themes emerged across the narratives of the four participants and the researcher: five themes emerged from the deductive analysis process and two themes from the inductive analysis. The researcher then completed the final write-up incorporating all seven themes. It is remarkable to note that two of the seven themes that emerged were exclusively from the special education teachers and both themes were inductive.

Considering that narrative inquiry is a fluid inquiry, it necessitated the researcher engaged in ongoing reflection, or what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) called wakefulness. Narrative inquirers need to be "wakeful, and thoughtful, about all of our inquiry decisions" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 184). Therefore, this process of moving from field texts to research texts was not a tidy or isolated series of steps; rather, this researcher reconsidered what she had written and revised, then added and removed information as new understandings emerged (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In the final analysis, the researcher used information from the interview sessions, in conjunction with her field notes and observation of body language of the participants, to write a detailed narrative of participants' experiences and provided a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences in working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities.

Trustworthiness

To increase trustworthiness, the researcher compared and cross-checked data obtained from the interviews among the participants. That meant that the responses received from the interviews were subject to member-checking, where the participants reviewed the preliminary transcripts to enhance the accuracy of the responses provided

and the researcher's interpretation of the data. Bryman (2004, p. 275) explained the merit of member-checking this way:

> The establishment of credibility of findings entails both ensuring that research is carried out according to the canons of good practice and submitting research findings to the members of the social world who were studied for confirmation that the investigator has correctly understood that social world.

Further, the researcher compared and cross checked the interview transcripts with personal notes obtained during the interviews.

The use of triangulation was another way that the researcher increased credibility for the research findings. Triangulation is using multiple sources of data that enhance reaching data saturation and add depth to the collected data (Fusch et al., 2018). The qualitative analysis process of this study included trustworthiness by triangulating individual teacher responses, the researcher's personal notes, and the researcher's observation of the participants' body language.

Additionally, the researcher ensured truthfulness and authenticity to the participants' experiences by using many of the participants' own words to capture their experiences. According to Creswell (2003, p. 196), using detailed descriptions to ensure the accuracy of findings "may transport the readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences". Further, the narrative approach used in this study allowed the researcher and participants to provide validation checks throughout the collection and analysis of the narratives through their constant negotiation of the meaning of the narratives (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006).

The researcher piloted the interview protocols with special education and bilingual education teachers who teach Spanish-speaking, EBs with disabilities, in elementary school. The researcher revised and fine-tuned the interview questions several

times based on feedback from the pilot study. The same interview protocol was used for each participant. Also, by virtue of the narrative inquiry method, trustworthiness was increased because the researcher checked for consistency in the participants' narratives throughout the interview process. Also, the researcher went back to the participants as a follow-up to check the researcher's data interpretation. During those conversations, the researcher elicited more in-depth information about certain topics, with prompts like, "tell me more about…" or "could you elaborate more on this idea that you shared about…"

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from the participating school district's IRB and the university's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) before collecting data. The name of the school district in which the study was conducted was not mentioned, nor were the individual names of the participants. The researcher used pseudonyms for the participants and students mentioned in the narratives. The researcher informed participants, through emails and pre-interview meetings, about the purpose of the study, that their participation would be voluntary, and their responses and identities would remain confidential. Further, the researcher described the methods to be used in the study and what the participants would expect should they choose to engage in the study. Participants were also informed that their participation would be confidential during reporting and would remain anonymous.

The researcher conducted each participant's interview after consent was received. During the interview process, the researcher made every attempt to be as objective as possible. During the coding phase, the researcher continuously safeguarded against subjective interpretations as themes emerged, by rechecking personal notes and listening to the recordings again. The data collected will remain in a password-protected folder on

the researcher's computer, and in a locked file cabinet, at the researcher's home. The researcher will maintain the data for three years as required by the university's CPHS and school district guidelines. After the deadline has passed, the researcher will destroy all data files associated with the study.

Research Design Limitations

The current COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the data collection process because of restrictions placed on personal contacts. Rather than a face-to-face interview session, the researcher utilized Zoom video conferences to interview the participants after they had gotten home from school. One of the three dimensions of narrative inquiry is the actual, physical place where the experiences happened (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). The specific place, the quality of the location, and its impact on the experiences of participants are significant (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006). A face-to-face interview in the participants' classrooms, would have allowed the researcher to see their classrooms where their experiences took place, and their body language, all of which might have added some important data to the study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how bilingual education and special education teachers of Spanish speaking EBs with disabilities described the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices. This chapter described in detail the methodology that was used for the qualitative, narrative study. A semi-structured, individual interview protocol was utilized to gather the experiences of four bilingual education and special education teachers in teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. The researcher analyzed and coded the information collected from the interviews to produce a descriptive, narrative response. The findings from this study are reported in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER IV:

FINDINGS

As I write this chapter of my dissertation, I cannot help but reflect on my own experiences as a non-Spanish speaking, special education teacher, working with Spanish-speaking Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) with disabilities. My reflection is especially significant because recently, I retired from teaching after 22 years in education. As I reflected on my journey in education, my mind travelled back to one time when I had Javier (pseudonym) in my special education resource classroom. Javier spoke Spanish and very little English. I spoke fluent English but no Spanish, so I wondered how I was going to provide home language support to him in reading, writing, and math. I remember using my aide as my interpreter to communicate with Javier, but much of the communication was lost in translation. My aide did most of the direct instruction though she was not trained for that responsibility. I remember my frustration at not being able to provide direct, explicit instruction to Javier. In this research study, two bilingual education teachers and two special education resource teachers shared the stories of their unique experiences in working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, and how the students' intersectionality impacted their practices. The researcher joined the four participants in the telling of five narratives that resonate with each other. Each of us experienced different classroom circumstances, yet similar challenges and fulfilments that connect us as teachers of Spanish speaking EBs with disabilities.

My inquiry began when I started teaching as a special education resource teacher in a school that had a high Spanish speaking student population. I had five Spanish-speaking EBs in my resource classroom, and while two of them spoke relatively fluent English, the other three had very limited English. My initial experience was confusion. I was confused as to how I would teach students with whom I could not effectively

communicate. Though my aide at this school could speak conversational Spanish, she was unable to read and write fluently in Spanish. Considering my situation, I resorted to teaching the students in English instead of Spanish. That was challenging, too, because I was not prepared or trained to teach English or academic subjects to non-English speakers. More importantly, by teaching in English, I was conflicted on whether I was doing a disservice to the children who were in the bilingual education program at my school.

Eventually, my experience caused me to seek other teachers of Spanish-speaking, EBs with disabilities to determine what their experiences were and how the students' dual needs for special education services and second language learning, impacted their practices. For this research study, I found two special education resource teachers, one with seventeen years of teaching experience and the other with six years of teaching. I also found two bilingual education teachers, one with nineteen years of teaching experience and the other with four years of teaching. Both special education teachers taught in the same school. Their students were in first through fourth grades. Similarly, the two bilingual education teachers taught in the same school; one teacher taught first grade, and the other teacher taught second grade. Thus, the study was limited to two elementary campuses in the target district. This chapter is divided into four sections and will be presented in the following order: the narratives of the participants and the researcher, the participants' interpretations of their journeys into the education field, connecting the past to the present, and the combined, emerged themes across the narratives. The narratives of the two special education resource teachers will be presented first, followed by the narratives of the two bilingual education teachers and that of the researcher.

Unending Challenges: Philia's Story

Philia (pseudonym) was a special education resource teacher. Philia did not know much about special education before she enrolled in college. Also, her six years of teaching have been difficult and therefore, she viewed her experiences as a series of "unending challenges". She was a minor when her mother brought her to the U.S. but soon after, she returned to the Philippines to obtain her bachelor's degree in special education and came back to the U.S. in 2015 to work. She obtained her Texas teaching certification through a university and has been teaching in her current district for six years. She was certified to teach early childhood (EC) to grade six and special education (EC to grade 12). She taught reading, writing, and math to students with disabilities in grades one through four in the special education resource classroom. Philia's racial identity was Asian, and her age was between 20 and 29. She spoke limited Spanish, but was fluent in Filipino. Philia began her story this way:

> It started in 2011 in the Philippines, where I was born and raised. When I was younger, I wanted to become a flight attendant, and then when I was about to start college, I wanted to do psychology, but I got a lot of discouragement from family. They said I would have a hard time looking for a job and that I would need to earn a master's degree to get a good job. So, I'm like, OK, let me try out [special] education. Even while in college, during my freshman and sophomore years, I was still hesitant about my career and wondered, should I shift? Should I do a different major? But then, I finished it because when I got to my fourth year and then, started my preservice field experiences, that's when I got the opportunity to be deployed to a special education school. Once I started working with the kids, I'm like, I'm going to finish this. I didn't really know much about special education before then, and then as I went by and learned more, I started growing to like special education.

> Finally, I said, yes, I want to do this (smiling). I got hired by my current district and was placed on probation for a year until they credited my license in the Philippines for another year. I took and passed three tests to qualify as a special education, licensed teacher in the state of Texas. Luckily, all my transcripts from my college in the Philippines was matched with the curriculum here in the USA, so I didn't have to take any additional courses. Also, because I already had a bachelor's degree in special education, I did not need to go through the alternative certification route.

Preservice Preparation for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

Philia shared that during her preservice college training, there was no course work on teaching EBs with disabilities, though she did have the opportunity to work with EBs with disabilities during her teaching practicum. As she explained:

> My preservice teaching experience back in the Philippines was an eye opener, especially because I had a lot of autistic kids. In the Philippines, I observed that it benefited students to have a foundation in their native language before being transitioned to English with native language support. When I was student teaching, I observed that the foundation that the student with special needs had in their home language helped them with understanding the vocabulary in English.

However, the EBs she worked with were not Spanish speaking. After moving to the U.S., and during her first year of teaching in her current district, she shadowed Ms. Douglas (pseudonym for the other special education teacher) during summer school, but the experience was not helpful for teaching EBs because there were few EBs enrolled for summer school at the time. Philia rated her preservice preparation program four out of ten for the job of preparing her to teach EBs with disabilities.

In-Service Preparation for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

When asked about the effectiveness of her in-service professional development trainings, regarding teaching EBs with disabilities, Philia said she had not attended many trainings in the past five years but a few that she attended were helpful, though generally, they did not go far enough. She explained:

> Honestly, in the past three years, I haven't been attending a lot of trainings. I think the most helpful was a training on differentiating instruction. The training was geared toward the gifted and talented teachers, but I attended the training because I remember, I was trying to earn my credits for the gifted and talented certification. I found that a lot of the strategies in differentiation help not just regular kids, but also, help EBs with disabilities. I learned a lot of strategies like providing audio books and adapted text. I said, oh yeah, I can use these for my EB kids too! In the Reading Academy training, there were a few strategies that were helpful. There were a few slides or portions of slides, and bits and pieces here and there of information of how we can address EBs, but there was nothing specific for EBs with disabilities. I mean, there's really a lack of information and training for working with EBs with disabilities. In Reading Academy, different groups of students were addressed separately, for example, there were a few information for working with students with disabilities and for working with multilingual kids, but there was no information on how to work with students that overlap, like multilingual kids with disabilities. Some of the phonics strategies in Reading Academy was helpful, for example, the kinesthetic strategies which I have started using with my EBs with disabilities, and that's been helping for the decoding, but other than that, there was nothing else.

Philia rated her in-service professional development trainings five out of ten because “I just wish they provided us, the non-bilingual teachers, some more training on how we can provide those interventions for EBs with disabilities.”

Experiences Teaching EBS with Disabilities

Sharing her experience with working with EBs with disabilities, Philia had this to say:

> It's challenging, especially if there's, let's say, a native English speaker who is a dyslexic kid, we already know what we will do. We'll try out Project Read® [Research-based language arts program (Project Read®, 2018)]. We'll try Edmark [Research-based reading program (Karami & Faramarzi, 2017)]. You already have a list of interventions you can use for them. But with the EBs with disabilities, there is nothing for us to use for them. Recently we asked our special education specialist to send us to a training on Esperanza [Evidence-based Spanish language program (Valley Speech, Language, and Learning Center, 2014)], and the admin has agreed to send us. The plan is to train us, the resource teachers first, and then we would train our paraprofessionals on how to use the intervention. But I mean, this is after six years that they're finally giving us something that we can use for the bilingual kids. So, I mean, everything has been like trying out something, and if it doesn't work, try out another one, depending on how the students are responding. So, we are improvising as we go. So, the interventions we use for EBs with disabilities are not explicit instruction based on a step by step, and not research-based like what their English speaker classmates receive.

Use of Culturally Responsive Instruction (CRI)

Philia shared her use of culturally responsive instruction this way:

> Because of the demographics of our school, I feel like it's very important for us to pick very culturally relevant materials, just as simple as stories or food, something

> that the kids can relate to. I feel like a conducive classroom is not just having anchor charts or the materials, but also it requires engaging that student to thrive, to be responsible for his own learning, and I feel like the best way for us to come to that is to pick culturally sensitive materials. I always ask our librarian if she has any bilingual books for my kids. If they're transitioning [to English] already, let's say for fourth graders, I still try to pick books that they have a background knowledge about. Initially, I felt stuck because I didn't have resources, I didn't know who to ask, but eventually, as I worked through the years, as I worked with EB students, I strived to become very introspective of their culture, like trying to understand their culture and trying to see how our cultures intertwine with their culture, how the cultures are similar or different. So, when I am doing the inquiry questions, I ask them, what's the difference between this and that? And they can activate their prior knowledge during discussions when we are doing read-aloud or think-aloud.

Philia rated her confidence level for using CRI as moderately confident "because I am not bilingual. I still need a lot of learning and professional development in the area."

Use of Language-Based Accommodations

Philia also shared her use of language-based accommodations:

> I do adapted text, provide visuals, and if I can, I do provide native language support for books that I am familiar with. Since it's my sixth year, I already have books that are in Spanish and then I have books for the English-speaking students. We read both English and Spanish books. For the challenged student, I usually translate. Let's say there's a sentence that we're working on, I would tell her its translation, or the meaning of the word and I would say in Spanish and then she's like, oh, OK. So, I am explicitly teaching them the difference between the two languages in cross linguistic relationships.

Philia said she felt moderately confident in using language-based accommodations.

A Day with Spanish-Speaking EBs with Disabilities in Philia's Resource Classroom

Philia described a reading class that she taught in Spanish using a prepared Spanish script, because she barely spoke the language. She shared that the EB students were several levels below grade level in reading, and she had the support of a Spanish-speaking aide for 45 minutes out of the 90 minutes block of time. She continued to share:

> I have two groups-the English and Spanish groups. While one group [English speakers] is working independently, focusing on phonics and writing, I work with the other (bilingual) group. For the first 30 minutes, when the students come in, I provide as much phonics lessons as I can. I do a guided reading lesson. I would already have cut out the syllables for them. They read it and we go over the story. I help them to visualize, help them activate prior knowledge, but of course, I already have prepared a Spanish script for me. I already have cards that tell me how to say, "Who are the characters?" After that, when my para [aide] comes in, I tell the para what to do. My focus is mostly on decoding and comprehension and the greatest challenge is that if they give me a response to my question, I will get only bits and pieces of what they're trying to say, not as well as if I were bilingual. I am able to get bits and pieces because my Filipino language is very similar to Spanish and that's the reason why I get bits and pieces of it, but it's not as clear, I guess, as it would have been if I was bilingual, so I guess that's the biggest challenge; it is the language for me, and of course, if they have concerns or clarifications, I'm not prepared for whatever they ask, and that's where the struggle comes in. It's a struggle.
>
> After the bilingual aides leave, I use the rest of the time to provide a short, English lesson for the students. I do a short lesson, nothing too explicit. I would go

> over something that is interesting to them. I have like a bin of really easy books, and they take turns to pick a book that we read together. We go over the book, just conversational, mostly nothing too challenging for them.

When asked how her intervention approach differed among the English speakers and the EBs, she said that a lot of the academic supports she provided were the same; for example, she might use audio books and sentence starters to jumpstart their writing. She said the main difference was that the EBs needed home language support in addition to academic supports. She also shared that students who have similar types of disabilities respond well to the same types of interventions or supports irrespective of whether they spoke English or Spanish. For example, she said, "if they are both ID (intellectually disabled), then their struggles will be the same and they will need the same type of special education interventions, but the difference is that the EBs will need the language support."

Philia's Fondest Memories Working with EBs with Disabilities

Philia talked about her fondest memories with EBs with disabilities:

> Throughout my six years, the fondest memory I had was the student I had when it was my first year. I didn't know nothing. I had three bilingual kids that time and they were all in first grade and they were very Spanish dominant, like, no English at all and they were nonreaders. So, I spoke to bilingual teachers. I asked for resources because I had nothing. I had them from first grade to fourth grade and I guess it's very fun seeing them progress. I mean one of them, Manny (pseudonym), has even been exited from resource (special education resource program) and he transitioned so well in English, when he was in fourth grade. I think he exited when he was moving to third grade. I had him for full resource, first grade, second grade, and then, third grade. We exited him and just seeing how he progressed, I'm like,

oh, you know, all my hard work, all the translating, paid off, although of course the other two that were with him, stayed in resource due to the nature of their disability. They were autistic and the comprehension piece remained a struggle for them though they could decode very well.

Philia's Most Challenging Experience Working with EBs with Disabilities

The most challenging is this year. I have a fourth-grade student, Martha (pseudonym), who is very Spanish dominant and all the instruction in fourth grade now is in English, so, that transition has been a challenge. At first, I added her with my fourth grade [English] group, but she can't keep up with that group, so I had to do one-on-one with her, and even with the one-on-one, she is not progressing. I provided audio. I tried various supports. Since I speak a little Spanish, I even provided her with Spanish support. I translated as much as I could, like, if let's say we're doing prepositions, we do kinesthetic activities, like if I say, "Stand in front of the chair" and then I would say it in Spanish as well. I would also demonstrate what that preposition looks like by standing in front of a chair. I would show a picture. Then, I would ask her to do it as well, but still, there's no progress. So, at some point, I got frustrated and wondered, what else can I do? I've been asking Ms. Douglas (the other special education teacher), what else can I do? The student is still reading at the same level [from the beginning of the year]. Her comprehension is not improving. I, even at some point, looked up to find any research on what I can do, but there's not a lot of support or research or articles for ID [Intellectually disabled] kids that are transitioning to English. So, that's the most challenging so far. We did not have this student in third grade. She transferred to our school in fourth grade but looking back at her old IEP [Individual Education Program], her

> medium of instruction [at her previous school] was all in Spanish, so this is her first year of transitioning to English, so that's part of it too, and she's ID on top of it.

Recognizing Successes of EBs with Disabilities

> First of course, the assessments. We have the progress report and running records and formative assessments, but most especially, when they can apply what they're learning, that's when you get that sense of fulfillment that, OK, they can tell the time now, even if it's not in the test. Also, when they apply the [academic] vocabulary that they're learning. Let's say instead of saying, "He has more" they would say, "I have the greater amount." So, those simple things, kind of like, are fulfilling.

Additionally, Philia shared that she knew her EBs were growing when she watched the peer relations and interactions between the EBs and their English-speaking peers, who modeled spoken English for the EBs. She elaborated:

> During unstructured time, they actually work pretty well together. They help each other. They (English speakers) would say, "You say it this way." Just a while ago, … the [English-speaking] kid built an animal with Legos and then the EB said, "It's pato". And then the English speaker said "No, it's a duck in English." So, they kind of help each other. Conversationally, they pick up, they mimic whatever words the other kids say. The other day, another one (English speaker) was telling us about his field day and the EB student [concurred and] said, "Yes, field day is fun." That was all the sentence he could say. But, he is making progress. The English speakers are models for the EBs in speaking English.

Philia rated herself between moderately confident and not confident for teaching EBs with disabilities. Her reason was because she is not bilingual.

Planning, Scheduling, and Collaboration with the Bilingual Education Teachers

Philia shared that she and her special education colleague had a very good planning and collaborative relationship with the bilingual education teachers. Though they were unable to join the bilingual teachers in formal or team planning due to schedule issues, they did frequently communicate about instruction, resources, and students' progress. As an example, she frequently got in touch with the kindergarten or first grade bilingual education teachers to provide Spanish materials and resources for her second grade EBs who were performing at those levels. She added, "They've been helping me a lot with strategies, too." Philia provided details about the nature of their collaboration regarding students' assessment:

> As for monitoring their progress, we would frequently get in touch with the bilingual teachers and say, "tell me about this student… I have observed that this student has been starting to read this level of books…please do a running record." We resource teachers don't assess the bilingual kids, because we're not trained to assess them because we are not bilingual. We're not trained to do the running records for the bilingual kids. Let's say I have observed the child reading a level F book, I would ask the bilingual education teacher to do a running record at level F.

When asked about the amount of time for planning, Philia wished for more:

> Our conference time is 60 minutes, a day. Honestly, I wish we had more time for planning because most of our planning is used for making IEPs. So, I just wish we had more time since [instruction] is individualized like, most of us have four kids at least. It's a lot of individualized planning especially for intervention like, this intervention won't work or it's not helping this kid, so you must try something else again, you must do a different plan. For example, this school year, I planned to put six students together in a small group, but, along the way, the other kids are not

> making as much progress as the other half. So, I had to do a different plan for those other kids or provide more support or more materials for them compared to the other ones that were making progress. So, I just wish we had more time.

Philia further shared that the time they allotted them for planning (conference time) was frequently not used for planning instruction because usually, they were attending IEP meetings or staffing (pre-IEP meetings) during that time. Therefore, she proposed that they be given one full day to plan each week. She said:

> Let's have Fridays to plan. There's really no time to plan. I barely find time to plan. I must stay back sometimes just to prepare resources, and during our conference time, we have had meetings during our conference time…. I worked double time for my bilingual kids because I had to translate the books, the stories, and when they're long, it just takes up my time. And looking for resources too.

"Winging it": Lack of Communication among Instructional Specialists Hinders Support.

> They [the campus administrators] know we are struggling for resources because we always tell them. I guess the peer facilitator is the one helping me the most because she used to be a bilingual teacher. I would ask her here and there, you know, do you have any new resources for the bilingual kids? And of course, even the bilingual teachers are short of bilingual resources, let alone us resource teachers. There are always more English resources than bilingual resources. The best support our campus administrators gave us, I would say, is making sure that our paras are bilingual, but they have not given us concrete resources. Our district wide special education resource specialist has also agreed to send us to the Esperanza training [to familiarize the teachers with the components of the Esperanza Spanish-based language program]. The districtwide bilingual specialist does not provide any

> information or resources to us. There is no communication between us and her. She only provides information to the bilingual teachers. I hope that both the special education resource specialist and the bilingual specialist would collaborate since we have so many bilingual kids. If the resource specialists can communicate to the resource teachers what the bilingual specialist said, [that would be beneficial] instead of us, you know, just winging it. Because even our resource specialist is not bilingual, so I guess because of that she doesn't pay much attention to that.

Philia's Beliefs about Language of Instruction for EBs with Disabilities

> I am conflicted about this. This is because of the challenge I have with one of my students, Norma (pseudonym), who has had Spanish all throughout till second grade. Now she's struggling with even basic directives like, let's say, "Underline this word" and she wouldn't know what underline means. I did Project Read® with her in a small group and that helped her with decoding, but she still struggles with decoding; she mixes /J /and /H/ because J in Spanish is pronounced like /H/. So then, when she is decoding in English, she would make the sound in Spanish. So, instead of saying /jar/ she would say /har/.

Despite the conflict Philia felt due to Norma's lack of progress, she believed that students should first be taught in their home language before being transitioned to English. She elaborated:

> From my experience, this works best. Let them get the basic literacy in Spanish before you start to teach them English in full, with native language support. Let them master their native language first and they can use those skills as a foundation when we transition to English…I start transitioning them to English in second grade because that's when they have mastered their language. Usually, for the kids that I have, by that time, they already know how to read in their language a little bit; how

> to read in Spanish at least at a level B. I believe it is very important to teach them in their native language first, before transitioning them to English and providing them with native language support.

Philia continued to share:

> Ms. Douglas (her special education colleague) would always tell me, "Just do English, don't stress yourself", but what I have seen in my experience in teaching [both in the U.S. and in the Philippines when she was doing her practicum teaching], when the kids are initially taught in their native language, and are able to decode in their native language, before learning English, I saw that was really helpful for the kids, including those with ID and autism. That is why I like for them to master [the letters, sounds, and basic reading skills] in their native language first before considering English. So, for example, in my class, after I see that they know their letters and sounds in Spanish, then I do a small lesson and I say to the kids, let's compare the alphabet in your language and in English. I would ask, what do you see is different or same? And I continue to ask them questions like, do you think….? Then, we go over just basic sounds and stop to ask again, what's different, what's the same? So, now, I see my EB learners are attempting to sound out English words when they see it somewhere in my room. They would still make mistakes, but at least they're applying it [the sounds they learned].

During this conversation, Phila digressed to talk about the confusion she experienced regarding unclear policies about the language of instruction. She shared:

> We have asked our PF (peer facilitator) how do we handle the bilingual kids? It's because at some point, I even do (teach) regular (English-speaking) kids and bilingual kids at the same time. It's just chaos with the number of students. It's chaos. So, you know, I asked her like what should we do? Should we do (teach)

> English right away? So, the PF would give us a different answer. The principal would give us another answer, and the assistant principal would give us a different answer. So, we're just like, what should we do then if everyone has a different answer? I just wish there was just one framework for us to follow. Our principal said, "Do 20 minutes of English and do the rest amount of the time in Spanish." But our AP said, "No, you can't do that because they're in a bilingual program. You need to provide everything in Spanish." So, I'm like who do we follow?

Mixed Experiences regarding Parent Partnership

When asked about her experiences regarding partnering with parents of EBs with disabilities, Philia said:

> It's a mixture. It's just a Russian roulette of what kind of parents we'll get. For parents who are not proficient in English, I would usually ask my paras to communicate with them that I would be sending homework. I would give them a heads-up during the IEP meetings, I would tell them I'll start sending folders for the student, and I even tried sending some Spanish version and English version, for those that's transitioning [to English] because the parents are more dominant in Spanish, and they said they can't help the student because it's in English. So, if they're very cooperative, then it's very helpful for the student and their reading progress is faster. Some parents don't even answer my call and do not help with homework. I feel that it impacts the students' progress very much. I think the reason that some parents do not respond is partly due to work. I just had an IEP recently and I was sharing with the parent that I was concerned about the student absences and as well as homework not coming back and you know, the parents said, "Oh, I'm a single parent, I work night shift." So, there are different reasons,

> but there are also some that are stay-at-home parents, but they just don't care enough.

Philia rated her ability to partner with parents as a nine out of ten. She rationalized her high rating by describing her efforts to get the parents involved in homework. She shared:

> If they're very Spanish dominant, I do ask my paras to communicate with them, but if the parents are a bit proficient in English, I communicate with them [directly] as much as I can. When I send homework home, I put notes for the parent on how they would approach the activity for that homework. I send a copy of the accommodations. For reading, I send the Spanish syllable chart instead of the alphabet chart. For math, I send the 100 chart or whatever math charts they need. I put sticky notes written in Spanish, on their homework just to remind the parents to prompt the students to answer in complete sentences or write in complete sentences. I provide as much as I can.

Philia's Insights for New Teachers regarding Educating EBs with Disabilities

> Some advice I would give is to gather as much resource as they can. To provide a lot of visual supports for the EBs. I guess if I would rate the importance of whatever scaffolds or supports to provide, visuals would be the top that I would recommend. Another is making it culturally relevant for them. Gather the resources that they can relate to.

Further, Philia suggested that new teachers should teach the home language first before transitioning to English. She said, "They would need both languages, so integrating those two worlds is the best way we can increase their level of proficiency and would make more impact on their learning."

Philia's Insights for School Administrators regarding Educating EBs with Disabilities

> I guess it's for them [the administrators] to collaborate. It's not just us teachers that need to collaborate. They need to collaborate. Probably, one step they can do is ask us the resource teachers, the non-bilingual ones, what support we need or what questions we have and start from there. As soon as they gather those questions, they should try to have a meeting or collaborate with different branches of education for answers.

Philia's Assessment of her Journey in Education so Far

Philia said she still had a lot of questions and working with EBs with disabilities has been her greatest challenge. She felt frustrated by the unclear policies regarding the language of instruction for EBs with disabilities. However, she said her experience has been based on trial and error and a learning curve, adding that she learned a lot more from her bilingual students than her native English-speaking students. She said, "I would say that all the mistakes along the way through my six years, I give a lot of credit to my EB students with disabilities because I learned from them throughout this journey." Further, she mentioned that she has grown professionally over time. She shared:

> I've learned which works best, especially because I had more bilingual kids with intellectual disabilities (ID) and autism (AU) through the years. I've noticed oh, this works best with students with emotional disorder (ED), ID kids, or this works best for AU kids. So that is my experience, and it has helped me grow professionally, I would say. I have a better idea. I already know which ones to try first before trying other things for kids with AU and with ID.

Philia's Future Career or Professional Plan

> If I do stay in this profession, I would obtain my master's in special education. But then again, it's a very stagnant field. It's very hard to move up, you know. I mean, if you've been in the district for so long, you just stay where you are. It's not going anywhere, so that's kind of what discourages me to stay in the profession because it's very stagnant. Even if you have your master's, I was telling Ms. Douglas, she also has her master's, but she can't even get an interview for a specialist position, and that kind of really discouraged me. But if I do stay, I would prefer staying as a resource teacher. I feel like the other programs like the BSS [Behavior Support Services] programs are not for me. I'd rather work on the academic side rather than the functional side…but I mean of course, I would love to become a specialist.

The above narrative was based on an in-depth interview with Philia, a special education, resource teacher. The next narrative will be that of Krystal, who is also a special education teacher and colleague of Philia.

My Foray into Education: Krystal's Story

Krystal, an immigrant from Asia, was a special education, resource teacher with 17 years of teaching experience. Krystal had not planned to be a teacher and her journey toward the teaching field was characterized by twists and turns, therefore, she titled her narrative, "My Foray into Education". She taught EBs with disabilities in grades one through four. She had a bachelor's degree in nutrition and dietetics, a post-graduate diploma in early childhood education, and a master's degree in school counseling. She obtained her Texas teaching certificate through an alternative certification track. She was certified to teach early childhood (EC) to sixth grade, fourth to eighth grade, special

education (kindergarten to twelfth grade), and English as a second language (ESL). Her age range was between 50 and 59 and her racial identity was Asian. This is her narrative.

> My journey [in education] began in 1999, when I was back in India. My husband had started a new business back in India but then it so happened that the business didn't really take off. I guess it was just not meant to happen, and so in the meantime, we were not doing well. We needed income. We had to do something to kind of make ends meet. My girls were young and the loans that were taken from the bank had to also be paid off. So then, my mother-in-law had this idea of starting a play center. She had done a course in Montessori education, so she was confident of starting a little play center. It was just a little place for about 3 or 4 hours/day. We had young kids come in before school, before they go to a real school. In India, you can start sending kids to play centers when they are like, as young as 18 months, or maybe two years. They go to school at three and a half years, but before that, [they go to play centers]. Because this was our ancestral home, we had a place for the center, so we didn't have to pay for the place; so, we started that and that's how I got into education. I still remember that day so well. I think the 17th of June 1999 is when we started our play center, and we advertised a little bit. We didn't have a lot of money, but we would just send flyers or put little posters up in schools and things like that. On the first day, nobody showed up. My younger daughter was the first student. We had taken her in the hopes of getting more kids. But we eventually got kids and in a span of two years, we started from nothing, to getting a lot of kids and we had to put some kids on the wait list because we couldn't get too many kids. As more and more people came to know about it, they started to want their kids to come to our school.

Krystal shared that after a while, she had a desire to acquire more knowledge in education and to get professional training in the field; she could use that knowledge to expand their play center. She continued to share:

> I wanted to be more professionally trained in the field of early childhood education, because I had my degree in nutrition and dietetics, so it had nothing to do with education. So, I enrolled myself in university again… I did a one-year postgraduate diploma in early childhood education.

Krystal said that after obtaining her diploma in early childhood education, she took a job in a local school in India. She wanted to "kind of see how it works because my dream was like, maybe we could expand our business and make our place even bigger." However, in the meantime, she got an opportunity to study overseas and moved to the U.S. With help from her sister-in-law who lived in the U.S. and was in the education field, Krystal enrolled in a master's program in school counseling. Her mother-in-law, back in India, supported and encouraged her. The mother in-law said to her, "I'll take care of your kids and you can go and study, do whatever you want to." While she was taking her graduate classes, her sister in-law suggested to her the idea of applying for the alternative teacher certification program. She continued to share:

> While I was taking graduate classes, my sister-in-law brought the idea of getting an alternative certification to become a teacher here. So, she said, "You can think about this. This is a good opportunity for you. Just give it a shot." So that's when I approached different districts over here… and they had these sessions where you could go and attend the sessions to get more information about the alternative certificate plan. So, I applied for the alternative certificate plan that the [current] district was offering, and I got into that and since then I've been over here.

Krystal explained that in India, she had acquired the certification to teach early childhood education, but was not certified to teach kindergarten through grade six. Therefore, the alternative certification track gave her that opportunity. After enrolling in the alternative certification program and obtaining a job along with it, she put her graduate program in school counseling on hold to focus on the certification program. In 2015, after getting her certification for EC-6, she went back to complete her graduate program and graduated with a master's degree in school counseling. She later obtained certification in special education. Krystal shared that she had not planned to come to the U.S. to settle down, or to teach special education, but "one thing led to the other thing" and with the support and encouragement of her mother in-law and sister in-law, she ended up in the U.S., teaching special education.

Preservice Preparation for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

Krystal shared that she did not recall any specific training geared toward teaching EBs with disabilities during her alternative certification training. She rated her preservice alternative certification training program a six out of ten on the job of helping her to teach EBs with disabilities.

In-Service Preparation for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

> I would say a helpful professional development was in math because we did a program recently on Touch Math and I think some parts were kind of helpful. They did mention that this can be used for different kinds of children including bilingual children and children with disabilities. These children can be taught counting and subtracting and adding and all that. I guess to some extent some of the professional developments were helpful, but, then again, there are not a lot of professional development, just a few. The Reading Academy course gave us a lot of pointers and some ideas for working with bilingual children, but again, children with

> disabilities who are bilingual, maybe not a lot, maybe a few here and there, but nothing concrete. I would say nothing like very specific, geared towards EBs with disabilities, like spend a whole module talking about it. Nothing like that. It was like sporadic. I think that the skills that they talked about included the bilingual kids a good extent, but I wasn't very happy about the special ed kids. For the bilingual kids, they talked about them a lot of times like the language transfer. I thought that it (information relating to bilingual students) was pretty good.

Krystal rated Reading Academy an eight out of ten and Touch Math was rated a seven out of ten, as they related to helping her to teach EBs with disabilities.

Krystal's Experiences Teaching EBs with Disabilities

> As a resource teacher, it's a very daunting task. I must depend on my paraprofessionals to help me with the student. Of course, we are giving them (the aides) the [material] support but then again, the resources that I give them, I must go to my bilingual teachers and ask for help, like ok, can you please help me get some materials? Give me some resources for these kiddos. And then, I must rely heavily on my paraprofessionals to help me translate. For example, I have a student, who is in fourth grade, and she is not picking up well. Apparently, she has been here for three or four years, but she still hasn't picked up the English language, so she is so Spanish dominant. She's in the fourth grade and I have a very hard time communicating with her because she comes to me for math. If my paraprofessional is not there, then I have a very hard time communicating with her. I mean, I use hand gestures. I tried my best. I have a Google app that I can use to translate for her, but it is a process [to use the app], and it just slows you down. If my aide is not there, then I can't read math word problems to her. I can't

> help her understand word problems. And then she's not making a lot of progress in reading and writing either.

Krystal said that she has other EBs who, though they have not been here for too long or may have been here for as long as this student has been, picked up English faster. Krystal was unsure why the student is not making progress. She continued to share her concern for the child:

> I don't know if it's just a problem with her not being able to pick up a second language fast or what is the issue? But I just feel that she's going to have such a hard time as she goes on to fifth grade and sixth grade.

Krystal elaborated on her concerns for the child:

> There are some concepts that she will not understand if I talk to her in English, so I need somebody to help me translate. Her English is very broken and I kind of try to break it down for her where I kind of just use visuals or I use gestures, hand gestures to explain something to her. But it's kind of hard. It's hard. Like I said, I also have a Google translator, an app that helps me translate. So, if I must tell her something, then I'm kind of using all these different ways to communicate with her.

Krystal further explained that in fourth grade, as with many other schools in the district, all the fourth-grade students, including those in the bilingual education program, received all instruction in English; the bilingual students received home language support. The students received instruction from an online platform called CONNECT, or Summit Learning, a personalized learning platform. However, students with disabilities, including EBs with disabilities who were not able to cope with the pace and curriculum level of the Summit Learning program, were not placed on the platform. Instead, they received all English instruction from their bilingual and special education teachers with bilingual support. This student under focus was not on the platform because of her low ability

levels. Krystal felt that to have children in a bilingual program and to teach them fully in English was inconsistent with the tenets of bilingual education and felt confused by that inconsistency. She said, “It just doesn't make sense.”

Use of CRI

Krystal said that she did not use CRI in her classroom and rated herself moderately confident in using CRI.

A Day in Krystal’s Resource Room with Spanish-Speaking EBs with Disabilities.

> I'll specifically talk about my math class because my math is my last group, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. That group has a mixture of bilingual kids and native English speakers. Luckily, this year, we got an extra helper because we talked to our admin about what a difficult time we're having with serving our bilingual students because when they come to resource, me or my coworker, we don't speak Spanish, so, we asked for additional person and then of course our numbers were also very high. So now, we have an extra aide. So, we have three aides and two of them speak Spanish very fluently. The other aide who does not speak fluent Spanish, we gave her the students who don't need a lot of bilingual support.
>
> In our schedule, we were able to have one of the aides spend the entire one hour with me (in this math class). I have 11 kids in this group. I have four bilingual kids and seven English speaking kids. It's a large group, but because of the schedule, we we're not able to make it any smaller.

Krystal explained that the group was broken into two small groups. The English-speaking group stayed with Krystal and the EBs stayed with the aide. The bilingual group was mixed across grade levels. They consisted of a student in first grade, one in second grade, another in third grade, and one other in fourth grade. Krystal said that she taught in English, therefore, her lessons and materials were in English, and her aide translated

materials for the EBs, helped them understand the questions or activities, and guided them through the work. She shared, “I am not directly teaching the bilingual kids” and the aide is “speaking Spanish to them the whole time.” Krystal mentioned that she checked on the students periodically and would call them one at a time to check on their progress and then, send them back again to continue work with the aide. She also mentioned that she collaborated frequently with the aide, and both routinely discussed the lessons, the students’ needs, their progress, and any changes or adjustments that needed to be made in the lessons or accommodations for the EBs. She also relied on the aide’s feedback to adjust her lessons. She described her aide as “pretty good.” When asked to rate her confidence level for teaching EBs with disabilities, Krystal rated herself as moderately confident because she did not speak Spanish. She said, “I have to rely on a lot of help because otherwise, I'm not able to teach the kids.”

Krystal’s Most Memorable Moment(s) Working with EBs with Disabilities

> I think that was the student that I had last year. I think when I was teaching him English language arts and reading, I think he made a lot of progress. Initially, it was a struggle to teach him, but gradually, I think towards the end of the year, he did make a lot of progress and I think we kind of built a relationship. He was grateful, I think. So, basically, when you break things down, and they understand, the light bulb comes on. They understand, and we are back on the same page.
>
> Last year was very difficult because it was both virtual and face-to-face [due to personal contact restriction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic] and so that was a challenge in itself, just kind of putting it all together, and in that, when a student makes progress, it just makes you feel so good you know, you feel so good that okay, they're making progress, just within the situation that was going on with everything with the pandemic. One [second grade] child [who had a particularly

difficult time as a virtual student last year], is now a third grader on face-to-face instruction and has made a lot of progress in math. He's adding and subtracting with regrouping. That is memorable, a very happy moment for me when you contrast him with what he did last year. He's able to do math because he's found a pattern because math involves pattern and his brain has kind of been able to figure numbers out, but for reading, he's still struggling with syllables. He's not able to join the syllables and make a word. So, I would say he's still probably at [level] A or B.

Krystal's Most Challenging Moment(s) Working with EBs with Disabilities

The challenging experience that I have this year is my student who is not making much progress in English. She's in fourth grade. She's still struggling to understand English because I think she's very Spanish dominant. She tells us that she was born here, but I can't believe that because she's in the fourth grade and she still can't speak even one fluent sentence in English, or even write, I mean, forget writing, but not even speak a fluent sentence in English. She's just wanting more Spanish like she wants us to speak to her in Spanish. Even when I talk to her in English, she sometimes responds in Spanish. Every holiday you know, the mom takes them to Mexico. I think they're spending a lot of time in Mexico. Maybe all her relatives are also speaking in Spanish. The whole time she's talking to her mom in Spanish. Her mom wants her to learn English. That's what she told us at the IEP meeting, but it seems like she is not ready for English. I asked her the other day, "Do you watch any shows in English?" She's like "no, no." So, I don't think she's interested because I think a lot of kids pick up English just by watching shows, but she doesn't seem to be interested in all of that. It just makes me feel a little bit worried you know, like I mean, how is she going to cope when she goes to middle school next year? It's mostly all English. I mean, her bilingual teacher and I usually talk about

this a lot, and we were going to check if she could take STAAR test in Spanish. We were going to see how that works, but that's my challenging child.

Krystal's Insight on the Differences between Native English Speakers and EBs with Disabilities in Terms of their Struggles with Learning

The Spanish speakers struggle more to communicate to express themselves, to feel a part of the group and to fit in the whole group. I think that they struggle a lot and for some of them, it depends on their personality. Some of them wouldn't care about fitting in, but then some of them do care. For example, when I have a mixed group, if I have a student who mostly speaks Spanish, I haven't seen them communicate a lot with the native English speakers. They kind of struggle to. Some of them will feel that they're being made fun of, or that the other kids are going to make fun of them when they speak. They feel they're going to laugh at them and things like that. So, because of that, they kind of keep quiet and don't say much. They do not build rapport with them (the English speakers.) I feel as a teacher, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to make that atmosphere more conducive to learning, where there are both English learners and Spanish speakers. I guess it becomes challenging for the teacher. I had a student last year who would almost ridicule a Spanish-speaking student and it would hurt the Spanish-speaking kid. He was like, why am I being ridiculed? So, he would want to defend himself because this kid's personality was that kind. He was going to fight back, so he would get upset sometimes. He would try to express himself, but then the other kid would just kind of shut him down. That became a challenge last year for me to where I had to kind of make sure that he wouldn't come hurt the other kid. So, I had to have a lot of conversations with the kid who ridicules the other student about being inclusive. Luckily this year, I have not had that problem at all. My children are very helpful

> towards each other. They are kind and they're just like children. I guess that with that kid who ridiculed the Spanish-speaking kid, that kind of behavior may have happened because he was influenced a lot by his family at home. He had older brothers, and he was the youngest, so, he had older brothers who were like in college and high school and all that, and so he had very little patience. And you know, of course his disability type [ED] also. He was also mature for his age. He almost acted like an adult sometimes with the way he spoke and the things he did.

Planning, Scheduling, and Collaboration with Bilingual Education Teachers

> Whenever we need help, the bilingual teachers help us. They give us some support, materials, and helping us understand the Spanish phonics. For example, the Spanish language uses syllables, so just helping us understand all of that.

Krystal said that the special education teachers did not attend grade level team meetings or meet formally with bilingual teachers to plan and collaborate because of schedule issues, but they found the time to collaborate well with the bilingual education teachers and discuss students' needs and progress. She also shared that they had learned to be creative with finding time to talk. She said, "If we are together in dismissal duty, or if we are here or there, [we] kind of talk about our kids and discuss the growth that they're making or what they need help with and things like that." When asked if she needed more planning time, she said, "Yes, definitely. I would say at least half a day per week in addition to our regular 60 minutes a day. I think maybe Friday mornings, we should have that entire first half of the day only to plan."

Administrative Support Pertaining to EBs with Disabilities

Krystal shared that the special education teachers got a lot of support from their administrators. Recently, the special education resource specialist approved the special

education teachers' request to be sent to a training in Esperanza. About this training, Krystal said:

> It's going to help us more than anything else. I mean, we're going to be able to provide support for our EBs which is really, crucial. We're providing Project Read® to our [English-speaking] dyslexia children and children with specific learning disabilities, but for the bilingual kids there was nothing.

Krystal's Language of Instruction Beliefs

Krystal said she believed in teaching students in English right from the beginning when they start schooling and providing them with home language support as needed. Therefore, she thought that children should be taught in English much sooner than is being done presently in the district. She rationalized her position by saying that some EBs with disabilities struggled to catch up in English acquisition when their transition to English was delayed until second or third grade. Due to her inability to speak Spanish, Krystal did teach in English, but even if she was able to speak Spanish, she was inclined to begin to teach her EB students in English as early as first grade. Krystal's tone switched to frustration as she reiterated her point:

> Our goal is to help these students be successful, right? They are going to be exposed to English very soon if they're in third grade. By fourth grade, all the teachers teach in English. It's only maybe 10% or 20% Spanish support, but they're all teaching in English. This is in our school. I don't know about other schools, but in our school, they teach in English, so, I'm like, this child is in third grade. He or she is going to have to be exposed to full English instruction next year. So why not start them off early? It's like, are we doing immersion? Are we doing bilingual education? What are we doing? There's so much more to this. I feel it's very complicated.

Krystal felt strongly about the language of instruction issue and wanted to know what the policy was regarding the language to use to teach EBs with disabilities in the resource room. Though the district had a bilingual transition model that outlined the percentage of Spanish instruction for each grade level, there was no guideline on what special education teachers who did not speak Spanish should do. When she asked for direction on the issue from her administrators, she got inconsistent responses which resulted in her confusion. She shared:

> Last year, when we had this issue, we had gone to the admin and we said, what do we do? So, the principal said, well, by the second semester in second or third grade, you should start teaching them in English. You must start preparing them for English. So, you can provide 20 minutes of instruction in English every day when they come to you in resource. Then, when we spoke to our assistant principal, the AP said, this child is bilingual, so you must provide bilingual education to this child. You must give them Spanish support. But we're like, I don't speak Spanish. So, what am I going to do? So, it's confusing. It's complicated, it's a whole bunch of things, you know, and we just try to kind of keep quiet about it and keep going.

Krystal added that the resource teachers have not received any written guideline from the district about the language of instruction to use in the resource room.

Krystal's Partnership with Parents of EBs with Disabilities

> Well, I think if we reached out, then they would help us. They do help us. I would say right now, they would interact with us only if we reached out to them. They have a lot of questions about their students and the progress they're making. Most of the parents do, but some parents may not even attend the IEP meetings. They don't show a lot of involvement, but I feel whenever I have called the parents to ask for some help, they've always been very responsive and helpful. I'm not too

> sure about why some parents do not attend IEP meetings or get involved with the school. Maybe they are intimidated or maybe they think that they will not be able to express themselves or that maybe nobody will understand them. Maybe they have that language barrier behind their minds.

Regarding her ability to effectively partner with parents of EBs with disabilities, Krystal rated herself an eight and a half out of ten**.**

Krystal's Insights for New Teachers regarding Working with EBs with Disabilities

> I think building a relationship is important because it's hard for a person to learn a different language, and then a child becomes even more vulnerable especially as new immigrants when they are left in school to learn a new language. If they're special ed and new immigrants, they have a very hard time learning a new language, so I think building a relationship with the child will be helpful. Also, using visuals has helped me a lot. Pointing to things or using visuals helps them to create a picture in their heads and they're able to understand better. So, I think providing them with lots of visuals, and being patient is important because it is going to take a while for the child to learn a new language. Now, some children can pick up a new language very quickly while some children have a hard time, and I am seeing that right now. I have a second-grade child who speaks very fluent English, even though she is categorized as limited English proficient (LEP) and in a bilingual class. She speaks very fluent English, but then I have another student over here who's trying so hard but not being able to speak English well. The child is ID. So, I guess being patient is important. Every child is different but trying our best to use the context that they can relate to will help them.

Krystal's Insights for School Administrators regarding Educating EBs with Disabilities

> I do see that our special ed kids need the bilingual program because they will benefit from it, but what would that mean? Would that mean that we need a bilingual sped teacher on every campus in a resource classroom? What would it look like? What would it entail? What would be the answer? We know there is an issue and that is the reason why we've been asking about a [Spanish reading] program, and so they suggested Esperanza. That is going to help our kids. But then again, our fourth-grade bilingual teachers are teaching in English with very little Spanish support, even though they are in a bilingual program. It seems that the bilingual kids will just have to start to learn English early because it seems that the burden is on them to pick up the language at a very fast pace, and to become assimilated into the dominant culture and language in a short span of time and it's hard. I mean, it's hard when you already have all these cognitive difficulties and then you must learn another language on top of it. But then for some kids, it's harder. Some kids are picking up English very fast and some are not. It's different for every child.

The next two narratives will be from the bilingual education teachers. Camilla's narrative will be presented first, followed by Sally's.

Everything will be Okay: Camilla's Story

Camilla (pseudonym) was a second grade, bilingual education teacher and had been teaching for four years. Camilla was an optimistic, new teacher that had little or no concerns about the future of her journey in education, therefore, she titled her narrative, "Everything will be Okay". She earned a bachelor's degree in bilingual education and obtained her Texas teaching certification through the university educator preparation

track. She was certified to teach bilingual, Early Childhood (EC) to sixth grade. Her racial/ethnic identity was White/Hispanic. Her age range fell between 20 years and 29 years. In the past three years of teaching, she taught a few EBs with disabilities who were students with ADHD. Much of her narrative was based on the experience with one student with ADHD, whom she taught during her first-year teaching. This year, as at the time of the interview, she had not received any EB with a disability in her classroom. She taught her previous student with ADHD reading and social studies. Her narrative begins like this:

> I have been wanting to be a teacher since I was in third grade. Basically, my third-grade teacher was the one that inspired me. She was very sweet, very kind and then right after high school, I didn't have a plan, I just knew, right away that I wanted to go into education. I went to school for four and a half years, and now I'm here in my current position for four years. This will be my fourth-year teaching. My aunt is a teacher. She's been teaching for many years, about twenty something years. It's just me and her in the teaching field [Out of her family].

Preservice Preparation for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

> I took the university certification track, so I studied bilingual education in college. I remember taking one or two college courses in special education and I remember one teacher, going in depth about students with disabilities, including what they looked like and how to work with them and that really did make me see what I could have in the classroom. During my first year of teaching, three years ago, I had a student with ADHD, and I remember that I did have to work with him more than the other students. The child attended resource class. My preservice courses in special education helped me work with the child. I was able to use some of the skills I learned for the child.

Camilla said she did not have opportunities to work with children with disabilities during her teaching practice. She said that if she had worked with children with ADHD during her teaching practice, "…it would have made a difference because I would have seen it first and then I would have kind of known what to do." She rated her preservice preparation training/experiences for teaching EBs with disabilities as a seven out of ten.

In-Service Preparation for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

> Reading Academy was very helpful. I got to see how I can use it for my special ed students and my regular ed students as well, like the different strategies that I can use for both. I really liked the phonics strategies, the comprehension [strategies], and [the strategies on] how to write. I do remember that in my first year, I worked with the resource teacher who taught math and reading in the resource class. Back then, I also taught math and reading. She would help me a lot with how to work with the kids.

Camilla rated her in-service preparation training/experiences as a seven out of ten, as they related to preparing her to teach EBs with disabilities.

Professional Development Training(s) Needed

> Maybe a training that would have more in-depth about the accommodations that a student can get, like more detailed of what they are. There are so many [accommodations] that they can get. What are the possible accommodations and what do they look like? Some examples of how to do accommodations would have been helpful in my first year.

A Day in Camilla's Classroom with EBs with Disabilities

> I remember that in my first-year teaching, I taught third grade, and we had three different class rotations. So, I would have my EB with ADHD from about 10:30 to say 12 or so. He would come in, then we would do our whole group. Usually, I

> would have to re-direct him to get back on task and then, we would do small group and he would do well in **s**mall group, and then I would pull him with another kiddo that was around his level, to the back [of the room] with me. Then, we worked together and then we would do grammar and I would help him one-on-one. Then, he would get pulled out by his resource teacher. Then, he would come back, and then that was the time to rotate to the next class.

Camilla's Fondest Memories of Working with EBs with Disabilities

> My very first vivid memory that I remember was when I first pulled my ADHD student to my back table as a first-year teacher and then I realized that he couldn't read. He couldn't concentrate. He couldn't really do much. It was shocking to me. I didn't really know what to do. So, I asked for help from the sped teacher, and she was very helpful and then I really learned how to work with him, like giving him timers [to help him pace his work], giving him sentence stems (or starters to help students jumpstart their writing), and really working with him, and he showed progress towards the end of the year. So, that was very good to see.

Camilla's Most Challenging Time Working with EBs with Disabilities

> I want to say having him (the student with ADHD) stay on task. He was always up. He was always making noises so, I had to find little things to make him concentrate, and I would say to him, "Hey, you get five minutes of free time at the end of the day", or five minutes of something and it would usually work.

When asked how she figured out what accommodations to use for the student (e.g., using timers) she said the special education teacher gave her ideas and she also remembered getting ideas from her college preservice courses on students with disabilities.

Differentiating Instruction for EBs with Disabilities

> For my students that don't have a disability, they do not need a lot of directions. I usually just teach it to them once. I begin with teaching whole group, then I would pull them to the back for small group and we would just discuss it (the knowledge/skills they are learning) and if they needed help with something, I would just help them out as needed. Things go quickly. With the EBs with disability, I would have to really sit down with them and work with them step by step to show them exactly what they must be doing. They need more explicit explanation, direction, and chunking of instruction. So, it takes just a little bit longer than the other students.

Recognizing Successes of EBs with Disabilities

> I could see growth from the beginning to the end of the year, for example, what he would do with me and what he would do with his resource teacher from the beginning to the very end of the school year. We also compared running records. Also, we look at his social behavior, like the way he interacts with his peers. He (the student with ADHD) was a very sweet kid. He always tried to get along with others most of the time. But I didn't really see growth in peer, social relationships, and interactions. I remember he would constantly be talking, he would sometimes be defiant, and not wanting to work. I would contact parents about his behavior. But academically, I saw a little bit of progress.

To show what they have learned, Camilla shared that EBs with disabilities would express their knowledge orally if they are unable to write. She also felt that it was great progress whenever the students demonstrated the ability to blend syllables to decode words by the end of the year, whereas they were unable to do so at the beginning of the year.

Camilla's Use of Special Education Intervention Strategies

> I use repeating and giving directions many times, and just basically setting clear rules and expectations, and I modify the assignments, constant reminders, reduce assignment, sentence stems. Some of these things I learned from my college courses and some of them I learned from admin and our special ed teacher. They would give me things to try, and I would try them.

Camilla rated herself as "highly confident" for teaching EBs with disabilities.

Experiences with IEP Meeting Process and with Implementing IEPs

> I remember my very first staffing and IEP meeting. I was very confused. I wasn't sure what to do. I remembered that I called the sped teacher, and I was like, hey, what do I need to prepare? What do I need to take with me? She kind of guided me through that and then we would talk about the students' goals like, what would be a good goal for the students. But overall, it worked very well. His (the student with ADHD) IEP was where it was supposed to be. I think everything worked well, the IEP meeting and staffing.

Camilla's Use of Accommodations and/or Modifications for EBs with Disabilities

> I remember, I would give him (the student with ADHD) maybe half the test of what the other students would take. At first, I did have to explain to him why. Then he would understand what to do by the second or third time. Overall, he was able to do it. I would give him timers and I would have to set the rules with a timer though, like don't be messing with it, don't be throwing it and all that stuff, but overall, it was good.

Camilla rated herself as "highly confident" in using content-based accommodations for EBs with disabilities. When asked to rate her confidence level for teaching EBs with

disabilities, she said, “Thinking back to my first year, I would say moderately confident. I had a lot of questions.”

Planning, Scheduling, and Collaboration with Special Education Teachers

About whether she had enough time to plan instruction, Camilla responded, “I don't think we had a time where we actually formally planned. It was always me popping in her class or her coming in my class and we've asked each other questions, but it wasn't really formal.” Camilla said she needed more time for planning. She said, “I say about 30 extra minutes twice a week would be perfect.” (This is in addition to the one hour of daily planning time.)

On further questioning, she described one instance of collaboration with the special education teacher. She said:

> There was a time when I needed a resource, something simple for my EB with disability and I didn't have anything. So, I went to the sped resource teacher who gave me worksheets and materials that I could use with that student that would be at his level that I didn't have in my classroom.

Regarding scheduling, she said things worked out well with the special education teacher regarding the pull-out schedule for special education resource services**.** She explained, “It worked very well. The sped teacher always tried to work with my time, and I always tried to work with her time, but it always worked out well.”

Administrators’ Support with Respect to EBs with Disabilities

> I have had great support from admin for the [ADHD] student. He would have some behavior issues at times, but my admin was very supportive. His resource teacher was also very supportive of him so, overall, I had great support. We do have resources and materials from our campus admin and if I needed something I would

> ask the peer facilitators (PFs), and they would just give me everything that they have.

Camilla's Language of Instruction Beliefs and Practices

Camilla shared that she followed the language of instruction that the district outlined in the transitional model, which for second grade, was 60% Spanish instruction and 40% English instruction. She said she believed in doing as she was told and did not share her personal belief about the language of instruction. She elaborated on how bilingual education teachers provided the 40% of English instruction. She explained that they had a time frame during the day set aside specifically for English language development (ELD) and this was a required time that bilingual education teachers must provide English instruction to EBs. Additionally, she shared that the district provided the bilingual education teachers access to an online, English-based reading program, which could be assessed through the district's online, curriculum platform. The program is comprised of structured, daily lessons that the teachers could use to teach English to their EBs. She said that the 60% Spanish instruction was designated for Spanish instruction in reading, writing, and math and the 40% English instruction was meant for English instruction in science, social studies, English phonics, and the ELD time.

Partnership with Parents of EBs with Disabilities

> I would contact parents. We would discuss their growth and they would be very supportive. When I would call the parent, they would usually pick up and if they didn't answer, they would call me back or I would call them back the next day. We did not give homework.

Camilla rated herself a 9 out of 10 on the ability to partner with parents of EBs with disabilities.

Camilla's Insights for New Teachers about Educating EBs with Disabilities

When asked to share her insights about teaching EBs with disabilities with new teachers, Camilla said, "I would say ask for help if you don't know what to do. If you're not sure what to do, don't just do it because it's the law and you have to follow it. Ask for help."

Camilla's Insights for Administrators about Educating EBs with Disabilities

Camilla was also asked to share her insights with her campus administrators, about teaching EBs with disabilities and she said, "I'm not sure what I would say to my administration. I don't really have any negative things to say about their support or anything. I can't think of one."

Camilla's Assessment of her Journey in Education so Far

> It's been very good. I can't complain. There are those challenges with the kiddos that don't speak fluent English, but that's normal. But overall, it's going really well. I speak fluent English and come from a family background that speaks Spanish.

Camilla's Future Career/Professional Plans

> In the next ten years, I still see myself being a teacher, hopefully still in second grade. I really like second grade. It's great. Right now, I teach second grade. I used to teach third grade for the past three years, but I prefer second grade.

The above narrative was based on an in-depth interview with Camilla, a bilingual education teacher. The next narrative will be that of Sally, the other bilingual education teacher in this study.

I have Survived and it was Wonderful! Sally's Story

Sally, a first-grade bilingual education teacher, emigrated to the U.S. from Venezuela, to get "away from the communist government of Chavez." Sally titled her narrative, "I have survived, and it was wonderful," to symbolize her feelings about

overcoming the challenges she faced early on in her teaching career. The school year 2021-2022 marked her 19th year of teaching bilingual education. Sally's age ranged between 50 and 59. She was certified to teach bilingual, early childhood to grade four, and her certification track was through the alternative route. Her racial identity and ethnicity were White and Hispanic, respectively. Over her 19 years of teaching, she had taught children with various forms of disabilities and typically had between five and six of those children in her class each year. At the time of this study, she had five EBs with disabilities in her class. She had a child with a hearing impairment who wore a hearing device. She also had a child with intellectual disability, another with ADHD, one with a severe speech impairment, and another with a dual diagnosis of autism and emotional disturbance. Sally taught all the core subjects-reading, writing, math, social studies, and science.

Sally spoke English well, but occasionally, she showed some dysfluency associated with English language learners, and that sometimes obscured her message. When that happened, I tried to summarize her response. Sally's story began with a question about her journey in the field of education.

> My name is Sally, I am a first grade [bilingual education] teacher. This is going to be my 19th year of teaching bilingual education, and I came to the United States from Venezuela. I was doing (practicing) in the medical field when I came here to United States, getting away from the communist government of Chavez. I came to this country originally with a student visa to study English, but the real reason was we were fleeing away from all the trouble in Venezuela. We needed work permits and a Venezuelan friend of ours told us that the school districts were in desperate need of bilingual teachers and the only requirement was that you speak both languages [Spanish and English] and that you have a college degree, and they

would sponsor your work permit. So, that's how I started working as a teacher in 2003.

I never heard about the bilingual education program. It was not on my mind to become a schoolteacher. The only thing was I wanted a job, a paycheck, and eventually I thought I was going to go back to my medical profession. After around five years teaching, first, I became a resident, then later, I became a citizen. When I became a resident in this country, I said Ok, I don't depend anymore on a work permit. I'm going to chase my dream of going back to the medical profession, but I couldn't. I could not pass the test; it was expensive, so reluctantly, I stayed in teaching to pay for the bills, and I discovered that the whole purpose of my life was to be a teacher. I come from a family of teachers. My grandfather was a teacher, my dad was a professor in a university, I have a couple of uncles that are teachers and I started to think that life is throwing me to where I belong, and I have been resisting it until I said no more. Then, I embraced it, this is what God wants for me. I am a teacher. I was born to be a teacher. After that, I have been enjoying teaching. I feel incredibly happy and fulfilled. That's how I ended up as a teacher, in a reluctant way.

Preservice Preparation for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

My alternative teacher certification program (ATCP) that I did through … (name removed) almost twenty years ago, I feel was a waste of time. I learned a bunch of things that really were not relevant to me. It didn't help me in the classroom. I had to learn the ropes by watching other teachers, by my own personal experience as an English learner, or emergent bilingual. I don't know how it is now, but that part [ATCP], I think it's a waste of time. I did it because it was a requirement to work as a schoolteacher.

Sally rated her preservice preparation ATCP a four out of ten on the job of preparing her to teach EBs with disabilities.

In-Service Preparation Experiences for Teaching EBs with Disabilities

> There has been, through my career, some trainings that have been helpful and one of them was Esperanza. It was a week-long training. The woman that designed the program is a Mexican descendant teacher or Ph.D. from Texas, so I think she knew what she was talking about, and I still use some of the elements of her program in my classroom. Another thing I found really helpful was Reading Academy. I was impressed about how put together it is. I have been teaching for 19 years and nobody has ever talked to me, and I have never done any in-service about English phonics or how to teach English. I have been teaching English to my students with little bits here and there, with the plan the district offers, but it's being a trial and error-let me try this here, the way I learned English, maybe, they will learn English this way. But now, with the Reading Academy, it's like, this makes sense, using cognates, trying to interrelate both languages. When I started teaching bilingual, there was a "No, no", you cannot mix both languages [English and Spanish]. You cannot use words in Spanish and English in the same sentence. You speak all in English or you speak all in Spanish. Now, they are telling us it's okay, it's all good. It's like a salad. It does not matter if you separate it or mix it, it all goes to the same stomach, and I thought, okay, that makes sense. If my students throw one or two words in English here and there, they are learning the language, it's alright. I love the Reading Academy! (Body language showed excitement.)

Sally mentioned that another in-service that she liked and found useful was Conscious Discipline, a behavior intervention training. She explained why she liked the training:

> … a lot of our students, bilingual students, Spanish speakers, come from a very unstable, violent background. So, these are disturbed kids, you know, you need to understand what's behind that kid and Conscious Discipline offers that, understanding there is a little kid hurting in there. Before you teach him anything you need to understand his emotions. So, those probably are the three most useful in-services so far in my career.

When asked about how the in-service trainings helped her with working with EBs with disabilities, she said:

> I think, especially the Esperanza training, it gives you the tool to go low in the curriculum, like I have my first-grade curriculum, but Esperanza goes to the basics of learning a language. It emphasizes the phonemic awareness, the pronunciation, you know, a lot of these kids need like, more specific instruction on, this is the way the L sounds, look at my tongue /L/, you put it on the top, say it with me. I like the Esperanza training because it kind of like, breaks it apart, the language, how your brain processes language but you need to know how it sounds, and you have some symbols for it, so in that sense, I would say the most helpful is Esperanza. It gives you the basis to go on a pre-kindergarten level with kids in first grade and they need that.

When asked to rate her in-service preparation experiences on the job of preparing her to work with EBs with Disabilities, she responded:

> Esperanza, I will have to say a ten. If I put all my in-service together, in a blender, mix them and give a grade, I will say eight or nine because some have been really helpful, some have been okay, and I would say, none has been not helpful. I can take something good from each of these in-services. They have helped. I do [also] like the focus training (provided by the district every nine weeks and at the

> beginning of the school year, to go over the TEKs curriculum for each nine-week period) I do love to go to those. It is helpful. Everything they give you, it helps you somehow.

A Day in Sally's Classroom with Spanish-Speaking EB with Disabilities

Sally described the interruptions that happened when service providers came in and out of her classroom to pull out students, and how after agreeing to a specific time to pull out students, sometimes the service providers did not stick to the schedule. As a result, they sometimes came into Sally's classroom at different times and requested to pull out students, without prior notice. Sally understood that the inconsistency in pulling out the children was not the fault of the service providers because they were dealing with multiple grades and servicing many students throughout the day. Therefore, she learned to be flexible and go with the flow. Here is how she described the situation:

> It is complicated. It's multiple interruptions and what I have come to is complete flexibility because at the beginning of the year, the [special education teacher] tell you, "When can I pull out student Jo (pseudonym)?" I said, well this is my schedule, and she say, "Well, I'm going to pull him from 8:15 to 8:45. Is that alright?" I said, yes. Then, comes the speech therapist, "When can I take student Jo?" Yes, that works for me. Then, they say, "Oh, I'm sorry I am late because I had another meeting. Is it okay if I pull him now?" I say, yes, thank you. Do it. That happens during the whole day and sometimes that drives me crazy. So, it takes constant interruption and refocusing, but I think nothing else we can do. Just the student with hearing impaired, he has three teachers pulling him out-the speech therapist, the special education teacher, and then, there's somebody from the district that comes from hearing impaired [department], just for the student.

Adding to the complication, Sally also must take time out to deal with behavior difficulties of some students amidst the shuffle of students in and out of her classroom. She mentioned a child, Ed (pseudonym) who had a dual diagnosis of autism and emotional disturbance and was aggressive. Ed was in the Behavior Support Services (BSS) program. Sally said:

> And then the BSS student [Ed] comes for one hour for math, then he goes back to his class [program homeroom] and comes [back] for 30 mins of reading. That 30 mins is flexible because usually he is throwing a tantrum. Then he [leaves] and comes back for another one hour. It's crazy, it's crazy.

Sally shared that in addition to taking time out to address Ed's behavior, she must also find time to follow her instructional routine which could be difficult to do with all the interruptions and distractions. She said:

> … I try to do my pull-out (small group or one-on-one) with all my students, not just the special education students. I think all my bilingual students, I treat them like special ed pretty much. I try to read to each of my students three to five minutes, one-on-one every day. That is the most efficient practice I can do. I remember my first-grade teacher, I went to a Catholic school in Venezuela and the way I learned to read is, she will pull out the students every day to read one-on-one. I remember that and she gives you homework that I needed to practice with my mom and then, I read with her [my mom] and she [the teacher] will ask, "Did you read your book? Okay, show me." I do the same thing with my students. So, with all that craziness and pull-outs, I still find the time to say, "Okay, student Jo, it's my turn with you. Let's sit down and read here." Then, with student Dy, and even with student Ed, my behavior support service [BSS] student. If he [Ed] comes for 15 mins, like he came

> this afternoon for one hour, I made sure that I took him for 10 minutes to work with me. You must work every day with these kids on reading.

Sally's Experiences Working with EBs with Disabilities

> It's very complicated. Something that has helped me since last year is the fact that each child has the computer so, when I do the test for everybody, the three kids [with disabilities] are working on Dreambox (an online math intervention program) on their computers while we do the [whole group] test and then I say, "Everybody in the class, can you guys work on DreamBox while I do the test with the three students?" At the end, we finished with the test, "General kids, close the computers, now we're going to do centers." It is exhausting. The computer has been really helpful. It is very engaging; they love it, and they know how to work on these programs in an independent way.

Sally continued to share that doing small group instruction was difficult due to Ed's behavior. She described her difficulty of having Ed work independently:

> He is very demanding for one-on-one time. He has to be next to me. I cannot tell him go work on your computer, go do this by yourself, no. He's like a keychain next to me. So, even if I am working with a different group of kids, higher than his level, Ed is sitting in my small table, next to me, doing something engaging. Ed cannot just go work with his computer or I cannot even tell him go read with your buddy over there. No.

Sally's Fondest Memory Working with EBs with Disabilities

> You know, we're coming to the end of the year, and you see the growth like student Jo, the hearing impaired, when he started school, he was almost mute, very shy kid, he's always kind of scared of talking. He started on a level AA [the lowest reading level or prereading level] because he did not know all his letters. Then, you know,

> becoming friends and working with him and seeing him now that he's mischievous and he raises his hand to talk. He is still behind, but his reading on a level F is really rewarding. Then working with student Ed, my BSS student who was really angry, and he wouldn't sit in the carpet, and he just wanted to throw things away and then, run away from the classroom, now coming every day to my classroom, and giving me, a hug and you know, feeling at ease with me. We're still working with him on letters, he is still on prekindergarten level. He still hasn't learned all his letters, but it's still an accomplishment.

Elaborating more on her fondest memories of her EBs with disabilities, Sally shared that her school had a lot of immigrants from Honduras and many of them have been traumatized by the political, economic, and social environments in their country. Last year, she had one of these students, Beth (pseudonym). Beth was not in special education when she arrived, but Sally described her as "severely disabled" and "barely spoke." The child was eventually determined to qualify for special education services and placed in a life skills program (a more restrictive, self-contained, special education program). Sally said for the first four months the child was in her classroom, the child would:

> …come out [crawling] under my desk…and it was really disturbing you know, it's a very, very, low kid. But then, after [sometime], she started sitting in the chair, smiling, feeling comfortable with the students. It's a rewarding feeling seeing the improvement, the progress, you know.

Recognizing Successes of EBs with Disabilities

Sally was asked if she thought her EBs with disabilities were being successful.

> Yes, they're definitely learning. Maybe they're learning in a slower pace. But they're learning and I see it on the Istation report (a reading program report). I see it when

> I take running records once a month. They move on the reading levels slower than the rest of the students. For example, student Jo has been going up one reading level every couple of months, when my regular, nondisabled students go up a couple of reading levels each month, or at least one reading level up every month, but they're definitely learning, and I see it also in the fact fluency [math facts fluency] where they might require counters, manipulatives. They might still be adding and subtracting with their fingers and are not able to do mental math. But if I compare them from how they started in first grade to now, definitely, there has been growth. It's not the normal growth as a regular student or student with no disability. But there is growth. They do their Istation assessment in Spanish, and I also put them to do Istation [assessment] in English. They like the challenge. I tell them don't take it seriously, remember you are just practicing. If you don't do good on the test, it's alright.

Sally was asked to rate her confidence level for teaching EBs with disabilities. She responded this way: "At this point of my teaching career, I feel highly confident, like throw me whatever you want. I get it. If you say, have you done it? Yes, I have done it." (Sally laughs cheerfully.)

Sally's Use of Special Education Intervention Strategies

> I don't see them (use of peer buddy and setting clear rules and expectations) as special education teaching practices. You need to have that structure in your classroom to be able to do anything, you know, the rules of consistency, the routine. I think the peer buddy, that's really challenging because kids at this age they want to play, but it has worked well with student Ed, the kid that is in the BSS [program], autistic, and very aggressive. He has a buddy in my classroom, student Nath (pseudonym). They started to become buddies in specials [music and P.E]. The BSS

(Behavior Support Services) teacher told me, “Oh he is friendly with student Nath from your classroom”, and I said to student Nath, “Okay so, when we sit in the carpet, could you sit next to student Ed?” and to student Ed, “Can you help student Nath pass out the papers?” So, I use student Nath to redirect Ed, making him feel comfortable. I told him, “You have a friend here.” and so, he started making other friends like [with] student Jo. But it could be challenging because student Nath is [only] six years old, and he wants to play. You have to be careful with that.

When asked to rate her confidence level in using special education intervention strategies, she said: “Highly confident. After all these years I feel confident. I think I'm doing the right thing. They are learning.”

Sally’s Use of Content-Based Accommodations and Modifications

I think we all do it. I teach my whole group instruction for 15-20 minutes in reading and 15-20 minutes in math and the instruction is on the first-grade level, but then every day, I do my math centers and my reading centers. Like right now, we're starting numbers from 100 to 120, but I got another student like a month ago from Mexico that has never been in school, and he doesn't know his numbers. I thought I was done with it! He is supposed to be a regular (typical, not in special education) kid. When I sit on my small group table and working on comparing and ordering numbers from 100 to 120, and then I have my student here and I gave him the numbers zero to 20, and say, order these numbers from one to ten. So, you have to go as low as the child needs, otherwise what’s the point? Some special education students [like] student Jo, and student Dy, the ADHD student, they know how to add and subtract but they cannot do mental math. They cannot even count with their fingers. So, with them I have to give them counters and give them the double-ten frame when we're going to do a test or when we are doing addition and subtraction.

> "Get your mat out, here are your counters", I try to make them successful, "get your 120 charts out" and give them extra time [to complete work].

Sally further shared that during testing, she did this for accommodation:

> Student Jo goes to do his test with the special education aide and student Dy, I don't give him the test when I'm giving the test to everybody. I have three to four students that [after] I give the test to everybody, then I call the three students to sit here with me with their dividers, "We are gonna do the test here in my small group table. I want to see you using your hundred twenty charts, get it out and put your finger, this is the question where we are working."

Experience with the IEP Meeting Process and Implementing IEPs

> Usually when we have the staffing or the IEP meetings that are formal, they read you the IEP and I go um, um. Then I have to go to Ms. Domingo (a special education teacher) and ask how does this look like? Could you put it on more simple words and give me some examples? But it usually goes to the same strategies you know, [for example], preferential sitting, repetition. Now, I see is not rocket science. What works for the ADHD [student] is going to work for the hearing impaired [student], work for the BSS [student]; that is, refocusing the student, shortening assignments. The [use of] small group and the one-on-one is best with the special education students. Also, looking back at the lower level TEKS, and reviewing the essentials with students, because the reason why these children are not on this [grade] level is because they don't have the essentials down. Yeah, so the IEP meeting process could be a little bit hard to digest and then you need to sit with the special education teachers or the person that wrote those IEPs to digest them for you and explain how does it look like for you to be able to implement.

Planning, Scheduling, and Collaboration with Special Education Teachers

> Usually, the teachers that work for special education, they are wonderful. You can tell they work with their heart. It's their passion. Our special education teacher right now, Ms. Domingo (pseudonym), she was a kinder teacher, two years ago, she used to work with my sister, so, I know her personally. So, I am comfortable enough to go with her and say, "Hey Domingo, what do we do with this kid?" and she has a lot of ideas because she was a kinder teacher and there is a lot of collaboration. Then she will say, "Try this." She worked with student Beth. She worked with student Jo. I tell her, "I don't know with student Jo, he is misbehaving in my class, he is reading, but his comprehension is not good." [Then she says], "Why don't you try this, read one sentence, then ask him a question, then read two sentences, then ask him a question, instead of reading a whole page." So, there is a lot of collaboration and same thing with the speech teacher. Yeah, they are all great. I can talk to them like they are my friends, you know, we have a friendship based on we are all working to make these students successful. For example, the speech teacher, this year, I referred her three students and she came back to me and said, "You know, I think this kid is more than just speech, why don't we put pressure for a full evaluation?" And I said, "I think you are right." And yeah, that was student Beth who was just labeled intellectually disabled. So, we collaborated and worked together. Something [to note], you have to be very flexible with them [the other service providers] you know, they're working with the whole school with different schedules, different grade levels.

Regarding her feelings about the amount of time for planning, Sally shared that they have one hour to plan daily but that on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, that one hour planning time was frequently used for professional learning community (PLC) time,

which was when the grade-level teams met to discuss matters relating to lessons and other issues. She believed that using two days out of five days to attend those team-level meetings was not a productive way of utilizing her planning time, because she was left with only three days to do her individual planning. She felt that she needed more individual planning time than team-level planning time. She justified her preference this way:

> I mean, I work on the weekends, I work after school, I never stop working, especially last year, I was staying in school every day until five or six [p.m.] because I was planning for the virtual students, and for the face-to-face students... I have to do my regular [learning] centers in reading and math, literacy centers, at their [grade] level, then, I have to be talking to the kinder teacher, the prekindergarten teacher [for lower-level resources] …

Her proposal was for teachers to teach for four days a week and have one full day in the week for planning. She said it was helpful whenever the district provided a full day to teachers to plan. While she needed a full day to plan, Sally argued that extra planning time should not be restricted to only teachers who have children with disabilities. She said every teacher needed extra planning time. Here was her reason:

> I think everybody should get that extra time [for planning] because even if you don't have children with disabilities, you have children that are low and maybe they have not been labeled yet with disability. Every other teacher in my grade level has very low students so, I think we all, in general, need more time for planning.

In further questioning, Sally shared her feelings about collaboration with the special education teachers.

> I think the problem is not having enough time to collaborate. The SPED teacher has students from every grade level, so she is focused on teaching all the various groups

of students. I know they have one conference time which doesn't correspond with ours. So, usually if she needs help or wants to know what we are teaching, she comes to me, or [to]whichever bilingual teacher has her student and talks to us about the student. But there is no time for sped teachers to participate in our team planning meeting, which would be helpful for them and for us bilingual teachers as well.

Administrative Support Pertaining to EBs with Disabilities

I love my principal and my assistant principal. We are expected to deliver. I think they will say that they have high expectations of teachers. “You can do it”, “We trust you.” Okay, thank you. With the resources, …we actually told Ms. Barnes (pseudonym), “Hey, we want to go to this Esperanza in-service, we have heard it's really good and we had heard it from other teachers”, and she sent us. She sent the first grade and second grade teachers, and we got resources. Yeah, we have support, it's just an enormous amount of work.

Sally’s Beliefs regarding the Language of Instruction

What I've personally seen through my years teaching is that the bilingual students fall behind learning English. My opinion or belief through my years of experience has changed. At the beginning, I thought it was appropriate to teach students to read in their native language. But now I think we should teach them everything in English with Spanish support; otherwise, they stay behind. There's no way they're going to catch up. So, what I have started to do in my own classroom is teach more English. When I see the students are proficient in English, that is, they speak to me in English, they understand English, so I say, OK, you already learned the mechanics of English so, I'm gonna start teaching you to read in English, even though that's not what my curriculum says. I'm trying to push more English because

> I know they're falling behind. So, I think it'll be better to maybe in Kinder, teach them letters in English and Spanish.

Sally supported her belief by positing that the bilingual education program has failed and needed to be revamped. She said:

> Something is not working and as teachers, we see it and we try to ourselves come up with solutions, patches, like, how do I do this? So, it's a trial and error and you say, let me see, I'm gonna start reading with these kids in English.

She acknowledged that sometimes, she was criticized by other teachers for teaching in English. This was her recount of the exchange with the teachers:

> They say, "Why are you teaching them in English?" And I say, "Because I know they're ready." And they say, "That's not what the curriculum says. You need to teach reading in Spanish.", and I say, "I don't care. I know these students are ready and I'm gonna do it." And fortunately for me, the administration, they trust me enough to say, "I trust you Sally, I know your students have been doing good, so whatever you're doing, keep doing it." But you know, but it's not fair for other teachers or for new teachers. They're a little bit lost there. The students [are] falling behind. Why are we going to have a student in second grade that is reading [in Spanish] above grade level…but insisting on [continuing] teaching [the child in] Spanish? Go make the transition to English. Some students may need to be taught in Spanish [longer], maybe Spanish until second grade, but the majority need to be taught English early.

Experiences with Parent Partnership

> Most of the parents of my students have two jobs and they don't have time but to provide for their families, and I don't blame them. I used to get angry about their nonparticipation in the education of their children [thinking], he is your kid, and I am more interested in his academic progress than you. But now I understand these parents are not bad. They get home tired; they don't want to read with their kids. They don't have time. They barely see their kids, and that's the best they can do. I have few parents that are really involved with the academic development of their students and of course, those students excel. The ones (parents) that would call you to say, "What else can I do? What are you guys teaching?" Those kinds are really rare. Most parents, they will answer the phone. The experience I have had. I'm thinking about student Dy that has ADHD. At the beginning of the year, I was calling the mom almost every week to say, hey, we need to work, and I am giving her reports, then she stopped answering the phone for months. I understand it was too much for her. I was like OK, I lost her! (Sally shrugged her shoulders.)

Sally continued sharing about student Dy and why she resorted to helping him do his homework at school:

> Student Dy doesn't do his homework. He brings it back to school empty and actually, I do homework with him in the morning. When I sit with him in the morning, I ask him, Dy, did you do your homework? He says, "No", and I say okay, fine, you know, you're going to spend 5 minutes with me. And I say, Dy, did you even try? Because I know they don't have parent support, so I tell him, I don't want you telling me that your mom wasn't home and couldn't help you get your homework out. Show me that you tried. If you couldn't do it and you did it wrong, that's fine with me. I'm going to see whether you did it correct and tell you what

> you did wrong. Most of my [typical] kids do their homework on their own. But then, the ones with disabilities bring the empty notebook back, I think because they're so scatterbrain. So, Dy comes back with no homework every day and that's been an all-year thing and I was like, okay, well, here, you have your counters remember, we're doing a subtraction. Sit there, we're going to try in recess. I feel like we have to do also the work of the parents.

Sally was asked to rate her confidence level in the ability to partner with parents. She responded this way:

> Highly confident. I think I'm very able because I understand what's going on. I understand what the modifications in the classroom are that I could teach the parents and tell them, you could do this at home, but there's no parent to talk to.

Sally's Insights for First-Year Bilingual Teachers

> If I were mentoring like a first-year teacher, I would tell them, ask questions, don't assume anything. Stay in close contact with the special ed teachers. If you don't understand something, tell them to demonstrate for you because nobody really tells you. [Ask special education teachers], "How does it look like? Act it out for me. Give me an example of how it looks like", until you can say, "OK, I get it."

Elaborating further, Sally said:

> As a new teacher, you are going to get special ed students. To better prepare, you need classes and courses that include how to work with all sorts of disabilities. The best way is observing veteran teachers. How does it look like? When they told me about IEPs, I often said, could you put it in more simple words? What does this look like on a daily basis? On a weekly basis? Make it a little more easy to understand, put it in a semester long class, where they go observe classroom teachers working with bilingual students. [Ask questions], what is the idea behind

accommodations? What does it mean to shorten assignments? Why do I need to shorten assignments? [Ask] practical things [for example], preferential seating, what is preferential seating? Why does it work? The teachers need to observe that. [Teachers should] read the reasoning behind it and go see it in action.

Sally's Insights for School Administrators

To the admin, I would say these first-year teachers need a lot of support. It seems like they don't teach you anything in the university. I don't know where people graduate from. At least I was very lost that first year of teaching during the alternative certification program. Well, that was 20 years ago. Hopefully they have improved it. I think the best way to learn how to teach is probably being in a classroom, observing a veteran teacher or observing the special ed teacher for a month. I think the principals need to be aware of that, like to let first-year teachers to go and observe other teachers in the campus, maybe for a whole day.

"What I Wished I could have Known" Sally's Reflection about Working with EBs with Disabilities

I was prepared to teach bilingual students because I'm bilingual. But I wasn't prepared to teach students with disabilities. During my alternative certification program, we never talked about students with disabilities, and I never even imagined that I was going to have students with disabilities, especially because I come from a different country. I did not know about the law that required all students need to be together in the classroom, and that was crazy for me. Having certain students was overwhelming. I had a student in my other [previous] school in second grade that had multiple sclerosis and he was paralyzed from the neck down and so I had him on a wheelchair and I guess it wasn't that scary for me

> because I come from a medical background, so I knew the medical stuff about him, but I had no idea how to teach him. So, I had to start improvising, you know.

Sally continued to share, and she explained that in her current school, they are fortunate that the speech therapist is bilingual, one of the resource teachers is bilingual, and the diagnostician is bilingual. As a result, the students are getting native language support from those service providers. She felt that bilingual education teachers need to be trained in special education because "bilingual students are somehow special education students." She elaborated on what she meant by that statement, saying:

> They [bilingual students] come with so many disadvantages, for example, one of the students, Manny (pseudonym), I don't think he's intellectually disabled, I don't think he has speech problems, he's not autistic, he's not an ADHD, but he is on a prekindergarten level and that's a reality. The bilingual kids that we're getting from Central America, they are coming in survival mode. Letters and numbers were not on their priorities. As bilingual teachers, we need to be prepared for that, to go low, low, [in the curriculum]. Maybe, every bilingual education teacher should have a special education certification training.

Sally further rationalized her view by drawing a parallel between special education and gifted and talented education. She said currently, many teachers are required to get certified in gifted and talented education and felt that the same should be required for special education certification. She shared:

> I have the gifted and talented certification because our principal asked us to have it. In the same way, we need our bilingual education teachers to also get a special education certification training and the special education teachers have to have training on how to work with any emergent bilingual.

Sally's Assessment of her Journey in Education so Far

> It's been a learning curve, definitely. The first-year teaching, I remember ending every day with a migraine, overwhelmed because I wasn't prepared to do what I needed to do. Because there was a shortage of teachers, I found a job and started teaching a month after I started my alternative teacher certificate program (ATCP). So, it was really hard at the beginning. Now I feel like I know what I'm doing, but every year, you learn something new, like these last two years, learning to navigate through the pandemic, the internet learning, the virtual learning, it's always been a challenge. It's almost like a never-ending climbing a mountain which make it interesting too. If it were not like this, probably, I would be bored already. I would have found something else to do, but it really keeps you expanding your mind-how can I do this better? What do I do different? So, it's been a learning experience, it's been very fulfilling. I have discovered that I am a social person and I think as teachers, we charge our batteries with all the energy from the kids, from all the other teachers. During the pandemic, I felt isolated. Even though I was seeing my students, it was on the computer. So, it's been very challenging, but it's been a wonderful journey so far.

Sally's Future Professional Plan

> Well, I remember after like five to six years of teaching in my ---[previous district], other teachers started saying, "Let's go do master's [degrees] …," "let's go back to school." Some teachers wanted to become librarians, some teachers wanted to become principal, assistant principal, diagnostician, and I remember telling them "No, I like being a teacher, I like being here with the students." So professionally, I am in the place where I want to be.

The researcher's narrative will be presented next.

That was my Experience, Too!

My name is Goretti. As I read the narratives of the four participants, I could not help but think, *that was my experience, too!* At the time of this research, I was a 22-year veteran-teacher who recently retired from teaching. I earned a bachelor's degree in English, a master's degree in business administration, and a master's degree in education, specializing in special education. I was certified to teach early childhood (EC) to grade six, English and reading to grades seven through twelve, English as a second language (ESL), and special education, EC through grade twelve. I got my Texas teacher's certificate through a university educator program. My race is Black/African American, and I immigrated from Nigeria. During my 22 years of teaching in the special education resource classroom, I taught students with various kinds of disabilities who were native English speakers as well as EBs from different ethnicities, in kindergarten through fourth grade. I felt like I had a connection with the families of many of my Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities because like many of the families, I was an immigrant from a developing country and part of a marginalized racial/ethnic group (Black/African American). I was also a mother of a child with a disability. It was this connection that I had with families of EBs with disabilities that influenced my interest in this research. I wished to contribute my part to improving educational services for EBs with disabilities. I also had an obvious connection with the participants of this study, considering we were all teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in elementary school. As I reviewed the findings of my interview with the four participants, especially as each described specific experiences in their classroom, I could not help thinking, *how similar were our experiences!* This is my story.

My journey into the field of education started in 1998 when I enrolled at Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, to work towards a master's degree in education, specializing

in special education. This move heralded a career change for me because prior to immigrating to the U.S., with an MBA degree under my belt, I had worked in a steel manufacturing corporation in Nigeria, in a middle management position, and my plan was to continue in that career path after my family immigrated to the U.S. But God had a different plan for me. Shortly after my family moved to the U.S., the youngest of my three children was diagnosed with autism. That was the reason I decided to become a special education teacher. I wanted to learn all I could about special education so that I could help my child at home. I graduated from Xavier with a master's degree in education, specializing in special education, in 2000, and obtained a job as a special education resource teacher. That was how I began this journey in education.

Preservice Training

My preservice training experiences happened during my master's degree program at Xavier University. I found all my courses helpful for teaching students with disabilities. The class discussions were less theoretical and more practically oriented. The assignments were also practical. One class instructor invited a parent with a child who had severe, multiple disabilities to speak to us about her experience in raising a child with a disability. We were able to ask the parent questions about the nature of the child's disability, how she communicated with the child, and how they functioned at home. The child, who was non-verbal and dependent on her parent for everyday living tasks, sat quietly in a wheelchair beside her mother. Though we tried to interact with the child, she was unresponsive to us, perhaps due to shyness or the unfamiliar environment. The experience was significant because it gave us, prospective teachers, a window into the kind of student we may have in our classroom someday. It also provided us the opportunity to view first-hand, the challenges that parents of children with multiple disabilities face daily.

I took a broad range of courses covering important aspects of special education; the courses included special education identification and issues, foundations in early childhood special education, communication strategies and assistive technology, special education communication and collaboration, special education assessment and evaluation, current issues in special education, adaptive motor development, and behavior and social skills management. During my practicum experiences, I worked with children with various types of disabilities. All these experiences were beneficial to me because they helped me to have an easy transition from student to special education teacher. By virtue of the depth of my preservice training, I felt that my preservice training was highly effective in preparing me to teach students with disabilities in general and I had a high confidence in my ability to teach children with disabilities. However, like Philia and Krystal, I did not have opportunities to learn how to work with bilingual students through coursework. Also, I did not work with bilingual students during my teaching practicum.

In-service Professional Development Experiences

Most of the districtwide professional development trainings offered to special education resource teachers were usually geared toward teaching the TEKs curriculum. Typically, at the beginning of the school year and subsequently at the beginning of every nine-week period, we joined the general education teachers in a districtwide professional development training, during which we were presented with an overview of the TEKs curriculum for the coming nine weeks. The overview included strategies in reading, writing, and math. The trainings were effective for teaching the TEKs curriculum.

Additionally, matters affecting special education, per se, were addressed through monthly meetings with our special education resource specialists. This forum allowed the specialists to address specific areas of concern and to update us on district policies affecting special education. Also, whenever the special education department purchased a

new reading intervention program, a training was usually organized to train all special education resource teachers that would be using the program. I believe that my in-service training was highly effective in helping me with the special education aspect of my job. However, there were no trainings on how to work with bilingual students with disabilities. Therefore, my experiences were similar to those of Philia and Krystal.

Most Memorable Classroom Experience

When I reflect on my classroom experiences teaching EBs with disabilities, I cannot help but gush about my most memorable experience. Several years ago, I had three Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in my resource classroom. Two of them were in third grade and one in fourth grade. The students were in varying stages of English proficiency. One of them was at the beginning stage and the other two were at the intermediate stage. I also had English-speaking students. The EB students were enthusiastic about learning, and they loved coming to school. I was excited to have them because it was an opportunity for me to learn Spanish. I always wanted to learn to speak Spanish and I was determined to pick up Spanish to better serve my EBs. I managed to teach the students math using my English-Spanish dictionary and a quick reference cheat sheet that had all the math vocabulary words in Spanish and English. However, I was unable to teach them reading and writing in Spanish. Therefore, my aide taught them while I supervised. I did not like the arrangement but under my circumstance, there wasn't much that I could do.

When conducting class, I spoke English when I communicated with students about routines, expectations, and general issues. The aide interpreted for the bilingual students. During my time teaching math to the EBs, we developed such a good rapport that I admitted to them my dire wish to speak Spanish and encouraged them to speak Spanish to me and be my "Spanish teacher". They were thrilled to assume the role! My

students taught me common phrases for classroom use like “line up”, “come here?”, etc. They giggled at my poor pronunciations, but we had fun with it. Both students and I benefited from the experience because my students felt good that I valued their language, and in turn, I felt good that I could keep them interested in learning. Their motivation was high in my class, and they were always willing to complete assignments.

Most Challenging Experience

My most challenging experience was my inability to teach my EB students reading and writing, and as a result, I relied on my aide to teach them. Like Philia and Krystal felt, I did not like that arrangement, not one bit. At a different school that I taught in, I once had a Spanish EB who was at the beginning level in all areas except listening, where he probably was advanced. Johnny (pseudonym) was a funny, amiable, and laid-back second grader who liked to do practical jokes on his classmates and on me. I once told him he should be a standup comedian when he grows up because he was a natural. He qualified for special education services as a student with learning disabilities. He was a non-reader and was to receive reading instruction in Spanish. Though I was able to teach him math, I relied on the aide to teach him reading and writing. He joined the English speakers during math and enjoyed the camaraderie among his English-speaking peers. When it came to reading, he was pulled to the side by my aide while the English speakers stayed with me for reading and writing instruction. While the aide taught Johnny phonics in a corner, using Esperanza, I provided explicit instruction to the English-speaking students, using Project Read. I did not feel good about it. This approach could not result in the best outcomes for the student because the aide was not a trained teacher. I felt that Johnny needed to be taught by a certified teacher just like his English-speaking peers. If the student were to be taught by the aide occasionally, like in a coaching or tutoring situation, it would have been proper, but when the aide assumed the role of the

teacher, I felt it was a problem. This was because aides were not trained teachers. Johnny missed the benefits of direct, explicit, instruction from a certified teacher and I thought that raised an issue of inequity. Besides, because he was alone with the aide, he missed the potential benefits that may have arisen from peer discussion and exchange of ideas; for instance, interacting and discussing with his English-speaking peers may have augmented his language and academic development. Johnny did not show much growth in his reading ability, though I am not sure why. It could have been the nature of his disability, the quality of instruction, the level of home support, or a combination of all.

My Competency to Teach EBs with Disabilities

Like Philia and Krystal, I did not feel competent to teach my EBs with disabilities primarily because I could not give them the level of language support that they needed. Most of them were either at the beginning or intermediate level of English language proficiency across the board-listening, speaking, reading, and writing-and as a result, they needed major language support. While I felt highly competent in providing content accommodations and modifications, I felt low confidence about my ability to implement cultural/home language support and linguistic accommodations. Therefore, I did not think that I gave them the most effective instruction that they deserved.

Collaboration with Bilingual Education Teachers

Consistent with what the four participants mentioned in their narratives, there was not enough time to collaborate with the bilingual education teachers. I could not attend the grade-level, planning team meetings with the bilingual education teachers due to scheduling constraints, but we made time to update one another about our shared students. Sometimes, when we walked through the hallways, we talked a little bit. We talked during dismissal, or in the parking lot while walking to our cars after school. Those times may not be the best for discussing students, but there was no other time to

talk, other than to stay back after school. If we needed to discuss confidential matters, or develop IEP goals for a pending IEP meeting, we stayed back after school to discuss.

The bilingual education teachers and I did work well together, as was the case with the four participants in this study, but once, I did have a conflict with one second grade bilingual education teacher, Mrs. Ortiz (pseudonym). One of my students, Alex (pseudonym), an EB with autism, ADHD, and speech impairment, was in Mrs. Ortiz's bilingual education classroom. Alex was high functioning; he could read, write a little, and speak English well, but due to this ADHD, he was impulsive, fidgety, distracted, and had difficulty sitting still and following the class routine well. However, he was respectful to adults and was not defiant or deliberately disobedient to adults. He just could not control his impulses. He was pleasant and wanted to please his teachers. What he needed was a teacher who understood the characteristics of ADHD, had some sympathy, and provided the accommodations and support that he needed. Ortiz was either not interested in teaching a student with a disability, felt incompetent to teach the student, or lacked the patience to deal with Alex's ADHD characteristics. Whatever the reason, Ortiz treated the child poorly, by frequently yelling at him or talking in a derogatory manner to him. Based on the teacher's apparent dislike for Alex, the other students started seeing him as a "bad" student and isolated him as a result. My aide reported to me that whenever she (the aide) walked into the room to pull out Alex for my resource room, the child was usually not paired with a peer, or involved in activities with the other students. The child remained in his seat, doing independent activities to while away time, until such a time when he was pulled out to my resource room. As an advocate for my students and their case manager, it was my responsibility to ensure the students were receiving their services and treated fairly, therefore, I felt I had no choice but to address the issue with the teacher. It was a dicey situation and I felt like no matter what I said, it

was not going to be a pretty discussion. Nevertheless, I did talk to the teacher about my concerns and what my aide had observed as well as what I had personally observed whenever I walked past the class. Ortiz vehemently denied any unfair treatment of Alex and became defensive and upset. I did not expect that reaction, though I was not sure what I expected. I only wanted a chance to discuss with her how she could accommodate Alex, but that did not happen during that initial encounter. However, I noticed that from that day on, the attitude of Ortiz changed for the better toward Alex. I observed that her communication was more tender toward him, and she began to involve him in activities in her classroom.

Use of CRI

During the years that I taught EBs with disabilities, I did make my students feel that their culture and language were valued. During writing activities, I would have them talk about celebrations in their culture and compare those with the American celebrations. For one year, I do recall asking my third and fourth graders to teach me the Spanish language, and that got them very excited. I would ask them, “How do you say this and that in Spanish?” They would tell me amidst giggles and laughter, especially regarding my poor pronunciations. I think the rapport I built with them surrounding the value I placed on their language resulted in increasing their motivation to learn and enjoy coming to my classroom. However, I do not think that I implemented as much CRI as I could have. My attempt to acknowledge their culture and language and use those in instruction was limited to writing about celebrations and learning the language. I think that CRI goes beyond those. At the time, I did not have ready or quick access to resources that would support CRI and was unaware of a full range of CRI ideas or activities to choose from. I would rate myself as not confident for implementing CRI. I would also rate myself as not confident in using language-based (or linguistic) accommodation because I was unable to

provide home language support. I would rate myself as not confident in teaching EBs with disabilities because I have not been trained to do so and I do not speak Spanish.

View on Language of Instruction

My view on language of instruction evolved over time. Initially, I believed that students should be taught in English right from when they start school in prekindergarten or kindergarten. The reasoning was because I saw many students with disabilities who did not acquire English by the time they got to second, third, or fourth grade. I reasoned that perhaps the reason they had not caught up was because they did not start early enough, as it took time to learn a new language, especially if the parents do not speak English. However, after I began the doctoral program and having read what current research (e.g., Escamilla, 2017) had found, which was that students who were taught in their native language first, before being transitioned to English instruction, performed better academically than students who were not, my view changed in favor of teaching students in their native language before transitioning them to English instruction. I must add that based on what I saw in my practice, and consistent with what Krystal (special education participant) experienced in her practice, EBs with intellectual disabilities in the bilingual education program did continue to struggle to acquire English through fourth grade. This may be explained by the nature of their disability, but more research may be needed in that area.

A Typical Day in my Classroom

Many years ago in my resource room, my aide taught my EBs reading and writing in Spanish while I tried to teach math in Spanish. Like Philia (special education participant) did when teaching reading in Spanish, most of the time, I memorized the math terms that I would use and combined those with visual representations, gesticulations, pointing, and modeling. I also threw in some English when I got stuck

with what I was trying to say in Spanish. It was usually hectic, but the students were patient and even amused sometimes, at my struggles.

As the years went by, and with support from my campus administration, I began to teach some EBs reading, writing, and math, in English, while the aide interpreted or translated for us. These students knew the Spanish alphabet and some sounds, so they were able to use those as a frame of reference to understand the English alphabet and sounds. The EBs were grouped with their English-speaking peers. I used the English-based Project Read® program for this group.

Parent Partnership

Regrettably, I had very little contact with the parents of my EBs with disabilities, mostly because I did not speak Spanish and almost all of them spoke very little, or no English and needed interpreters. If I had information to share, I usually told the bilingual education teacher who forwarded the information to the parent and vice versa, but such communication was very limited.

Summary

The previous sections presented the participants' and researcher's narratives about working with EBs with disabilities. The narratives included details of the teachers' experiences under many categories, some of which were their journeys into education, teacher preparation, planning and collaboration, and classroom instruction. The next section is focused on the four participants' interpretation of the individual paths they took into the classroom as teachers.

Participants' Interpretation of their Journeys into Education

Most of the teachers' interpretation of their journeys seemed like serendipity. Three of the teachers did not plan on a teaching career, but life's turn of events led them to the classroom, and they felt it worked out for the best. Their interpretations of their

journeys inspired the title of their narrative stories. Philia's interpretation will be discussed first, followed by Krystal's, Camilla's and Sally's.

Philia was undecided about what she wanted to do career-wise. First, she wanted to be a flight attendant, then later, considered psychology, but she was discouraged by her family from doing psychology. Later she said, "OK, let me try out [special] education." Even after she enrolled in college to study special education, she was still hesitant and wondered if she should change her discipline. She faced a lingering question: "Should I do a different major?" Finally, she decided to stay in the field of special education after her practicum experience. Obviously, the students won her over! She said, "Once I started working with the kids, I'm like, I'm going to finish this. You know, I started liking it...finally, I said, yes, I want to do this (smiling)." Her interpretation of this winding path to education was that because she did not have any prior knowledge of special education before entering the field and did not anticipate the difficulty she might face as a teacher of children with disabilities, she perceived her teaching experience as a series of "unending challenges", and that was why she chose that title. She said, "Just one thing after the other. Every day, there is something." Philia did not regret her career choice. She planned to stay in special education and credited her EBs with disabilities for her growth. She said,

> I learned a lot from my bilingual kids more than my native English-speaking kids. I would say that all the mistakes along the way through my six years, I give a lot of credit to my EB students with disabilities because I learned from them throughout this journey.

For Krystal, the journey into the education field was just as unplanned as Philia's. Below is Krystal' interpretation of her journey, which started in India.

When Krystal was growing up in India, she never thought that she would become a teacher. She said, “When I was growing up, I thought I would become a journalist; but [as for being a] teacher, I didn't dream of becoming like a real teacher.” Her winding path to education began with a degree in nutrition and dietetics, followed by an unsuccessful business venture with her husband, and a short stint co-managing her family’s play center business in India. Later, on advice and encouragement from family, she came to the U.S. and enrolled in a master’s degree program in school counseling. By chance, and out of the necessity to obtain a job and earn a living, she enrolled in the teachers’ alternative certification program. She has remained in teaching ever since. She said this about her journey: “I guess it was meant to happen, so it happened.” Her interpretation was that she was destined to be a teacher because her entry into the field was a chance occurrence. Therefore, her interpretation inspired the title, “My Foray into Education”. Contrary to the unplanned journeys of Philia and Krystal into education, Camilla’s journey was a predictable one. Her interpretation is next.

Camilla was the only participant whose journey into the field of education was linear. Right from the start, she knew she wanted to be a teacher. Like the other participants, she planned to stay in education and hoped to continue to teach second grade which she described as her favorite grade to teach. She perceived her journey to the field of education as an uneventful experience and therefore, expected the same would happen as she continued in the field; hence, she picked the optimistic title, “Everything will be okay”. In contrast to Camilla’s, Sally’s journey echoed the winding journeys of Philia and Krystal. Her interpretation of her journey is next.

Like Philia and Krystal, Sally’s entry into the education field was unplanned. Before immigrating to the U.S. from Venezuela, she had never heard about the bilingual education program, and it was never her intention to become a teacher. She wanted to be

a medical professional. Therefore, she was a practicing medical professional in her home country of Venezuela before moving to the U.S. to escape the economic and political crisis there. Her hope was to return to the medical profession. But fate had a different plan for her. After unsuccessful attempts to pass certain qualifying medical exams in the U.S., she reluctantly took a job as a teacher and remained in the teaching profession to pay her bills. Sally said her disappointment led her to her life's purpose. Inspired by a long line of family members who were teachers, Sally eventually embraced the teaching profession and enjoyed it. She said:

> I started to think that life is throwing me to where I belong, and I have been resisting it until I said no more. Then, I embraced it, this is what God wants for me. I am a teacher. I was born to be a teacher. After that, I have been enjoying teaching. I feel incredibly happy and fulfilled. That's how I ended up as a teacher, in a reluctant way.

Her interpretation of this journey was that she was destined to be a teacher because it was God's desire for her. Sally chose the title, "I have survived, and it was wonderful!" because she believed that she overcame many of the challenges she initially felt at the beginning of her teaching career and credited her long years of experience and a series of trial and error, for bringing her to knowledge and fulfillment. She said, "We came here, and we conquered. We made it!" (Sally laughed.)

The above section discussed the participants' individual interpretations of their respective journeys into education. Most of their interpretations concluded that they were meant to be teachers due to the serendipitous nature of their journeys' paths. It might be necessary to examine how the teachers' past experiences may have influenced their practices as teachers. Therefore, the next section will focus on connecting the past to the present.

Connecting the Past and the Present

The participants' past experiences connected with their teaching practices in certain ways. Krystal's and Philia's language of instruction beliefs were influenced by the language model used in their school as young children. Sally's and Camilla's elementary school teachers inspired them to emulate those teachers' classroom practices. Krystal's connections will be discussed first, followed by Philia's, Sally's, and Camilla's.

Krystal shared that as a young child in India, the model at her school was full English instruction and the experience influenced her belief about language of instruction, which was that children should be taught in English from when they enter school. Therefore, her preferred language of instruction was English, to begin as early as first grade. Her rationale for her belief was that if the goal was to have children to be able to learn English, then why delay? She felt that on a personal level, learning English early was beneficial in helping her to speak, read, and write in English, fluently and quickly.

Like Krystal, when Philia was growing up in the Philippines, she was taught in English when she started school. As a young child living in the Philippines, she lived in a multilingual home. Her mother was Filipino-Chinese, and her dad was Spanish. Before she was of school age, her mother spoke Filipino and Chinese to her, but her dad spoke English and Spanish to her. She said the two primary languages spoken most of the time were English and Filipino and she acquired both languages simultaneous before she was of school age. When she started school, she said all instruction was in English, from kindergarten. She said they had just one class period when they learned the Filipino language but "Everything else-math, science, etc.- was in English."

However, unlike Krystal, Philia disagreed with the policy of teaching students in English when they entered school for the first time. She felt that students must be taught in their home language first and be transitioned to English instruction after the children

could read basic words in their home language. She believed that a solid foundation in the home language would serve as a framework for learning a second language. She said that when she was doing her teaching practice in the Philippines, she noticed that the foundation that the students with special needs had in their home language helped them in acquiring English. Therefore, in her current practice, although her understanding of Spanish is limited, she made extra efforts (e.g., memorization of scripts and reliance on Spanish translation apps) to first, teach her students in Spanish, until they could read simple words in Spanish, before transitioning them to English instruction.

Sally's connection to the past was different from those of Krystal and Philia. Sally's connection to the past was evident in her description of how her first-grade teacher influenced her current practice. She said her first-grade teacher read to all the students in her class daily, one-on-one. She said she benefited tremendously from those individual sessions with her teacher and therefore, she adopted the same practice in her current classroom. She found time every day to read individually for a few minutes at a time, to all students in her class, including EBs with disabilities. Like Sally, Camilla was also influenced by her teacher when she was in third grade. She recalled her teacher being kind, patient, and "sweet". Camilla said she grew to like her teacher very much and tried to model those traits that she admired in her teacher. In summary, the teachers' past experiences influenced their beliefs and current practices, and it is quite likely that some of their teaching practices would connect to their future experiences in some ways. This section discussed how some of the participants' past experiences influenced their teaching practice. Both special education teachers' language of instruction beliefs was impacted by their experiences as young children. The classroom practices of the two bilingual education teachers were impacted by inspiration from their elementary school teachers. The next section will be focused on the research questions and emerged themes.

Research Questions and Emergent Themes from across Narratives

To answer the research questions, the researcher analyzed individual narratives of the participants. After analysis, the researcher triangulated the data, and significant themes emerged across the narratives. The emergent themes represented the answers to the research questions. The following subsections will present the findings for each research question. The overarching question was:

How do special education and bilingual education teachers of Spanish-speaking, EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices? To answer the overarching question, each of the sub-questions will be answered.

Question one: How do special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?

The following section will present the findings of this study relating to special education teachers' experiences. Seven themes emerged from across the narratives of the special education teachers. The themes were, unpreparedness to teach EBs with disabilities, challenging experiences, inequitable instructional practices, confusion over unclear policy on language of instruction, language of instruction beliefs influenced instructional language of choice, supportive and collaborative relationship with bilingual education teachers, and insufficient time to plan instruction.

Unprepared to Teach EBs with Disabilities

Both special education teachers felt unprepared to teach EBs with disabilities due to inadequate preservice training. Krystal felt there were no courses or experiences for teaching bilingual students with disabilities. She said, "I don't remember anything specific that we learned or that was part of the curriculum, or a part of the course in our

alternative certificate program." She rated her preservice preparation program a 6.5 out of 10 on the job of preparing her to teach EBs with disabilities.

To fill the knowledge gap resulting from inadequate preservice preparation, Krystal relied on her bilingual education colleagues and aide for support. Commenting on her unpreparedness to teach EBs with disabilities, Krystal said, "It's a very daunting task. I have to depend on my paraprofessionals to help me with the students." She rated herself as moderately confident for teaching EBs with disabilities. She said she did not feel highly confident because of the language barrier (she did not speak Spanish) and the fact that she had to "rely on a lot of help" from the bilingual education teachers and her aides to teach the students.

Like Krystal, Philia said that in the Philippines where she obtained her bachelor's degree in special education (English was used for instruction), there was no coursework on how to work with EBs with disabilities, but during her teaching practice, she did experience working with EBs with disabilities, though the students were not native Spanish speakers. Philia also shared that when she moved to the U.S. and initially joined the current district, she had the opportunity to shadow Krystal Douglas (pseudonym for her special education colleague) during summer school, but Philia noted that the experience was not helpful because there weren't a lot of EBs with disabilities. She rated her preservice training as a 4 out of 10 for the job of preparing her to teach EBs with disabilities.

To make up for the gap in knowledge caused by inadequate preservice preparation, Philia also did what Krystal did, which was to frequently seek help from her bilingual education colleagues and relied on support from her aide. Further, Philia mentioned that she learned through trial and error and grew professionally over time as a result. She credited her EBs with disabilities for her professional growth because she felt

that she learned a lot more from them than from their English-speaking peers. She said, "All the mistakes along the way through my six years, I give a lot of credit to my EB students with disabilities because I learned from them throughout this journey." She elaborated by sharing that her experience had been a learning curve and she had learned what worked best for EBs with ID and what worked best for EBs with autism; hence, she felt that she had grown professionally, despite the inadequacy of her preservice training. Philia rated her confidence level for teaching EBs with disabilities as between "moderately confident" and "not confident". She explained that in some ways, she felt moderately confident because her students were making progress, but sometimes, she felt no confidence because she did not speak Spanish.

The researcher's experience regarding preservice teacher preparation for teaching EBs with disabilities was similar to that of the two participants who taught special education. Though the training adequately prepared her to teach students with disabilities in general, there was no reference to how EBs could be supported. The researcher filled the gap by utilizing her bilingual aide and memorizing math vocabulary in Spanish. Regarding in-service trainings, the two participants shared that some in-service professional development trainings they received were helpful for working with EBs with disabilities but overall, they felt there were not enough in-service trainings geared toward working with EBs with disabilities.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Krystal and Philia felt unprepared to teach EBs with disabilities due to inadequate preservice preparation programs. Krystal's alternative certification programs did not address teaching EBs with disabilities and Philia's bachelor's degree program in the Philippines did not offer course work on working with EBs, though it did provide opportunities to work with non-Spanish-speaking EBs during teaching practicum experiences. The teachers' low ratings of their

preservice trainings (6.5 out of 10 and 4 out of 10), suggested that teacher preparation educators may need to evaluate their preservice training programs and make necessary changes to bridge the knowledge gap that the teachers experience. Perhaps, partly due to inadequate preservice preparation to teach EBs with disabilities, Philia and Krystal expressed that working with EBs with disabilities was a challenging experience, as can be seen in the next section.

Challenging Experiences

Both special education teachers (Philia and Krystal) described their experiences in working with EBs with disabilities as challenging. Two factors that contributed to the challenge were the lack of instructional resources and the fact that the teachers did not speak Spanish.

Lack of Instructional Resources. Regarding the lack of instructional resources, Philia said, "It's challenging." She elaborated by explaining that she knew what to do and what resources to use for reading intervention regarding her English speakers with disabilities who have reading difficulties because the special education department had supplied two reading programs for those students-Project Read® and Edmark. She said that on the contrary, there was nothing for her to use for EB students. Philia further shared that recently, she and her colleague asked their special education specialist to send them to the Esperanza training, and the request was granted; they will attend the training in the next school year. Philia expressed relief that they will finally have a program for their EBs with disabilities, but she felt that they should have been trained long before now. She said that she had been teaching in the district for six years without a reading program for the EBs with disabilities, while their English-speaking counterparts had two reading programs available to the teachers. She said, "But I mean, this is after six years that they're finally giving us something that we can use for the bilingual kids." Philia felt

the lack of resources had caused her practice to be based on trial and error for the EBs with disabilities. She said, “So, I mean, everything has been like trying out something, and if it doesn't work, try out another one depending on how the students are responding. So, we are improvising as we go.”

Krystal concurred with Philia’s views. Reiterating Philia’s observation, she said, “We're providing Project Read® to our [English-speaking] dyslexia children and children with specific learning disabilities, but for the bilingual kids there is nothing.” For that reason, she said that she frequently went to her bilingual education colleagues to request resources for her EB students and relied heavily on her aides to translate materials. Like Philia, Krystal expressed relief that she and Philia would be sent to the Esperanza training the following year. She believed it would help them to serve the students well, and that was “crucial”.

The lack of instructional resources was not limited to materials and reading programs. Also, there were not enough aides to assist the teachers. Philia explained that sometimes, the teachers had English speakers and EBs at the same time, and those students had different ability levels. Therefore, the teachers were faced with several levels of groupings for small group instruction. This caused a challenge when the teachers did not have an aide for the full hour (or hour and a half) that the students were in the resource room. Due to a limited number of special education aides, the aides were scheduled to spend only a certain amount of time with a teacher before they moved on to the next teacher. The aides also needed to push-in to the bilingual education or general education classrooms to work with other children with disabilities, who received push-in services. Therefore, the aides were stretched thin and unable to spend a full hour or hour and a half with the resource teachers at a time. The implication of this challenging situation was that instruction may not be as effective as it could be. Within this

circumstance, Philia explained that her students had learned to work independently while they waited for her to finish one group before going to the next group, but she acknowledged that it was not a perfect situation. She said, “Their work is not going to be perfect.”

Lack of Understanding of Spanish. Philia described the challenge she experienced in her classroom practice due to her lack of understanding of the Spanish language. She talked about what she did to prepare for a lesson and how she delivered her lesson. For example, before a lesson, she would have had to spend time memorizing scripts in Spanish and prepared cards that told her how to say certain sentences in Spanish like, “Who are the characters?” She also had to rely on her aide to translate materials. Philia described her greatest challenge as when the EB students gave her responses to her questions, and she was only able to understand bits and pieces of what they were trying to say, but not as well as if she spoke Spanish. Additionally, when the students had concerns or clarifications, she was unable to respond to whatever they asked, adding, “…and that's where the struggle comes in. It's a struggle.”

Krystal also described the challenge of teaching EBs with disabilities, as a teacher who did not speak Spanish. In math class, she taught the English group while the aide taught the EBs. The aide translated the English lesson and materials into Spanish for the EBs and guided them through their work. Krystal said she must discuss the lessons and materials to be translated with the aide before class, and during class, she must keep an eye on the aide and the EBs. Though Krystal did not teach the EBs directly, and the aide spoke Spanish to the EBs the whole time, Krystal felt a responsibility to closely monitor the aide and the EBs and to periodically check-in with individual students before sending them back to the aide. Krystal described the class situation as, “a very daunting task.”

The researcher's greatest challenge was the inability to provide home language support to the students. She had difficulty fully understanding the students' questions and relied on translations to communicate with the students. However, unlike the participants, the researcher did have access to the Spanish-based Esperanza program, which her aide utilized to teach the EBs.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Philia and Krystal reported that meeting the intersectional needs of EBs with disabilities was a challenging experience and the factors that contributed to the challenge were a lack of instructional resources and the fact that the teachers did not speak Spanish. Regarding a lack of instructional resources, Philia explained that the English-speaking students with disabilities had access to two research-based reading programs, but bilingual students with disabilities had none in Spanish. Krystal shared that she frequently had to go to the bilingual teachers to get materials for the students.

Regarding the fact that the teachers did not speak Spanish, Philia described the length she had to go to prepare a Spanish lesson for her students, like memorizing scripts and running them by her aides to make sure that whatever she had prepared to teach was correct. Also, she needed to rely on her aide to do some translation of materials. She described her greatest challenge as understanding only bits and pieces of the students' responses when they provided answers to her questions. Krystal described her experience as daunting. Due to her lack of understanding of the Spanish language, she presented her lessons and materials in English and relied on the aide to do the translation and guide the students through the lessons.

The implication is that the lack of an adequate supply of resources and materials and the fact that the teachers did not speak Spanish meant that they could not sufficiently meet the intersectional needs of EBs with disabilities and their practice became tedious

and frustrating at times. The fact that the teachers lacked resources for teaching EBs with disabilities and the students were taught by aides, raised the issue of inequity. The next section will focus on the issue of inequity.

Inequitable Instructional Practices

The teachers felt that their instruction of EBs with disabilities was inequitable compared to those of their English-speaking students. They based this thinking on three factors: the EBs were not taught with research-based, instructional reading programs like their English- speaking counterparts were; the students did not consistently receive academic instruction in their home language; and the students were taught by paraprofessionals who were not certified teachers.

Lack of Access to Research-Based, Instructional Reading Programs. Philia felt that the lack of research-based, instructional reading programs and the resulting haphazard nature of her instruction raised the issue of inequity for EBs with disabilities. She explained that the interventions she used for EBs with disabilities were not explicit instruction based on a step-by-step lesson, and not research-based like what their English speakers' classmates received (e.g., Project Read®, Edmark). Philia said, "There's no equity, it's not equal." She continued by arguing that her haphazard reading instruction, where she sometimes improvised and memorized Spanish scripts due to being a non-Spanish speaker, was unfair to EBs with disabilities. In frustration, she asked "…So, how is this supposed to work?"

Inconsistent Instruction in Home Language. Like their typical peers in the bilingual education program, EBs with disabilities are expected to receive a certain percentage of their instruction in Spanish (e.g., first grade, 70%; second grade, 60%, etc.). However, unlike their typical peers, who consistently received Spanish instruction in their bilingual education classrooms, EBs with disabilities did not receive Spanish

instruction consistently because when they got pulled out to the resource room, the special education teachers were unable to provide Spanish instruction. Though Philia tried hard to teach the students in Spanish, the quality of her Spanish instruction fell short. Krystal taught mostly in English.

Taught by Paraprofessionals. The resource classes frequently consisted of a mixture of English speakers and EBs across grade levels and because the special education teachers did not speak Spanish, they relied on the aides to provide direct instruction to the EBs in Spanish. For example, Krystal's math class consisted of seven English speakers and four EBs ranging from first to fourth grade. While she taught the English group, she relied on her aide to teach the EBs the same English lesson, using translated lessons and materials. The aide spoke Spanish to the EBs throughout the lessons, though Krystal did not understand a word of what the aide communicated to the children. Both Krystal and Philia pointed out that the aides were not certified teachers. Like the participants, the researcher also felt that her instruction of EBs was inequitable, for the same reasons cited by Philia and Krystal. The researcher usually engaged her English-speaking students in direct instruction in reading, while her EB students received Spanish instruction from the aide who was not a certified teacher.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Philia and Krystal felt that their instruction of EBs with disabilities was inequitable compared to those of their English-speaking peers with disabilities and their typical classmates in the bilingual education program. They supported their feelings with three factors: EBs with disabilities did not have access to research-based, instructional reading programs like their English-speaking peers; the students received inconsistent instruction in their home language; and the direct instruction portions of Spanish lessons were provided by aides who were not certified teachers. The implication drawn from these data was that EBs with disabilities were

placed at a disadvantage compared to their English-speaking peers. When students are in a disadvantaged space, progress in their academic performance may be stalled. Considering that the teachers did not speak Spanish, they expected the administration to give them clear guidance as to how EBs with disabilities should be taught, but the teachers got confused over the administration's responses. The next section will discuss unclear policies regarding the language of instruction.

Confusion Over Unclear Policy on Language of Instruction

Philia and Krystal described their confusion over an unclear policy about the language of instruction for EBs with disabilities. The teachers explained that the district has a language of instruction guide for bilingual education called the *Bilingual Transitional Language Model,* but that model created a problem for special education teachers who did not speak Spanish. According to the model, EBs must receive 90% of their prekindergarten instruction in Spanish, 80% of their kindergarten instruction in Spanish, 70% of their first-grade instruction in Spanish, 60% of their second-grade instruction in Spanish, 40% of their third-grade instruction in Spanish, and 20% of their fourth-grade instruction in Spanish. However, the teachers explained that there were no guidelines on how this transitional language model should be implemented by special education teachers who did not speak Spanish. Aggravating the problem, Philia explained that due to scheduling challenges, sometimes the teachers may have two groups of students (English-speaking students and bilingual students) in the classroom simultaneously, which meant that English instruction and Spanish instruction needed to take place simultaneously. The teachers wanted to know if they could teach the EB students in English only. On separate occasions, when the teachers asked the campus leaders for direction on the matter, they got conflicting answers. Philia said that the peer facilitator (PF) gave them one answer, the assistant principal gave another answer, and

the principal gave a different answer. Expressing confusion, she said, “So, we're just like, what should we do then, if everyone has a different answer? I'm like, who do we follow? I just wish there was just one framework for us to follow.” Philia concluded that the inconsistency of the administrators’ responses caused her practice to be chaotic. She said, “It's just chaos with the number of students. It's chaos.”

Krystal’s description of her confusion over the unclear policy for language of instruction mirrored that of Philia, and provided more details. Recalling the same events with the administrators that Philia had alluded to, Krystal shared that in the previous year, she and Philia raised the issue of language of instruction with their administrators. She recalled that the principal said that by the second semester in second or third grade, the teachers could begin to teach in English for 20 minutes, with home language support. This meant that, assuming a child was in second grade and his or her IEP prescribed a 60-minute time frame for reading instruction in the special education resource room, the child could be taught in English for 20 minutes of the time and the remaining 40 minutes could be in Spanish. This approach would closely align with the district’s transitional language model, which required 60% Spanish instruction in second grade. However, when the teachers spoke to the assistant principal (AP), they got a different answer. The AP insisted that the students should receive all instruction in Spanish because they were in the bilingual education program. Krystal said she wondered how that was going to happen when none of the special education teachers spoke Spanish. Expressing confusion, she said, “What am I going to do? It's confusing. It's complicated, it's a whole bunch of things you know…when you go to different people, they'll give you different answers.” Krystal also expressed frustration that the resource teachers had not received any written guidelines regarding language of instruction for EBs with disabilities; hence, they relied on their administrators for guidance, but the administrators did not appear to

agree on the issue. The researcher's experience was similar to the other special education teachers' experiences. The researcher remembered being conflicted about what language of instruction to use for EBs.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Philia and Krystal shared their confusion over unclear policy about the language of instruction for EBs with disabilities. The teachers argued that the district's *Bilingual Transitional Language Model*, which outlined the percentage of Spanish instruction that students must receive for each grade level, created a problem for special education teachers who did not speak Spanish. Also, the teachers had not received district guidelines on how the transitional language model should be implemented in the resource room. The struggle that Philia and Krystal faced was whether they would be allowed to teach an entire 60-minute block in English (assuming the child's IEP prescribed that amount of time for a resource pull-out service in any given subject), or follow the district's transitional model which, for a child in second grade, as an example, was 60% instruction in Spanish. The principal seemed to have finally provided an answer to their question and that is to teach in English for 20 minutes, but that begged the question as to who would teach the remaining 40 minutes in Spanish, since the teachers did not speak Spanish and the aides were not certified teachers.

The implication of this problem was that for many years, without any clear answers, the teachers taught the students based on their individual beliefs about the language of instruction. The next section will focus on the teachers' language of instruction beliefs and how those beliefs influenced their preferred language to teach EBs with disabilities.

Language of Instruction Beliefs Influenced Instructional Language of Choice

Philia and Krystal held different beliefs about the language of instruction for EBs with disabilities, and this influenced their preferred language of instruction. Philia believed that the students should first be taught in their native language (in this case, Spanish), before they are transitioned to English. She explained that what she had seen during her years of teaching was that when children (including those with ID and autism) were initially taught in their native language and were able to decode words in their native language before learning English, they acquired English more easily and quicker than those who were not initially taught in their home language. She believed that during the transition to English, the students can leverage the knowledge of their native language to help them acquire English more easily.

As a result of Philia's language of instruction belief, she made great attempts to teach in Spanish despite her limited understanding of Spanish. She took the time to memorize scripts for use in her instruction and relied on her aide to translate or interpret words and terms for her. She put a lot of effort into preparing Spanish lessons and would frequently ask her aide to check and recheck her scripts and lesson content to ensure that she was not teaching the students the wrong things. She spent a great deal of time on self-study to acquire Spanish and used translation apps to help with vocabulary. Philia taught in Spanish until the students knew their letters and sounds, and could read simple words in Spanish, before transitioning them to English instruction with home language support.

Contrary to Philia's belief, Krystal believed that English should be taught to EBs with disabilities when they start school. In other words, the students did not need to be able to read in their home language before they began to learn in English. She believed that if EBs with disabilities were taught in their home language first, before transitioning to English instruction, a lot of time would have been wasted and as a result, they would

struggle to catch on and would be left behind their typical peers. She worried that the gap in English acquisition would only get wider with time. She elaborated by sharing that in fourth grade at her campus, English was the primary language of instruction. This was because all fourth-grade students (both English speakers and EBs in bilingual programs) received instruction in all academic areas from an English-based, online instructional platform, called CONNECT (or Summit Learning) and the bilingual students received home language support from their teachers. Krystal expressed concern that some of her EBs with disabilities did not acquire English by the time they got to fourth grade, when English was the primary language of instruction, and this had been a barrier to the students' academic success. She attributed their lack of English acquisition to the fact that they were taught in Spanish for too long. She believed that they needed more time to learn English, so they needed to begin the transition to English as early as first grade. Based on this belief, Krystal felt comfortable teaching her EBs with disabilities in English, beginning in first grade. To further support her belief, Krystal shared that one of her fourth grade EB students, who was Spanish dominant, was struggling to acquire English. If Krystal's aide was not in the class, Krystal had a hard time communicating with the child. Krystal expressed concern that the child was not making progress in reading and writing and wondered how the child would cope with the curriculum the following year, when the child would be in fifth grade without the ability to speak English. In fifth grade, like in fourth grade, the primary instruction is in English. Therefore, Krystal worried that the child's academic deficit might increase.

The researcher's language of instruction belief evolved over time from teaching in English when students begin schooling in kindergarten (with home language support), to teaching in their home language first, before transitioning to English, as suggested by research (Escamilla, 2017). Therefore, the researcher made efforts to teach math in

Spanish, by relying on translations from aides, memorizing math vocabulary, and using an English-Spanish dictionary or other similar supports.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Philia and Krystal held opposing beliefs about the language of instruction for EBs with disabilities, and this influenced their preferred language of instruction. Philia believed that students should initially be taught to read in their home language before being transitioned to English instruction. Therefore, she tried hard to initially teach in Spanish, despite her limited understanding of the Spanish language. On the other hand, Krystal believed that delaying the introduction to English instruction would cause the children to struggle to acquire English by fourth grade. She would begin teaching fully in English as early as first grade.

The obvious implication of the different approaches of the teachers is that the language of instruction for an EB with a disability, in a special education resource room, is a function of the teacher's belief on language of instruction. This meant that student A may be taught in English beginning in first grade (Krystal's preference), while student B may first be taught in Spanish until he or she understood the basic Spanish phonetic structure, before being transitioned to English instruction (Philia's preference). Therefore, short of a districtwide, consistent, and clear policy on the language of instruction for EBs with disabilities, the students would be taught in languages chosen by their teachers, which would cause inconsistency across classrooms. Krystal and Philia may hold different beliefs about the language of instruction, but they agree that special education and bilingual education teachers collaborate well. The next section will focus on the collaborative relationship between special education and bilingual education teachers.

Supportive and Collaborative Relationship with Bilingual Education Teachers

The teachers experienced a mutually supportive and collaborative relationship with their bilingual education colleagues. They relied on their bilingual education

colleagues for resources and materials in Spanish as well as helpful information about the structure of Spanish phonics. Also, the special education and bilingual education teachers frequently discussed students' assessments and progress collaboratively. Commenting on the collaborative relationship, Philia said, "We collaborate well with the bilingual [education] teachers." Philia shared that she frequently received lower-level resources from the kindergarten or the first-grade bilingual education teachers. She needed those materials for her second grade EBs who were working below grade level. She also received helpful strategies on how to work with the students.

Further, Philia elaborated on the nature of her collaboration with bilingual education teachers regarding students' assessment. She explained that she frequently met with the bilingual education teachers to discuss the students' progress. Periodically, when she suspected a child was improving on his or her reading, she would request the bilingual education teacher to conduct running records in Spanish for the student to confirm growth (Philia was not trained to conduct running records in Spanish). Philia concluded, "So, it's a constant back and forth between us and the bilingual teachers." She added that the communication between her and the bilingual teachers was "very good."

Consistent with Philia's view, Krystal shared that she received a lot of support and collaboration from the bilingual education teachers**.** She said that whenever she needed help, the bilingual education teachers were always ready to help. They provided materials and instructional support, like helping her to understand the Spanish phonics and Spanish syllables. The researcher's experience was the same as Krystal's and Philia's experience.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. The teachers experienced a supportive and collaborative relationship with their bilingual education colleagues. The bilingual education teachers provided instructional support and Spanish-based materials and

resources to the special education teachers when needed. The bilingual education teachers also helped with the assessments of the EBs with disabilities in Spanish and frequently discussed the students' progress with the special education teachers.

It seemed like the special education teachers needed and depended on the bilingual education teachers' support for their success in teaching EBs with disabilities, considering that the special education teachers lacked resources in Spanish and could not provide home language support to the students. Therefore, it seemed like the special education teachers had to make concerted efforts to frequently talk to the bilingual education teachers with whom collaboration became vital.

It might be relevant to mention here that though the participants felt they experienced good collaboration with their bilingual education colleagues, they did not think that the instructional specialists in bilingual and special education collaborated about the needs of EBs with disabilities. Also, each specialist seemed to communicate with teachers within his or her own discipline area which meant that teachers that had students that overlapped between bilingual and special education may not always receive all the information needed to plan effective instruction for their EBs with disabilities. The implication is that a lack of collaboration among departmental instructional specialists may potentially lead to fragmented, inadequate special education and English language services for EBs with disabilities, like Kangas (2018) found. Though the special education teachers noted that they collaborated well with their bilingual education colleagues, the teachers had limited time to plan and collaborate. The next section will focus on the insufficiency of time to plan.

Insufficient Time to Plan Instruction

Both Philia and Krystal felt that they needed more planning time to adequately plan instruction for EBs with disabilities. Philia explained that she put in extra time and

effort to adequately plan for EBs with disabilities. She said, “I worked double time for my bilingual kids because I had to translate the books, the stories, and when they're long, it just takes up my time.” She added that looking for Spanish resources also took time. Additionally, she must communicate with the bilingual education teachers and the speech therapist about the needs of the children and then plan lessons and interventions tailored to individual students across grade levels. Also, when the students are new to her campus, she must talk to the campus school psychologist who oversees all incoming students with disabilities, to get cultural and language information about the students. That information is needed to adequately plan interventions for the students. She said all these responsibilities frequently caused her to stay after school to plan. Philia proposed that she would like to teach students for four days a week and use one full day of the week to plan.

Krystal concurred with Philia. She said they received an hour daily for planning, but usually, IEP meetings were scheduled during their planning periods. Therefore, on days when they attended IEP meetings or staffing meetings, she did not have any planning time. She answered, “Yes, definitely,” when asked if she needed more planning time. She would like to have an extra half day per week, in addition to their regular one hour a day, for planning. Specifically, she said she would like to have the first half of the day on Fridays for planning. The researcher also felt that she needed extra time for planning instruction for EBs with disabilities. Her recommended amount of time needed was the same as Philia’s, which was to have a full day of planning a week and to teach students for four days a week.

Researcher’s Summary and Reflection. Philia and Krystal shared that they needed more planning time to prepare to teach EBs with disabilities. Philia proposed one full day a week for planning and Krystal proposed one half day a week for planning, in

addition to the regular, one hour a day of planning. On reflection, I do concur with the teachers' proposals for extra time because teaching EBs with disabilities requires extra responsibilities due to the language difference. I recall spending my own time on finding Spanish vocabulary for certain math terms or finding a suitable translation resource for my lessons. I also remember using my lunch time or weekends to find materials or think through how I would present lessons for my Spanish-speaking EB students. The implication is that if teachers are not given extra planning time during the school day, they will continue to have to use their personal time to plan instruction for their EBs with disabilities, and as a result, some teachers may get frustrated and exit the field.

Question Two: How do bilingual education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities describe the impact of the students' intersectionality on the teachers' practices?

The following section will present the findings of this study relating to bilingual education teachers' experiences. Five themes emerged from across the narratives of the bilingual education teachers. The themes were, unpreparedness to teach EBs with disabilities, complicated experiences, language of instruction beliefs influenced instructional language of choice, supportive and collaborative relationship with special education teachers, and insufficient time to plan instruction.

Unprepared to Teach EBs with Disabilities

Both participants shared that at the beginning of their teaching careers, they felt unprepared to teach EBs with disabilities due to the intersectional nature of the students' needs. While they felt competent in teaching bilingual education by virtue of their training in bilingual education, and the fact that they had Spanish backgrounds, they did not feel competent to teach children with disabilities; therefore, they did not feel they could adequately teach EBs with disabilities. They felt that their preservice training was

inadequate for preparing them to teach children with disabilities. Camilla captured her feelings of incompetence by describing her experience with a student with ADHD. She described how in her first year of teaching, she realized the child could neither read nor concentrate on his work. She said she was shocked to learn that as a third-grade student, the child could not do much, and she did not know what to do about it. Camilla mentioned that during her student teaching practicum, she did not have any opportunities to work with students with disabilities and added that if she had worked with an ADHD student during her practicum, that experience would have transferred to the classroom, and she would have been more prepared to work with this student she was describing. However, Camilla did acknowledge that she took one or two courses in special education during her preservice training and found them helpful in providing some strategies for working with students with disabilities, but she felt that more training was necessary. She rated her preservice training program a seven out of ten, as far as preparing her to teach EBs with disabilities.

Regarding Sally, she said that during her alternative certification program, they did not talk about students with disabilities. She described the program as “a waste of time”, adding that much of what she learned was irrelevant and did not help her in the classroom. Sally rated her preservice preparation program a four out of ten regarding her preparation to teach EBs with disabilities. However, she acknowledged that she underwent the alternative certification program about 20 years ago and things may have changed since then.

The teachers shared that they filled the knowledge gap caused by inadequate preservice teacher preparation by requesting assistance from their special education colleagues and from experience gained through the years. Camilla shared the time she requested assistance from the special education teacher regarding the IEP meeting

process. She said that during her first staffing and IEP meeting, she was "very confused." She was uncertain about what to do, so she asked for guidance from her special education colleague who guided her through the process. Camilla rated herself "moderately confident" in teaching EBs with disabilities.

Sally also described one time when she got support from the special education teacher. Her EB with a disability was having trouble with reading comprehension and she did not know what to do about it. The special education teacher shared a reading comprehension strategy with Sally that proved effective for the child. Sally also mentioned that her long years of teaching experience contributed to filling her knowledge gap in special education. She described her experience as a learning curve starting from her first-year teaching, when she was unprepared to teach the students. She said every day, she went home overwhelmed and with a migraine because she did not know what to do with the students. However, over time, she reached a space of knowledge and confidence for teaching the students. She rated herself "highly confident" in teaching EBs with disabilities. She justified her rating this way, "…throw me whatever you want. I get it. If you say, have you done it? Yes, I have done it." Regarding in-service trainings, both Sally and Camilla shared that generally, some in-service professional development trainings they received were helpful for working with EBs with disabilities, each to varying degrees. However, Camilla wished there were more trainings in special education interventions especially on different types of accommodations.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Camilla and Sally shared that they felt unprepared to teach EBs with disabilities because they were not adequately trained in special education during their preservice training. They filled their knowledge gaps by relying on their special education colleagues and from their teaching experience over time. It is noteworthy that there was a difference in the teachers' preservice training

programs, regarding the integration of special education courses. Camilla, a new teacher (four years of teaching), and one who took the university certification track in bilingual education, recalled that she took one or two courses in special education during her college preservice training and found that helpful. Sally, on the other hand, a veteran teacher (19 years teaching), and one who took the alternative certification track in bilingual education, found her alternative certification training unhelpful, and described it as a "waste of time". She said there were no discussions about special education during her training.

I think that the gap in the time of certification between the two participants may be significant. It is quite possible that in recent years, university teacher preparation programs may have included more special education courses in their programs to meet the growing trend toward inclusion in public schools and that may be why Camilla, a new teacher for only four years, may have benefited from that shift towards inclusion and thus had access to one or two special education courses during her preservice training. On the other hand, Sally obtained her certification through the alternative track about two decades ago. It is quite possible that certification programs at that time may not have been as inclined to prepare teachers for inclusion as present programs may do. The teachers' unpreparedness to teach EBs with disabilities may have contributed to a complicated classroom practice as they tried to grapple with meeting the dual needs of EBs with disabilities. The next section will focus on aspects of the teachers' classroom experiences which one of them described as "complicated".

Complicated Experiences

Both teachers described a complicated classroom experience as they tried to balance meeting the needs of EBs with disabilities and those of their English-speaking peers. Factors that contributed to the complicated experience included disruptions caused

by frequent pull-outs of students, distractions caused by students' behavioral challenges, and time constraints for addressing varying learning needs of students.

Disruptions Caused by Frequent Pull-Outs of Students. Sally described a day in her classroom with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities this way, "It is complicated." She elaborated by describing the constant interruptions by special education service providers who pulled out students throughout the day, and how she came to cope with it by adopting an attitude of flexibility. She said that just one student with a disability may be pulled out of her classroom by three different service providers daily; for example, Jo (pseudonym), an EB with a hearing impairment was pulled out at different times during the day by the special education teacher, the speech therapist, and a specialist working with children who are hearing impaired. Sally had five EBs with disabilities in her class who got pulled out for one service or another. She said, "It's multiple interruptions and what I have come to is complete flexibility." At the beginning of the year, they worked out a schedule, but unfortunately, that schedule did not hold because the speech therapist and the special education teachers frequently had unplanned and planned events, including IEP meetings, that conflicted with the prearranged schedule. Consequently, they showed up at different times during the day to ask to pull out children for special education services. Sally said that those unscheduled pull-outs occurred frequently and as a result, interrupted her lessons and routine. About the frequency of the pull-outs, she said, "That happens during the whole day and sometimes that drives me crazy…it takes constant interruption and refocusing…" However, she did not blame the service providers who pulled out students outside the prearranged scheduled times. She understood that because the service providers served all grade levels and must attend IEP meetings and conduct assessments schoolwide, it was

impossible to maintain a rigid schedule because things happen. Therefore, she learned to be flexible and accepting of the situation, despite it making her practice complicated.

Distractions Caused by Students' Behavior Challenges. Sally shared that in addition to the disruption caused by the students being pulled out and returned throughout the day, she also had to deal with the behavior difficulties of some of her EBs with disabilities. For example, she mentioned a student (Ed, pseudonym) who was diagnosed as emotionally disturbed and was in the behavior support program. Ed received a push-in service in Sally's classroom for math and reading, but usually during the half hour that he was in Sally's room for reading, the child was throwing a tantrum, so Sally had to stop what she was doing to address the behavior. Also, Sally described the child as very demanding for one-on-one time because he had difficulty working independently. Therefore, during small group instruction, when Sally was working with different groups of students, Ed must sit next to her like a "keychain", otherwise, he would be all over, causing disruption. This added another layer to Sally's complex classroom situation. Regarding Camilla's classroom, the behavior of her student with ADHD was also a distraction. She described her most challenging time as when the child would not stay on task or focus on his work. She said he was always up and made noises during instruction. Therefore, she needed to stop what she was doing to address the situation.

Time Constraint to Address the Varying Learning Needs of Students. Amidst the disruptions caused by frequent pull-outs and behavior difficulties of students, much of which took away from instructional time, Sally had to find the time to engage her typical students in small group instruction, based on ability levels, and to engage those with disabilities individually. In addition to finding the time for small groups, she was committed to reading a book to her students individually, every day, for a few minutes; therefore, she needed to find the time to do that. Influenced by her first-grade teacher, she

believed that reading to children individually every day was beneficial to their learning development. Regarding Camilla's classroom, she said that her typical students did not need a lot of directions in small group. Therefore, things went quickly. However, those with disabilities needed a lot of support, and she had to find the time to provide individual support. She would need to sit down with them and work with them step-by-step to show them exactly what to do. They needed more explicit explanation, direction, and chunking of instruction. Therefore, it took longer to teach them than the typical students. The disruptions caused by the pull-outs, the distractions caused by students' behavior challenges, and the challenge of finding the time to address the individual needs of students, resulted in a complicated classroom experience which Sally described as "crazy."

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Camilla and Sally shared a complicated classroom experience in their attempt to balance meeting the needs of EBs with disabilities and those of their typical peers. Factors that contributed to the complicated experience included disruptions caused by frequent pull-outs of students, distractions caused by students' behavioral challenges, and time constraints for addressing varying learning needs of students. It is pertinent to mention that the instructional interruptions described by Sally are not unique to bilingual education teachers who teach students with disabilities. Their general education counterparts in inclusive settings also face this kind of shuffling back and forth of children who are pulled out for special education services by various service providers throughout the day. However, what sets the experiences of the bilingual education teachers apart is the fact that their small groups or one-on-one arrangements may be more complex because of the dual needs of EBs with disabilities. This is because, in addition to dealing with students' cognitive and behavioral needs (which is also the case with general education teachers), the bilingual education teachers

have an additional consideration, which is to figure out how to increase scaffolds for EBs with disabilities who are also struggling to learn a second language. This additional consideration adds another layer of complexity to the bilingual education classroom. This may mean either more individual sessions with EBs with disabilities, or longer time periods for one-on-one sessions with EBs with disabilities. With only so much time given for instruction during the school day, it becomes clear how these experiences are complicated. One thing that the teachers did not find to be complicated was their language of instruction beliefs. This theme will be the next focus.

Language of Instruction Beliefs Influenced Instructional Language of Choice

The teachers' language of instruction beliefs influenced their preferred language to teach their students. Sally believed that students should be taught English from the time they begin schooling and saw no need to first teach them to read in their native language before transitioning them to English. Sally rationalized her belief by explaining that from her personal experience, she found that bilingual students fell behind learning English. She insisted, "There's no way they're going to catch up" if they are taught in their home language, which, in this case, was Spanish. Therefore, soon after her students could speak English conversationally, she began to teach them in English. She acknowledged that her approach was inconsistent with the district's bilingual transitional model, but she argued that her approach was in the best interest of the children, remarking that "the bilingual education program has failed and needs to be revamped. Something is not working and as teachers, we see it and we try to ourselves come up with solutions…"

Contrary to Sally's belief, Camilla believed that teachers should follow the language of instruction model of the district; that meant complying with the district's transitional model, which for her second-grade level was to teach in Spanish 60% of the

time and in English 40% of the time. She shared that she followed this model strictly, adding, “I just do what they asked us to do.”

Researcher’s Summary and Reflection. The teachers’ language of instruction beliefs influenced the language they chose to teach their students. Sally taught in English as soon as her students could converse in English because she believed that students should be taught in English from the time they begin schooling so that they will not be left behind in English acquisition. In contrast, Camilla taught 60% of the time in Spanish and 40% in English, a model consistent with the district’s transitional model for second grade. Camilla believed that she must follow the district’s model because she liked to do what she was told.

It does seem that the difference between the teachers’ beliefs and actions about the language of instruction may have to do with their years of teaching experience. Sally, the veteran teacher of 19 years, seemed to have a high confidence that usually comes with a long teaching experience; hence, when she felt a strong conviction of her belief, she felt the liberty to implement what she thought was in the best interest of her students. On the other hand, Camilla was a new teacher, with only four years of teaching experience. She was also young, less than 30 years of age, therefore, she was still learning the ropes and lacked the confidence to take risks. Though the teachers took different approaches regarding the language of instruction, their views on collaboration and planning with special education teachers were similar. Those views will be the next focus.

Supportive and Collaborative Relationship with Special Education Teachers

Both bilingual education participants (Camilla and Sally) reported that they engaged in a supportive and collaborative relationship with their special education colleagues. They said that the special education teachers shared helpful strategies for working with students with disabilities. Camilla and Sally also shared that they did not

have a formal planning time to collaborate with special education teachers due to scheduling difficulties, but they tried to find informal ways to collaborate. Camilla said, “It was always me popping in her class or her coming in my class and we've asked each other questions, but it wasn't really formal.” Camilla said she frequently went to the special education teacher to request assistance with resources, the IEP process, and behavior management, and the special education teacher was always helpful.

Like Camilla, Sally also shared that she experienced a good collaborative relationship with the special education teacher. She said she got help for instructional strategies, reading comprehension strategies, and the IEP meeting process. The special education teacher also provided Sally with lower-level materials which Sally needed for her EBs with disabilities who were performing below grade level. She mentioned that the special education teacher (who was bilingual and spoke Spanish) used to be a kindergarten teacher and was knowledgeable about strategies that worked for students at those lower levels; therefore, she was a valuable resource for Sally who had some EBs with disabilities that were performing at the prekindergarten and kindergarten levels.

Researcher’s Summary and Reflection. Camilla and Sally shared that they engaged in supportive and collaborative practices with their special education colleagues. They received resources, as well as academic and behavioral support from the special education teachers, regarding working with their students with disabilities. On reflection, I noticed that learning from the special education teachers appeared to be an important way that the bilingual education teachers developed the knowledge and skills to work with their EBs with disabilities. This dependence on their special education colleagues may have been necessitated by the fact that the bilingual education teachers received inadequate preservice preparation for teaching students with disabilities (as shared in the teachers’ narratives). The implication is that to meet the dual needs of EBs with

disabilities, supportive and collaborative practices with special education teachers would be vital for the success of bilingual education teachers. That means that the bilingual education teachers would need time during the school day to collaborate with their special education colleagues, but that does not appear to be happening as a discussion of the next theme about insufficient planning time will show.

Insufficient Time to Plan Instruction

The two participants expressed their need for more time to plan lessons, considering they planned for two groups of students-the typical students and those with disabilities. To this point, Camilla said, “I say about 30 extra minutes twice a week would be perfect,” as extra time to plan. This would be in addition to the one hour a day that they already have for planning. Sally’s suggestion was for teachers to teach four days a week and use a full day to plan.

Sally also felt that the current practice, where grade level teams were required to plan as a group twice a week, was not productive for her. She would rather have less team-based planning and more individual planning time. She explained that teachers have an hour of planning each day but, for two days in the week, they were required to use the one-hour block for team planning. She felt that two days of team planning was too many. Rather, instead of using the full hour for team planning for each of those two days, they could reduce the time to 30 minutes and the other half hour could be used for individual planning. She described her rationale for the need for more individual planning by saying that she never had enough time to plan individually for her students. She said that to plan for the varying levels of her students, she had to work on weekends and after school. She said, “I never stop working.” She said in the previous year, when she had both virtual and face-to-face students due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she was staying after school every day until five or six p.m. to plan. Sally further described the extra responsibilities she had

to take on to prepare instruction for EBs with disabilities. She said she had to prepare a learning center for reading and math for typical students who were on grade level, then, she had to go talk to the kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers to get lower-level materials for her EBs with disabilities, and all those activities took time.

Researcher's Summary and Reflection. Camilla and Sally shared their desire to have more planning time to prepare to work with EBs with disabilities. Camilla proposed an extra 30 minutes twice a week, in addition to their regular one hour a day planning time. Sally would like to have a full day of planning a week and teach students four days a week. She also would like to have more individual planning time and less for team planning.

Sally's wish for more individual planning time than team planning time was understandable because she had five special education students in her classroom, and each had a different disability and unique learning needs that required consideration during planning. Therefore, the implication is that to adequately plan for those students, she would need extra individual planning time to plan individual instruction for the students.

Question Three: What are the similarities and differences in the experiences of bilingual and special education teachers regarding working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities?

Several similarities and differences emerged in the experiences of bilingual and special education teachers regarding working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, but the similarities outweighed the differences. These will be outlined below.

Similarities

Unprepared to teach EBs with Disabilities. The special education and bilingual education teachers felt unprepared to teach EBs with disabilities due to inadequate

preservice preparation programs. The two teachers who underwent the university certification track (one bilingual education teacher [Camilla] and one special education teacher [Philia]) said that their preservice, college preparation training was inadequate for preparing them to teach EBs with disabilities. Camilla shared that though she took one or two special education college courses that were helpful, she did not have any opportunities to work with students with disabilities during her teaching practice. Philia said that her college preparation program did not offer courses on working with EBs, but she acknowledged that she did have an opportunity to work with EBs who had autism and ID diagnoses during her teaching practicum.

The two other teachers who went through the alternative certification track (one special education teacher [Krystal]and one bilingual education teacher [Sally]), shared that the programs did not address working with EBs with disabilities. To fill the knowledge gap caused by inadequate preservice preparation programs, all four teachers relied on their colleagues to provide instructional support and resources. The special education teachers relied on their bilingual education teacher colleagues on their campus, and the bilingual education teachers relied on their special education teacher colleagues on their campus. Another way the teachers said they filled the knowledge gap was through trial and error as well as improvisation. They also felt that their cumulative experiences over the years contributed to their professional growth in working with EBs with disabilities. The teachers' feelings of unpreparedness may partly explain why they felt like their instructional practices were challenging and complicated. Their challenging and complicated practice is the next theme of discussion.

Challenging or Complicated Experiences. The special education teachers shared that their practices were challenging, and the bilingual education teachers reported that theirs were complicated. Though both pairs of teachers used different words to

describe how they felt about their practices, they were essentially saying the same thing, which was that their practices were intricate and difficult due to a myriad of reasons including, a lack of resources, the language barrier, disruptions caused by pull-outs, distractions caused by students' misbehaviors, and time constraints for meeting the needs of varying levels of students' abilities. The special education teachers cited a lack of instructional resources and the fact that they did not speak Spanish as factors that contributed to their challenging practices. The bilingual education teachers cited disruptions caused by pull-outs, distractions caused by students' misbehaviors, and time constraints for meeting the needs of varying levels of students' abilities as contributory factors to their complicated practices. The teachers may have felt that their practices were challenging and complicated, but their beliefs on the language of instruction were clear and straightforward as the next theme would show.

Language of Instruction Beliefs Influenced Preferred Language to Teach. For most of the teachers (three out of four), their language of instruction beliefs influenced the language they used for instruction. One special education teacher (Philia) believed that students should be taught in their home language first, and after they demonstrated a basic ability to read in their home language, then they could be transitioned to English with home language support. This teacher argued that when students have a foundation in their home language, that can be used as a framework for learning English. As a result of this teacher's belief, she went to great lengths to teach her students in Spanish until they acquired a basic reading foundation in Spanish before she transitioned them to English instruction, with home language support.

In contrast, two other teachers (one special education teacher [Krystal] and one bilingual education teacher [Sally]) believed that students should be taught in English when they begin schooling. They argued that when students are taught in their home

language first, before being transitioned to English instruction, too much time would have been lost and the children would lag in English acquisition. The teachers expressed concern that the lag in English acquisition will only get worse with time if the children continue to receive Spanish instruction through third grade. Additionally, the teachers pointed out that starting in fourth grade and beyond, English was the primary language of instruction; therefore, they felt that students should be taught in English early so that they could have more time to acquire English proficiency before they reached fourth grade. The teachers expressed concern that when the students reached fourth grade, their lack of English proficiency may negatively impact their academic performance because they would be unable to effectively communicate with their teachers and peers. Therefore, based on their beliefs, the two teachers did teach primarily in English as early as first grade, though that approach was inconsistent with the district's transition model expectations. Camilla (bilingual education teacher) believed in following the district's language of instruction model, which was to teach both in Spanish and English at different proportions based on grade levels. Therefore, in her second-grade classroom, she taught in Spanish and English for 60% and 40% of the time respectively, as provided in the transition model. She believed in doing as she was told by the district. Though all the participants did not hold the same language of instruction beliefs, their views on collaboration were in sync, as will be seen in the next section.

Supportive and Collaborative Relationships. All the teachers expressed that they practiced supportive and collaborative relationships with their colleagues, and most of those collaborations were done out of necessity. The two special education teachers shared that they relied on the bilingual education teachers to provide them with Spanish resources and instructional support in Spanish for their EBs with disabilities, and the bilingual education teachers relied on the special education teachers to help them in

understanding special education matters like the IEP meeting process and IEPs. The special education teachers also helped them with behavioral and instructional strategies for working with children with disabilities. Therefore, there appeared to be a symbiotic relationship between the special education and bilingual education teachers, and this relationship seemed to have been strongest during the beginning of their teaching careers. This strong dependence on their colleagues earlier in their career supported what the teachers had shared about their preservice preparation, which was that it was inadequate. The teachers' views on the amount of time for planning were also in agreement and that will be the next focus.

Insufficient Time to Plan Instruction for EBs with Disabilities. All the teachers noted that they had insufficient time to plan instruction for EBs with disabilities. The special education teachers needed more time to find lower-level Spanish materials, meet with bilingual education teachers to request Spanish resources and discuss students' assessments and progress, and develop lesson plans that involved the individual needs of the students. Bilingual education teachers who taught higher grades also needed extra time to get lower-level Spanish materials from kindergarten and prekindergarten bilingual education teachers, plan for different literacy centers that met the varying needs of EBs with disabilities, plan for grade level learning centers, and plan weekly lessons. As a result of this workload, the teachers said they frequently stayed after school to plan or used their weekends to plan.

When asked how much extra time they needed for planning, two of the teachers (one special education [Philia] and one bilingual education teacher [Sally]) proposed a full day of planning each week with four days a week of teaching. Another teacher (a special education teacher [Krystal]) proposed one half day a week, preferably the first half of the day on Fridays, in addition to the regular one hour a day for planning. The

fourth teacher (a bilingual education teacher [Camilla]) proposed an extra 30 minutes, twice a week, for planning. The amount of work the teachers described appeared to be a great deal and might be overwhelming. To reduce burnout of special education and bilingual education teachers, it may be necessary to provide extra time to the teachers, to avoid any possibility of teacher attrition. The above section focused on the similarities in the experiences of bilingual education and special education teachers. The next section will focus on the differences.

Differences

Confusion over Unclear Policies on Language of Instruction for EBs with Disabilities. The two special education teachers were the only ones who shared that they were confused due to the absence of a clear policy on the language of instruction for EBs in the resource room. Considering that both do not speak Spanish, they were unsure about how to implement the district's model for bilingual transition, which outlined the expectations for the percentage of Spanish instruction children should receive based on their grade level. For example, in first grade, those students were expected to receive Spanish instruction for 70% of the time and English instruction for 30% of the time. Also, the teachers shared that they did not receive guidelines from the district about the matter. When they looked to their campus administrators for answers, they got different answers and, as a result, they felt confused.

The bilingual education teachers may not have had this problem of unclear policy because they spoke Spanish and they were bilingual education teachers. Also, the bilingual education specialist communicated directly with them regarding policies and guidelines. Unclear policy guidelines were not the only theme that was different between the special education and bilingual education teachers. The two special education

teachers were also the only ones that felt that their instruction of EBs with disabilities was inequitable, as will be discussed next.

Inequitable Instruction. The two special education teachers were the only ones that felt that their instruction of EBs with disabilities was not equitable compared to that of their English-speaking peers. They based their thinking on three factors. The first was that EBs with disabilities had no access to research-based instructional reading programs, like their English-speaking classmates did. Second, the special education teachers did not speak Spanish and therefore, the students did not receive consistent Spanish instruction like their typical peers in the bilingual education classroom. Third, the EBs with disabilities were frequently taught by aides in the resource room even though the aides were not certified teachers. These factors placed the students in a disadvantageous position, compared to their English-speaking peers, and being in this space invariably hurt the students' chances of making adequate progress. The narratives of the bilingual education teachers did not appear to suggest issues of inequity, perhaps because those contributing factors mentioned by the special education teachers did not apply to the bilingual education context. For example, the bilingual teachers spoke Spanish and the bilingual students had access to Esperanza reading program.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings regarding how bilingual and special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities described the impact of the students' intersectionality on their practices. The similarities and differences between the teachers' experiences were also presented. The next chapter will focus on discussions of the findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER V:

LOOKING FORWARD

When I began this study, my hope was to find answers to my research questions by utilizing narrative inquiry, which Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 20) described as "a way of understanding experience". Through the participants' narratives, I tried to understand how the intersectionality of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities influenced teachers' practices. The teachers' narratives have allowed for some answers to my initial inquiry to emerge, though much still needs to be researched in teachers' experiences working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. The previous chapters presented an introduction to the study, a literature review, the methodology, and the findings that emerged from the narratives. This chapter will present the implications as well as the opportunities for future research.

Study Overview

The main interest that researchers have in studying experience is the revelation of the meanings of the participants' experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Also of interest to researchers is the growth and change that might result from the experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The primary aim of this study was to retell the narrative experiences of two bilingual education and two special education teachers who taught Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in elementary schools to determine how the students' intersectionality impacted the teachers' practices. The expectation was that some of the themes that emerged from the narratives would help educators in the field to grow and change the landscape of educating Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities, for the better.

In this study, the researcher interviewed two bilingual education and two special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities and retold their narratives.

The researcher also narrated her own experiences to find connections between the experiences of the participants and her own experiences. The data gathered through this study were analyzed and coded for themes that emerged. The discussion of those themes will follow.

Discussion

The interviews conducted with the four participants and the researcher's journaling provided the teachers' descriptions of how the students' intersectionality influenced their practices. The narratives offered ideas from which we can continue to grow and improve upon our practices. The following section will focus on discussions, implications, and conclusions from the seven emergent themes in the findings. This will be followed by suggestions for future research.

Theme #1: Unprepared to Teach EBs with Disabilities

One of the emergent themes in this study was that bilingual and special education participants felt unprepared to teach EBs with disabilities and attributed the reason to inadequate teacher preparation and training. The special education teachers felt their preservice training lacked coursework on cultural and linguistic approaches for working with EBs. One of the bilingual education teachers said she had no training on special education intervention strategies. As a result, most of the teachers did not feel highly confident in working with EBs with disabilities. This finding is consistent with that of Jozwik et al., (2020) who found that most special education teachers felt underprepared to work with EBs with disabilities. The finding is also consistent with what More et al. (2015) reported about special education teacher preparation programs, which was that few programs included course content connected to supporting the needs of EBs with disabilities. Further, some consistency can be seen in the report of Miranda et al. (2019) which suggested that special education teacher preparation programs had a scattered and

disjointed approach to preparing teachers to teach EBs with disabilities and as a result, the teachers lacked mastery of essential content such as utilizing the students' culture in instruction, and a sense of efficacy in teaching EBs with disabilities (Miranda et al., 2019).

Most of the participants in this study also shared they did not have opportunities to work with EBs with disabilities during their preservice practicum experiences and alternative certification training. Studies have shown that field experiences played an important role in bridging the gap between theory and practice and are crucial for developing the skills for implementing core instruction and intensive intervention (Harvey et al., 2015; Ortiz & Robertson, 2018; Robertson et al., 2016). Based on these findings, it may be necessary for teacher educators to provide ample opportunities for preservice bilingual and special education teachers to engage in practical fieldwork in classrooms that have EBs with disabilities. This would allow the preservice teachers to observe experienced teachers as well as engage EBs with disabilities in whole group, small group, and one-on-one situations. When preservice teachers personally engage EBs with disabilities, they may gain valuable experiences that can transfer to their classrooms during their first few years of teaching, a period that is likely to be most challenging for teachers.

All the participants shared that some in-service professional development trainings they received were helpful for working with EBs with disabilities, but overall, they felt there were not enough in-service trainings geared toward working with EBs with disabilities. The findings of other studies (Chu, 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2021; Jozwik et al., 2020; Kaczorowski & Kline, 2021) also pointed to inadequate in-service training as an important reason teachers felt unprepared to work with EBs with disabilities.

Theme #2: Challenging and Complicated Experience

Another emergent theme was that special education and bilingual education teachers felt that teaching EBs with disabilities was challenging and complicated. One factor that contributed to the challenges experienced by the special education teachers was a lack of adequate resources to teach the students. This is consistent with the findings of Schuck and Lambert (2020) who reported that special education teachers of EBs with disabilities named a lack of equitable provision of resources as contributing to the challenge of teaching those students. The second factor that caused the challenging experiences for special education teachers was their inability to speak Spanish, which meant they could not effectively teach the students in the students' home language or provide linguistic/cultural support. This is consistent with the finding of Gonzalez et al., (2021) who found that special education teachers felt unprepared in utilizing the students' culture in instruction.

Factors cited by the bilingual education teachers as contributing to their complicated experiences of working with EBs with disabilities were inconsistency in the pull-out schedule, students' behavioral challenges, and insufficient time to address the individual needs of students. Based on the researcher's experience, frequent pull-outs of students throughout the day and disruptions caused by the misbehavior of some students with disabilities are generally typical in classrooms, irrespective of whether they are bilingual education classrooms. However, in addition to managing students' pull-outs and behavioral challenges, the bilingual education teacher must additionally figure out how to increase supports for EBs with disabilities who are also struggling to learn a second language. Therefore, the teacher faces an increased level of complexity in the bilingual education classroom and must figure out ways to manage the limited instructional time available, to adequately meet the individual needs of all students. One way to mitigate

this challenge might be to provide professional development training on behavior management to bilingual education teachers to show them strategies for reducing or eliminating incidences of students' misbehaviors.

Theme #3: Language of Instruction Beliefs Influenced Preferred Language for Instruction

One other emergent theme in this study was that the language of instruction beliefs of special education and bilingual education teachers influenced their preferred language of instruction. One teacher believed that students must first be taught in their home language, and, after the children are able to read in their home language, they can be transitioned to English with home language support. The teacher argued that a prior knowledge of home language was advantageous because students can use the knowledge of their home language structure as a foundation to learn English. Therefore, this teacher was inclined to teach in the home language first. In contrast, two other teachers believed that students need not be taught in their home language first because doing so could cause the students to lag in English acquisition. Rather, those teachers believed that English should be used for teaching students from the time they begin schooling, so that they would have plenty of time to acquire the English language before they reached fourth grade, when instruction is primarily in English. Those teachers were therefore inclined to teach in English as early as first grade. This finding that the language of instruction beliefs of special education and bilingual education teachers influenced their preferred language of instruction is consistent with the findings of Henderson and Palmer (2021). Some bilingual education teachers in the Henderson and Palmer study disagreed with the language of instruction of the Gómez and Gómez Dual Language Enrichment model. The model prescribed a strict use of one named language for a given subject. In other words, the model required a strict separation of languages, therefore, another language could not

be inserted when a named language was being used for instruction (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). Some teachers in the Henderson and Palmer (2021) study who disagreed with the separation of language policy believed in the flexibility of the use of language in instruction. As a result, they did not follow the model as prescribed, but instead, utilized their full linguistic repertoire across languages and encouraged their students to do the same (Henderson & Palmer, 2021). The consistency in the findings of the current research and that of Henderson and Palmer (2021) leads one to conclude that when teachers' language of instruction is based on their individual beliefs, there would be inconsistency in the language of instruction across classrooms, and the implication of this inconsistency on students' performance outcomes may need to be further explored by future research.

There are some studies that have reported on the language of instruction that is more beneficial for instruction for EBs and EBs with disabilities. For example, research has shown that high quality bilingual instruction was as effective as English-only instruction, if not better, for students with disabilities (Cheatham et al., 2012; Thordardottir, 2010). Baker (2011) shared that bilingual instruction may augment the linguistic skills of students compared to English-only instruction, which may limit linguistic skills. Additionally, Verhoeven et al. (2012) indicated that learning a home language may help accelerate the learning of a second language. Considering these data, Cheatham and Hart Barnett (2017) concluded that bilingual instruction is more likely than not to foster a positive educational outcome for EBs with disabilities. However, the findings of the current study and those of Henderson and Palmer (2021) indicate that some teachers' beliefs about the language of instruction are inconsistent with Cheatham and Hart Barnett (2017), leading to the conclusion that more research is needed to determine the most beneficial language of instruction for EBs with disabilities.

However, one possible way to address the issue of language of instruction may be for IEP committees to make the determination during IEP meetings as to what language of instruction may be used for the students in the resource room. During those IEP meetings or prior staffing (meetings before the IEP meetings), committee members can have deep discussions about the language of instruction that would best meet the needs of the students and the decision reached would become part of the IEP. Considering that the parents, teachers, and administrators are part of the IEP committee, a consensus on the topic should put the matter to rest for individual students.

Theme #4: Supportive and Collaborative Relationships

An additional emergent theme from this study was that special education and bilingual education teachers experienced supportive and collaborative relationships. Their relationships were symbiotic in the sense that the special education teachers relied on the bilingual education teachers for Spanish resources and Spanish instructional support and the bilingual education teachers relied on the special education teachers for guidance on the IEP meeting process, adapting instruction, and managing behaviors of children with disabilities. Ortiz et al. (2020) emphasized the need for teachers to collaboratively plan and implement instruction to address the needs of EBs with disabilities because working together allows teachers to better understand the many and interconnected variables that contribute to students' success. However, the finding of the current study is inconsistent with those of Kangas (2018) and Delgado (2010) who reported that special education and bilingual education teachers did not collaborate, but rather, worked independently, concentrating on their own specialized roles. Clearly, based on this inconsistency, more research may be needed regarding the collaboration among special education and bilingual education teachers.

Despite the inconsistency between the current study and the Kangas (2018) and Delgado (2010) studies regarding teachers' collaboration, Kangas' implication of a lack of collaboration is worthy of further examination. Kangas (2018) said that a lack of collaboration may result in fragmented, inadequate special education and English language services for EBs with disabilities. Relevant to this knowledge is what the special education participants of this current study shared about collaboration at the district level. The participants shared that, at the district level, instructional specialists in special education and bilingual education did not seem to collaborate about meeting the needs of students who overlap between disciplines (special education and bilingual education), and each specialist appear to communicate with teachers through different pipelines. In other words, bilingual education specialists communicated with bilingual education teachers about policies and instructional matters, and special education specialists communicated with special education teachers about policies and instructional matters. As a result of this linear way of communication, teachers with students that overlap between bilingual and special education may not receive all the information needed to plan effective instruction for their EBs with disabilities. The implication is that a lack of collaboration among departmental instructional specialists may potentially lead to fragmented, inadequate special education and English language services for EBs with disabilities, as Kangas (2018) found. Ortiz et al. (2020) emphasized that collaboration needs to happen at the departmental level to discuss how to better educate EBs with disabilities. This meant that departmental leaders must move away from working as separate departments (e.g., bilingual educators address native language and English proficiency, and special educators address disability-related needs) to working as an integrated whole (Ortiz et al., 2020). Equally important is a shared knowledge base among departments (Ortiz et al., 2020). Ortiz et al. concluded that collaboration across

departments and programs allowed educators from various departments to focus attention on the intersectional spaces that students are in, and plan appropriate instruction to address those intersectional needs. Therefore, bilingual and special education instructional specialists may need to work together and jointly communicate relevant information to teachers in both special education and bilingual education.

Theme #5: Insufficient Time to Plan Instruction

Kangas (2018) and Delgado (2010) found that special education and bilingual education teachers were not given sufficient time to plan and collaborate. Another emergent theme in this study echoed this finding. The special education and bilingual education participants felt that they lacked sufficient time to plan instruction for EBs with disabilities and offered suggestions to solve this issue. Two of the teachers proposed a full day of planning each week with four days a week of teaching. Another teacher proposed the first half of the day on Fridays, in addition to the regular one hour a day of planning. Considering that planning is an important part of providing adequate instruction for students, campus administrators might need to explore creative ways on how they can provide ample time to teachers to effectively plan instruction for their EBs with disabilities.

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) posited that special education and bilingual education teachers are among the group of teachers that have a higher turnover rate compared to other teachers. Also, the most significant reason why special education teachers leave the profession is poor working conditions, for example, inadequate support from administration (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). One of the ways that administrators might show support for teachers may be providing them with sufficient time to plan instruction. This might serve as an important retention effort. Landrum et al. (2019) suggested that one way to mitigate teacher shortages and attrition, is by placing

more emphasis on teacher retention efforts than hiring and training teachers to fill vacancies, only for the teachers to leave due to unsatisfactory working conditions.

Theme #6: Confusion over Unclear Policies on Language of Instruction

One other emergent theme from this study was that special education teachers experienced confusion over unclear policies on language of instruction for EBs with disabilities. When the teachers asked their administrators for direction regarding what language of instruction they were expected to use for teaching EBs with disabilities in the resource room, the teachers got different answers from their administrators, leaving the teachers confused. This finding of unclear policy is consistent with DeMatthews et al. (2014) who reported that in some southern states, policy documents lacked clarity and specificity about how to address disability issues for EBs. Based on the data from the current study, it is apparent that there might not have been discussions among campus administrators and districtwide instructional specialists in special education and bilingual education about the language of instruction policy for non-Spanish-speaking special education teachers of EBs with disabilities in the resource room, and this may explain why the principal and assistant principal gave conflicting views on how to teach the students. The conclusion that can be drawn is that it may be necessary for the districtwide, bilingual, and special education instructional specialists to find the time to talk about policy guidelines that might affect both disciplines and communicate the same to the bilingual and special education teachers and their campus administrators, so that they will all be on the same page. Campus administrators may also need to periodically ask the bilingual and special education teachers what they need and how they can further be supported in working with EBs with disabilities. With all these communication structures in place, there would be little room for teachers' confusion over policies.

Theme #7: Inequitable Instruction for EBs with Disabilities

A final emergent theme from this study was that special education teachers expressed that their instruction of EBs with disabilities was inequitable compared to that of the students' English-speaking peers. The reasons the participants gave were a lack of evidence-based programs for teaching reading, inconsistency in home language instruction, and the fact that the students were taught by aides who were not certified to provide the direct instruction portion of lessons. Regarding the issue of the provision of evidence-based reading intervention programs, the Esperanza program appeared to be favored by the participants. Therefore, Esperanza may be made available to resource teachers across the district who have EBs with disabilities in their resource rooms.

On the point that the inconsistency in home language instruction contributed to the teachers' inequitable instruction for EBs with disabilities, the data indicated that when students were pulled to the resource room, they often did not receive adequate home language instruction from their special education teachers because the teachers did not speak Spanish. It was this inability of the teachers to utilize the students' language and culture in instruction that necessitated the use of Spanish-speaking aides to teach the students in the resource room. Gonzalez et al. (2021) came to a similar conclusion that inequitable education of EBs with disabilities results when teachers are unable to provide language and cultural support. The authors argued that a crucial social justice issue arose when special education teachers did not receive the necessary training to prepare them to provide home language/cultural/linguistic support to the students (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Of relevance to the issue raised by Gonzalez et al, the findings of Benson and Kosonen (2013), Bialystok (2001), Hovens (2002), and King and Mackey (2007) supported the notion that the best educational outcomes for ethnic minority students arose when the language of instruction is the students' home language and educators, schools, and

communities have positive attitudes towards the home language of the students. Therefore, Bianco (2017) proposed an integrated approach to language and academic learning. Lastly, regarding the use of aides to teach the students, one of the special education teachers in the current study relied on her aide to teach math to the EB students in Spanish because the teacher did not speak Spanish. According to TEA, some non-negotiables regarding the tasks of paraprofessionals who work with students with disabilities are that paraprofessionals may not engage in introducing new material or content, provide the direct teaching portion of a lesson, or select materials for the implementation of lessons (TEA, 2020c).

Implications for Bilingual and Special Education Teachers' Training

Based on the data, the special education teachers in the current study appear to lack knowledge and skills in cultural and linguistic approaches for teaching Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. The findings of other studies (e.g., Jozwik et al., 2020; Miranda et al., 2019; More et al., 2015) are consistent with this knowledge. Both bilingual education teachers also mentioned in their narratives that the first year of teaching was the most challenging because they did not understand the IEP meeting process, their role in the process, how to interpret an IEP, or how to manage students' challenging behaviors. The teachers relied on their special education colleagues to fill those gaps for them. Also, some of their knowledge was acquired through trial and error. All four participants felt that though some in-service professional development experiences were beneficial, they were insufficient to adequately prepare them to teach EBs with disabilities. For example, one bilingual education teacher wished for a training in the different types of accommodations and modifications and how to implement them in the classroom. Other studies (e.g., Chu, 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2021; Jozwik et al., 2020; Kaczorowski & Kline, 2021) also found teachers' in-service trainings to be

inadequate. The implication that can be drawn from these findings is that bilingual and special education teachers may need more professional development to better prepare them to teach EBs with disabilities.

The passing of the Texas Bill 2256 in 2021, which created a bilingual special education teacher certification in Texas, appears to be a significant step in the right direction toward adequately preparing teachers to teach Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities. However, it is unclear when bilingual special education teachers become available to teach the large number of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities in Texas public schools. Therefore, in the interim, the students must receive instruction from teachers trained to meet their intersectional needs. One way to do that is through professional development training, especially, geared toward new bilingual and special education teachers. Orosco and Abdulrahim (2017a) demonstrated the effectiveness of professional development for teachers. Based on the data discussed, special education teachers may benefit from professional development in Culturally Responsive Instruction (CRI), which involves an understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and incorporating students' cultural experiences into instruction (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014). The teachers may also benefit from a training in Language and Linguistics (Ortiz & Robertson, 2018) involving an understanding of the stages of language acquisition and development, an understanding of the relationship between the home language and the second language, and between literacy and language acquisition.

Bilingual education teachers may need professional development in the IEP process and their role in the process, interpreting the IEP document, the different types of accommodations and modifications, behavior management, and best practices for the most frequently identified learning and/or behavioral needs among children in public schools; this could include needs associated with specific learning disabilities,

speech/language impairment, other health impairment, autism, intellectual disability, and emotional disturbance (NCES, 2022). One participant in this study recommended that administrators allow time for first-year teachers to periodically observe the classrooms of other experienced teachers for a whole day at a time, to allow the new teachers to gain practical experience.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Study

This narrative inquiry aimed to understand how bilingual education and special education teachers of Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities described the impact of the students' intersectionality on their practices. The participants shared that they were unprepared to teach EBs with disabilities due to inadequate preservice and in-service trainings. On this issue of teacher preparation, Gonzalez et al. (2021) raised an important point, which was that there is limited empirical evidence on the specific practices and beliefs that teachers need in the space between special education and bilingual education. Gonzalez et al. (2021) also indicated that the extent to which teachers are prepared to teach students in that intersectional space is also unclear. Part of the goal of the current study is to bridge some of the gaps raised by Gonzalelz et al. (2021) by exploring teachers' experiences with working with Spanish-speaking EBs with disabilities; however, more research needs to be done. It is therefore recommended that more studies on teachers' experiences working with EBs with disabilities be conducted using different research methods to achieve multiple perspectives on the issue.

Also, more research studies about bilingual and special education teachers' language of instruction beliefs and the influence of those beliefs on teachers' actual language of instruction may need to be conducted. Such studies are important because there appears to be disagreement among teachers regarding the language they use for instructing EBs with disabilities. Therefore, to promote consistency in the language of

instruction usage, a deep understanding of teachers' beliefs and preferences would be a necessary first step. Further, an exploration of what impact the inconsistency in the use of language might have on students' outcomes may also be necessary.

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APPENDIX A:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Date: _____

Location of Interview: _____

Review informed consent documents. Informed Consent Signed: Yes or No

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions: To answer these questions, please think about only the Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals with disabilities that you currently teach or have taught in the past.

	Interview Questions	**Dimensions of Narrative Inquiry**
	Family/Personal Background	
1	When and where did your journey in the field of education begin? How would you assess this journey so far? What is your future career/professional plan?	Past temporal and Place Dimensions
	Preservice Training	
2	Tell me about any preservice courses or experiences that you found helpful for teaching EBs with disabilities. **Follow Up Question if necessary:** a. Explain how those trainings/experiences helped/hindered your ability to effectively teach EBs with disabilities. On a scale of 1-10, (10 being the best rating), please rate your college preservice teacher preparation program on the job of	Past temporal dimension

	effectively preparing you to teach EBs with disabilities. Explain why you rated the way you did.	
	In-service training	
3	Tell me about any in-service preparation training/experiences that you attended, or were involved in, that you found helpful for teaching EBs with disabilities. (e.g., professional dev. training, professional learning communities, coaching, mentorship, etc.) **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** a. Explain how those trainings/experiences helped/hindered your ability to effectively teach EBs with disabilities. On a scale of 1-10, (10 being the best rating), please rate your in-service trainings/experiences on the job of preparing you to effectively teach EBs with disabilities. Explain why you rated the way you did.	Past temporal dimension
	Student Descriptions	
4	What kind of disabilities did/do your EBs with disabilities have? How many EBs with disabilities do you have currently? (E.g., students with autism, speech, or language impairment, emotionally disturbed, intellectually challenged, other health impairments resulting from ADHD or other conditions, visually impaired including blindness, learning disabilities, hearing impaired, deaf-blind, deafness, multiple disabilities, orthopedic Impairment, and traumatic brain injury.)	Present temporal dimension
5	Describe a day with a Spanish-speaking EB receiving special Ed services in your classroom. **(FOR SPED TEACHER)** Describe a day with a Spanish-speaking EB who receives special ed services and is in your bilingual education classroom. (**FOR BILINGUAL ED. TEACHER)** Please describe your fondest memories/most challenging moments working with EBs with disabilities. **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** a. Please describe your feelings about working with EBs with disabilities. Provide anecdotes to help me understand.	
	Planning, Scheduling, and Collaboration	
6	Talk to me about your experiences with planning, scheduling, and collaboration with other service providers, regarding working with EBs with disabilities. **Follow Up Questions if necessary:**	Present temporal dimension

	a. Describe your feelings about the amount of time provided to you for planning instruction for EBs with disabilities. b. Describe specific challenging and successful moments in your attempts to collaborate with **special education teachers (OR with bilingual education teachers)** c. Describe specific challenges and successes in coordinating your classroom schedules and sped-related pull-out services that might be prescribed in the IEP of your EBs with disabilities. (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, etc.)	
	IEPs	
7	Please describe your experience with the IEP process and with implementing students' IEP in your classroom. **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** a. Please describe your experience with using the students' IEP goals to plan and implement instruction. b. Please describe how you provide IEP accommodations and/or modifications to EBs with disabilities.	Present temporal dimension
	Administrative Support	
8	Talk to me about the administrative support that you receive pertaining to EBs with disabilities. **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** a. Please describe specific supports you receive from your administration with respect to EBs with disabilities. (e.g., provision of resources/materials, instructional aides, student discipline issues). b. How does the supports (or lack of) impact your classroom practices regarding EBs with disabilities?	Present temporal dimension
	Classroom Instruction	
9	Talk to me about your use of culturally responsive instruction (CRI) in your classroom. Please share examples. (RESEARCHER WILL EXPLAIN WHAT CRI MEANS IF NECESSARY.) **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** a. Do you use the strategies routinely or occasionally? b. How confident are you using CRI? (Highly confident, moderately confident, not confident).	Present temporal dimension
10	Talk to me about your use of special education intervention strategies in your classroom. Please share examples.	Present temporal dimension

	(RESEARCHER WILL PROVIDED SOME EXAMPLES OF SPED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES IF NECESSARY.) **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** a. Do you use the strategies routinely or occasionally? b. How confident are you using special education intervention strategies? (Highly confident, moderately confident, not confident).	
11	Talk to me about your use of content-based (or instructional-based) accommodations and language-based accommodations. Please share examples. (RESEARCHER WILL EXPLAIN WHAT THOSE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE IF NECESSARY.) **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** **a.** How confident are you implementing content-based (or instructional-based) accommodations? Highly confident, moderately confident, not confident). **b.** How confident are you implementing language-based accommodations? (Highly confident, moderately confident, not confident). **c.** Do you implement either of the above accommodations routinely or occasionally?	Present temporal dimension
12	Talk to me about how you differentiate instruction based on the language proficiency level of your students in the Speaking Domain. (RESEARCHER WILL EXPLAIN WHAT THE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL STANDARDS ARE, IF NECESSARY.)	
13	How would you rate your confidence level for teaching EBs with disabilities? (Highly confident, moderately confident, not confident). Explain the rationale for your rating. a. Please share any specific professional development trainings that you would like to have, to help you be more effective in teaching EBs with disabilities.	Present temporal dimension
	Students Assessments and Outcomes	
14	What subjects do you teach EBs with disabilities? What is a measure of success for your EBs with disabilities? How would you describe the impact of the students' dual needs (disability related needs and second language learning needs) on students' classroom assessment? academic outcomes? socio/emotional outcomes?	
	Parent Partnership	

15	Please talk to me about your partnership with parents of EBs with disabilities. **Follow Up Questions if necessary:** a. Do you remember specific examples that can explain different situations when you attempted to partner with parents of EBs with disabilities? b. Using a scale of 1-10, one being the best rating, rate your ability to effectively partner with parents of EBs with disabilities. Explain the rationale for your rating using examples to help me understand.	Past temporal dimension
	Other	
16	Did you have different experiences in different schools or different districts, regarding your experience as a teacher of EBs with disabilities? Explain. What are some insights that teachers teaching EBs might have for other educators and administrators? Is there anything else we have not talked about that you would like to add or talk about regarding teaching EBs with disabilities? If you were to give a title to your story regarding your experiences working with EBs with disabilities, what would be the title of your story?	Past temporal dimension

APPENDIX B:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of Houston Clear Lake

INFORMED CONSENT: ADULT RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Title of Study: Lived Experiences of Bilingual and Special Education Teachers of Spanish-Speaking, Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) with Disabilities: The Impact of the Students' Intersectionality on Teachers' Practices

Student Investigator: Goretti Rerri

Faculty Sponsors: Laurie R. Weaver, Ed.D.; Leslie M. Gauna, Ed. D.

Dear teachers,
My name is Goretti Rerri. I am a Pasadena ISD employee expanding my professional knowledge and skills through advanced course work in a doctoral program at UHCL. My course work requires that a study be conducted in an educational setting. I have obtained the district's approval to collaborate with Pasadena ISD stakeholders who volunteer to participate, and Pasadena ISD supports employee-researchers in their efforts to learn more about best teaching and leadership practices that ultimately benefit students.

Thank you for your anticipated interest in participating in this study. You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Please know that I greatly appreciate your time and willingness to participate. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study, or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. I anticipate it will take two interview sessions, with each interview session lasting approximately 60 mins to complete. You are being asked to read the information below carefully and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether to participate.

Protections: I am not collecting any identifiable information but will collect demographic information to ensure participants qualify for engagement in this study. The intended participants are grades 1-4 special education and bilingual education teachers who provide education, support, and/or services to emergent bilingual (English Learners) children with disabilities, ages six through nine. Once you start the interview, you may decide to withdraw from participating by exiting at any time, and your decision will involve no penalty.

Purpose of Study: For my doctoral dissertation, I am seeking participants' narrative stories about their experiences in working with emergent bilinguals (EBs) with disabilities (Emergent bilingual is the new term recently adopted by the State of Texas to refer to English language learners.) The purpose of the study is to better understand bilingual and special education teachers' experiences in working with emergent bilinguals with disabilities and how the students' dual needs (second language learning needs and disability-related challenges), impact the teachers' practices.

Procedures: Two Personal Interviews

Expected Duration: Any two days in April 2022, that is convenient for you would be scheduled to conduct the interviews; the interview for each day is estimated to last about 60min. The second interview would be a follow-up of the first interview.

Informed Consent: Adult Research Participant Revised October 2018 Page 1 of 4

Risks of Participation: This researcher does not see any risk to participants of this study. All data will be collected anonymously.

Benefits to the Subject

There is no direct, tangible benefit to be received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator to better understand the experiences of bilingual and special education teachers in teaching EBs with disabilities. The outcome of the study may potentially inform teacher preparation programs about ways to better prepare teachers to effectively address the dual needs of EBs with disabilities. Efforts at preparing teachers to effectively teach EBs with disabilities would likely promote equitable access to the students' education, consistent with the requirement of Every Student Succeed Act of 2015.

Confidentiality of Records

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will **not** be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the student investigator in a password-protected computer and a locked file cabinet accessible only to the student investigator, for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

Compensation

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

Investigator's Right to Withdraw Participant

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

Contact Information for Questions or Problems

The investigator has offered to answer all your questions. If you have additional questions during this study about the research or any related problem, you may **contact the student investigator, Goretti Rerri, by telephone at 832-738-6658, or by email at gorettiz@yahoo.com; or ZomaG3247@UHCL.edu; or grerri@pasadenaisd.org. You may also contact the faculty sponsors, Dr. Laurie Weaver, at 281-283-3584 or weaver@uhcl.edu. and Dr. Leslie Gauna, at 281-283-3576 or gauna@uhcl.edu**

This research has been approved by the University of Houston Clear Lake Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, you should contact the researcher at ZomaG@UHCL.edu, or the sponsors, Dr. Weaver at Weaver@UHCL.edu. and Dr. Gauna at gauna@uhcl.edu.

You may also contact UHCL's IRB at sponsoredprograms@uhcl.edu or by phone at 281-283-3015, if your questions, concerns, or complaints are not addressed by the researchers, you want to talk to someone besides the researcher, you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you want information or to provide additional input about this research.

Signatures

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from

their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the student investigator or faculty sponsors. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Your signature below documents your consent to take part in this research. Thank you.

_____
Signature of subject Date

_____
Printed name of subject

_____
Signature of person obtaining consent Date

_____
Printed name of person obtaining consent

Demographic Information

Please fill out the demographic information below.

Q1. What grades do you presently teach? You may check all that apply.

o Grade 1

o Grade 2

o Grade 3

o Grade 4

Q2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

o 0-5 years

o 6-10 years

o 11-20 years

o 21 and up

For how many of those years did you teach EBs with disabilities? ----------

Q3. Indicate your current teaching/service delivery setting:

o Bilingual Education Classroom

o Resource Special Education Classroom

Q4. What is your education level?

o BS/BA

o Masters

o Doctoral

Q5. Which certification/credentials do you presently possess (e.g., EC-grade 6)?

_____

Q6. Please indicate the certification track you used to obtain your teaching license for the program you are currently teaching.

o Regular certification Track

o Alternative Certification Track

Q7 What is your gender?

_____

Q8 What are your racial identity and ethnicity?

_____

Q9. What is your age range?

o 20-29

o 30-39

o 40-49

o 50-59

o 60-69

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281.283.3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

(FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE #FWA00004068

APPENDIX C:

RESEARCHER'S FIELD NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Research Field Notes and Reflection

Date	**Field Notes and Reflection**
4/14/22	**Sally (Bilingual Ed. Teacher)** **Session One**
Getting to know Sally	I turned on the zoom video camera after I was satisfied that Sally had no more questions for me about the research. I must say that we hit it off right from the beginning. We talked like we had known each other a long time. I think the reason might be because we are both mature in age, been teaching for about the same number of years (she 19 years and almost 22 years), and were immigrants, so we kind of like understood where we were coming from without having to say it. She came across as very pleasant, animated, and enthusiastic about doing the interview. I thought that was a good thing for my research. When she was introducing herself, she mentioned that she attended a catholic school where daily reading was emphasized. I thought WOW, that is another connection I have with her. I also attended catholic schools from 1st grade through high school and I

	remember those nuns, our administrators, emphasized daily reading! Sally would later make the connection that her teacher at her catholic, elementary school, who read to her daily, influenced her teaching practice; Sally reads to all her students individually, every day. As I thought about this, I wondered how she does it. That is commitment! And how does she find the time? I calculated that if she spent 5 mins on each child, and has a dozen students, that is a good one hour reading to them; not to count all the other things she has to do like, whole group and small group instructions in all subject areas, managing literacy centers, and doing lunch, recess, PE, etc. One thing that struck me about Sally was the fact that she was a fully certified pediatrician in her home country of Venezuela before immigrating to the US. It made me think of the sacrifices that immigrant make for the opportunity to live in the US. My family and I made similar sacrifices too. But Sally does not regret her decision. In fact, she believes that it worked out for the best because teaching is what she is born to do. She said all forces have been pulling her in the direction of

	teaching, but she was resisting it until she finally realized it and accepted it.
On being prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	Sally did not mince words about her opinion about her alternative teaching certification program. She basically said it was a waste of her time because she learned nothing useful to her.
On planning and collaboration	Sally appeared to like her special education colleague very much. When she described their relationship, her body language supported her narrative. She smiled, gesticulated with her hands and showed great enthusiasm. Though she was not asked about the speech therapists and other service providers, she voluntarily said they were all compassionate people who loved what they did, which was to service children with disabilities. She could not say enough about the dedication of those educators and the collaboration that she enjoyed with them. Having spoken to many educators of students with special needs for many years my conversation with sally was the first time I heard that teachers who do not teach students with disabilities need as much planning time as those teachers who teach students with disabilities. This was Sally's belief and is based on her notion that many teachers have students who are struggling as

	much as children with disabilities are struggling. The difference is that those children have not yet been identified. The teachers of those students deserve more time to prepare instruction for those students too. I thought this was an empathetic and laudable stand by Sally.
On classroom instruction	Sally elaborately described her frustration in the classroom caused by frequent interruptions by special education service providers who come in to pull out students. Though she did not like the interruptions, she did not blame the service providers for their actions. Her empathetic nature was again obvious when she expressed an understanding that the service providers are doing the best that they could considering that they service many students across grade level. In her characteristic manner, and gesticulating with hands held up, Sally said about the situation, "I have to be flexible!" I That moment took be back to when I taught many EBs in my resource room. When I would go pull out my students from their home room, I would see at least two other service providers (typically, the speech therapist and the dyslexia teacher), already in line to pull out students. I observed that

	the home room teacher would need to pause her instruction to direct students who needed to leave the room to do so. This creates excitement from the other students who are not being pulled and they wonder why they are not being pulled; they begin to envy the ones that are being pulled because they do not understand why those kids are being pulled. Momentarily, it becomes a little chaotic until the teacher pulls the kids back into focus.
On language of instruction belief	Sally said that what she has personally seen through her years teaching is that the bilingual students fell behind learning English, and this has caused her to change her belief of language of instruction. She explained that at the beginning of her teaching career, she thought it was appropriate to teach students to read in their native language or the language they speak at home. But now she thinks we should teach them everything in English with Spanish support, otherwise, they stay behind. She insisted, “There's no way they're going to catch up.” As a result, Sally, who teaches 1st grade, started to teach more in English as soon as her students demonstrated that they could speak to

	her in English and understand the foundational structure of speaking the English language. Sally acknowledged that her practice was not consistent with the bilingual education curriculum and policy and has drawn criticism from her colleagues, but she insisted that her decision was in the best interest of her students. She said, “I'm trying to push more English because I know they're falling behind.” She believes that bilingual education has failed the students and teachers like her are trying to grapple to save the situation. As I reflect on Sally’s stand, I cannot help but be conflicted on this issue. I have come to accept what the research says which is contrary to what Sally is saying but then I find it hard to discount what Sally is said. I bet there are more teachers like her who feel the same way. I will be curious as to what other teachers in this study has to say about this issue.
4/20/22	**Sally (Bilingual Ed. Teacher)** **Session Two**
On helpful insights on how new bilingual education teachers can better	Sally’s take is that new teachers would learn best if they observed veteran teachers in action not just for a short period of time but for as long as a semester. This would allow the new teacher to see

be prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	how veterans work with students as well as provide the chance for the new teacher to ask pertinent questions. She said she had to ask lots of questions when she was a new teacher. Examples of questions she asked about the IEP were: Could you put it in more simple words? What does it mean to shorten assignments? Why do I need to shorten assignments? What is preferential seating? Why does it work? Sally said the new teacher needs to observe an intervention or practice and understand the reasoning behind it. Sally also believed that for a more permanent solution to this problem of inadequate teacher preparation, bilingual education teachers should get an additional certification in special education and special education teachers should get training in bilingual education. She drew a parallel with gifted and talented certification, arguing many schools now require teachers to get certified in gifted and talented education. Sally sees no reason why the same requirement cannot be extended to special education. My thought on this matter is this. The new bilingual, special education teacher certification approved by the Texas law makers should solve the

	problem of inadequate teacher preparation. The only issue is how many years would it take to get enough teachers certified in that field? My guess is that it will take many years. In the meantime, what is to be done?
4/18/22	**Krystal (Sped. Teacher)** **Session One**
Getting to know Krystal	I have known Krystal as a special education colleague for many years. Many years back, the school that I taught was adjacent to the school where she taught. My school was an elementary school and hers was a middle school and a feeder middle school for my campus. As a result, when my fourth-grade students left our campus, they went to her campus for fifth grade, and she ended up teaching my students. That is how we met each other many years ago. I also have a connection with Krystal because she is an immigrant too.
On being prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	Regarding her alternative teacher certification program (ATCP), Krystal did not recall any specific training geared toward teaching EBs with disabilities. This does not surprise me because she got certified 17 years ago during which time, alternative education programs may not have caught up with the trend toward inclusive education

	and the need to prepare teachers to teach a diverse classroom. Krystal rated her ATCP a six out of ten. I wondered why she rated it that high if she did not benefit from the program regarding teaching EBs with disabilities. She appeared to justify her rating by explaining that generally, the program helped her to learn the ropes regarding the system of education in the US considering that at the time, she was a new immigrant from India where the systm of education was different from that of the US. Therefore, she appeared to want to give some credit to the program for that reason.
On planning and collaboration	Krystal said she and her bilingual education peers collaborated well. Each shared their knowledge with the other in supportive ways. The only issue they had was inadequate time to collaborate and plan instruction. I think this issue of inadequate time to plan is very prevalent among teachers. I experienced it myself when I was still teaching. If teachers do not have time to plan, how could they be expected to provide effective instruction to students?
On classroom instruction	Krystal said it was challenging to teach EBs with disabilities. I watched Krystal as she described

	her classroom experience which she referred to as "a very daunting task". She was visibly frustrated by the circumstance. Inadequate resources and the inability to provide home language support to EBs were among the reasons for the challenge that she faced. Listening to Krystal was a DeJa'Vu moment for me. I remembered those days in the classroom when I had to figure out how to teach my EBs. I felt conflicted about teaching them in English and low teaching self- efficacy. It makes me sad that sped teachers have been having this challenge for so long and nothing was done until recently with the passing of House Bill 2256 creating a bilingual special ed certification in Texas. But better late than never!
On the language of instruction policy	Krystal believes in teaching EBs with disabilities in English as early as 1st grade (if not earlier) to allow them time to learn the language. She argued that based on her experience, EBs with disabilities do not catch up with English acquisition when transition to English is delayed till 2nd or 3rd grade. This was another subject that got Krystal visibly frustrated. As I reflected on this issue, I noticed that Krystal's belief was similar to that of Sally whom I interviewed a few days ago. Hearing

	the arguments from Sally and Krystal got me thinking about my own beliefs about language of instruction. Krystal and Sally said that their students struggled to learn English by the time they reached 4th grade and blamed the current system of delaying transition to English. Noteworthy, I have also observed that my EBs with disabilities also continue to struggle to learn English by the time they reached 4th grade. The observation of Sally, Krystal and me, appears to be consistent with research which suggests that children with disabilities do just as well as others in learning a second language. What I am curious about is what category of disabilities and what level of disabilities have been studied. I think that those variables may have implication on how well or how quickly an EB with a disability would acquire a second language.
Unclear policy on language of instruction	Krystal expressed frustration about unclear policy regarding the language of instruction to use for EBs in the resource program. She and her colleague asked their two administrators for directions but received conflicting responses. The principal advised them to teach in English for 20mins a day and the AP said not so; she feels that

	the students should be taught in their home language, a policy consistent with the bilingual education program. Reflecting on this issue, I felt that the teachers should do as the principal suggested because she is the ultimate person who bears responsibility for the school. However, her response does not completely answer the question of the teachers which is, if they teach English for 20min out of a one-hour session, who teaches the students in Spanish for the remaining 40min? This brings us back to having the aides teach the students; but the aides are not trained teachers. So, we are back to square one.
On inequitable instruction for EBs with disabilities	Krystal shared that her instruction of EBs was inequitable compared to her English-speaking students. This is because the teachers did not have access to evidence-based reading programs for EBs, even though the teachers had two programs that they could use for their English-speaking students. Also, the fact that the EBs were taught by aides was another reason. This issue of inequity is a social justice issue, and it appears to be systematic, and not an isolated issue. Hopefully, researchers will continue to share the data with policy makers until positive action is taken at the highest level.

4/26/22	Krystal (Sped. Teacher) Session Two
On helpful insights on how new special education teachers can be better prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	Krystal recommended that new teachers know three important things about working with EBs with disabilities: building a relationship with students, using a lot of visuals in instruction, and being patient with the students. She explained that building relationships was important because EBs with disabilities tend to be vulnerable due to the cultural/linguistic isolation that they may experience because it is hard to learn a foreign language. Krystal said that using visuals helps the students create a picture in their minds, thereby augmenting their learning. Krystal shared those teachers need to be patient with the kids because it does take a while for some of them to learn a second language and all children do not pick up a second language at the same rate. I think that Krystal's recommendations are well thought out and I agree with all of them. When teachers build relationships with students, the students feel safe. When they feel safe, they are more likely to attend to instruction and learn. The use of visuals has been identified as an evidence-based practice for students with disabilities. I have

	often heard that one trait associated with special education teachers is patience and Krystal rightly pointed that out.
4/22/22	**Philia (Sped. Teacher)** **Session One**
Getting to know Philia	Philia was a bundle of enthusiasm and joy. Young, ambitious, and passionate about her work. Throughout the interview, she was excited, animated, and laughed a lot. I immediately felt at ease in her presence. At the onset of the interview, her very cute 4-year-old boy was with her in the kitchen from where she gave the interview. Philia asked her son to go upstairs which he prompted complied. But halfway through the interview, perhaps tired of waiting for his mom, and curious as to who his mom was talking to, he reappeared in the kitchen and took his seat beside his mom. I told Philia it was okay for him to stay if she wanted to. Phila described him as “very curious”. He asked me what my name was, and I told him. Then I asked him if he could repeat my name and he did so flawlessly! I do not have an easy name to pronounce, so that was surprising! I engaged him in childlike chitchat for a while before his mom asked him to leave a second time. This time, he left

	reluctantly. I guess he wanted to be part of the conversation. As soon as he left, I turned on the zoom video and the interview commenced.
On being prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	Phila had a lot of students with autism (AU) during her practicum teaching in the Philippines where she trained. She described her experience working with this group of students as an “eye opener”. This is because the experience revealed to her the importance of learning in the home language before being transitioned to a second language. She said the AU students who were taught in the native language first before learning English benefited from this practice because they were able to utilize the knowledge of their home language structure as a leverage to learn English. Other than the practicum experience, Philia didn't have a lot of other experiences working with or learning about EBs with disabilities. Regarding her college coursework experiences in the Philippines, though she was trained as a sped teacher, the needs of EBs were not addressed in the curriculum. She did not receive direct instruction on working with EBs, but rather, it was more of observation and self-realization through her personal inquiries. Therefore, she did not think her

	preservice preparation adequately prepared her to teach EBs with disabilities.
On planning and collaboration	Phila did say she did not have enough time to plan. As a result, she stayed back after school and worked on weekends to plan for her students. She would like to have a full day to plan lessons weekly and teach students four days a week. I concur with Philia. I do not think that schools can provide enough time for teachers to do all they need to do for their students, but an uninterrupted, full day a week to plan would go a long way.
On classroom instruction	I thought it was another DeJa'Vu as I listened to Philia talk about the challenges, she faced in teaching EBs with disabilities. Her experiences matched those of Krystal: difficulty providing home language support and lack of resources. At this moment, I concluded that there was consistency across the experiences of Krystal, Philia, and myself regarding teaching EBs with disabilities.
On the language of instruction policy	Philia believed that it's very important to teach students in their first language early on to gain mastery of the foundational skills before transitioning them to English. She explained that the native language served as a scaffold to build on,

	while transitioning to English. As I thought about this position, I remembered that it is what current research is suggesting works best for EBs. Based on her beliefs, Phila makes every effort to teach in Spanish. My position on this issue is now consistent with what the research suggests although I am still conflicted on it because I have not seen the evidence with the students that I have taught. I do recall my previous interviews with Krystal and Sally, both of which also said their students' outcome regarding learning English appear to be inconsistent with what the research is suggesting.
Unclear policy on language of instruction	Phila shared a similar anecdote about a conversation she and Krystal (her colleague) had with their administrators about what language of instruction to use for EBs in the resource room. Both administrators (Principal and Asst., Principal) gave different answers. The principal said they could teach in English for 20mins/day out of whatever total time was prescribed for reading by the child's IEP. The AP thought the students should be taught in Spanish considering that they were in a bilingual education program. The inconsistent response caused Phila and her

	colleague to be confused as to what to do. As I thought about this issue, I remembered being in the same position as Philia and Krystal. I do remember that my approach was different in the different campuses that I taught because each administrator saw things differently. In one campus, the administrator and myself came to the realization that we did not really have any choice on what language of instruction to use to teach the students because I only spoke English. So, I taught reading, writing and math in English to EBs who had resource placements. At two other campuses that I worked, it was preferred that the students were taught in Spanish, consistent with their bilingual education program. Therefore, I tried to teach math in Spanish (I did not speak Spanish though) using memorization of vocabulary and translation dictionaries. My aide taught reading in Spanish under my supervision. It was not the best practice, but in the circumstance, there was no other choice.
On inequitable instruction for EBs with disabilities	Philia shared that there was no equity in educating EBs in her resource classroom because she did not have access to research-based reading program like she does for her English-speaking

	students. She explained that recently she and her colleague asked their sped specialist to send them on a training for the Spanish-based Esperanza reading/language program and the training was approved for them to attend the following year. However, she was not totally impressed because she felt that she waited too long for this to happen-six years since she has been teaching in the district. She showed frustration as she elaborated on what her instruction looked like in the absence of explicit instruction using a research-based program. She said she basically said it came down to trying one thing, and if does not work, trying another. She relied on Google translation app, and her aide to translate for her, all of which is time consuming and makes the lessons choppy. Therefore, her instruction was not systematic like the English-based Project Read® which she used for her English students. As I reflected on this issue, I thought, good luck to an EB who is with a teacher that does not know how to teach reading, independent of a reading program, or who is unmotivated to do the extra work of finding reading lessons that may work for the students. So, the effectiveness of a child's reading lesson is a function of the teacher's

	dedication and drive in finding lessons, spending time on Google translation app, etc. to meet the students' needs. No wonder, Philia said out of frustration, "it's not equal" and said it was a disservice to her students. She added, "How is this supposed to work?" In my experience teaching EBs, I did have the Spanish based Esperanza reading program, but my aide was the one who taught my EB. Therefore, I felt the same frustrating sentiments as Philia because the inequity was clear.
4/29/22	**Philia (Sped. Teacher)** **Session Two**
On helpful insights on how new special education teachers can be better prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	Phila said there's still a lot of questions in the area of educating EBs with disabilities. She said initially when she received my solicitation letter to participate in this study, she noticed that I used the term "Emergent Bilinguals". She said she was not sure what that term meant. She said she usually referred to English learners as bilingual learners. So, she googled the term emergent bilinguals and found that it meant the same thing as bilingual learners or English learners. I confirmed to her that the change was made by the Texas Education Agency, only recently.

4/25/22	Camilla (Bilingual Ed. Teacher) Session One
Getting to know Camilla	Camilla is a new teacher (4years teaching), young (in her late twenties) and teachers 2nd grade. She is one with few words; I frequently needed to prompt her to provide details of her experiences. She appeared to be guarded about what she said, perhaps being careful not to say to wrong things. I understood her and therefore approached her gently by asking for more information, when necessary, but not overly pressing her. Though she smiled throughout the interview, I did not notice the robust enthusiasm and animation that I saw with some of the previous participants that I had interviewed for this study. But she was pleasant and graceful. Camilla always wanted to be a teacher since she was in 3rd grade after being inspired by her 3rd grade teacher who she admired greatly. Camilla described this teacher as "very sweet, very kind". Right after high school, she enrolled in college to train as a teacher. She said she did not even have a second thought about that decision. After graduating college with a bachelor's in bilingual education, she joined the current district as a 3rd grade bilingual teacher. Three years later,

	she was moved to teach 2nd grade which she said she prefers and loves. She wishes to remain teaching 2nd grade for as long as she teaches.
On being prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	Camilla remembers taking one or two college courses in special education and said that one teacher in particular delved deep into special education topics including talking about students with disabilities, what they looked like, and how to work with them. These experiences helped to make Camilla see what she could have in the classroom. Actually, Camilla was able to use some of the knowledge learned in this class to work with an ADHD student she had in her classroom during her 1st year of teaching. However, she did say that during her practicum teaching, she did not have an opportunity to work with students with special needs. She believed that had she had that practicum experience, it would have made a positive difference in her teacher's preparation overall.
On planning and collaboration	Camilla said that she did not have any formal planning time with her special education colleague, rather, she popped into her colleague's classroom anytime to talk, and the colleague did likewise. She described her collaboration with her special education colleague as very good. Camilla

	said she would like to have an extra 30 minutes, twice a week for planning, in addition to their typical one hour daily of planning time.
On classroom instruction	Camilla described the most challenging time she faced during her first-year teaching when she taught 3rd grade. She had a student with ADHD whom she could not get to stay on task. The child was always up, making noises that disturbed the class. After seeking counsel from the special education teacher, she was able to implement some strategies that helped to reduce the off-task behaviors. Sally said she also tapped into her knowledge gained from her college course in special education. It is remarkable that Camilla, a bilingual education teacher, found one college course in special education beneficial to her as a first-year teacher. This makes me think that if only one course could be beneficial, imagine what a more coordinated, and collaborative partnership with bilingual and special education would do for preservice teachers in those disciplines. It does reiterate the need for both departments to work together.
On language of instruction belief	Camilla believes in following the district's policy on language of instruction which for 2nd

	grade, is to teach in English 40% of the time and in English 60% of the time. She did not offer her opinion on the issue and the researcher did not push further out of the sensitivity that Camilla did not feel comfortable doing so. On reflection, I think that not sharing her personal belief on language of instruction may be because she really does not care one way or the other (or indifferent). She is young and still learning the ropes of her profession. Matters of policy and taking strong stands on one side or the other, may not be her priority at this early stage of her career. Usually, more experienced teachers tend to be more interested in policy matters.
4/ 27/22	**Camilla (Bilingual Ed. Teacher)** **Session Two**
On helpful insights on how new bilingual education teachers can better be prepared to teach EBs with disabilities.	Camilla recommended that new teachers should not be hesitant to ask for help if they do not know what to do.