"THEIR LIVES ARE SO MUCH BIGGER OUTSIDE OF MY LITTLE CLASSROOM:" ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH MULTILINGUAL STUDENT ADVOCACY DURING MANDATED SCHOOL CLOSURES

by

Michelle C Pazzula Jimenez

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Curriculum and Instruction

Charlotte

2023

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Joan Lachance

_____
Dr. Heather Coffey

_____
Dr. Adriana Medina

_____
Dr. Walter Hart

ABSTRACT

MICHELLE C PAZZULA JIMENEZ. "Their Lives are So Much Bigger Outside of my Little Classroom:" English Language Development Teachers' Experiences with Multilingual Student Advocacy During Mandated School Closures. (Under the direction of DR. JOAN LACHANCE)

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way education transpired for teachers and learners worldwide. Widespread virtual learning brought deeper academic and social inequities among K-12 diverse learners to light. Multilingual learners and their teachers were no exception. Advocacy is a key identity and expected role of English language development teaching professionals. Research has found that advocacy work can benefit the academic, linguistic, and social growth of ML students. Research has yet to deeply explore the topic of ELD teachers' experiences with advocating for their ML students during the pandemic, as well as the lessons they learned during this unique time in educational history that inform their advocacy work today. This phenomenological study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews to investigate these experiences. Potential implications for this study include teacher preparation, professional development, as well as policy-making decisions surrounding advocacy needs for multilingual learners.

DEDICATION

I first would like to dedicate this work to Leidy, my very first English student almost two decades ago in Antigua, Guatemala. You unlocked a passion for teaching and learning in me for which I am forever grateful. To all my students, past, present and future, it is for you that I advocate y sigo la lucha por un mundo más justo.

Next, this work is dedicated in loving memory of Dr. Theresa Perez, whose fire for student advocacy continues to burn in all those who had the honor of learning under you. I hold your stories and memories close to my heart each day of teaching.

And finally, I dedicate this project to my family. To my husband, Elias, I would not have made it through this journey without your love and support. Gracias por creer en mí siempre. And, to my precious children: Camille, Lorenzo, Francesca, and Antonella. I am so proud to be your mamá. I cannot wait to see what wonderful things you will do for the world. Ustedes son temerosa y maravillosamente hechos, may God bless you always.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I begin by acknowledging my dissertation chair, Dr. Joan Lachance. Your guidance throughout this transformative process has been invaluable. To my committee members, Drs. Heather Coffey, Adriana Medina, and Walter Hart, thank you for stepping up and offering such amazing expertise and support. To my advisor, Dr. Spencer Salas, thank you for encouraging me to pursue this degree and offering so much wisdom, encouragement, and love along the way. To my writing group, Stacy and Kessler, you kept me so motivated, especially on days when I wanted to call it quits! To my teacher friends, administrators, and university classmates, thank you for taking this journey with me. Thank you for lending an ear, a shoulder, and the occasional proofread. To my participants, thank you for graciously sharing your experiences to make this project come to life.

Some may be unaware, but I underwent two major surgeries (including one emergency) and had a baby during this degree. Furthermore, our precious Enzo had two life-threatening emergencies and a half-dozen surgeries in this time. So, to all the family, friends, neighbors, and Godparents who fed us, watched our kids, prayed for us, and just got me out of the house on occasion, a million thank yous. Y especialmente, a mis suegros, gracias por apoyarme y a nuestra familia. Ustedes nos han ayudado en más maneras que puedo decir.

To my dear mom and pop and my big bro, thank you for teaching me what hard work is all about. You gave me all the tools I needed to succeed. Above all, your love and the faith instilled in me have carried me to this moment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> The storm has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and
> superfluous certainties around which we constructed our daily schedules, our
> projects, our habits and priorities … Amid this storm, the façade of those
> stereotypes with which we camouflage our egos, always worrying about
> appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed
> awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one
> another (Pope Francis, 2020, p. 27).

The spring of 2020 is a time most will remember as a pivotal mark in world history. The
global health crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (severe acute respiratory syndrome
coronavirus 2) was spreading across nations (Cohen et al., 2020). It was a time of great
uncertainty, as businesses and public entities were rapidly shifting in response to daily
news of the virus and its effects. Stakeholders in American education may remember
March 13, 2020, as a particularly remarkable day. Millions of parents and educators
across the United States were informed that schools were shutting down, and in-person
instruction would be temporarily suspended. The shutdowns were initially understood to
be for a short period, but weeks passed and situations surrounding the spread of COVID-
19 (the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2) remained volatile. The reality of long-term
school closures slowly became apparent. The majority of districts remained closed for the
remainder of the academic year (2019-2020), and many endured closures for face-to-face
instruction most or all of the following academic year (2020-2021). What took place
during that time was widespread virtual teaching and learning. As this was a new

platform for the majority of parents, students, and teachers, many issues had to be overcome.

Reports continue to be released indicating concerns about learning loss for many students during the pandemic. Research from the NWEA finds economically disadvantaged, Black, Brown, and Indigenous students fared worse than their middle- and upper-income and White peers. Specific negative outcomes include decreased test scores in math, increased dropout rates, and decreased projected lifetime earning potential due to this learning loss phenomenon (Beetz Fenske, 2021).

Public schools in the U.S. are home to students from a plethora of diverse backgrounds. Immigrant and multilingual (ML) student populations, in particular, continue to rise in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Over 5 million students nationwide qualify for language services under federal Title III guidelines (NCES, 2021). Schools in California and Texas lead the nation in serving these ML students, with each state home to over 1 million students receiving language instruction. Furthermore, North Carolina ranks in the top ten among states hosting immigrant students as well as students receiving language services (Migration Policy Institute, 2019).

As such a large number of students nationally and locally require targeted language instruction and support, it is crucial to take the teaching and learning experiences of this population into consideration. Teachers in English language development (ELD) programs recognize their advocacy efforts for these students as a fundamental part of their profession. Advocacy efforts encompass speaking up for and taking actions to support ML students both inside and outside of the classroom (Linville, 2020).

In response to mandated school closures during COVID-19, ELD teachers cite difficulties experienced by themselves and their students. Both groups felt impacted by pandemic-related stress. Teachers also felt that teaching and learning became less of a priority overall. Multilingual students saw decreased progress in language acquisition, notably in the domain of speaking (Hartshorn and McMurray, 2020). Overall, a major hurdle for ML learners and teachers at this time was a lack of natural, structured, meaningful language engagement in online learning spaces (Hildebrant, 2020).

Problem Statement

The United States hosts students from a wide variety of cultures and linguistic backgrounds. ELD professionals strive to serve those students academically, but also through advocacy work, supporting them and their communities to promote overall social and economic success and sustainability. When schools were closed due to the sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, much changed within our public schools and communities. Social and academic adversities for linguistically diverse students continued and in some instances were intensified during the pandemic (Beetz Fenske, 2021; Hartshorn & McMurray, 2020; Hildebrant, 2020). Therefore, the importance of advocating for diverse students did not cease but became even more critical during this unique time.

Purpose of Study

Nationwide school closures have essentially concluded. However, virtual teaching and learning as a viable education option has been established because of the extraordinary circumstances that occurred in the wake of the pandemic. It is unknown if the need for widespread virtual learning will arise again quickly, as it did at that time.

Additional layers of complexity exist related to when, how, why, and for whom virtual learning may be a viable option for students to continue to access education as opposed to having large gaps in learning if attending school in person is hindered.

North Carolina and surrounding states rank high in the nation for hosting immigrant and ML students in K-12 schools (Migration Policy Institute, 2019). As students in these subgroups do not reach the same academic heights as their monolingual peers (NCES, 2022; Soland, 2019), it is critical that teachers, administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders pay attention to and address the needs of these students, both academically and socially. English language development (ELD) teachers are one such group that works to serve these diverse students.

ELD teachers in general view advocacy work as an essential part of their profession and teaching identities (Linville, 2020). Advocacy practices may include collaborating with content teachers, providing instructional support and modifications, planning and carrying out testing accommodations, translating information for families, and connecting ML students and families with additional resources. With advocacy being an important and prevalent theme of ML student research, this study sought to gain insight into the advocacy experiences of ELD teachers, specifically, what it was like trying to maintain the identity of an ML advocate in a virtual learning world.

Research Questions

I used a phenomenological methodology for this study. In phenomenology, researchers seek to gain insight into participants' lived experiences, or *lifeworld* (Vagle, 2018). The phenomenon explored in this study was the ELD teachers' lived experiences of advocating for their ML students during times of mandated virtual teaching and

learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the theoretical framework's lens of collaboration, data collection and analysis addressed the following research questions:

1. What were ELD teachers' experiences with ML student advocacy during times of virtual teaching and learning?

    1a. What factors impacted advocacy efforts?

2. What lessons learned about advocacy during the pandemic persist in informing their advocacy and collaborative practices today?

Theoretical Framework

The notion of ELD teacher advocacy and teacher leadership strongly aligns with the concept of teacher collaboration. Honigsfeld and Dove (2019) have written extensively on collaborative practices for the benefit of ML learners. Major tenets of collaborative practices I contend are closely aligned with advocacy practices of ELD professionals including program models, curriculum development, instruction and assessment, professional development, and shared leadership. Given the inherently collaborative nature of phenomenological data collection and analysis, I used this notion of collaboration as a framework for my study. I listened to and co-created knowledge with my participants throughout the interview and analysis processes. Furthermore, the end goal for the final fruits of the project is to build and foster collaboration and further advocacy practices for ML students among ELD professionals and their peers and leaders in K-12 schools.

Data Sources

Comprehensive details about research methods for my study can be found in Chapter 3. However, in this and the following paragraphs I introduce key areas of my

methods. In this study, I conducted in-depth interviews with K-12 teachers who were certified to teach ML students and who did so during and after the pandemic-related school closures. I conducted the interviews in person and via virtual methods, depending on the preference, location, and availability of each teacher participant. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and subsequently analyzed, grouping themes that emerged across the interviews. Also, teachers were asked for background and anecdotal information in an initial questionnaire. Additional information and clarification were gained through member-checking activities during the analysis process.

Research Site

I interviewed ELD teachers in and around a large metro area in the southeastern United States. At the time of the interviews, teachers were employed in two different school districts. The area chosen to recruit participants was related to my contacts in the teaching profession. During the interviews, two of the participants were teaching in a large, urban school district in the southeastern US. The other was teaching in a large, suburban district adjacent to the same city. During the school closures and times of virtual learning, two of the teachers were in this same metro area, while one was teaching in a different large, urban city in a different state in the southeast. The diversity of settings also included grade span (one elementary, one middle, and one high school), school (all teachers were in different schools during and after the pandemic), and district (they were all in different districts). Having teachers from these various settings allowed for the possibility of diverse perspectives regarding advocacy practices.

In an effort to respect teachers' availability with minimal interruptions to instructional and planning time, I began recruitment and interviews in the summer

months. One interview as well as all member-checking activity took place at the

beginning of the 2023 school year.

Selection of Participants

I used convenience, criterion, and snowball sampling to recruit three ELD teacher

participants. One participant was a colleague from my graduate program (MAT-TESL).

One was a snowball referral from a colleague I know from my undergraduate program.

The third was a teacher I met by chance in my community. The criteria included teachers

who a) were ELD certified in the state where they taught during the pandemic, b) taught

MLs virtually during the pandemic in a K-12 setting, c) continued teaching after school

closures concluded, and d) had been teaching for at least three years at the time of the

pandemic onset. The teachers shared ML advocacy experiences from three distinct

settings during the pandemic. The sample included teachers from elementary, middle, and

high school settings. One was a K-5 pull-out ELD teacher. One taught sheltered ELA

(English Language Arts) and ELD resource for 8th graders. The third teacher taught

sheltered government and economics to 12th-grade MLs.

I employed a Google Form via the UNC Charlotte secure server to survey and

screen potential teachers and gain interest in participation. I used snowball sampling to

encourage peers to share the questionnaire with others who might have been interested in

sharing their experiences in the study. I contacted the interested participants via email or

text to arrange interviews. I made initial contact with ten potential participants (or

colleagues who might not meet the criteria but could share the questionnaire with their

peers who did). Five of those contacts completed the questionnaire. Three of these

respondents went on to complete the interview and member-checking processes.

Definition of Terms

Advocacy: "the act…of supporting a cause…" (Merriam Webster, 2022). In this context, advocacy refers to the support of MLs and their families by ELD professionals through both academic support as well as actions outside of the classroom. Advocacy often requires collaboration with students' family members, other teachers, other school staff such as registrars or guidance counselors, school and district leaders, and non-school, community partners.

COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures: In March of the 2019-20 school year, most public schools closed for in-person instruction, due to the onset and spread of SARS-CoV-2. For many states and districts, closures continued into the following school year. Teachers had to conduct classes virtually, and students, families, and teachers had to learn to navigate this novel learning environment.

English language development (ELD): This term refers to the programming in place for students who are formally identified and qualify for language support in K-12 schools. ELD programs take many forms like inclusion, pullout, ELD courses (like a block in middle or high school), newcomer or self-contained programs, and dual language and bilingual programs. All programs follow state and federal guidelines for screening, serving, monitoring, and assessing students. Other states may use varied terms like *multilingual development program (MLD)*, *English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)*, *English as a second language (ESL)*, or *English as an additional language (EAL)*. Related to programs is how teachers certified to work in these programs are addressed, i.e. *ELD teacher/professional/practitioner*, etc.

Multilingual Learner (ML): This term refers to a student in K-12 schools who has been formally identified as qualifying for language support services per federal guidelines. Multilingual learner is the most current term used by the school system in which I teach. It relays a more inclusive and asset-based meaning versus other outdated terms. Some other used terms for ML include *English learner (EL), English language learner (ELL), emergent bilingual (EB),* and *limited English proficient (LEP).* Related terms include *long-term ML (LTML), newcomer ML,* and *students with interrupted formal education (SIFE)*.

Title III: This refers to Title III of the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) from the U.S. Department of Education. Title III outlines the requirements under the law for serving MLs and immigrant students in public K-12 schools (Department of Education, 2020). While guiding states and districts on programming, it also protects marginalized students' right to equitable access to education.

Significance of Study

This study aims to benefit both pre-service and in-service teachers who do and will work with linguistically diverse students and families. Given the collaborative nature of the study and its links to advocacy, it stands to reason that both groups will benefit from learning about the importance and impacts of collaborative best practices in ML student advocacy. Teacher educators may use data from advocacy-related studies to inform teacher preparation. Similarly, school and district administrators may strengthen collaborative practices by informing continuing education and professional development opportunities for teachers, office staff, counselors, and other stakeholders. Local, state,

and federal policymakers may also gain insight into the diverse needs of ML students and families in regard to interacting in virtual learning spaces.

Organization of Chapters

This study and its works consist of five chapters: an introduction (Chapter 1), a literature review (Chapter 2), research methods (Chapter 3), research findings (Chapter 4), and a discussion (Chapter 5). In chapter one, I have introduced the topic, problem, purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, an overview of the data collection, and significance of this study. Key terms and definitions are included to guide the reader with regard to a specialized lexicon in the field of ML education. In chapter two, I present current research literature surrounding the major topics of ML education and advocacy as well as online learning in particular during mandated school closures. In chapter three, I present the phenomenological research methods I employed to gather and analyze the study's data. In chapter four, I present the findings from the data analyses. In chapter five, I discuss the findings, make connections to literature and the theoretical framework, and offer limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Mandated school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a new world of virtual teaching and learning in K-12 schools across the United States and the globe. In addition to putting pressure on teachers and schools to provide comparable, effective lessons online, it highlighted and, in many ways, intensified academic and social adversity experienced by diverse students, specifically multilingual learners (Hartshorn & McMurray, 2020). This illuminated a strong need for advocacy for these students by language teachers and other key stakeholders. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the experiences of English language development (ELD) teacher advocacy for their multilingual learners (MLs) during times of involuntary online teaching and learning.

The following literature review first introduces information about linguistically diverse populations in the U.S. particularly in public schools. Second, I discuss the history of multilingual learner education and the variety of ways in which ML students are served in public schools along with the achievement disparities they face. Next, the topic of advocacy is explored, with a particular focus on multilingual learner advocacy by teachers and other key stakeholders as well as factors that hinder ML advocacy. After this, I review literature on online learning with distinct attention paid to information about multilingual learners and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, I present collaborative practices as a theoretical framework for my study.

Linguistic Diversity in the U.S.

No one will ever openly deny that they are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less

worthy, less important, less human. For Christians, this way of thinking and

acting is unacceptable, since it sets certain political preferences above deep

convictions of our faith: the inalienable dignity of each human person regardless

of origin, race, or religion, and the supreme law of fraternal love. (Pope Francis,

2020, p. 30)

In the United States today, culturally and linguistically diverse families and students

make up an integral part of society. Over 20 percent of businesses in America are

immigrant-owned, adding eight million jobs and over one trillion dollars to the economy

(New American Economy, 2022). Religious communities are also increasingly diverse.

For example, nearly 36 percent of U.S. Catholic parishes serve specific culturally and

linguistically diverse worshipers (Gray, 2016). It is no wonder then that American K-12

public schools are serving greater diverse populations as well. In fact, approximately one

in four U.S. schoolchildren come from immigrant households (Camarota, Griffith, &

Zeigler, 2017). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2021), five

million students in public K-12 schools are served in English language programs, often

known as ELD or English language development. This group makes up over 10 percent

of the total school population. Additionally, three-quarters of these multilingual students

are from Spanish-speaking homes (NCES, 2021).

As noted in Chapter 1's Definition of Terms, authors and government

organizations may use terms such as *ML* (multilingual learner), ELL (English Language

Learner), *EL* (English Learner), and EB (Emerging Bilingual) to refer to students

acquiring English in U.S. schools. From this point forward, *multilingual learner* or *ML* is

used to refer to linguistically diverse students in language programs, unless directly

quoting an author who uses a different term. The term ML is less deficit-oriented and more inclusive of students and families who may be acquiring two or more languages as well as those who may be multiliterate (SCDE, 2022a; Wagner & Kabuto, 2021).

Multilingual Students in U.S. Schools

For generations, linguistically diverse students and families have been a part of American culture and society, including public school systems. Unfortunately, a rich legacy of marginalization exists for these citizens in their communities and in the educational arena. Historically, Latin American and Caribbean nations, where many migrants to the U.S. and their descendants originate, experienced centuries of colonization, slavery, genocide, cultural and linguistic eradication, and land dispossession (Jones & Fuller, 2003). Even post-independence from colonization and post-emancipation, cultures often still operate under Euro-centric ideals and discriminatory infrastructures. Meanwhile, global capitalism continues, causing an ever-increasing economic and social chasm. This leads families in developing nations to choose between leaving their homeland for better economic opportunities or trying to survive in poverty (Nazario, 2004).

While the United States is home to people from myriad nations and cultures, there remains a strong cultural stigma toward languages other than English. However, if the Spanish-speaking population of the U.S. were a nation, it would be the fifth most populous country in the world. Despite this vast linguistic resource potential, the U.S. remains steadfast in monolingualism (Calderón, et. al., 2020). The obvious and hidden linguistic borders serve as gatekeeping ideals that spill into public policy in schools (ie. English-only instruction and emphasis on ELD programs). The stance also creates deficit

mindsets and social othering of multilingual students and adults, leading more and more students to experience language loss and, therefore, missing out on the beneficial resource of strong-rooted bilingualism.

Scholars have also found that Latinx students are more likely than their peers to be in high-poverty and more intensely segregated schools (DeMarrais and LeCompte, 1999). Furthermore, race can play a factor in Chicano (American of Mexican descent) student success. In one study, Chicano students who achieved higher levels of post-secondary success were those from less-segregated communities and those with lighter skin than their peers (Nieto, 1999). Jones and Fuller (2003) find that teachers fail to build relationships with linguistically diverse students, assuming they need language support. Students often feel isolated and concerned with how they are viewed and stereotyped by their teachers, who expect them to fail. These historic and current realities are key to understanding power imbalances in communities and schools as well as the need for educational intervention for linguistically diverse students to equitably access the curriculum.

ELD programs

The history of language support for multilingual students in the United States can be traced back to the unanimous Supreme Court decision of Lau v. Nichols (1974). Schools in California were found to be in violation of the Civil Rights Act (1964), due to not providing needed support to Chinese students in English-only school settings. Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act specifically prohibits entities receiving federal funding from discriminating based on race, color, or national origin. These language minority students

in California had previously been segregated and were unable to access the curriculum and ultimately be successful in school without language instruction and support.

Today, linguistically diverse students enrolling in U.S. schools have the right to equitable access to education protected by ESEA or Federal Title III (South Carolina Department of Education, 2022). Enrolling families fill out a language survey at registration. When a language other than English is noted, the student is screened for language proficiency. If the student qualifies, a learning plan is developed and the student can then take part in ELD programs such as pull-out services, inclusion, bilingual courses, or sheltered instruction by a dual-certified instructor. These services vary state-to-state and district-to-district, yet all states are required to comply with Title III regulations, including screening, instruction, monitoring, and annual assessments (Department of Education, 2020).

Achievement and Opportunity Disparities

Despite these key interventions, making education equitable for multilingual students remains a challenge throughout the United States. In 2019, on national exams, fourth-grade Latinx students in North Carolina were outperformed by White peers by 24 percent in math and 26 percent in reading. Results for grade eight exams were similar (NCES, 2022). Multilingual students (those who qualify for language services), specifically, achieved far behind their monolingual peers on standardized tests (Soland, 2019). In fact, over 90 percent of fourth-grade MLs scored below proficient in reading on these national assessments (National Kids Count, 2015). For many scholars, these facts about student achievement do not occur by chance, nor are they problems of genetic insufficiencies, inherent in diverse students (Wiggan, 2007). They are due to what many

refer to as an opportunity gap or compounding social, political, economic, and educational imbalances that make achievement equal to White, monolingual peers nearly impossible (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Delpit, 2003; Hilliard, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lipman, 2004; Milner, 2012; Wiggan, 2007). In addition to the segregation and other social and economic injustices mentioned above (DeMarrais and LeCompte, 1999; Nieto, 1999; Jones & Fuller, 2003), Pease-Alvarez and Samway (2012), cite strict state and federal regulations as factors playing against ML student achievement year over year. These include English-only instruction, scripted curriculum programs, and standardized tests created for monolingual students. It is in these gaps of opportunity that advocacy plays a critical role in moving toward social justice and equitable access and outcomes for multilingual students.

Advocacy

When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Lv 19:33-34, as cited in Pope Francis, 2020, p. 42).

Merriam-Webster (2022) defines *advocacy* as "the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal" (para. 1). The noun, *advocate* comes from the Latin, *advocare*, meaning *to add a voice* (IXL, 2022). For example, an individual may be well-known in the community for their *advocacy* for voting rights, speaking up for the cause they feel is important. Or, one might *advocate* for accessibility for persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Similarly, for teachers of multilingual students, advocacy is an important aspect and an expected role in their professions (Linville, 2020). While teaching may be a

primary goal, ensuring the voices and needs of students and their families are heard is also very critical, especially when those voices have historically been marginalized. Teacher advocacy for multilingual learners can be defined as "teachers' negotiations in an attempt to identify and challenge unjust practices, and strive to ensure students' equitable treatment and access to resources" (Maddamsetti, 2022, p. 232). Unjust practices such as the systemic minoritization of linguistically diverse students and families (Free and Križ, 2022) expose the need for advocacy in favor of these students by strong allies such as ELD professionals and other key stakeholders in the schools and communities. In an instance of such unjust practices leading to the need for advocacy, Free and Križ (2022) find that school systems often minoritize linguistically diverse students and families. The schools expected English language competence and reward those who have it. They assumed students could self-advocate in educational and social situations. Parents (who in this context were migrant workers) were expected to be intensely involved in their children's education. These unrealistic expectations were often incompatible with migrant farm working contexts and highlighted the importance of allies such as ELD professionals and other staff to act as intermediaries and advocates for these students and their families.

Teacher Advocacy

The most common theme in recent literature surrounding ML advocacy is that of the advocacy practices of teachers. Linville (2020) posits that there are two types of ELD teacher advocacy, instructional (within the school) and political (outside of school). Using survey data to shed light on ELD teacher advocacy, it was found that teachers are overall more likely to engage in instructional advocacy, helping the students who are

immediately before them. ELD teachers were more inclined to carry out both instructional and political advocacy efforts when they had higher knowledge of the ELD standards and when they felt that advocacy was supported at their schools. Furthermore, teacher advocacy rates were higher when they had elevated feelings of advocacy self-efficacy, meaning they believe in their capacity to advocate for their students. Greater rates of political advocacy were found when ELD teachers had more years of experience, were teaching in middle and secondary grades, and were racially diverse (Linville, 2020).

In an editorial publication, Ortiz and Fránquiz (2017) give a plethora of advocacy suggestions for ELD teachers that range from instructional to political. To begin, they suggest teachers advocate "for positive school culture for English learners" (p. 241) by actions like creating and maintaining high expectations of MLs, both academically and socially. Next, teachers should advocate "for excellence in instructional practices" (p. 241) in acts like PLC collaboration and promotion of linguistically and culturally responsive practices. Teachers should also engage in and maintain strong relationships with families and communities, helping to reduce cultural barriers and power imbalances. Outside of school, the authors advise that teachers participate in "advocacy for equitable resources" (p. 242), lobbying for equitable funding for school and human resources. The authors further recommend teachers' continual participation in professional organizations that promote learning and continuous improvement of the language teaching profession, as well as lobbying for needed policy changes at local, state, and national levels.

Fox and Salerno (2021) analyze data from a preservice teacher advocacy simulation exercise. The simulated conversations revealed that the students recognized the need to gain the trust and respect of their colleagues before being effective advocates

for their MLs. The data shows how advocating can, at times, be problematic for new teachers or teachers who do not have the trust of their colleagues. The study suggests that simulations such as these can be beneficial in preservice programs to give candidates valuable practice in situations they will encounter in the teaching profession. This can prepare them to offset power imbalances between professionals when the ELD teacher is not viewed as an equal, or if the other professionals hold biases against MLs. The authors state, "...ESL teachers must earn the right to be heard by establishing trust between themselves and their colleagues or community members while also challenging deficit-oriented views that colleagues might hold against ELs" (Fox & Salerno, 2021, p. 10).

Using a systematic analysis approach, Norman and Eslami (2022) reviewed 21 documents on the topic of advocacy for MLs and reported several key points not previously mentioned in this section. First, they found that male teachers were more likely to engage in advocacy than females, and African Americans were more likely than Whites. Teachers who had previously experienced poverty were also more prone to act as advocates for multilingual students. Lastly, teachers who had completed advanced degrees advocated for MLs at higher rates than their peers with only a bachelor's degree. It was also found that teachers who were multilingual themselves were more likely to collaborate with ML families. Similarly, teachers who had significant cultural immersion experiences or who came from multilingual or multicultural backgrounds collaborated with ML families and engaged school colleagues in cultural mediation with more frequency than teachers without intercultural experiences.

In this same vein, Davis and Howlett (2022) find that world language (formerly called foreign language) instructors are strong advocates for multilingualism and their

multilingual students. World language teachers use their agency to build strong relationships with their MLs. They also often push them toward multilingual goals, like the seal of biliteracy, as a way to advance their post-secondary aspirations. World language teachers also work with their administrators, advocating for resources for MLs and expansion of multilingual programs. Additionally, these teachers work collectively with other teachers in professional development, conferences, and networking opportunities. All of these efforts place value on ML students as assets and are important examples of advocacy.

Non-teacher Advocacy

While many studies focus on the actions of teachers, some scholars point out that there is a strong potential for a collaborative nature in advocacy for MLs, including the efforts of schools and district administrators, multilingual family members, and school counselors as key stakeholders. This collaborative advocacy by additional stakeholders can also be referred to as transitive advocacy (Harrison & McIlwain, 2020).

Administrators

To begin, administrators can make a huge impact by advocating for dedicated time for collaborative practices among their ELD and content teachers as well as professional development aimed at bridging the cultural and linguistic gaps between MLs and their teachers (Calderón et al., 2020; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019). Furthermore, administrators and staff should be open and welcoming to multilingual families and the varied ways in which they participate in their students' learning (Calderón et al., 2020; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019). Some factors to be considered include language assistance,

flexible times for meetings, transportation needs, and creating an environment that is welcoming to culturally diverse families.

Family Members

Parents and other family members are also fundamental advocates for linguistically diverse students. For instance, Wagner and Kabuto (2021) report on multilingual families attempting to maintain heritage culture and language in their children via various bilingual education programs. One Spanish-speaking family in the study went to great lengths for their young son to attend a dual-language program that was an hour's train ride from their home. The student had success in the program, but his progress was halted when he reached secondary school, where only world language was offered. Another family, Mandarin-speaking, enrolled their child in a bilingual kindergarten class, hoping for him to learn in both English and their native tongue. This family was also hindered, as the program slowly transitioned from bilingual to English-only instruction as the school year progressed. The family had misunderstood the goals and structure of the kindergarten program. The authors propose that schools and communities collaborate as a form of advocacy for these diverse families. Schools and systems need to better understand families' cultural and linguistic needs and goals, work to include their voices, and implement programs that view language as a resource and not a deficit or problem.

Guo (2022) also presents findings that show the benefits of advocacy efforts among parents of MLs and their school systems. Conducted in Canada, the study found that immigrant families were effective advocates for their children within EAL (English as an Additional Language) programs. Parents took initiative to learn about the programs

and encouraged more equitable policies and practices. The author calls for schools and school systems to recognize parents as "informed…and engage them as collaborators in decision-making to transform schools and educational systems towards educational equity and justice" (Guo, 2022, p. 828).

School Counselors

School counselors are charged with acting as strong advocates for all students, including multilingual students and families. Farrell et al. (2022) find that counselors help provide context on ML student background and culture for teachers and administrators who work with them. Giving space for cultural context is a means to support staff and better understand what ML students are experiencing outside of the classroom that may be affecting their performance and behavior in and outside of school. Counselors also report going above and beyond their typical counseling duties for their MLs, with some examples including connecting them to mental health, language, and social service-related resources in the community while working outside of school hours. Furthermore, counselors describe advocating against issues with systemic inequity and biases, such as rigid and narrow standardized tests created for monolingual students and lowered academic and linguistic expectations of MLs by teachers and other staff.

Conditions Hindering Advocacy

While the goal of advocacy is to help bridge gaps and move MLs toward success, there are times when advocacy can be difficult and even problematic. Overall, if a school is *not* supportive of ML advocacy or if teachers do not see themselves as effective, both teacher and collaborative advocacy can suffer (Linville, 2020). Specific themes that appear in recent advocacy literature pertaining to conditions that hinder advocacy are:

teachers being ill-prepared to advocate, ELD teachers feeling marginalized among their peers, and *English-only policies and ideals*.

Being Ill-Prepared to Advocate

ELD teachers must be well-prepared prior to stepping into ML advocacy roles (Fox & Salerno, 2021). Preservice programs must inform and train teachers to create trust and rapport with their colleagues. Furthermore, teachers must be knowledgeable about multicultural practices and prepared to challenge deficit thinking (Calderón et al., 2020). Without this preparation and action, teachers will fail at their advocacy goals. Ongoing professional development (Calderón et al., 2020), advocacy simulation, and role-playing activities (Fox & Salerno, 2021) are recommended to overcome some of these challenges.

ELD Teachers Feeling Marginalized

ELD teachers feeling marginalized themselves within their schools is another condition that can be problematic in their advocacy efforts (Norman & Eslami, 2022). Teachers report that they are often given "undesirable…noisy…" (Norman & Eslami, 2022, p. 12), shared, or non-permanent workspaces. Many school staff misunderstand what ELD teachers do and see them as teaching assistants or interpreters rather than instructional professionals. These marginalized feelings and negative relationships with peers make it difficult for ELD professionals to advocate for their students. A mutual trust must be established between ELD teachers and their school counterparts for advocacy and collaboration for MLs to be successful (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018).

English-Only Policies and Ideals

Overcoming English-only policies and ideals is another hurdle for teachers wishing to advocate for their multilingual students (Kim, 2022). Overall anti-immigrant

and anti-bilingual sentiments are in direct opposition to language teaching and advocacy efforts that promote equity in schools (Maddamsetti, 2022). World language teachers face similar adversity. Davis and Howlett (2022) report that English-only policies pose frustrations for these teachers advocating for bilingualism and multilingualism among MLs in their programs. Instead of multilingualism being viewed as a great asset, ML students are portrayed as problematic. These long-standing monolingual policies in many states and districts along with the politicizing of immigration perpetuate deficit ideologies, making advocacy work a constant uphill battle.

ELD teachers are also often challenged by content teachers when it comes to scheduling for pullout services, which many see as a disruption. Furthermore, some staff view ML students in deficit terms and have racial and cultural biases (Davis & Howlett, 2022; Fox & Salerno, 2020). On a systemic level, rigid standardized testing and accompanying rules and regulations are also noted as a huge barrier to ML teachers' collaboration and teaching (Calderón et al., 2020). As previously noted, ML students struggle to keep up with monolingual peers on these exams due to language and cultural differences inherent in the exams and their administration (Soland, 2019; National Kids Count, 2015).

Teaching and Learning During a Pandemic

During the mandated school shutdowns beginning in the spring of 2020, virtual teaching and learning became a household occurrence for teachers and American families with school-age children. For most students and teachers, this new avenue for school was a rocky one. Preliminary literature published on pandemic experiences reveals learning loss, economic effects, as well as emotional and safety concerns.

Early post-pandemic studies show students in U.S. public schools experienced learning loss during the pandemic-prompted school closures. Students in economically disadvantaged areas as well as Black, Brown, and Native American students fared worse than their middle- and upper-class and White peers. Math scores on standardized assessments were the most affected for these students. In addition to lower achievement scores, student dropout rates increased. Furthermore, it is estimated that K-12 students will face a six to nine percent decrease in lifetime earnings due to these educational setbacks. This in turn is estimated to reduce the nation's GDP by three to four percent over the rest of the 21st century (Beetz Fenske, 2021).

Studies exploring experiences during the pandemic also reveal concerns endured by teachers. For instance, Kim and Asbury (2020) find that teachers faced feelings of uncertainty (by themselves, their students, and students' families) surrounding the pandemic and the school and governmental responses. Teachers also report being concerned for vulnerable students who were no longer able to access school resources and support while at home.

Multilingual Learners and Online Learning

A large number of students in U.S. public schools require targeted language instruction and support (NCES, 2021). Therefore, it is imperative to consider the teaching and learning experiences of this population during the pandemic. Hartshorn and McMurray (2020) report that both ELD practitioners and ML students were greatly impacted by the pandemic and consequential remote learning experiences. Both groups felt the effects of pandemic-related stress as well as a decrease in prioritization of teaching and learning. Furthermore, ML students' language development slowed,

particularly in the domain of speaking. Hildebrandt (2020) specifically cites a lack of natural, structured, meaningful language engagement as a hurdle facing ML learners and language instructors in online learning spaces. In a report from Thailand, English teachers also shared that they experienced difficulties keeping students engaged as well as attaining language objectives in a purely online environment during the early onset of the pandemic. Technology issues such as bandwidth limitations and accessibility by low-income students are also noted by these teachers (Todd, 2020).

Collaborative Practices as a Theoretical Framework

Recent literature on advocacy for MLs strongly parallels the concept of collaborative practices among teachers and other staff who serve MLs. In fact, researchers such as Hattie (2018) find that strong collaborative practices are directly linked to teacher efficacy and diverse student success. Federal regulations require students identified as MLs to have access to language services, but that often requires that they spend time outside of the content classroom, which can hinder academic language development (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019). Couple this with the findings that ML students are regularly performing lower than their monolingual peers on standardized assessments (Soland, 2019; National Kids Count, 2015) and it is clear that collaboration among ELD teachers and content teachers is essential to ML student success.

> It is certain that ELLs will continue to constitute a growing subgroup of the K-12 student population--growing both in numbers and in diversity. On that account, no educator should enter a school building without understanding who these learners are, where they are from, what their needs are, and how to respond to those needs successfully. (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2015, p. 2)

Here the authors express the need for collaboration among teachers in schools that are ever-increasing in diversity of language and culture. School leaders are called to ensure that *all* teachers, not just ELD instructors, are well-prepared to serve multilingual learners. I present the following fundamental tenets of collaborative practices I view as key areas of advocacy for MLs: program models, curriculum development, instruction and assessment, professional development, and shared leadership.

Program Models and Structures

English language development programs are required by public schools that serve ML students. These programs can appear in many forms including inclusion, pull-out, self-contained, immersion, bilingual, and dual language. In an inclusion setting, MLs and a certified ELD teacher work inside a content or grade-level classroom. The ELD and classroom teacher will collaborate to teach relevant academic language, differentiate, or offer scaffolding or even small group instruction to assist MLs in accessing the mainstream curriculum. Pull-out programs are most common in elementary settings and allow ML students to work with the ELD teacher in smaller groups, focusing on linguistic concepts and academic language skills that support their learning in the mainstream classroom. Self-contained classrooms occur when a school or district has a large number of MLs, particularly newcomers or those students who recently arrived to U.S. schools. Another ML student population that is often self-contained is students with an interruption in their educational backgrounds. The teacher is often dual-certified in the content or grade level as well as ELD. MLs in these classes are offered intensive English instruction and the content curriculum at the same time. In immersion programs, ML students spend a significant portion of their day studying intensive English. In bilingual

programs, students spend a certain percentage of their day learning content in English and another portion of the instructional day learning content in their first or home language. Some bilingual programs in the U.S. are still transitional in nature, meaning the goal of the services is to discontinue the use of the students' home languages and shift to an English-only mode of instruction. Dual-language programs are somewhat different in that they are strategically structured to always maintain and grow content instruction in two partner languages for at least 50% of the school day, and at least through the fifth or sixth grade. While there is much debate in the field regarding the homogenization of dual language programs for middle- and upper-class White students, there is more emphasis now on advocacy for dual language programs to be situated in communities with racio-linguisitcally marginalized populations who seek their children to be multilingual from the onset of their elementary school experiences (Lachance & Honigsfeld, 2023). Student populations at these schools include both native and non-native speakers of the partner language, and both groups in turn gain bilingualism and biliteracy by learning in both partner languages. While these programs have similarities and differences among them, it is important that district administrators collaborate with school leaders, families, and teachers to construct the best model for the needs of their community's students (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019).

Curriculum Development

Collaborative practices call for leaders to reflect on the consideration of MLs in existing standards-based curricula and accompanying goals and assessments. Collaborators are encouraged to advocate for curriculum "adaptations and acceleration" (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2015, p. 45) as opposed to remediation. Making the curriculum

more challenging versus watering it down leads to higher ML achievement. Additionally,

curriculum development should be responsive to the students in each school and district,

taking into account students' cultural backgrounds and existing funds of knowledge. This

allows students to see themselves represented in the materials, share what they know, and

see that their existing knowledge is valued (Calderón et al., 2020).

Instruction and Assessment

Teachers should not be working in isolation. Content and ELD teaching

professionals need dedicated time to engage in a complete collaborative cycle (see Figure

1), including planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection (Honigsfeld & Dove,

2018). Content and language teachers may co-plan because they are co-teaching, or the

language teacher may be offering supportive strategies for the MLs in the content

classroom. Another reason would be that the ELD teacher is providing additional,

parallel, targeted instruction in the ELD classroom that helps MLs gain academic

language specific to that content area.
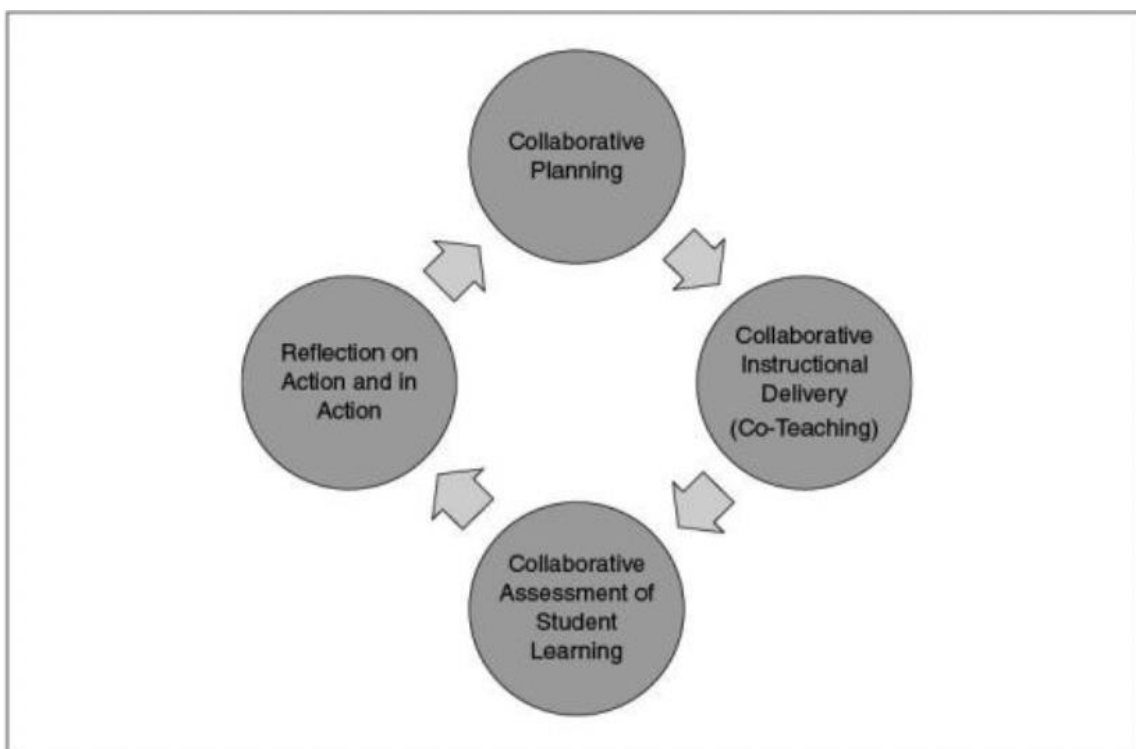
Figure 1

The Collaborative Instructional Cycle (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018, p. 10)

Assessments refer to both formative and summative measurements. Teachers should regularly monitor student progress through classroom assessments like quizzes, journaling, and even daily classwork. Summative assessment data, like from end-of-course exams and annual language assessments, are reviewed by collaborative teams to look at the big picture of growth. Both summative and formative assessments give teams data to reflect upon to decide on ongoing instruction and placement for upcoming semesters/school years. If teachers need to make adjustments to how or what they are teaching, or how students are grouped, this reflection process will help them make those decisions. Working collaboratively in this process helps instructors remain accountable and objective in regard to the decisions they make for their students. Principal Richard Taibi states this collaborative process allows content and language teachers to take

"collective ownership of student achievement" (as cited in Honigsfeld & Dove, 2015, p. 59).

Professional Development

In addition to co-planning, teachers and several types of support staff must recognize the wide diversity present *within* the ML population in order to better serve them from a comprehensive approach. Examples of diversity could include country of origin, generation in the U.S., home language, years in U.S. schools -including if education was interrupted-, and years in an ELD program (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018). Recognizing and affirming these differences can lead to a shift from deficit to asset-based mindsets. Additionally, all teachers who work with MLs should recognize themselves as language and content teachers (Calderón et al., 2020). With this understanding, ongoing professional development and continuing education should occur at district and school levels to steadily familiarize teachers and other staff with the demographics and academic and social needs of their particular student populations. Schools and districts should look to their ELD coordinators and instructors as valuable resources for this collaboration (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019). Regular professional development provides opportunities for teachers to engage in the latest, research-based, best practices for serving ML and other diverse students (Calderón et al., 2020). Furthermore, becoming aware of differences and valuing them as assets promotes positive engagement with ML students and their families. This can lead to more success academically and to families feeling more welcome and a part of the community, further strengthening collaborative possibilities. Overall, fostering collaboration in school spaces is a form of shared advocacy practices, and can counteract the marginalization felt by MLs and their ally ELD teachers.

Shared Leadership

Leaders can be successful in promoting collaborative practices by integrating all of the facets of collaboration mentioned above. State and district leaders should create and support the program model(s) and curricula that work best for their areas based on the population of ML students they serve. Building administrators should be aware of the programs and curriculum and how they can best support the teachers and students. Leaders must simultaneously recognize the diversity of students yet the generally White, monolingual, female workforce in teaching. Leaders are also called to recognize the overall dominant White, Eurocentric culture that exists in public schools (i.e. individualism, independence, etc.) and how this might be unusual for culturally and linguistically diverse students and families. Therefore, administrators are called to listen as a key component of collaboration with students, families, as well as staff members (Safir, 2017). Furthermore, principals must provide goals for collaboration as well as time for teachers to accomplish them. Collaborative leaders also recognize the importance of and carry out relevant and engaging professional development that promotes ongoing collaborative practices, such as team building (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019) and parent partnerships (Calderón et al., 2020).

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

In summary, current scholarly work provides an abundance of information about advocacy for ML students in U.S. public school settings. ELD professionals, content teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents and families all act as advocates for multilingual learners. Additionally, it is apparent that mandated online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic amplified the need for advocacy and educational equity for

diverse learners, MLs included. However, there is little in the way of specific research surrounding advocacy for MLs in virtual teaching and learning spaces. This study seeks to fill this void. Through the lens of collaborative practices, this study explored the advocacy experiences of ELD professionals who took part in mandated virtual teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative, Phenomenological Research Design

According to Mertens (2015), researchers employ qualitative methods to gain an in-depth look at a specific practice or setting. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) add:

> qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world….[it] involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials--case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions…--that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (pp. 3-4).

The following sections outline an explanation of and my rationale for choosing qualitative, phenomenological research methods, the pretext for semi-structured interviews, direct connections to post-pandemic insights, my specific methods used, the application of collaborative practices within the methods, limitations, and my positionality statement.

Rationale

Ravitch and Carl (2021) note that qualitative studies should not be "overly rigid" (p. 124), yet should be intentional and systematic. Mertens (2015) specifically notes the advantage of qualitative methods when studying certain populations, including immigrants, citing the importance of establishing a trusting relationship between researcher and participant. This could also be true of ELD teachers who have themselves been placed in marginalized positions professionally, especially in the tasks of advocacy for their multilingual (ML) students.

Phenomenological research, in particular, hones in on participant experience. Vagle (2018), citing Husserl's notion of a phenomenon, refers to it as *lifeworld*. In phenomenological research, scholars are called to suspend potential theories and allow the participants' lived, subjective experiences to come through in the data collection and analysis (Mertens, 2015). The ultimate goal of phenomenology is to strive for social change (Vagle, 2018).

In the context of my study, phenomenological research is appropriate in that I explore the lifeworld of ELD teachers. These teachers' perspectives matter and are often marginalized because of the marginalized populations of students they serve through educational and advocacy efforts. Therefore, this study strives for social change in schools and teacher preparation by allowing this population to share their stories. Furthermore, given the teachers' and students' marginalizations, the notion of collaboration becomes even more crucial for teaching and learning, solidifying the use of the Honigsfeld and Dove (2019) theory to frame the study.

Interviews: The Pretext

According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), interviewing as research data collection is a "social practice…a form of human interaction…" (p. 1). It is through this interaction that participants share subjective points of view about their experiences or lifeworld. The knowledge constructed in a qualitative research interview comes from an interdependent interaction between the researcher and the participant. The semi-structured lifeworld interview, especially, serves to gain descriptive knowledge of the participants' lifeworld or phenomenon. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) do note a power

asymmetry, stating that the interaction is not between equals, as the interviewer creates and ultimately controls the situation.

In addition to insight into the experiences themselves, Ravitch & Carl (2021) note qualitative interviews provide an understanding of how interviewees make sense of their realities as well as how their perspectives relate to those of other participants. Qualitative interviews are "relational, contextual and contextualized, non-evaluative, person-centered, temporal, partial, subjective, and non-neutral" (Ravitch & Carl, 2021, p.127). To begin, interviews are relational in that trust and reciprocity must be established between the interviewer and the participant. Interviews are contextual and contextualized in that there is an interaction with various people and settings within different socio-political contexts. The interviewer must ask primary questions and follow-up questions that elicit specific responses to understand these varied contexts. Interviews are non-evaluative in that the goal is to understand participants' experiences rather than measure or judge them. Interviews must be person-centered, meaning the participant should be valued as the "expert of their own experience" (Ravitch & Carl, 2021, p. 128), and interviewers should be sensitive to any distress that may be caused by sharing these experiences. Related to context, interviews are temporal in that they are given in a small moment in time. The time of day, experience of the participant, social climate, etc. can affect what is shared. Similarly, interviews are partial, brief, and only give a "snapshot of a moment in time" (Ravitch & Carl, 2021, p. 129). Interviews are subjective and a reflection of the participant's interpretation of their experience. Finally, interviews are non-neutral in that biases will inevitably exist in both the interviewer and the interviewee regarding the topic and experiences being discussed.

This study explores the in-depth experiences of ELD teachers. The methods section below describes the systematic (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) approach to the research. The particular phenomenon I explored was ELD teachers' experiences with practices of advocacy during times of mandated virtual teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as lessons that persist in informing their advocacy practices today. This phenomenon represents routine, yet potentially problematic moments for these teachers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Teachers' understanding of the phenomenon as well as how the collective experiences relate to one another are explored. Through the interview process, I sought to foster trusting relationships (Mertens, 2015) with each participant so that they could share their experiences, their *lifeworld* (Vagle, 2018), with confidence. The widening opportunity and achievement gaps present for linguistically diverse student populations, especially post-pandemic, are evidence that social change (Vagle, 2018) is needed and that a phenomenological approach is appropriate for the proposed research. The ultimate goal is indeed social change (Vagle, 2018), for teachers and education leaders to be aware of ML student and ELD teacher needs so that ML students will ultimately be more successful in school and beyond. The specific research questions this study addresses are:

1. What were ELD teachers' experiences with ML student advocacy during times of virtual teaching and learning?

    1a. What factors impacted advocacy efforts?

2. What lessons learned about advocacy during the pandemic persist in informing their advocacy and collaborative practices today?

Interview Research: Post-pandemic Insights

Interviews can provide rich detail about participants' experiences, which can be found in a recent study of teacher experience during the outset of the COVID lockdown by Kim and Asbury (2020). The researchers used email solicitation through personal and professional contacts to recruit 24 teacher participants. The team then employed semi-structured interviews to elicit in-depth stories about the teachers' experiences during the first weeks of school closures. The teachers were asked to share "three key scenes in their experience of COVID-19…a low point, a high point, and a turning point" (Kim & Asbury, 2020, p. 1069). These semi-structured interviews served to gain insight into how teachers made sense of their realities (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) during this unique time in educational and world history.

Commonly, researchers will combine interviews with another form of data collection such as surveys. Often the surveys precede the interview process as a means of gathering preliminary or demographic information or helping to apply criteria to the participants prior to the interview process. For example, Faez and Valeo (2012) used an initial online questionnaire in their study of the preparedness and efficacy of novice ELD teachers. The survey was distributed via a regional TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) professional organization as well as through personal contacts of the researchers. In addition to demographic and professional background information, the questionnaire used a Likert scale to measure the teachers' feelings of efficacy and preparedness. Of the 115 participants who responded, 66 agreed to participate. The researchers then applied criteria to the responses, identifying teachers who felt the most and least prepared and those with increased and decreased feelings of preparedness after

their teaching experiences. From there, eight teachers were interviewed using seven core questions probing for elaboration on their personal experiences and support received at the beginning of teaching, as well as suggestions for TESOL program development. These questions were followed by four customized questions pursuing the factors contributing to or reasons that teachers felt more or less prepared or their preparedness had increased or decreased. Using preliminary questionnaires can help researchers with limited contacts within the pool of participants they are seeking. It can also help focus the pool of participants to ensure researchers will gather sufficient and appropriate data to answer the research questions at hand.

Beyond criterion sampling, convenience sampling is often used to make contact with potential participants for interview studies. Boling et al. (2012) used this technique in their study of teacher and student perspectives on online learning experiences. They sought participants across a variety of programs. As they were limited in time for their study, they used convenience sampling to engage 16 participants. In addition to this varied method for gaining participants, researchers in this study analyzed artifacts from the participants as supplemental data to support the findings of the interviews.

Sampling, Recruitment, Sites

In this study, I used convenience, criterion, and snowball sampling methods. I first used convenience sampling to reach teachers I know through various professional and academic connections. I have worked as an ELD teacher in three public school districts, one independent charter school, and one community college in the metro area where I conducted my study. Additionally, I have peers with whom I am in contact from my time as a graduate TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) student.

I contacted six teachers I knew from graduate school and the various ELD positions I have held in different districts, framed by purposive sampling. Additionally, I contacted one ELD teacher whom I knew had not taught during the pandemic, but she was willing to share my recruitment communication with her ELD colleagues. I also contacted one colleague (not an ELD teacher) from my undergraduate work who works in schools and had expressed interest in sharing my project with her ELD teams. This snowball method yielded two additional contacts. I made another contact with a teacher I met by chance in my community.

In accordance with IRB protocols, I used a script for text, direct message, and email initial contact (see Appendix A). Altogether, initial contact was established with ten teaching professionals. Beyond the introduction script, I shared the link to an initial questionnaire which was created using Google Forms (see Appendix B). The form served several purposes. First, it included the informed consent required and approved by IRB (see Appendix C). Second, it collected demographic data used to organize and describe my teacher participants and their teaching contexts. Next, the questionnaire served to apply my criterion (explained in detail below) to each potential teacher. Finally, the questionnaire helped me learn about the teachers' willingness to continue with the interview process as well as their availability and interview venue preferences.

While reviewing the questionnaire responses, I used criterion sampling to identify teachers who a) were ELD certified in the state where they taught during the pandemic, b) taught MLs virtually during the pandemic in a K-12 setting, c) continued teaching after school closures concluded, and d) had been teaching for at least three years at the time of the pandemic onset. The decision was made to include only teachers with three or more

years of experience, because NCDPI (n.d) classifies teachers in their first three years of service as *beginning* teachers and provides them with additional mentoring and support as they begin their profession. Furthermore, Linville (2020) finds that teachers with more experience tend to have higher levels of advocacy and identities as ML advocates.

Again, initial contact yielded ten potential participants, either contacted directly by me or through snowball contacts. Of those, five educators completed the Google Form questionnaire. Ultimately three ELD teaching professionals agreed to participate and to have their findings shared as part of the project. These three each completed the interview and member-checking process. The participants included ELD teachers in a large urban city as well as an adjacent suburban area in the southeastern United States. The following profiles offer additional context for each collaborating participant.

Participant Profiles

The ELD teacher participants varied in terms of the grade spans they served and ELD instructional models used. All three participants were teaching in the same metro area at the time of the study, however, not all teachers were in the same district. These profiles highlight more details about the similarities and differences among each participant.

Violet

Violet is a Black, female, dual-certified ELA and ELD teacher. She teaches 8th-grade sheltered ELA for MLs as well as ELD resource classes. At the time of my study, she was in her 14th year of teaching. She teaches in a large urban school district in the Southeastern U.S. She has taught in the same middle school in this district for 12 years. Her middle school hosts approximately 1100 students, with 375 being identified as MLs.

Violet studied abroad in her undergraduate program and uses her Spanish gained during that time as an asset to help the students and families she serves. While there are other languages represented at her school, the ML population is predominantly Spanish-speaking. Violet is a mom of two children who were also learning from home during the pandemic. When asked about advocacy efforts she took in her school prior to the pandemic, Violet included this in her reflection,

> The main situation for me with advocacy has to do with students and their grades. … teachers … even though our school was literally … one-third ML at this point, they have a hard time taking that into consideration when they're grading students and in their instruction … 'How are you delivering the content? Are you making adjustments to their content?'

Violet said she spent (and still spends) a lot of time collaborating with content area teachers, assuring that they are using the supports and modifications put in place via students' ML plans.

Catherine

Catherine is a White, female, multi-certified ELD teacher (she holds licenses in K-6 elementary education, K-12 reading, and ELD). She teaches ELD resource in a pull-out model. At the time of the study, she was in her 18th year of teaching. She teaches in a large suburban school district adjacent to a large urban city in the Southeastern U.S. She splits her time serving ML students at two elementary schools. During the initial shutdown (spring 2020), she was serving one school. The following semester (fall 2020) she began serving the two schools. Each school had approximately 300 students. Catherine also had a chance to study abroad and learn a level of Spanish that helped her

establish and maintain relationships with her ML families. The MLs at her schools also primarily speak Spanish as their home language. Catherine's husband is in law enforcement and was an essential worker during the pandemic. She is also a mother of two. She supported her young child in her virtual class while caring for a preschooler and teaching her own classes simultaneously. When asked about advocacy efforts prior to COVID, Catherine talked about fostering communication with her ML families and about educating her school staff about ML students and policy, "just advocacy really in trying to build those relationships and … break some of those stereotypes. Yeah. And … long-held beliefs, but just with misinformation … with ignorance, you know." Being the only ELD teacher serving two campuses, Catherine recognized that her fellow faculty and staff were ignorant, to some extent, when it came to working with ML students and families. She worked to bridge the gap of information that otherwise would lead to discrimination.

Brandee

Brandee is a White, female, high school government and economics teacher in a large urban school district in the Southeastern U.S. However, at the time of the pandemic, she was teaching in a large urban district in a different southern state. In addition to high school social studies, Brandee also has ELD and Special Education endorsements. Therefore, in her previous state, she was teaching government and economics in "regular" classes as well as in a sheltered instruction model with all ML students. At the time of the study, she was in her 15th year of teaching. Her school at the time of the pandemic had close to 3000 students. Over fifty percent of those students were either MLs, former MLs, or were not classified but spoke a language other than English at

home. The languages most represented at her school were French Creole, French,

Portuguese, and Spanish. Brandee reported that most of the MLs in her sheltered class

were either Haitian or Brazilian. Like the others, Brandee also had experiences abroad

including teaching and leisure in South Korea, Japan, and Zambia. Additionally, Brandee

also shared the experience of being a mother of school-aged children during school

shutdowns. Prior to school closures, Brandee identified as an ML advocate and often

encountered barriers when seeking support with modifying her sheltered curriculum.

When reflecting on her advocacy identity she shared the following, "I would like to be an

advocate and I try, and I go and I use my voice where my kids can't, but …they're just

like, 'no,' you're hitting roadblocks. So … I broke rules …" Even before the pandemic,

Brandee innovated her curriculum and teaching strategies to meet the needs of her ML

students. She did things like allowing students to work in small groups and to use their

home languages in the classroom to help one another understand the content and

activities they were completing. While this was not standard practice for her school or

district, Brandee felt it helped the students gain the knowledge they needed for her

course. It also affirmed their linguistic and cultural strengths and used those strengths as

assets rather than deficits.

Instrumentation

As mentioned in the section addressing sampling, I gathered initial data and

gained participant interest by using a Google Form questionnaire. The questionnaire also

served to check for the criteria outlined above. The questionnaire gathered information

such as teaching experience, settings they teach/have taught in, interest in participation in

the study, and availability for interviewing.

After participants consented to participation and scheduled an interview time and place, I used a semi-structured interview protocol to guide my conversations with them (See Appendix D). Prior to the interview, I introduced major topics (such as advocacy views prior to the pandemic and advocacy experiences during the pandemic) via text, DM, or email, in order to give the teachers a chance to reflect on their experiences prior to the interviews. Since the times of virtual teaching were a couple of years in the past, this helped avoid rushed responses that may have been less inclusive of key elements of their experiences. The main topics I presented prior to the interviews included: their ideas on ML advocacy, elements of virtual learning that supported or hindered advocacy, and their experiences with students, families, other teachers, and leaders during the COVID-19 school closures.

Data Collection

The bulk of the study's data came from one in-depth interview with each participant resulting in thick descriptions for analyses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The interview approach included participants' individual demographics, their current educational contexts, and some details regarding their cultural backgrounds. In this way the data analysis process allowed me to analyze participants' insights connected to the research questions, bringing their experiences to life via their quotes.

Prior to beginning interviews, I asked my participants to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix C). I used a template provided by UNC Charlotte. The consent explained the purpose of the study, the risks of participation, and the process of data collection, storage, and analysis. The participants were also informed of their rights to

terminate their participation at any time without repercussion. I also gave participants the opportunity to ask questions or for any clarification after reviewing the consent.

Once participants consented to participate, I contacted them via text, direct message, or email to set up a time that worked best for their interviews. The method (in-person or video chat) for the interviews was determined based on each participant's preference and availability. Violet and Catherine participated via Zoom, while Brandee's interview was conducted in person. The interviews were semi-structured, using the interview protocol noted above while allowing for additional follow-up questions and clarifications throughout the interview process. The interviews' duration ranged between 30 and 55 minutes.

The virtual interviews were audio recorded via Zoom software and the in-person interview was recorded using Quicktime. The recordings were stored as .m4a files on my UNCC secure server Drive account, and the files on my laptop were erased after the upload to Drive. Using audio-only recordings allowed for the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. I used Temi transcription software to transcribe the interviews verbatim. The accompanying audio recordings allowed me to check the transcriptions for accuracy and fix any errors the software made. The interview recordings and transcriptions are to be kept for at least one year on the secure server Drive account.

Additional Data Sources

In addition to interviews, I utilized the preliminary questionnaire responses as additional data sources. This data was mainly contextual in nature, like years of teaching experience, courses taught, etc. One participant also included details about her family's

pandemic lockdown experiences in an open-ended question asking them if there was anything else they wanted to share prior to the interview. Beyond the questionnaire and the interview data, I asked follow-up and clarification questions to each participant via text and email as I worked through the analysis process. After my analysis, I completed member-checking activities. I sent each participant an introduction text and an email with a copy of my findings chapter. The document was unique to each of them, and I had all of their input highlighted so it was easy to locate. I gave them commenting rights to their respective shared documents so they could make changes or comments. This allowed participants to share more in-depth and ensure their experiences were accurately understood and portrayed.

Data Analysis

I used inductive coding methods to approach "the analytic enterprise with as open a mind as possible," allowing the codes to come from the interview data (Saldaña, 2021, p. 41). After transcribing the interviews, I printed the transcriptions and began the analysis process. My data analysis for the interviews followed a whole-part-whole analysis process (Vagle, 2018). First, I began with a holistic reading of the transcripts to familiarize myself with the material. Next, I read line-by-line and began marking the text and making anecdotal notes in the margins to capture my thoughts related to the connections to research questions and patterns in the data. From my marked-up hard copies, I transferred key quotes onto separate spreadsheets, one for each participant's interview. I assigned short phrases or codes to each quote. Then, I looked at all sets of quotes holistically to begin organizing the codes into themes. Finally, these themes were organized into categories. The majority of the categories were convergent, meaning the

themes were ones that participants had in common. There were also divergent categories

that applied to one or two teachers, not all three. All of these themes are outlined in the

findings chapter. As mentioned above, I used member-checking, or member validation, to

confirm my understanding of each participant's findings and make revisions throughout

the analysis process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

<div align="center">**Collaborative Practices in Research Methods**</div>

The goal of gathering data from ELD teachers was to learn about their authentic

experiences with advocacy for their ML students during the time of COVID-19-related

school closures. Using phenomenological methods, such as the in-depth, semi-structured

interview, was inherently collaborative, as I worked with teachers to co-create knowledge

surrounding their experiences, or their *lifeworld* (Vagle, 2018). The questions and

responses in the interviews had a great potential to touch on many of the tenets of

collaborative practices for ML success such as program models used, the nature of their

ELD curriculum, instruction and assessment practices for MLs, and engagement with

leadership before, during, and after the pandemic. Finally, when analyzing the interview

data, I took a collaborative approach. The task of member-checking with each participant

verified that I understood their experiences correctly and presented their voices with

fidelity in my analysis.

<div align="center">**Limitations**</div>

There were several elements of my study that presented limitations, including

sample, context, and my identity. First, because of the time constraints of completing a

dissertation, the sample size was relatively small, with only three teachers. However, an

offset to the limitation of a smaller sample size is the thick descriptions that emerged in

the data set of in-depth interviews. Another offset of the limited sample size is that my sample included all levels of K-12 ELD instruction: one elementary, one middle, and one high school teacher. There was some variation in race and years of experience, but otherwise, the group could be considered relatively homogenous. Also, while I had the privilege of interviewing teachers from multiple states and districts, the context was limited to the southeastern region of the U.S. Even though the COVID-19-related shutdowns affected the nation and globe, this regional, urban focus may limit the generalizability of the study. Finally, while I took a collaborative approach to co-creating knowledge with fellow teachers, I recognize that I am in a terminal degree program. As the leader of the study, this potentially posed a power imbalance among myself and my participants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). These dynamics had the capacity to alter how participants responded during interviews and on surveys. My identity as an ELD teacher and ML advocate also influenced my desire to carry out this study and framed my lens of analysis.

Positionality Statement

At the time of this study, I served as a part-time English Language Development teacher at a high school in Gaston County, NC. I pulled ML students in small groups and one-on-one for targeted language support. I began this position in the spring of 2023. Prior to this school, I served elementary, high school, and continuing education adult MLs in three counties and two states. Overall, I have been working with MLs in the classroom since 2008. I gained my master's in TESL in 2010. I began the Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction program in the fall of 2017.

I am a bilingual, native English speaker. I am a first-generation college student. My father gained his training for his career in engineering in the military. My mother attained her associate's in nursing when I was in elementary school; my dad also received an associate's a few years later. My brother and I both hold advanced degrees in our fields. We grew up in a small town in the Piedmont region of North Carolina with a large immigrant population in the 1990s, fueled by manufacturing jobs in our area. I believe that having linguistically diverse peers as friends my whole life contributed to my desire to pursue linguistics and ultimately serve this population in our public school systems.

It was during my early years as a K-5 ELD teacher that I realized how advocacy work is essential to teaching MLs. I often found myself walking the fine line between being diplomatic and professional while also being a "mama bear" of sorts for my linguistically diverse students and their families. I went head-to-head with teachers, office staff, testing coordinators, and administrators, advocating for my students' academic and sociocultural needs. I advocated for resources, classroom space, testing accommodations, instructional modifications, and sometimes just plain human kindness and compassion. It was not long into my teaching career before advocacy was a clear part of my identity, and I soon realized that I wanted to affect change at a greater level. The constant need for ML student advocacy inspired me to join this doctoral program, in the hopes that I can better prepare the next generation of teachers, as well as influence change in school policy via research and writing.

The current study seeks to understand and share the lived experiences of ELD teachers who taught remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. This global virus outbreak and its massive impacts have been felt in almost all corners of the globe. In the United

States, businesses and public entities quickly created strategies to serve clients and the community from home-based offices. Countless people were laid off or furloughed, and many businesses closed for good. According to the NCES (2019), U.S. public schools served over 56 million learners in the 2019-20 school year. In March of that year, students (and their families) quickly found themselves attending school virtually.

The study is personal for me in that I, too, was attempting to teach and maintain communication with my students and their families during the at-home learning time. I am also a parent. At the time of the COVID-19 onset, I had a second grader in a mainstream class, a kindergartener with an extensive IEP, in a self-contained exceptional children's class, and a preschooler who was in a full-time early education CATE program at my high school. In addition to serving as essentially four classrooms and a therapy arena, our home was also an office for my spouse, who worked in IT for a large financial company. Some privileges that I feel positively impacted my work at home were readily available and reliable utilities (including high-speed internet access), a two-story home in which we could separate learning and work, and two adults with careers that allowed us to work from home without significant financial disruption.

Perhaps the most important part of my identity and positionality is my faith. I firmly believe that as a Catholic Christian, I am called to advocate for others. This has taken form in my passion for serving culturally and linguistically diverse students and families in our schools. The Rule of Saint Benedict calls for hospitality and that "all guests who arrive be received as Christ" (Dominicus Scribe, 787). Similarly, Christ Himself reminded us that "'...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me'" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Bible, 2023, Mat. 25: 40). I feel

advocacy for my multilingual students is the link that ties my faith to the work I do in public schools and for the change I wish to enact in teacher preparation.

During the pandemic, families of all sizes and styles converted their homes to workspaces and did the best they possibly could to balance home and work and children's education simultaneously. Being a teacher and parent during COVID-19 was challenging. The lens I bring to this study of teachers' lived experiences during virtual learning certainly reflects my own experiences, including my faith. I consciously acknowledge my own positionality while opening my mind to new and different experiences that I encountered during this study. While the participants may share some commonalities with me, I remember that no experience (even if endured globally) has only a single story (Adichie, 2009).

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to learn about the lived experiences of English language development (ELD) teachers advocating for their multilingual (ML) students during times of mandated virtual teaching and learning brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020. The following questions guided my research:

1. What were ELD teachers' experiences with ML student advocacy during times of virtual teaching and learning?

     1a. What factors impacted advocacy efforts?

2. What lessons learned about advocacy during the pandemic persist in informing their advocacy and collaborative practices today?

The ELD teacher participants who contributed to this research shared their lived experiences surrounding advocacy for their ML students. They shared experiences from a K-5 pullout classroom, middle school sheltered ELA and elective ELD courses, as well as a high school sheltered government and economics class. Prior to the pandemic, they all had some degree of identification as ML advocates. There were converging themes that each of the three participants experienced as well as divergent themes that only one or two experienced. The remainder of this chapter uses the aforementioned research questions to organize and expound upon the findings of the study. Within each research question, themes are presented that emerged from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews with ELD teacher participants. The graphic below (Figure 2) offers a visual depicting the themes that emerged from the research questions.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐                                 │
│ │ RQ1: Advocacy Experiences            │                                 │
│ │   *Collaboration with:               │                                 │
│ │      ● ELD Teammates and Other Teachers │                              │
│ │      ● Non-Teaching School Staff     │                                 │
│ │      ● Parents and Families          │                                 │
│ │      ● Community                     │                                 │
│ │   *ELD Teachers' Individual Efforts  │                                 │
│ └──────────────────────────────────────┘                                 │
│        ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐  │
│        │ RQ1a: Factors Affecting Advocacy                             │  │
│        │                                                              │  │
│        │ *Advocacy Support +          *Advocacy Hindrances -          │  │
│        │   ● Other Staff                ● Student Engagement          │  │
│        │   ● Parents and Families       ● Family Needs                │  │
│        │   ● The Community              ● Non-ELD Teachers and Staff  │  │
│        │   ● School District            ● Administration/District     │  │
│        │     Infrastructure/Technology  ● Virtual Learning Space/     │  │
│        │   ● Students' Self-Advocacy      Technology                  │  │
│        │              ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐│  │
│        │              │ RQ2: Lessons Learned                        ││  │
│        │              │   *Connections with ML Students and Families││  │
│        │              │   *Maintaining Community Relationships      ││  │
│        │              │   *Empathy                                  ││  │
│        │              └──────────────────────────────────────────────┘│  │
│        └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 2

Visual of Thematic Findings

Research Question 1

What were ELD teachers' experiences with ML student advocacy during times of virtual teaching and learning? This question yielded responses centered mostly around ways in which the ELD teachers collaborated with others to advocate for their ML students during the COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures. The themes included collaboration with *ELD teammates and other teachers, non-teaching school staff, parents and families,* and *the community*. There were also some examples of how the ELD teachers made *individual efforts* to support their students academically and socially.

Collaboration with ELD Teammates and Non-ELD Teachers

During this incredibly unique time in their careers, ELD teachers worked collaboratively with both their *ELD teammate*s as well as *non-ELD teachers*, like classroom and content teachers, to advocate for the needs of their ML students. They

advocated by getting students supplies and technology needed to learn from home. They also simply checked on students and worked to keep them engaged in virtual learning.

ELD Teammates

To begin, two of the three participants reported advocacy efforts that included work with an ELD colleague. Violet and Brandee were both in schools with high ML populations, therefore they had other ELD colleagues in their buildings. Violet, the middle school ELD teacher, shared a project that she and her team took on early in the pandemic.

> Calling parents over and over again … my team … we went and we made bags and delivered them too. I don't know, that was technically what we were supposed to do. … We made sure these kids had all of their school supplies that they needed, and we delivered bags and gave their parents contact to make sure they knew how to get in contact with us if they needed more things.

Violet and her team worked together on this task at the beginning of the school shutdowns, even though it was not a school or district-sanctioned activity. They found out what their students needed, organized themselves and the items, and started delivering them. They also made sure to establish communication with families to keep that door open for future needs.

Brandee, the high school teacher, also reported working with the ELD team at her school. In her case, it was her ML coordinator helping out,

> She would go to the home, she would do home visits … to make sure that they had the resources. At one point I had [ML] students that weren't able to get their computers or were having trouble with Wi-Fi … We were going to their homes and setting it up for them. Like driving computers to their house.

Students in Brandee's school did not all have devices prior to the pandemic shutdowns, so getting them established with equipment and Wi-Fi was a top priority. She also mentioned that her ML coordinator made home visits and phone calls when students were not showing up to virtual classes.

> Our [ML] director, she also was … from Haiti and she did not play. So if I contacted Ms. D and I said, 'I'm missing this person and this person hasn't been in my class for two days virtually,' she'd go to their house. 'Cause she's like, 'I have a Haitian mother and I know what it is like. And the second their mother knows that they're not logging in, there's a problem.'

Brandee saw the diverse staff members she worked with as valuable assets and connections to her students' community and families. This collaboration helped to keep students engaged in virtual learning.

Non-ELD Teachers

When it came to instances of working with non-ELD instructors, such as content or classroom teachers, two of three participants also offered examples. Catherine, the elementary ELD teacher, was able to use the relationships she had with her students' families to help connect them with their classroom teachers. "... other teachers were doing home visits and so and weren't as comfortable … in the community. And so I would travel with them to do that. Just being more familiar with the families and the neighborhoods."

Similarly, Brandee collaborated with other teachers to check in on students' well-being. She worked with the ELA teacher with whom she had ML students in common. "I would touch base with Ms. E, like, 'I haven't seen this kid in three days'... Ms. E was also an immigrant from Haiti. And so she spoke French Creole and she … also spoke

Portuguese, because she was amazing." Just like Ms. D, the ML coordinator, Brandee greatly valued her teammate, Ms. E. She knew the linguistic and cultural connection Ms. E had with the students and families was a critical factor in communicating with them and keeping the students engaged.

Collaboration with Non-Teaching School Staff

Non-teaching staff also played a big part in the advocacy efforts of the ELD teacher participants during the pandemic. There were two types of non-teachers that emerged in the interviews: bilingual staff members and social workers. Collaboration with these staff members primarily revolved around student safety.

The participants each had multilingual staff helping in various advocacy activities. For some, it was other teachers or ELD staff. For Catherine, the elementary ELD teacher, it was a collaboration with her school's bilingual treasurer. Like the others, Catherine and her colleague also performed home visits. "... we did not have our school's approval. We did not have our school's, you know, blessing on this. But she and I made home visits … and stood outside to just put eyes on these kids." Like Violet, Catherine did not have explicit direction from her school or district, yet the safety and well-being of her students were enough to motivate her and her colleague to make these visits. Being that her ML population was much smaller and did not warrant multiple ELD teachers, having this additional bilingual staff ally was an important resource for Catherine's school.

Violet utilized the social worker at her school to check on student safety. "... like talking to the social worker to make sure we knew where those kids were at the time … and that was the big goal … during the pandemic, was making sure they were safe and had what they needed." Just like the others, Violet and her team were concerned with student

safety. When students were not participating in virtual lessons, she made the social workers aware and they took action, checking on student safety and needs.

Collaboration with Parents and Families

While collaboration with faculty and staff played a major role in ML advocacy, parent and family collaboration was also significant. All three participants spoke of making contact with families, either directly or in collaboration with other staff members. As noted above, initially, they sought to check on student safety and ensure kids had what they needed to be successful in virtual learning. Catherine also shared a few instances of collaborating with families later in the pandemic via online teaching. "... building those family relationships, that I do miss. I do miss the little brothers and sisters coming on and saying, 'hi, Mrs. C,' and showing me their stuffed animals and what they had colored that day." Catherine reminisced on the times when her students' siblings were joining their virtual class sessions. She was able to include them and validate their families' situations, with everyone home and participating in each others' lives so closely during lockdowns. In the same context, Catherine shared, "We had … i-Ready packets, I put together some materials, some vocabulary, and frankly things that the entire family, you know, would be beneficial for them … a lot of healthcare phrases and that type of stuff." Later she mentioned, "I could record videos … and so, so they were able to play that back with their entire family." She took the time to create lessons that would be beneficial to the whole family and record them so they could access them when it was convenient for them.

Collaboration with the Community

Another considerable contribution to advocacy for MLs came from outside of the school in the form of community members and non-profit organizations that the ELD

teachers relied on for support. Two out of three participants recounted ways the support of their communities benefited their ML students. To begin, Brandee talked about an advisor who joined her students to talk to them about post-secondary opportunities, "... the [college and career] coordinator … and she was over, like, she was … the representative at our school that was in charge of help, like college and career bound. And so I got her to come in and start doing … this virtually." The community program helped students in their district with college and scholarship applications, job placement, etc. The coordinator was able to get a lot of the online and paper documents translated into languages Brandee's students needed. This was in contrast to the school's resources which were usually only in English or Spanish.

Another noteworthy relationship among ELD teachers and community members was found in Catherine's experiences. She partnered with a non-profit in her area that provided gift cards (for food, clothing, medicine), school supplies, health information, clinics, etc. to Latinx members of her community. Catherine was also approached by friends and family who had the financial means to donate to her students. She collected close to $2000 to purchase gift cards that were used to help families who had lost employment during the pandemic.

ELD Teachers' Individual Efforts

The final theme of research question one included ways in which the ELD teachers took individual action to advocate for their ML students' learning. Brandee, for example, made adjustments to her curriculum and assessments,

So, I also altered my curriculum. I went through and determined what was gonna be most necessary and what was not … I just took it, if I'm being honest, into my

own hands because I had to cover a certain amount of work in a certain amount of
time …

She knew that time constraints as well as a new online model were hindering her students
from achieving all of their normal semester goals, so she made the goals more attainable
and realistic for what their learning environment now looked like. Brandee also talked
about approving the use of tech tools that were previously avoided by some teachers,

Google Translate, you know, a lot of our [M]L kids have used that as a crutch for a
very long time. And a lot of teachers frowned upon it, but in the pandemic, I was
like, 'open up Google Translate'... because, I mean, they would still have to submit
their work in English … they did not have interpreters in the classroom. They did
not have me there.

Brandee recognized that students did not have the same resources at home in terms of
face-to-face instruction or bilingual teachers that they had in school. She allowed them to
use a resource readily available that could increase their comprehension and efficiency.

A further example of ELD teacher's individual efforts for advocacy came from
Catherine, "I set up office hours, so the kids could log on, and we could have that face
time and check in…build that connection." Offering this additional connection
opportunity helped her to strengthen relationships with her students and their families.

Summary of RQ1

The ELD teacher participants shared many examples of ML advocacy that took
place at their schools during the pandemic. They collaborated with their ELD teams and
other content and classroom teachers. They found bilingual office staff and social workers
to be great assets for their ML learners. They fostered relationships with students'

families. They made valuable community connections. Finally, they took solo actions that were in the best interest of their MLs and their learning in this new virtual environment.

Research Question 1a

What factors impacted advocacy efforts? In order to convey in-depth information and organize the participants' experiences related to the factors impacting advocacy, I chose to group this information into two themes: *advocacy support* and *advocacy hindrances*. This proved fruitful as the teachers had a lot to share about both supporting and hindering factors.

Advocacy Support

ELD teachers found many people, relationships, and resources supportive of their advocacy for MLs. Sub-themes related to these helpful factors included *other staff members, parents and families, the community, students' self-advocacy,* and *school district infrastructure/technology.*

Other Staff Members

All three ELD teacher participants reported staff members who specifically made advocating for their MLs easier. First, as Catherine described above, she collaborated with the office treasurer who was bilingual. Likewise, Brandee referred to the ML liaison at her school. While she felt the liaison was spread pretty thin, Brandee knew she was a valuable resource for her team and students. Violet mentioned both a bilingual parent liaison as well as bilingual front office staff that helped foster communication with multilingual families. She also noted that she appreciated the readily available support from her school guidance counselors and social workers during the school closures,

I'll say the, the school counselors … it was easier to get in contact and reach out to them and the social worker than it was during the school year … I feel like during the pandemic, since that's all they were doing all day, it was a lot easier to get them to make phone calls and like, reach out on your behalf.

Violet found that, despite so many needs, the counselors and social workers rose to the challenge and were accessible to support students.

Parents and Families

Parents and family were a part of each participant's experiences, however, Catherine in particular spoke of engagement and support from the family members of her students. For instance, she reported parents being very engaged once digital communication was established and they were able to reach teachers with questions via the online tools her school was using. She also found that because so many families were home together, many of the members (who were learning English themselves) wanted to participate in her virtual lessons with her ML students,

… at one point I was working with a student, and then I kind of noticed movement on either side of the screen … So I was teaching students … with a more varied background, you know that spoke Arabic and Farsi … And so I looked and there were three women in surrounding him … so like, they're learning too.

It was from this instance that Catherine began collaborating more with families in terms of the types of lessons she provided. From that point, she began creating lessons that everyone could benefit from, like supermarket phrases, healthcare vocabulary, etc.

The Community

Involvement by community members and organizations was a valuable asset shared by two of three participants in recalling the support they had for advocacy. As previously detailed, Brandee found the college and career coordinator to be very relevant for her high school seniors at an extremely rare and uncertain time in educational (and world) history. Additionally, Catherine made mention of the generous friends and neighbors who gave monetary donations to her students, as well as the non-profit organization in her city which was a steadfast partner in helping her Latinx families.

School District Infrastructure/Technology

Two of three ELD teacher participants noted support from the district in the form of infrastructure or technology that was in place or put into place quickly to make the transition to virtual teaching and learning more seamless. For Violet, her district already had Chromebooks issued to students in a one-to-one format. Therefore, the students were already familiar with the devices and could begin engaging in virtual classrooms with little effort. The district then needed to push out Wi-Fi services (hot spots) to families who needed it. Violet noted that the school and district went to great lengths to make sure students were able to connect.

Catherine also conveyed that technology strengths played an important supporting role in advocating for her ML students. In her case, it was software available to teachers and families, "Class Dojo … had the Google Translation. And so now all of the sudden the parents are just texting and going back and forth. That, that was a great piece." For Catherine's ML students and families, access to Class Dojo (a classroom management and

communication tool) and Google Translate software on student devices established virtual contact and fostered communication between school and home.

Students' Self-Advocacy

One participant, Brandee, shared examples of how her students began self-advocating during the pandemic. While it was more of a divergent theme, Brandee was very enthusiastic about these occurrences,

> There were always a few students who were there every day, and they were learning how to advocate for themselves. So they would log in and 'Ms. B, this is what I need,' or 'Ms. B, can you meet with me at this time for like a one-on-one?' or what have you. And so while I felt maybe disconnected to the full, the whole of the class, there were five or six that were like clockwork.

Brandee realized that the connection to her class had diminished during virtual instruction, however, she was encouraged by several students who were motivated to stay connected and self-advocate for their learning. Another example she gave was related to the students' confidence in navigating virtual systems,

> … maybe the kids' personality for whatever reason, they had a little bit more confidence than the general population … many of my students, especially at that age, they are, *in English* [emphasis added], running their families. So, filling out paperwork for Mom and Dad. Some of them were actually really good at navigating virtually because they've had to do it for their families since coming here.

This was a remarkable observation for Brandee, that her ML students came to school (and to the pandemic shutdown) with a cultural capital that their non-ML peers may be lacking.

They had been relied on by their families as leaders in English and to navigate social systems. Therefore, it gave them a leg up in succeeding in a virtual learning world that was generally dominated by English.

Advocacy Hindrances

While there was a great deal of support available to MLs and their teachers, there were also situations during COVID-19-related school shutdowns that hindered advocacy and collaboration. Sub-themes related to hindering factors were *student engagement, non-ELD teachers and staff, family needs, administration/district,* and *virtual learning space/technology.*

Student Engagement

All three participants talked about the importance of engagement in virtual learning in one way or another. However, the middle and high school teachers experienced ML students' lack of consistent engagement in their virtual classes. Violet and Brandee both shared that getting and keeping kids fully engaged in learning was a challenge. In Violet's case, even with all of the technology infrastructure provided, students still did not participate at the level she hoped,

> I'll say that as a teacher … the main challenges were students connecting to the internet … Although the district provided access, devices for the home, like the home internet or hotspots or whatever, we still had a hard time getting students to, to turn their cameras on and fully engage in class. So they might show for the first couple minutes to be counted present. Then you would hear crickets.

Beyond simply the students' efforts, Violet found the virtual learning environment a hindrance in engaging her students in valuable language learning lessons,

It's so hard when they're behind the screen … When they're in your classroom,

you can make sure they're gonna answer the question. You can make sure you're

going around calling on everyone, being sure they're writing things down. But

when they're behind the screen, there's only so much you can do, 'Write it down,

show me.' But if they don't show me, I can't really make them show me anything.

Or I can't really make them, you know, participate in class. Or I can't make them

turn their cameras on. I can ask them to. So it becomes like … whatever the

student's willing to do on their end becomes much more of a factor when they're

behind the computer than it does in the classroom.

Violet's students quickly learned that the expectations for online engagement were still

being established for the school and district. They could be counted "present" at the

beginning of the lesson, but there was little repercussion if they stopped their involvement

in class. Violet mentioned that every so often she and her colleagues would remind their

students that they would call their parents if they were not participating, and that helped to

re-engage them for a short time.

Violet's second observation was that perhaps the students were self-conscious of

their appearance or the appearance of their homes on video calls, "Maybe they didn't want

us to see the background of their home. Maybe like they … didn't want us to see their

face." Violet came to this conclusion after witnessing her own daughter struggle with

anxiety about sharing her video during virtual lessons at home.

Brandee also found engagement to be a major challenge in helping high school ML

students continue to learn through the pandemic. She first mentioned decreased

engagement when she talked about the positive aspect (detailed above) of her five or six

students who were always in the virtual sessions, without fail. While it was a good thing that several students were committed to continue learning, it meant that 19 or 20, the majority, were not. Brandee gave another detail of lack of engagement as a hindrance when talking about the fall 2020 semester, after the initial shutdowns in the spring,

> … that year that we were virtual kids did have an option to go face-to-face, but … because I teach high school, and I specifically teach 12th grade, they … just didn't. They weren't gonna come … So from November until June I was teaching from my classroom, that was empty.

In November 2020, teachers at Brandee's school returned to campus, and students had an option to come in, but they chose not to. This meant that engagement in virtual lessons continued to suffer.

Family Needs

Another hindering factor that all three participants shared dealt with the ML students' family needs, such as the need to continue working, even when the students were home alone. Similarly, many students themselves took on jobs to help support their families during this difficult time. Catherine, for instance, found that many of her elementary MLs were home alone, and their parents were unable to help them with their lessons or attend virtual information sessions. Violet also recalled a situation of kids home alone,

> We had one little newcomer who, mom … left them home all the time, but no one, but she would never get online … But then the police went to the house because the neighbor thought someone broke into the house, and there was a poor little girl

there with *all* [emphasis added] these little kids that she was taking care of during

the pandemic.

Violet and her team had been trying to get in contact with this particular child, and it was

not until the police were called by a neighbor that they learned why she would not open

the door. Because the child's (and other's) parents were working, she was being relied on

to care for many children in her neighborhood. Violet also noted instances where students

who were 14 or 15 started working during the initial shutdowns and then continued jobs

the following school year when students were back on campus.

The MLs in Brandee's class also took advantage of the flexible time virtual

learning afforded them,

… my students were 17, 18, and some of them 19, you know, just because of their

situations and coming from their home countries when the pandemic happened,

depending on what was going on with their family … Many of my students went to

work.

Brandee, like the others, recognized working and providing an income for the home was a

top priority for many MLs and their families. This hindrance overlaps with student

engagement, as the teachers reflected that engagement suffered when students were left

alone without guidance for their virtual lessons, were caring for other siblings or

neighbors, or they themselves were working outside of the home.

Non-ELD Teachers and Staff

Two of three teachers also shared one or more examples of teachers or other staff

that made advocacy more difficult. This challenge was generally associated with non-ELD

staff's bias and ignorance. Catherine shared a particularly disheartening instance when

attempting to collaborate with a colleague for a student's accommodations and beginning-of-the-year paperwork,

> … the political climate at the time … there were some teachers that held particular beliefs that were really contrary to … the development of … our students … I had a colleague that when we were sitting down to look at some … intervention groups and plans … she's like, 'well, when their parents can show their papers, then I'll be willing to fill out all this paperwork, but this is a big ask … and they're not supposed to be here anyway.'

Catherine found this lack of compassion and lack of knowledge of the laws in public education a huge hurdle to overcome.

Violet also contributed examples of discrimination linguistically diverse families faced. At her school it was in the front office, "It's well, you know what, to be really honest, they just assume everyone in the school needs a translator … if they're not Black … Just being honest, because … the school is mostly Hispanic, so they just assume." While the assumption that families could not speak English and needed interpretation to navigate the school may have been well-intentioned (ie. offering help to get what they needed more efficiently), Violet viewed it as another layer of marginalization that her Latinx families faced.

Like Catherine, Violet also struggled to get content teachers to collaborate with her when co-planning or when she would offer help with providing lesson modifications or accommodations for MLs,

> ... well, you know, this … to be true probably through teachers, just lazy. No one was really asking for help anymore. Like 'How do I differentiate?' I think it was

more like, 'Here it's online, do it, do it, or not.' It became one of those things, but

they weren't really asking or reaching out for … help with how to differentiate the

material, modify, or amplify.

Violet did not describe these actions (or lack of) by content teachers as discriminatory, she

simply saw their behavior as lazy. She felt the teachers were not willing to provide her

MLs with basic needs to be successful in their virtual classrooms, despite having Violet

and her teammates ready to help.

Administration/District

The subtheme of *administration and district* refers to hindrances related to a lack

of resources or human capital, infrastructure, planning, or sufficient professional

development needed to adequately support MLs at the teachers' schools. All three teachers

reported one or more departments lacking sufficient manpower to optimally serve their

students. To begin, Brandee spoke very highly of her ML liaison at her school, but

lamented that the liaison was alone in her position,

The [M]L liaison at our school, who I loved and was wonderful, but like, her hands

were just as tied as … mine were. In terms of getting resources, there's not extra

money for it … There was only one of her for 3000 kids.

While Brandee had immense respect for her ML liaison, funding made it challenging for

the liaison to fully address all of the student and family needs. Likewise, Brandee reported

that interpreters were spread thin at her school,

We were supposed to have … an interpreter for each language that was represented

in that class … we probably had four people in the department, which meant

there's no way the interpreter's gonna be with me … like maybe once a week …

> and I just got to the point where I was like, this is not helpful, 'cause I needed you
> on Thursday.

The school attempted to provide a linguistic representative for each language spoken, yet the sheer number of students and sheltered classes made it impossible for them to serve each class and teacher effectively. Brandee's third observation regarding district and state funding shortfalls dealt with how certain programs took precedence over the ELD department,

> One might think because you live in an area that's so highly populated by …
> individuals who English is their second language and that our county is well aware
> of that … that we would have so much at our fingertips, so many resources. And
> we just didn't, I always felt like my kids were forgotten about. I always felt like
> my kids were considered second rate … even though this is one of the largest
> populations in the area … They will give you a ton of money for your kids passing
> AP exams, and for your kids being in IB programs and all of that good stuff. But
> money for schools that have a high [M]L population … These kids are barely
> graduating high school. And I had them as 12th graders.

Brandee saw instructional and human resources in her school and district going to higher achieving programs, while she struggled to innovate her virtual classroom to sufficiently serve her MLs.

Next, Violet too noticed a gap in human resources when it came to the needs of her ML families. When I asked her about a bilingual liaison or family advocate she responded,

We do. We have one, but not right now. We have one that always quit, but you know, we always, we have a slot for, we have a position for one, I'll say that; whether they wanna take a position or stay is another story.

The district was well-intentioned in providing the funding for the position of an ML advocate, however, the school could not consistently keep one employed. Violet also added that her non-Spanish-speaking ML families were sometimes marginalized within the ML community because all of the resources were geared toward Spanish speakers, "But we also have students who speak other languages. It's more difficult, sometimes the parents are kind of ignored unless they actively come and ask for assistance." With Spanish-speaking ML families being the majority in the community, Violet felt families from other linguistic backgrounds self-advocated more; otherwise, their needs were not addressed.

In Catherine's case, she mentioned times when she and her colleagues took action to help their families prior to getting approval from the school or district, "We did not have our school's approval. We did not have our school's, you know, blessing on this, but she and I made home visits." Realizing that it was taking some time for administration and leaders to understand the needs of students and to create protocols, Catherine decided to take action. Another example she mentioned several times was related to a lack of training or professional development for the staff at her school,

… the political climate, just so, so divisive, so incendiary and so much misinformation … that too, was a struggle because it was kind of like, well, everybody's struggling right now. So trying to get supports for our multilingual learners … with that implicit bias that people had, with those misunderstandings

that they had of the resources available was … another hurdle, I would say, to

advocacy.

Catherine came against this bias and social struggle when looking for resources or

collaboration for her ML kids and families. She recognized that the pandemic, itself, was a

polarizing situation and that perhaps the staff needed a better understanding and training

on diverse families, the law, and the goals of their jobs as education professionals.

Virtual Learning Space/Technology

The final hurdle ELD teachers faced during the global pandemic was tied to virtual

learning spaces and technology. Catherine, for example, stated that her students and

families experienced connectivity issues, even with pre-assigned devices for each student.

She also expressed that families struggled to get help when they had technology issues

because the tech support hotlines and documents were only available in English.

Brandee, by far, communicated the most in-depth issues related to the virtual

learning space and technology hindering her ML advocacy. First, she felt strongly that the

virtual learning environment was not at all conducive to learning language, "So we lost a

lot of that when we started teaching virtually … like having my captains, the whole like

breakout rooms on *Teams* … I couldn't be in all of them." When her class lost the team

learning environment she had created in person, they lost the interactive nature,

collaboration, and sense of ownership of their learning. She referred to *Teams*, the

Microsoft video conferencing application, as ineffective in mirroring the hands-on team

environment they established when face-to-face. Furthermore, Brandee realized the

importance of in-person instruction on creating connections and identifying the needs of

her MLs,

… not knowing what my students' needs were ... so when we left in March, at that

point, I had had the kids like well over half a year. So I knew who needed what. I

knew who my stronger kids were. I had the final three months from March to May

or March to June, whatever it was, I knew … how to best help them. When we

started back in August, and then I had a whole year, a new crop of kids from

school. You can't advocate for someone when you don't know what their needs are.

So I know general needs of [M]L students, … but I didn't know their specific

needs. I didn't know who was a strong speaker, … 'cause in the classroom you're

like, all right, it, it's not that you're not a strong speaker, you're just … an introvert

or shy. So I know how to utilize that … physically in the classroom. I couldn't

figure those things out. So it wasn't that it made … advocacy challenging that I

couldn't get the things that I needed or wanted for the kids. It was that … I didn't

know what to advocate for.

In the initial shutdown in the spring of 2020, Brandee had already had those students in

person, in class for part of the year. However, the following fall, she received all new

students in an already-established virtual environment. Without those pre-existing

relationships or an understanding of their linguistic and academic strengths and needs,

Brandee struggled with *what* to advocate for.

From an infrastructure standpoint, Brandee's experience was unique among the

group in that her school was not "one-to-one," meaning one device assigned to each

student, prior to the school shutdowns,

... they had to come to the school to get their Chromebooks, 'cause we were not a

one-to-one school. Like kids didn't have Chromebooks … So in March to April we

had, our school was just under 3000, maybe 2,500 kids … we had to get 2,500 kids

computers … So while everyone else started teaching virtually, like our kids didn't

have computers.

The task of issuing and distributing devices to students delayed the beginning of virtual

learning for Brandee's students. Similarly, she noted that tech-related communication

channels had to be set up, "And so when we left in March, I had … Remind, that was

really the only … tech way for me to interact with my kids, 'cause we weren't even …

emailing our students at that time." Without already having personal devices from the

school, the students were not communicating with their teachers digitally. So, this key

communication line needed to be established, again delaying the transition to virtual

learning.

Summary of RQ1a

The ELD teacher participants relayed various supports and hindrances of their

advocacy efforts that they experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent

virtual teaching. They found that other staff members, parents and families, the

community, students' self-advocacy, and school district infrastructure/technology were

factors in supporting their ML advocacy. Meanwhile, the following factors hindered their

efforts: student engagement, non-ELD teachers and staff, family needs,

administration/district, and virtual learning space/technology.

<div align="center">Research Question 2</div>

What lessons learned about advocacy during the pandemic persist in informing

their advocacy and collaborative practices today? After reflecting on the times of

teaching during the pandemic, the teachers had a chance to ponder how these experiences

were impacting how they advocate for their ML students now. This research question

sums up the question, "We learned all of this from the pandemic, so what? … and now

what?" The themes that emerged regarding the ELD teachers' advocacy moving forward

included *connections with ML students and families, maintaining community*

relationships, and *empathy*.

Connections with ML Students and Families

Making connections to ML students and their families was a key takeaway for

each of the three ELD teacher participants. To begin, Brandee said she is even more

intentional now about how she assigns and assesses work for her ML students,

> ... and to be aware of how I assign homework, … or how I even assess things that
>
> they're doing. … I have a lot of seniors that work, but my [M]L students by far
>
> have jobs way more than the other students. A lot of them by far speak multiple
>
> languages. … especially my Portuguese-speaking students … And so just having
>
> that insight during the pandemic, like literally into their homes, maybe curved the
>
> way I approached my content and teaching as I moved forward.

Brandee recalled that getting to know her students is important, and knowing various

factors in their lives plays a part in how she prepares her courses. She also affirmed her

students' multilingualism as a strength as well as their needs and desires to work to help

provide for their families.

Violet also placed emphasis on the importance of these connections, "... and I feel

like parent contacts, I feel like after the pandemic I've done a better job with keeping in

contact with parents and have their numbers in my cell phone as contacts." Violet said she

now establishes contact with families early, fostering collaboration between the school

and home so parents feel connected and can help address needs as they arise. Related to this, Violet also mentioned her bilingualism as something that is valued, "... they like my broken Spanish, so that's good … Yeah, I feel like I have a good relationship with those parents. Even my difficult students, I feel like we have a good relationship with their parents, so that's always a good thing." While Violet was humble about her level of Spanish, she recognized that it is a key tool in collaborating with and gaining the trust of her ML parents.

In a like manner, Catherine also emphasized the need for fostering student and family relationships and collaboration to effectively advocate,

> … and building those relationships, and just seeing if I went into this without those preexisting relationships, … the advocacy would not have reached as far and been as impactful, and so I think it's just a reminder to, um, make those concentrated efforts of building connections … having relationships with your families, um and being willing to admit what you don't know, you know, and let me seek that answer out.

Moving forward, Catherine found having relationships with families is key to identifying and meeting student needs. She also admitted she does not always have the answers but is willing to look for solutions as a further form of advocacy. Using the technology that became second nature during the school shutdowns, Catherine also builds stronger bridges between ML families and her schools,

> I think it fostered … our community engagement when we had … open house, we all recorded videos of ourselves and then … added … the Spanish subtitles, so that the families could kind of see and just make that connection so that it's not just a

printed newsletter or drop in where we don't have an interpreter, the child acting as

the interpreter. That was wonderful … And, you know, curriculum night where

you updated the slides, they could have that extension to … hear it in their first

language, they could have the subtitles, they could pose questions…

Moving forward, Catherine found that giving parents information in their home language, as well as flexible ways and times to access it, is very beneficial to family-school partnerships. It makes families feel more included and valued by the school.

Maintaining Community Relationships

Like relationships with students and families, the two of three participants also related the importance of fostering community relationships for their advocacy efforts now. Violet talked about a way she connects to the community to stay ahead of ML student needs in her classroom now, post-pandemic,

... like making sure the kids have what they need in front of me, not in front of me.

So I do a lot of *Donor's Choose* … posts or whatever, so I can get donations, but

I'm always making sure, like first and foremost, they have what they need to be

successful in the classroom.

Violet told of using *Donor's Choose*, a crowdfunding application for teachers to connect with community members for small grants, as a way to get funding for areas in which her school or district might fall short. Connecting with the community in this way assures that Violet's MLs have what they need, whether they are in person, or if they need to go back to virtual learning.

Brandee, too, kept up with community partnerships post-pandemic learning,

And then after we came back from the pandemic, we did it … in person all the time. But it started virtually. I was like, I have these kids that are interested in college stuff, but all the resources have kind of been taken away and they don't know how to navigate it and they're asking for it. So I had her come in on *Teams* as like a guest speaker and talk to the kids to give them … all the resources that they need. And all of those resources come in every language possible.

After having the college and career coordinator join her class virtually, Brandee saw what an amazing resource this could be for her senior MLs moving forward. Even if the coordinator could not join in the building, Brandee made accommodations to welcome her virtually to speak with and support the students. She also added,

I didn't just advocate for them and like, I need resources to teach government, I realized that I could advocate for them as a whole person. 'You need college stuff too? I got you.' … And so it went beyond just my content area to the whole student.

The integration of this post-secondary information resource made Brandee realize that advocacy was also going beyond her classroom.

Empathy

The final theme of empathy was a very powerful one. It seemed to overlap with many of the aforementioned themes. Two of three participants specifically mentioned empathy and caring for the whole child. To start, Catherine offered this as part of her final reflection,

I would say … just my absolute … empathy with all individuals that were … being impacted. You know, my husband was an essential worker. I had a preschooler, I

had a kindergartner, I myself was teaching. It was, you know … what really

matters? What really matters? And that's the thing now when you're talking about

learning loss, and it's like, okay, well what … did we lose? Like we, you're not just

learning when you're in this environment. They were learning so many skills. …

and then almost just a frustration … that we're … dead set on these … goalposts

and grade-level norms and grade-level standards. Really, we need to be looking at

the context of things and not just, well, the standardized tests are already made and

they're geared for these norms, so we've gotta meet that. I mean, that's just

something that … it just seems so arbitrary to me right now that it's kind of like,

well, are these students learning and growing at their own pace? What are they

learning just outside of academics … and skills that they're bringing? … and really

just … focusing on … the whole child. We hear that a lot, but I think the pandemic

was like, 'No guys, really, there's a whole child.'

Post-pandemic, Catherine reflected upon what her own family had experienced, while also

learning alongside her ML students. Both experiences increased her empathy for students

and their families and made her pan back and consider the big picture of "what really

matters?" She acknowledged that expectations should be broadened beyond grade level

and state assessments and standards to view ML students for what they *can* do and the

capital they bring to school each day.

In a similar sentiment, Brandee expressed her feelings of empathy for her ML

students,

And I think that what the pandemic helped me realize is I had the opportunity to

see inside some of these kids' homes. And maybe it didn't necessarily give me a

resource moving forward, but what it did do, and I don't think that I was … hard or insensitive at all, but it made me more aware of some of the home lives that they're coming from … Many of my students were sitting at their dining table with … (I had a kindergartner that I was trying to help), they themselves as the student had a kindergarten sibling that they were trying to help. And I think what that did is it helped me remember that all students, but maybe particularly my [M] L students, their lives are so much bigger outside of my little classroom.

Seeing inside her students' homes and watching them multitask and help siblings while joining her virtual lessons gave Brandee increased empathy for and connection to her MLs. In her final reflection about advocacy moving forward she added, "I guess maybe my advocacy changed because I wasn't just advocating for them … in terms of how I teach American Government and Economics, I was advocating for them as a whole person." Like Catherine, Brandee considered the pandemic as a transformative event in that she was now more cognizant of her students' comprehensive needs and the value they brought to her classroom.

Summary of RQ2

The ELD teacher participants shared many valuable takeaways from their time teaching during the pandemic. Lessons they learned included: the importance of connections with students and families, maintaining community partnerships, and empathy for their ML students. Each of these lessons is carried forward to inform their advocacy practices today.

Summary

In summary, the teacher participants shared experiences from elementary, middle, and high school ELD classrooms. Each teacher had unique ML advocacy experiences, yet many of their responses corresponded with one another. The participants' ML advocacy experiences (research question 1) included individual efforts as well as collaboration with their ELD teammates and other teachers, non-ELD staff, parents and families, and the community outside of their schools. In response to research question 1a, the teachers named other staff members, parents and families, the community, students' self-advocacy, and their school districts' infrastructure as factors that supported their ML advocacy efforts. They also noted factors hindering their advocacy during virtual teaching including student engagement, non-ELD teachers and staff, family needs, administration and district, and the virtual learning space. Finally, the teacher participants shared lessons they learned during the pandemic that inform their advocacy practices today (research question 2). Moving forward they are placing careful emphasis on relationships with their students and their families, maintaining community connections, and empathy.

In the following chapter, I summarize and discuss the findings of my study. Furthermore, I convey how these findings relate to current literature on advocacy in addition to the theoretical framework of collaborative practices. I also consider the limitations and implications of this study, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to learn the experiences of ELD teachers who taught and advocated for their ML students during the mandated school closures due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Three experienced, multi-certified ELD instructors (one elementary, one middle school, and one high school) participated in semi-structured, lifeworld interviews to share their personal knowledge of what occurred in this unique time. This chapter begins with a summary and discussion of the findings reported in Chapter 4. Next, I share how these findings are situated in the context of both current literature regarding ML advocacy and the theoretical framework of collaborative practices for ML advocacy. Finally, I offer the limitations and implications of my study as well as recommendations for future research.

Thematic Discussions

Research Question 1: Advocacy Efforts

What were ELD teachers' experiences with ML student advocacy during times of virtual teaching and learning? The following themes emerged from questions related to the ELD teachers' experiences advocating for their MLs during the COVID-19-related school shutdowns: collaboration with their ELD teammates and other teachers, non-ELD staff, parents and families, the community, and ELD teachers' individual efforts. First, all three participants recalled working closely with their ELD teammates, and two of three collaborated with classroom or content area teachers to make sure students were safe, get students the school supplies and technology they needed to engage in virtual learning, and simply connect with families. Just like working with faculty colleagues, every participant

had one or more instances of collaborating with non-teaching staff such as social workers or various bilingual office staff.

Catherine and Violet made direct contact with parents and families of their MLs, while Brandee relied on relationships with her colleagues to help with this. This could speak to Catherine's and Violet's levels of bilingualism and their ability to connect linguistically with their Spanish-speaking families. While Brandee had overseas teaching and travel experience, she did not describe herself as confident in communicating in French Creole, or Portuguese, the languages of most of her students. Nonetheless, she recognized the value of her bilingual colleagues and their cultural and linguistic ties to their students. She capitalized on those connections to foster communication between the virtual classroom and ML student homes.

During the interview questions about advocacy efforts during the pandemic, only Catherine named examples of community connections. However, in later discussions, Violet and Brandee both named ways they connected with community members to enrich their students' virtual learning experiences. Catherine realized that her collaboration with affluent individuals willing to just give money for whatever her students needed was something not all teachers or schools might experience. Furthermore, she was very appreciative of the pre-existing non-profit in her community that focused especially on the needs of Latinx families. Partnering with individuals and non-profits seems very possible for any teacher or school to accomplish. For teachers and administration that do not already have these connections, advocacy would be researching and building those bridges in their individual schools and communities.

Finally, two of three participants mentioned individual efforts they made to advocate for their students' virtual learning. Catherine talked about setting up additional office hours for students and parents to meet with her to get clarity or assistance on anything they were facing from the school. Brandee made a distinct effort to modify her curriculum during the pandemic. She realized their normal lessons and assessments were not going to have the same outcomes virtually, and she wanted her students to experience success during this new, peculiar learning environment.

Overall, the majority of virtual ML advocacy situations shared dealt with collaboration with others. This highlights the importance of relationships when working as an ML advocate. Even when working alone, such as in the above examples, ELD teachers are working to build bridges either with the students themselves or to include ML families in the learning process.

Research Question 1a: Factors Impacting Advocacy

What factors impacted advocacy efforts? I found that teachers shared both positive and negative factors affecting their advocacy efforts. Therefore, I broke up research question 1a's interview responses and analysis organization into two themes, factors *supporting* ML advocacy, and factors *hindering* ML advocacy. The next two sections highlight the sub-themes that emerged from these two opposing types of factors.

Support

The ELD teacher participants shared advocacy support factors that grouped into the following sub-themes: *other staff members, parents and families, the community, student self-advocacy,* and *school districts' infrastructure and technology*. To start, all three participants found support from non-teaching staff members at their school, such as

counselors and social workers, ML liaisons, and other office staff. For Violet, the counselors and social workers helped her and her team contact families when the teachers were not seeing students in virtual class meet-ups. They assisted in checking on the safety and needs of families. Violet found this resource more readily available than she felt it was during a typical school year and learning setting, perhaps because the social workers and counselors were on heightened alert due to the volatile nature of the pandemic and subsequent school closures.

The other two teachers made particular reference to the support they received from bilingual staff members at their schools. For Catherine, it was the office treasurer who lent a hand in contacting her Latinx families. While Catherine could also communicate with her Spanish speakers, she found this additional staff support to be a great asset. Similarly, Brandee held her bilingual liaison and other staff in high regard for their ability to connect with her French-Creole and Portuguese-speaking families. Although Brandee did not speak these languages herself, she understood the importance of establishing communication with the homes and valued family input and collaboration.

In reference to families in particular, it was Catherine who made particular mention of this as a supportive factor for advocacy. She explained that once communication was established virtually, families were quick to reach out to her and each other. Furthermore, she shared a unique anecdote of family members of a student joining the virtual class session. Finding that these family members were home with the student and interested in learning led Catherine to create lessons that could benefit all of them.

Two of the three participants shared ways in which the community outside of the school supported their ML advocacy efforts. Brandee shared how a college and career

counselor from a non-profit program in their area became a regular guest speaker in her

class. This coordinator shared information and forms in any language for the ML students

who were on the verge of high school graduation.

Catherine also highlighted several instances of community members supporting

her ML student advocacy. As mentioned in the previous section, she had several affluent

friends and contacts offer cash for her students' needs. Catherine organized gift cards that

her families could use to buy groceries, prescriptions, etc. She also spoke very highly of a

local non-profit in her area that worked specifically with the Latinx community. They

offered things like medical clinics, school supply drives, and food and housing support for

families that were new to the area. Catherine acknowledged this organization's partnership

with her schools and families several times in her reflection.

Next, while only mentioned specifically by one participant, the notion of student

self-advocacy as a support was a salient one. Brandee noted that while many of her

students struggled to stay engaged in virtual classes, a few of her MLs were very

motivated to stay connected, learn, and use virtual conferences to get ahead. These

students even asked for one-on-one virtual time as well as additional resources, like

information about post-secondary opportunities. Brandee also found that many of her high

school students used their past experiences as a self-advocacy tool to strengthen their

virtual learning experiences. She noted that many of her ML students had been navigating

the world (both in school and outside of school) as advocates for their parents and family

members. As teenagers in immigrant families, they were often counted on to help translate

or fill out paperwork and registrations in situations like school or even healthcare. Being

the English representatives of their families, in an increasingly virtual world (even before

COVID), prepared Brandee's students to smoothly transition to succeeding in their own virtual coursework for her class and others.

The final supportive factor noted by the teachers dealt with the infrastructure already established by their school districts, especially in terms of technology available to them and their ML students. Two of the three teachers worked in districts where the students were already assigned personal devices on a one-to-one basis. In addition to Chromebooks, Violet talked about the great lengths her district went to to push out mobile hotspots so that all students had Wi-Fi access. Her district knew that learning could not continue without reliable internet access, so this technology push was made essential. In addition to hardware infrastructure, Catherine also mentioned several software applications that supported her advocacy efforts. She used Class Dojo as well as some features of her district's Google Suite package to connect with families. These applications were easy for parents to navigate and offered ways for them to access information in their home language. Catherine noted that these tools fostered communication and helped families stay virtually connected to school at a time when everyone was physically isolated.

Hindrances

On the other side of the coin, the ELD teachers also expressed factors that hindered their ML advocacy efforts during the pandemic. These sub-themes included *student engagement, non-ELD teachers and staff, family needs, administration and district,* and *the virtual learning space/technology.* As one may notice some of the hindrances are related (in a contradictory manner) to a number of the supporting factors. To begin, as classes transitioned from face-to-face to virtual instruction, student engagement

deteriorated, most notably for the middle and high school ML students. Although Brandee

had praised her highly motivated, self-advocating few, she realized they were the minority

in her classes. Most of her high school MLs struggled to stay connected in virtual

coursework. Violet saw similar situations with her middle school students. Getting and

keeping them engaged in learning on video calls was a strenuous task. As the move to

online learning was new territory for most, schools struggled to provide timely and

consistent expectations for teachers and students to follow in terms of attendance,

participation, and grading.

Next, while the ELD teacher participants noted support for ML advocacy from

their ELD teammates and other faculty, two of the three also found some non-ELD

teachers and staff to be unsupportive of their advocacy goals. Catherine, for instance,

voiced concerns of bias against her students from non-ELD faculty and staff. Similarly,

Violet dealt with other teachers failing to provide needed support for ML students in

content-area classes. Even with Violet and her team ready to collaborate and help, some

teachers were just not willing to take the steps necessary to adequately modify and

enhance the learning experiences for their ML students.

Another key sub-theme of factors hindering advocacy was that of family needs. All

three participants spoke of ML families' need to work to provide for their households

during the pandemic. For many students, this meant working themselves instead of fully

engaging in virtual learning. Furthermore, many ML students found themselves

facilitating online learning for their younger siblings or acting as primary childcare for

family members and neighbors. The ELD teachers learned of these situations during video

calls and home visits. For many families, providing food and shelter during this unsettled time had to take priority over the virtual classroom.

A fourth hindering factor was resources (or a lack of resources) at the school and district levels. All three participants mentioned ways in which their school or district came up short in optimally providing resources for the success of ML students. Catherine and Violet shared instances of bias that showed there was a lack of professional development for faculty and staff who encountered linguistically diverse families on a daily basis. Brandee made mention of several ways her school district funneled money into other programs like Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate curricula. Meanwhile, she was unable to obtain modified materials to sufficiently support her ML students in her sheltered instruction class.

Furthermore, two participants mentioned at least one situation in which their school or district lacked adequate *human* resources to meet the needs of their ML students and families. Violet and Brandee talked about positions (student interpreters, an ML liaison, and a bilingual family advocate) that were meant to foster collaboration, but failed to achieve their purpose. In Brandee's case, the ML liaison was one person responsible for supporting their entire school, so her time was stretched very thin. Similarly, there were simply not enough interpreters to support the sheer number of sheltered courses the school offered. For Violet, most of the school's resources were geared toward helping Latinx families, as they made up the majority of her ML population. This somewhat marginalized non-Spanish-speaking families, leaving them to seek help on their own. Also, the fact that Violet's school's bilingual family advocate position was not consistently filled speaks to something occurring on an organizational level. What was happening (or not happening)

for the people serving in this role to not stick around? Perhaps the work was too overwhelming, the staff were not being properly trained, or the district was not hiring people who were committed to the position. Either way, it created a hole where there was a great need in Violet's school.

The final hurdle teachers faced was related to technology. Catherine found her ML families struggling to get tech help in their language. This was not a priority for Catherine's district, therefore getting help for ML families required an additional layer of language assistance. This, in turn, would slow the process of the students getting the information they needed to continue learning. Brandee's case was the most precarious in terms of technology, as her district did not have devices issued one-to-one prior to the school closures. The process of getting thousands of students the needed devices and Wi-Fi access severely delayed the extension of learning from school to the new virtual home environment. Moreover, Brandee noted that virtual learning itself was a huge hindrance to language learning, in general. She relied on face-to-face interactions to get to know her students and provide them with meaningful learning opportunities. Similarly, without building an in-person relationship with her new crop of students the following fall (2020), Brandee never really got her feet under her in terms of knowing what the students needed and how to best advocate for them. From Brandee's perspective, in-person learning was simply superior to virtual instruction for her ML students.

Just like the themes related to research question 1, the factors affecting ML student advocacy by ELD professionals very much hinged on relationships. While some of the responses dealt with district policy, resource allocation, or students' individual choices, over two-thirds of the reflections illustrated the importance of *people* and their

connections with one another. In terms of support, relationships were established and capitalized upon; meanwhile, in instances where advocacy was inhibited, relationships (or resources to support relationships, like securing ML liaisons or bilingual advocates) were the missing link needed to break down those barriers. Even circumstances like students and families working (often a hindrance) could be traced back to collaborative relationships. Advocates must work to understand families' needs and address learning in a context that is accessible and timely for students in those situations.

None of the ELD teachers touted their own bilingualism or cultural awareness as supports for advocacy, but I would argue that these were clearly valuable strengths that improved their advocacy efforts and their motivation to advocate. Two of the three teachers spoke the language of the majority of their students and therefore could connect with families more seamlessly. While Brandee did not speak any of the languages her students represented, she recognized the importance of the linguistic connection that other bilingual teachers and ELD staff members could provide. Furthermore, all of the teachers had experienced living, teaching, and/or studying abroad, giving them cultural competence and compassion for ML students balancing a bicultural life between home and school.

Research Question 2: Lessons Learned

What lessons learned about advocacy during the pandemic persist in informing their advocacy and collaborative practices today?

After reflecting on the pandemic as a past occurrence, the teachers contemplated how their advocacy practices are being informed by this extraordinary time in their careers. The themes that came from these responses include *relationships with students and families, maintaining community connections,* and *empathy.*

First, all three participants talked about the priority they now place on ML student and family connections. Brandee already placed getting to know her students and their needs at the top of her list, but now she is even more aware and intentional about using that knowledge of each student's needs to modify her lessons and assessments to meet each student where they are. She realized during the pandemic that connecting with students in person was so important because, in the fall 2020 semester, it was almost impossible for her to get to know them authentically in a fully virtual setting. Similarly, Violet and Catherine noted how they now make connections with parents as early as possible, to avoid trying to do so simply when a problem arises. Catherine specifically mentioned that moving forward, she is capitalizing on the technology tools brought about by the school shutdowns. She now uses subtitles and other translating tools on videos and printed information that is shared with parents.

Next, the teachers all mentioned ways in which they utilized community support after schools returned to in-person learning. For Catherine, her community partnership with the non-profit in her area was something she valued before, during, and after the pandemic. Violet realized during the school closures that circumstances could change without warning, so having access to adequate resources for her students and classroom became a higher priority. She made sure she was prepared by applying for additional community grant funding. Brandee, too, made adjustments moving forward and invited the community college and career counselor into her classroom regularly post-pandemic. It was the few self-advocating students she had during the virtual learning time that led her to look at her students and their needs more holistically, beyond just the American government and language learning standards of her course.

Finally, the theme of empathy is one that was woven into so many of the other questions and themes. The teachers felt empathy for their ML students and families and therefore worked to make their learning experiences during the pandemic more fruitful. Moving forward, empathy was a strong force motivating their advocacy efforts. They found their students navigating complex and often problematic social and economic situations during the school closures. While Brandee and Catherine mentioned it specifically in terms of advocacy moving forward, all three teachers talked about working from home with their own school-aged children and how they felt connected to their ML students' virtual learning hardships in that way. Perhaps another facet of their empathy stems from the teachers' cultural awareness and connection to their ML students brought about by their own language learning and cross-cultural experiences. Just like seeing what their children are going through with virtual learning, the teachers are more willing to advocate for their MLs because they have the common experience of living and learning in a foreign place.

Discussions in the Context of Empirical Literature

The notion of advocacy permeates recent literature surrounding best practices for schools and teachers serving multilingual students and families. Advocacy for ML students is a crucial part of the actions and identities of ELD teaching professionals. I found the following themes in recent literature regarding advocacy for MLs: *teacher advocacy, non-teacher advocacy*, and *conditions hindering advocacy*. I also found literature surrounding outcomes of the pandemic-related school shutdowns, in particular how ML learners and ELD teachers navigated *online learning* environments. The findings of my current study add depth and specific examples to all of these themes.

Teacher Advocacy

As my research depended upon teachers sharing their experiences or *lifeworld*, the theme of teacher advocacy was apparent throughout my findings. My participants gave examples of both instructional (within the schools) and political (outside of school) advocacy (Linville, 2020). Each participant shared at least one example of collaborating with forces outside of their respective schools, namely their community connections. However, the vast majority of advocacy instances centered around work *within* their schools.

According to Norman and Eslami (2022), advocacy rates were increased when teachers were themselves multilingual, had significant cultural immersion experiences, and/or came from a multilingual or multicultural background. It was noted that teachers specifically used this strength to collaborate with ML families. While my participants did not proclaim their cultural immersion or multilingualism as key factors in their drive for advocacy, I felt it was a salient point to share. They all recognized the importance of communication in the home language, whether it was they themselves or other staff collaborating with ML family members. Brandee even made strides to connect her Haitian and Brazilian families with bilingual staff, even though she herself did not speak those languages.

Fox and Salerno (2021) found that pre-service advocacy simulations can prepare teachers for the adversity they face when advocating for MLs. Catherine's case reinforced the need for preparation for problematic circumstances like bias and discrimination by other non-ELD faculty and staff. However, none of the participants took part in advocacy simulations as part of their education. Yet, during a global crisis, these professionals were

all willing to do whatever was necessary to get what their students needed to be as successful as possible in learning at home.

Non-teacher Advocacy

The literature surrounding advocacy and collaboration with non-teaching staff offered the following sub-themes: *administrators, family members*, and *school counselors*. In each of the following sub-sections, I share some connections between this literature and my findings as well as some new insights.

Administrators

To begin, administrators (both building and district) play a huge role in supporting ML advocacy in their schools (Calderón et al., 2020; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019). Administrators are called to structure dedicated time for collaboration and co-planning. Furthermore, they should offer professional development geared toward bridging cultural and linguistic differences as well as curbing bias and discrimination. Administrators can also directly advocate for ML families by providing language assistance and flexible meeting times.

Violet and Brandee, the middle and high school teachers were both teaching sheltered content classes with a team of teachers. This leads me to believe their administrators fostered collaboration at least on a basic level. Both teachers mentioned that their schools had dedicated personnel that offered language support to families. However, those resources were either stretched extremely thin, or the positions were not consistently filled. Catherine's school did not have a dedicated liaison or interpreter, so Catherine and another bilingual colleague stepped up to fill that void for their ML families.

In terms of professional development, Catherine and Violet made specific mention of incidents where non-ELD staff could have been better trained. Catherine experienced outright racism on behalf of her students when a teacher refused to collaborate and complete federally mandated accountability paperwork. Violet said her office staff made assumptions that all Latinx families needed interpreters when that was not necessarily true. In an attempt to streamline office procedures, these staff were ignoring that some ML family members had perhaps worked hard to become bilingual, or that maybe they were second or third-generation Americans themselves.

Honigsfeld and Dove (2015) note that administrators should be flexible with meeting times for parents who may be working various shifts to provide for their families. This was a very apparent need during the pandemic, as work played a considerable role in families staying afloat. While no administrator intervention was mentioned, Catherine said she implemented varied ways and times parents could access school information, a need she recognized and still carries out post-pandemic. All three participants also spoke about ways they adjusted the curriculum or how they made contact with families without administrative approval. The teachers saw a need and realized that waiting to make adjustments or waiting to make contact would equal language and learning loss for their students. These instances signal a need for protocols to be put in place or for administrators to be more accessible to their staff if a crisis such as COVID-19 were to arise again. None of the teachers mentioned negative repercussions after taking unguided actions, so their administrators likely trusted them and approved of the actions and adjustments they made.

Family Members

Just like the family in Guo's (2022) study who took the initiative to learn about and become involved in the language programs in which their children were taking part, Catherine noticed families motivated to advocate for their children. Once given the tools they needed (i.e. communication apps and translation features) they were very involved in communicating with the teachers and other parents about their children's experiences. This involvement seemed more prevalent at the elementary level, as Brandee and Violet did not have the same experience. They realized early on that collaboration with parents was needed to get and keep their students engaged. They had to establish a baseline of communication between school and home that was not previously in place pre-shutdowns. They often partnered with other staff, like social workers and other multilingual teachers, to promote better home communication.

School Counselors

Farrell et al. (2022) found that school counselors play a key role in helping non-ELD staff recognize how students' context and background can affect their school experiences and performance. Counselors will get to know students and learn about their families, their home lives, and their histories. Then they are able to offer context to teachers who simply see the students struggling in class, and not necessarily why they are not succeeding. This was found to be true in my study, as counselors (as well as social workers) helped Violet in particular. She worked with these key collaborators to execute home visits when students were not showing up to virtual lessons. It was then Violet and her teaching team learned of the situations outside of school that were clearly affecting students' ability to keep up with school work. Some students were left alone to care for

siblings and neighbors, as the adults needed to continue working. Some middle school ML students were even working themselves. Violet also partnered with these staff at her school to visit students when they were in need of resources like school supplies or more reliable Wi-Fi.

Conditions Hindering Advocacy

Some of the key sub-themes found in the literature regarding conditions that hindered advocacy were *ELD teachers being ill-prepared to advocate*, *ELD teachers feeling marginalized* among their peers, and *English-only policies and ideals*. Each of these sub-themes was touched on in one way or another in my findings. Below I combined the themes of *ELD teachers feeling marginalized* with *English-only policies* in the section below, as the examples from my findings were intertwined.

Being Ill-Prepared to Advocate

To begin, Fox and Salerno (2021) found that preservice programs can begin to prepare ELD professionals for advocacy activities as part of their upcoming roles. Furthermore, Calderón, et al. (2020) reported that ongoing professional development for all staff engaging with MLs helps to combat deficit mindsets about MLs and their capabilities. Professional development can also inform ELD teachers and others about multicultural practices. Brandee felt that her school district and state theoretically should have had all of these supports in place. She recognized that they required all classroom teachers to have additional ELD and SPED endorsements on their licenses. So, the state did acknowledge there was a need based on the ML population in their schools. The shortfall Brandee expressed in this respect was that her schools simply left her without adaptive resources for her ML sheltered courses. Brandee's experience adds to the

literature in that she explicitly stated she was ill-prepared because other programs like AP

and IB curricula were prioritized over her ML students' needs. Therefore, she found

herself consistently trying to innovate materials and ways of teaching to optimize

academic language and content growth for her MLs.

ELD Teachers Feeling Marginalized/English-Only Ideals and Policies

Norman and Eslami (2022) found that ELD teachers are often placed in shared,

non-permanent, or undesirable workspaces. Furthermore, their study stated that ELD

teachers are sometimes treated as paraprofessionals or interpreters rather than instructors

who often hold advanced degrees. The authors cite misunderstandings about and bias

toward the students of ELD teachers as a motivation for these marginalizing actions.

Honigsfeld and Dove (2018) found that mutual trust must be established between ELD

professionals and their colleagues for advocacy and collaboration to be successful. Related

to marginalization, Kim (2022) found that English-only policies and ideals create

boundaries for advocating ELD teachers. Anti-immigrant and anti-bilingual ideals seep

into schools and policies, making it hard for teachers to advocate for equity on behalf of

their MLs (Fox & Salerno, 2020; Davis & Howlett; 2020; Maddamsetti, 2022).

Brandee's above-mentioned experience of her ML sheltered classes being passed

over for needed resources could also fall under this theme. Catherine, too, offered relevant

examples of marginalization for herself and her students by other staff members at her

school. She saw blatant examples of anti-immigrant bias from classroom teachers

unwilling to complete federally mandated paperwork on behalf of their mutual MLs.

Similarly, Violet mentioned inaction on the part of content teachers, unwilling to modify

their content and support MLs during the pandemic. Brandee's predicament would require

political advocacy at the district or even state levels to improve resource allocation. Catherine and Violet's instances point to a need for the administration to establish clear expectations of collaboration and the non-negotiable need to follow state and federal guidelines for supporting ML learners. Each school or school system should offer training or professional development on ELD and content teacher collaboration and its benefits.

Multilingual Learners and Online Learning

According to Hartshorn and McMurray (2020) ELD teachers and ML students both experienced increased stress and anxiety and a decrease in prioritization of teaching and learning during COVID-19-related school closures. It was also found that MLs' language development slowed during virtual learning times. Hildebrant (2020) stated a lack of natural, structured, meaningful language engagement was the cause for diminished language learning during this time. According to Todd (2020), teachers struggled to keep students engaged in online classes, citing bandwidth limitations and other technology accessibility issues. Each of my participants had at least one topic in the experiences they shared that adds depth to this existing literature.

In terms of the virtual learning environment lacking meaningful engagement, Brandee's experiences and reflection closely align with this. In her sheltered social studies course, Brandee capitalized on face-to-face, dynamic, kinesthetic practices to facilitate interactive learning with her MLs. She did so out of her own innovation, as her school did not consistently provide her with language-specific curricula or adaptive materials. When schools shut down, Brandee lost the ability to actively engage with her MLs, severely hindering her style of teaching and therefore ML language and overall academic progress.

A decline in student engagement was a theme across all my ELD teacher participants' experiences, making a clear focus on advocacy for them during school closures. The teachers also revealed more about *why* engagement suffered during the pandemic. Students working, kids being left alone, and siblings caring for one another and neighbors were common occurrences that hindered engagement. Advocacy in this respect meant the ELD teachers spending a lot of time seeking an understanding of their ML families' situations (as well as reacting to their needs). Violet also cited a lack of clear, established expectations on attendance and participation as factors hindering engagement.

Technology issues were a component affecting learning for all participants. Brandee's experiences most explicitly highlighted the need to have hardware and Wi-Fi pre-established. Additionally, Catherine found software and communication applications to be critical tools for softening the transition from face-to-face to virtual learning.

Discussions in the Context of Collaborative Practices

Multilingual learners in K-12 US schools are regularly outperformed by their monolingual peers (Soland, 2019; National Kids Count, 2015). Advocates of ML education call for collaborative practices among administrators, teachers, staff, and families in order to promote more favorable academic and linguistic outcomes for MLs (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019; Calderón, et al., 2020). I reviewed the following fundamental tenets of collaborative practices as essential to well-rounded advocacy practices for ELD instructors and their colleagues: *program models and structures, curriculum and development, instruction and assessment, professional development,* and *shared leadership.* Serving as my theoretical framework, I view aspects of my data as touching on each of these tenets. The following paragraphs summarize how my participants'

experiences either fostered the notion of collaboration or pointed to a need for better collaborative practices in their respective settings.

Program Models and Structures

The teachers who contributed to my findings came from a variety of places on the spectrum of ELD program models. Catherine served as a K-5 pull-out ELD instructor. Violet worked with MLs both in 8th grade sheltered ELA as well as a targeted ELD elective course. Brandee taught 12th-grade MLs in a sheltered government and economics classroom. All of the participants held multiple certifications or endorsements on their professional licenses. Violet and Brandee often worked in collaboration with grade-level or team colleagues, while Catherine's role as a pull-out instructor serving multiple schools was a little more solitary.

Curriculum Development

There was an absence of curriculum development in the experiences of my participants. None of the teachers talked about being involved in curriculum development, before, during, or after the pandemic. Violet saw herself as an advocate for helping content teachers adapt and accelerate their curriculum to support MLs, however, she found content teachers unwilling to collaborate with her during the pandemic. This was a point of frustration for Violet as she analyzed their inactions as lazy. Brandee also reported a lack of curriculum development in her sheltered content courses. She longed for adaptive materials, but her department was passed over for more affluent programs such as AP and IB. Brandee took it upon herself, pre-pandemic, to innovate materials that could meet her MLs where they were and make her social studies content more accessible.

Instruction and Assessment

Like curriculum development, the collaborative cycle of planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection (Honigsfeld &Dove, 2018) was not well-supported in the virtual learning environment by the ELD teachers' schools and school leaders. To begin, collaborative planning and instruction did not seem to happen during the pandemic. The collaborative planning that took place among teachers and other staff centered around them putting eyes on students and ensuring their well-being. Furthermore, assessments and reflective practices seemed to have been put on the back burner, as teachers and school administrators were most concerned with gaining minimal instructional engagement and caring for student welfare.

Professional Development

Professional development as a collaborative practice empowers teachers and staff to effectively serve linguistically diverse students in their schools. Faculty, staff, and administrators are called to learn about the diversity their students represent including aspects like language, country of origin, and years in US schools (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018). Affirming these differences helps schools shift from deficit to asset-based mindsets when considering what their ML students bring to their classrooms (Calderón et al., 2020). Regular professional development activities allow ELD teachers to serve as leaders and valuable resources to other non-ELD staff (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019).

Each of my participants held multiple certifications and/or endorsements on their professional licenses. Yet at least two of them (Violet and Catherine) struggled with peers not taking their jobs as teammates serving the same MLs seriously or with respect. These schools (or perhaps districts) would benefit from more regular professional development

illustrating the strengths their MLs possess, the knowledge available from the ELD teachers, the benefits of teachers working collaboratively, and the legal requirements of teachers serving students with an ML plan. Learning more about their student and family population would also benefit Violet's office staff, so as not to offend those who may be multilingual, but who may prefer to communicate in English.

Brandee's peers seemed to work very well together (shelter teacher teammates, ELD coordinator, etc). Furthermore, she shared that all professional educators in her state were required to hold ELD endorsements on their licenses. This is a major step in the right direction as far as preparing *all* teachers for ML students. What Brandee and her teammates might benefit from would be further, ongoing PD to help them adapt their teaching for their sheltered courses. If funds are not available or not allocated for adaptive materials, the districts should provide further training on SIOP or another method of sheltered teaching that would better support these ELD teachers and their MLs.

Shared Leadership

School leaders are called to be active listeners in order to foster collaboration among students, families, and staff (Calderon et al., 2020; Safir, 2017). As mentioned in the previous section, professional development is key to promoting collaborative practices among ELD teachers, content teachers, and non-teaching school staff. Principals and district leaders must also provide goals and expectations for collaboration and the time and space needed for collaboration to be carried out regularly (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019). The pandemic and subsequent school closures brought to light the need for clear goals, expectations, and structure for collaboration among the ELD teachers in my study. They

all knew that collaboration was needed to advocate for their MLs, but they were often acting alone or without guidance from their leaders.

Overall, as discussed in my findings chapter, my interviews revealed that human relationships were key in supporting advocacy and were absent in factors hindering advocacy. This need for human interaction among ML students, ELD teachers, ML families, content teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, and office staff directly mirrors the call for collaborative practices as a standard for ML student success.

Revisiting the Study's Limitations

Chapter three expressed detailed descriptions of the study limitations which are now revisited, linking them to the Discussions section. To begin, my sample size might be considered a limiting factor. Due to the scope and sequence of the study, my sample strategically included three ELD teaching professionals. The smaller sample size also afforded me an in-depth and highly contextual view of the participants' experiences. I did not seek perspectives from other non-ELD teachers, administrators, non-teaching staff, ML students, or families. The teacher participants did work in three different school districts in varying ELD program models and grade spans. However, the findings were limited in terms of transferability for large-scale generalizations based on these three teachers' experiences and perspectives.

Next, while there was some variance in race, the sample was homogenous in that all participants identified as female. The participants' years of experience were fairly comparable as well, ranging from 13 to 17 years of teaching. They were also all mothers, giving them related experiences of teaching and caring for children at home during the

pandemic. This perspective could vary greatly from others without children or with fewer or more years of experience.

Related to the timeline of securing commitment by three participants, I conducted only one in-depth interview with each ELD teacher participant. Teachers did not participate in additional semi-structured interviews. Their single interview provided the bulk of the data that was analyzed. While I conducted follow-up member-checking and clarification communication during the analysis process, other forms of supplemental data such as artifacts that could have provided further triangulation of my data were not shared by the participants even though they were requested. Given the challenging times of the pandemic, teachers' access to saved documents was highly limited as many items were purged when schools returned to face-to-face instruction. The noted pattern also leads to a potential further question regarding how much teachers simply "moved forward" and deleted electronic information that may have otherwise been saved. Was everyone simply wanting to "not look back?"

Finally, my identity as an ELD educator and ML advocate had a strong influence on my desire to explore this topic and as such, also impacted and shaped the ways in which I interacted with the data. My educator and advocate identities along with my experience teaching through the pandemic are and were present in my work as a researcher and knowledge co-creator on this project. Living and working during the pandemic was an isolating experience. During this research process, having the privilege of hearing fellow teachers' and parents' stories and sharing them in this capacity was therapeutic, enlightening, and transformational.

Implications for Educational Practice

This study explored the lifeworld of ELD teachers who taught and advocated for ML students during and after the COVID-19-related school closures in the spring of 2020 and the following 2020-21 school year. Literature suggests that advocacy for MLs is a part of ELD teacher identities and an expected role in their teaching professions (Linville, 2020). Advocacy for these professionals is sometimes problematic (Fox & Salerno, 2022; Howlett, 2022; Kim, 2022; Linville, 2020; Norman & Eslami, 2021), and it requires the task of collaborating with other staff as well as families to support MLs in their linguistic and academic content goals (Calderón, et al., 2020; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018).

My study offers a new perspective on viewing advocacy practices in virtual teaching and learning environments brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. My findings revealed major themes about advocacy during the pandemic (research question 1) including ELD teachers' individual and collaborative (with other school and non-school staff) advocacy efforts, and factors supporting and hindering advocacy (research question 1a). Moving forward, ELD teachers placed emphasis on empathy for their MLs and families as well as building relationships with them and their communities (research question 2). Together with existing literature, my findings offer several implications for teachers, teacher educators, K-12 building and district administrators, and policymakers.

First, teacher educators and administrators should place an increased value on ELD and other instructional staff that are multilingual, have cultural immersion experiences, or are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These strengths lead to greater empathy and connections with linguistically diverse students and their families, an element that benefited the ELD teachers and their colleagues in my study during times of

school closures. In addition to looking for these qualities in ELD professionals, building and district administrators should strive to employ multilingual staff such as instructional assistants, office staff, and family advocates. Policymakers should insist that schools with high populations of MLs have reliable interpreting services and human personnel to connect families to their children's schools.

Secondly, administrators at both the school and district levels are called to establish and maintain partnerships with non-profits, businesses, and individuals in their communities to support their schools. Community connections can help supplement financial resources that may run short in schools with greater need. High school students can also benefit from their schools fostering relationships with college and career counselors and representatives from various post-secondary opportunities.

Next, building, district, and state policymakers should consider the positive impact that counselors and social workers have on K-12 ML students. These professionals have knowledge and tools that make them invaluable collaborative partners. Schools should have full-time counselors and social workers to support their respective populations. ELD teachers in particular should establish relationships with these colleagues for the benefit of their ML students and families.

The difference in experiences among my participants in terms of the technological infrastructure available to them indicates that districts need to be ready for widespread virtual learning. Some districts were ready with one-to-one personal devices for students, while others were not. Wi-Fi also needs to be pre-established. Districts should spend time creating an infrastructure that is flexible and can easily transition to a virtual model. Additionally, to ensure instruction is accessible to all in the event of future shutdowns,

tech support should be accessible in the home languages represented in each district. Administrators should also make software available to teachers that helps them both provide meaningful virtual lessons and communicate with families effectively.

Another call for resources for ELD instructors comes from a lack of access to adaptable materials for sheltered instruction courses. Districts with high ML populations may offer sheltered content courses taught by dual-certified instructors. However, leaving those instructors to innovate materials on their own is counterproductive. It takes an incredible amount of time to modify existing course materials that are created for monolingual learners, leaving these ELD instructors constantly trying to catch up and stay afloat in their other everyday teaching tasks. If schools offer sheltered courses, they need to take their funding a step further and give these instructors appropriate materials to help their ML students succeed in the content course.

Lastly, districts and school administrators should work with their ELD departments to provide regular, effective professional development for all staff that come in contact with ML students and families. There are several aspects of my findings that lead to various suggestions for professional development. First, ongoing training can help to curb bias and assist staff in learning about their schools' populations and appreciating the diversity that they represent. Non-ELD teachers also need to be aware of the legal requirements for supporting students with ML plans. Furthermore, training classroom and content teachers on concepts like SIOP (sheltered learning) can assist them in modifying their curriculum and making their content accessible to all students. The ELD teacher should be seen as a valuable resource for supporting learning, not an enemy requiring others to do more work. Next, professional development should be aimed at helping the

whole school staff learn about the families they serve, understand their contexts, and overall promote empathy. Similarly, teachers should learn about the importance of establishing communication with families at the beginning of each school year. Learning about each student's strengths and needs allows teachers to meet students where they are and tailor learning to best fit them. Additionally, early communication allows for a smoother transition, should the need for virtual learning arise.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is an abundance of literature dedicated to the theme of advocacy for MLs and the benefits that advocacy and teacher collaboration have on MLs' educational outcomes. This current study adds to the greater umbrella of ML advocacy literature while also offering unique perspectives from ELD teachers in times of mandated virtual teaching and learning. As discussed in my limitations section, there are a number of ways to enhance future studies to provide further depth to these discussions.

First, researchers can consider perspectives from a wider range of participants. One could interview a number of ML collaborators including content or classroom teachers, non-teaching staff such as counselors and ML liaisons, administrators, ML students, and ML families. Additionally, teacher participants in future studies could include a more diverse group such as variances in gender, race, and cultural and linguistic background. It may also be interesting to compare beginning teachers' perspectives with those of veteran teachers. A comparison of grade spans as well as ELD program models could also provide complexity to future data.

Doing larger-scale projects may also provide more transferability to diverse contexts. Future research could explore experiences across a wider range of school

districts and across many states. Furthermore, looking at long-term data and academic outcomes for MLs years beyond the pandemic will continue to illuminate needs and ways in which ML advocates can best serve students in the years to come.

Summary

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of U.S. K-12 ELD teaching professionals advocating for their ML students during the COVID-19-related school closures in 2020 and 2021. Three teachers offered in-depth reflections on their experiences with advocacy, including factors supporting and hindering advocacy and lessons learned during the pandemic that they carry forward into their advocacy efforts today. Contemporary literature offers a vast knowledge base surrounding the topic of ML advocacy. Additionally, research is beginning to emerge about the inequity of academic outcomes post-pandemic among MLs and their monolingual school peers. This study enriches current research by offering specific insight into the necessary task of ML advocacy and how mandated virtual learning affected advocacy for many stakeholders involved. Implications for educational practice include resources for culturally competent, multilingual personnel and social workers, emphasis on community connections, attention to technology infrastructure, funding for sheltered course materials, and extensive professional development opportunities for all staff.

Future research should include larger-scale projects across more districts and states. Researchers can also consider perspectives from non-ELD teachers as well as non-teaching staff members who act as collaborative colleagues and advocates for MLs. Comparisons could also be done among teachers from diverse backgrounds, in different grade spans, teaching in different ELD models, with varying years of experience, etc.

Long-term data on ML student outcomes should also be gathered and analyzed to see what further advocacy needs are present.

REFERENCES

Adichie, C.N. (2009, July). *The danger of a single story*. TEDglobal.

　　https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_st

　　ory?language=en

Beetz Fenske, C. (2021, August 25). United States: Measuring learning loss from school

　　closures during the pandemic and beyond. *Asia News Monitor.*

　　https://www.proquest.com/docview/2563813560?pq-origsite=primo

Boling, E. C., Hough, M., Krinsky, H., Saleem, H., & Stevens, M. (2012). Cutting the

　　distance in distance education: Perspectives on what promotes positive, online

　　learning experiences. *Internet and Higher Education, 15*(2), 118–126.

　　https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2011.11.006

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research*

　　interviewing (3rd ed.). Sage.

Calderón, M. E., Fenner, D. S., Honigsfeld, A., Slakk, S., Zacarian, D., Dove, M. G.,

　　Gottlieb, M., Singer, T. W., & Soto, I. (2020). *Breaking down the wall: Essential*

　　Shifts for English learners' success. Corwin.

Camarota, S. A., Griffith, B., & Zeigler, K. (2017). Mapping the impact of immigration

　　on public schools. *Center for immigration studies*.

　　https://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/camarota-pumas_2.pdf

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub.L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241 (1964).

　　https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/civil-rights-act

Cohen, P.A., Hall, L.E., John, J.N., Rapoport, A.B. (2020). The early natural history of

　　SARS-COV-2 infection: Clinical observations from an urban, ambulatory

COVID-19 clinic. *Perspectives and Controversies, 96*(6), 1124-1126. Mayo Clinic. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocp.2020.04.010

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future.* Teachers College Press.

Davis, W. S., & Howlett, K. M. (2022). "It wasn't going to happen until I made it happen": World language teacher agency for multilingual advocacy. *System (Linköping), 109,* 102893–. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102893

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S (Eds.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage.

Delpit, L. (2003). Educators as "seed people" growing a new future. *Educational researcher, 32*(7), 14–21. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X032007014

Department of Education. (2020). Title III Language instruction for English learners and immigrant students. *Office of elementary and secondary education.* U.S. Department of Education. https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-legislation-table-contents/title-iii-part-a/

Dominicus Scribe. (787) *Rule of Saint Benedict*. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2021667984/.

Faez, F., & Valeo, A. (2012). TESOL teacher education: Novice teachers' perspectives of their preparedness and efficacy in the classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(3), 450-471. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.37

Fox, W., & Salerno, A. S. (2021). The discourse of ESL advocacy in a simulated environment. Linguistics and Education, 63, 100928–. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2021.100928

Free, J. L., & Križ, K. (2022). The not-so-hidden curriculum: How a public school system in the United States minoritizes migrant students. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 55*(1-2), 50–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2022.2047409

Gray, M. (2016). Cultural diversity in the Catholic church in the United States. *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate*. https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/upload/Cultural-Diversity-Summary-Report-October-2016.pdf

Guo, Y. (2022). Towards social justice and equity in English as an Additional Language (EAL) policies: The agency of immigrant parents in language policy advocacy in Alberta schools. *International Review of Education, 67*(6), 811–832. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-022-09935-z

Harrison, J. & McIlwain, M. J. (2020). ESOL teachers' experiences in their role as advocate: Making the case for transitive advocacy. *TESOL Journal (11)* e464. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.464

Hartshorn, K. J., & McMurry, B. L. (2020). The Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on ESL learners and TESOL practitioners in the United States. *International Journal of TESOL Studies, 2*(2), 140–156. https://doi.org/10.46451/ijts.2020.09.11

Hattie, J. (2018, August 11). *Collective teacher efficacy 2018*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCMV692itfg

Hildebrandt, K. (2020). Integrating second language learning online. In R. Power (Ed.), *Integration of instructional design and technology to support rapid change* (online edition). Power Learning Solutions.

https://idandrapidchange.pressbooks.com/chapter/integrating-second-language-learning-online/

Hilliard, A. G. (2000). Excellence in education versus high-stakes standardized testing. *Journal of teacher education, 51*(4), 293–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487100051004005

Honigsfeld, A. & Dove, M. G. (2015). *Collaboration and co-teaching for English learners: A leader's guide.* Sage.

Honigsfeld, A. & Dove, M. G. (2018). *Co-teaching for English learners: A guide to collaborative planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection.* Corwin.

Honigsfeld, A. & Dove, M. G. (2019). *Collaborating for English learners: A foundational guide for integrated practices* (2nd ed.). Corwin.

IXL. (2022). *Advocate*. IXL Learning. https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/advocate

Jones, T. G., & Fuller, M. L. (2003). *Teaching Hispanic children.* Allyn and Bacon.

Kim, A. I. (2022). (De)legitimation of monolingual ideologies in a US teachers' online forum. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 25*(3), 1021–1032. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.1740163

Kim, L. E., & Asbury, K. (2020). 'Like a rug had been pulled from under you': The impact of COVID-19 on teachers in England during the first six weeks of the UK lockdown. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*(4), 1062-1083. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12381

Lachance, J., & Honigsfeld, A. (2023). *Collaboration and co-teaching for dual language learners: Transforming programs for multilingualism.* Corwin.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational researcher, 35*(7), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X035007003

Lau v. Nichols (1974). (2014). In *Asian American Society : An Encyclopedia* (Vol. 3, pp. 1447–1452).

Lipman, P. (2004). *High stakes education: Inequality, globalization, and urban school reform.* Routledge Falmer. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203465509

Linville, H. A. (2020). A closer look at ESOL teacher advocacy: What we do and why. *TESOL Journal, 11*(3). https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.508

Maddamsetti, J. (2022). Analyzing elementary teachers' advocacy for emergent bilinguals as identity dissonances from cognitive, emotional, and social perspectives. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 21*(4), 231–247. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1791710

Merriam-Webster. Incorporated. (2022). Advocacy. In *Merriam-Webster* (online edition). Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advocacy

Mertens, D. M. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology* (4th ed.). Sage.

Migration Policy Institute. (2019). English learners in K-12 education by state. *Migration policy institute.* https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/english-learners-k-12-education-state

Milner, H. R. (2012). Beyond a test score: Explaining opportunity gaps in educational

    practice. *Journal of Black studies, 43*(6), 693–718.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934712442539

National Kids Count. (2015). *Fourth graders who scored below proficient reading by*

    English learner status. http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5197

Nazario, S. (2006). *Enrique's journey* (1st ed.). Random House.

NCDPI. (n.d). *BTSP monitoring: Beginning teacher support program monitoring*

    information. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

    https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/recruitment-support/beginning-teacher-

    support/btsp-monitoring

NCES. (2019). Back to school statistics.

    https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372#PK12_enrollment

NCES. (2021, May). English language learners in public schools. *Annual reports and*

    information staff. U.S. Department of Education.

    https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgf

NCES. (2022). How's your state performing? *NAEP: National assessment of educational*

    progress. National Center for Education Statistics.

    https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/state/

New American Economy. (2022). Where Americans are most entrepreneurial, 2019.

    Entrepreneurship. New American Economy.

    https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/issues/entrepreneurship/

Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities.*

    Teachers College Press.

Nieto, S. & Bode, P. (2017). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education.* Pearson.

Norman, L. N. M., & Eslami, Z. R. (2022). English learner teacher advocates: A systematic literature review. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language, 25*(4).

Ortiz, A. A., & Fránquiz, M. E. (2017). Co-editors' introduction: The central role of advocacy in ensuring excellence in education for English learners. *Bilingual Research Journal, 40*(3), 241–245.

https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2017.1361896

Pease-Alvarez, L. & Samway, K. D. (2012). *Teachers of English learners negotiating authoritarian policies.* Springer.

Pope Francis. (2020). *Fratelli tutti: On fraternity and social friendship*. Our Sunday Visitor.

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2021). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Safir, S. (2017). *The listening leader: Creating the conditions for equitable school transformation.* Jossey-Bass.

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). Sage.

Soland, J. (2019). English language learners, self-efficacy, and the achievement gap. *Collaborative for student growth.* NWEA. https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/03/researchbrief-collaborative-for-student-growth-english-language-learners-self-efficacy-and-the-achievement-gap-2019.pdf

South Carolina Department of Education. (2022). *ESEA, Title III.* South Carolina

    Department of Education. https://ed.sc.gov/policy/federal-education-

    programs/esea-title-iii1/

South Carolina Department of Education. (2022a). *Multilingual learner program*

    terminology. https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/school-district-memoranda-

    archive/multilingual-learner-program-terminology/multilingual-learner-program-

    terminology-memo/

Todd, R. W. (2020). Teachers' perceptions of the shift from the classroom to online

    teaching. *International Journal of TESOL Studies, 2*(2), 4–16.

    https://doi.org/10.46451/ijts.2020.09.02

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Bible. (2023). *Matthew*.

    https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/25

Vagle, M. D. (2018). *Crafting phenomenological research* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Wagner, C. J., Kabuto, B., & Williamson, T. (2021). Collaborative Language Planning as

    Advocacy Work. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 65*(1), 85–89.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1165

Wiggan, G. (2007). Race, school achievement, and educational inequality: Toward a

    student-based inquiry perspective. *Review of Educational Research*, *77*(3), 310–

    333. https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430303947

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT SCRIPTS

Text/DM/email contact script

Hi _____. I am contacting you to see if you would be interested in participating in my dissertation research study. I am exploring the experiences of ELD teachers with regard to their ML advocacy practices during the pandemic-related school shutdowns. The study consists of a brief initial questionnaire followed by a one-on-one interview with me. I will provide detailed information about the study along with a request for consent for me to use the information in my research. If you choose to participate, your identity will be protected, and no identifying information will be published. If you are interested and/or have questions, please let me know. Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

Snowball text/DM/email contact script

Hi _____. I am contacting you to see if you know any certified ELD teachers who might be interested in participating in my dissertation research study. I am exploring the experiences of ELD teachers with regard to their ML advocacy practices during the pandemic-related school shutdowns. The study consists of a brief initial questionnaire followed by a one-on-one interview with me. I will provide detailed information about the study along with a request for consent for me to use the information in my research. If they choose to participate, their identities will be protected, and no identifying information will be published. If you have any teachers in mind and/or have questions, please let me know. Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

APPENDIX B: PRELIMINARY PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name

2. How long have you been a K-12 public educator?

3. Where do you teach? (school, district, state)

4. Can you briefly describe the multilingual learners you teach?

5. In your setting, are you considered an ELD/ESOL/EL/ESL/other teacher?

6. Did you teach multilingual (ML) students during the 2019-20 and/or 2020-21 school years?

7. If you do not teach ELD, what do you teach?

8. If so, what is the nature of your ELD instruction? (pull out, inclusion, co-teaching, self-contained [ie English immersion/newcomers], other).

9. What grade(s) do you teach?

10. If you are co-teaching or working in inclusion or self-contained classes, what content areas do you teach?

11. What professional license(s) do you hold?

12. How long have you been an ELD/education professional?

13. Would you be interested in participating in an interview to contribute to a dissertation research project exploring ML advocacy during the COVID-19 school closures?

    a. What's the best way to contact you?

    b. Is there anything else you would like to share before moving forward with interviews?

14. Do you have data, lessons, contact logs, etc.f (artifacts of any kind), that you would be willing to share regarding advocacy practices during your time teaching remotely? [all information would be de-identified and anonymous]

15. If you are willing to continue with the interview process, what days/times are best for you?

   a. Do you prefer an in-person or virtual meeting?

Information about interviewing:

All of your personal identifying information will be kept confidential. No identifiable information will be shared in the publication. Interviews will be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis. The recordings and transcriptions will be stored on a secure UNCC server drive, which is password-protected. The researcher will share information with you during the analysis process, as a form of member checking and knowledge co-creation practice.

If you have additional questions, please contact Michelle at mpazzula@uncc.edu or 704-689-2052.

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

   1. What were ELD teachers' experiences with ML student advocacy during times of virtual teaching and learning?

      a. What factors impacted advocacy efforts?

   2. What lessons learned about advocacy during the pandemic persist in informing their advocacy and collaborative practices today?

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of the Project: ELD Teachers' Experiences with ML Student Advocacy During Mandated School Closures
Principal Investigator: Michelle Pazzula Jimenez, MAT; UNC Charlotte
Faculty Advisor: Joan Lachance, PhD; UNC Charlotte, Faculty Advisor

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know

- The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of English Language Development (EL, ESL, ESOL) teachers with multilingual student advocacy in times of mandated teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We are asking experienced teachers certified to teach MLs and who did so virtually during and after the pandemic to complete a brief introductory questionnaire and participate in a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator. The questionnaire will gather basic demographic and criteria information and the interview will explore your experiences with advocacy for ML students during and after times of mandated virtual learning. This is a three (3) part study. 1- You will be asked to complete the questionnaire remotely (15-30 minutes). 2- If you meet all criteria and are willing to continue with the interview process, you will schedule a time and venue (virtually or in person) that is convenient and comfortable for you to meet with the principal investigator. The interview will take 45-60 minutes. 3- Once the interview is complete, the principal investigator will contact you at a later date to share her analysis with you. You will then have a chance to provide feedback on the analysis of your experiences, a process called member-checking (15-30 minutes).

- Inclusion criteria to participate are as follows: teachers who a) are ELD (ESL) certified in the state where they teach, b) taught multilingual students virtually during the pandemic in a K-12 setting, c) continued teaching after school closures, and d) had been teaching for at least three years at the time of the pandemic onset. The pandemic onset is defined as March of 2020. Included teachers will have taught virtually after this point, and will have had at least 3 years of teaching experience prior to the 2019-2020 school year.

- Depending on your experiences personally and professionally during the pandemic, some of the questions may trigger emotional responses. You may choose to skip any questions you wish. You may also ask questions at any time during the study. You may also choose to only participate in some aspects and not others. Furthermore, you can choose to stop participation at any time without repercussion. You will not personally benefit from taking part in this research, but our study results may help inform policies regarding multilingual learners in public education.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this research study.

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of English Language Development (EL, ESL, ESOL) teachers with multilingual student advocacy in times of mandated virtual teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are an experienced, (3+ years as of 2019) certified ELD teacher who taught multilingual students virtually during and after the COVID-19-related school closures.

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you choose to participate you will complete a questionnaire, an interview, and member-checking (post interview) activities. You can fill out the questionnaire from the location of your choice. You may also choose to do the interview and member-checking activities virtually or in person. The questionnaire will ask questions about your experience in education, particularly with MLs, and the nature of your work during the pandemic. The survey will also ask if you have any advocacy or collaboration-related documents, such as lesson plans or professional development participation, you would like to share to supplement your responses. After the questionnaire, if you choose to continue, the principal investigator will coordinate a time and venue for your interview. The interview can be in person or virtually via Zoom. Then, after analyzing the interview data, the principal investigator will contact you to complete the member-checking. Here you will have the opportunity to confirm or clarify the PI's analysis of the experiences you shared. Your total time commitment if you participate in this study will be 1 hour and 15 minutes to 2 hours (1.25-2 hrs): 15-30 minutes for the questionnaire; 45-60 minutes for the interview; 15-30 minutes for the member-checking.

What are the benefits of this study?
You will not personally benefit from taking part in this research but our study results may help inform teacher preparation, professional development, and policies regarding multilingual learners in public education.

What risks might I experience?
Depending on your experiences personally and professionally during the pandemic, some of the questions may trigger emotional responses. You may choose to skip any questions you wish. You may also ask questions or ask for a break at any time during the study. You may also choose to only participate in some aspects and not others. Furthermore, you can choose to stop participation at any time without repercussion.

How will my information be protected?
You will provide your name, email address, phone number, and where you teach. All of this information will be protected on the UNCC secure server and accessed via the primary investigator's password and fingerprint-protected laptop.
Your contact information is to keep in contact with the principal investigator. Your location is to provide context for the study and its analysis.
None of this identifying information will be published in the study. The PI will use a pseudonym in place of your name. The name of your school/area will be replaced with a general description such as "rural middle school in an area adjacent to a large metro area in the southeastern US."
The principal investigator and faculty advisor will have routine access to the study data.
However, other people with approval from the Investigator, may need to see the information we collect about you, including people who work for UNC Charlotte and other agencies as required by law or allowed by federal regulations.

How will my information be used after the study is over?
After this study is complete, study data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies without asking for your consent again or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify you.

Will I receive an incentive for taking part in this study?
There is no financial incentive for participating in this study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
It is up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant?
For questions about this research, you may contact Michelle Pazzula Jimenez mpazzula@uncc.edu, 704-689-2052 (and faculty advisor Joan Lachance jlrolsto@uncc.edu).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Office of Research Protections and Integrity at 704-687-1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to Participate
By choosing 'yes' below, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you choose your response. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Welcome participants, thank them for agreeing to be a part of the study.

2. Review their professional experience in working with ML students (per prelim survey response).

3. Talk about overall experiences during the pandemic (as a teacher, parent?, etc)

    a. challenges?

    b. successes or positive aspects?

    c. aspects of life/teaching that have continued to be different.

4. Please tell me about your overall experiences with advocacy (before the pandemic).

    a. What does advocacy for your MLs mean to you?

    b. What are some examples of ML advocacy you participate(d) in regularly?

        i. Possible prompting: what kind of collaboration do you have with content teachers, specials teachers, EC staff, office staff, guidance counselors, building admin, district admin, testing coordinators, student families, community organizations

5. Please tell me about ML advocacy during the pandemic.

    a. What were some examples of advocacy for your students?

    b. What were your experiences in collaborating with other teachers, parents, and school leaders?

    c. What were the aspects of virtual teaching and learning that made ML advocacy challenging?

     d.   What were the aspects of virtual teaching and learning that supported ML advocacy?

6. Could you please explain lessons you learned during the pandemic that support or inform your advocacy practices today?

     a.   How has participating in the mandated school shutdown impacted your advocacy practices?