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Preparing Teacher Candidates with Pedagogical Approaches for ELLs in Hybrid/Virtual Learning Spaces

The purpose of this study is to empower preservice teachers (PSTs) to leverage relevant technology-based practices and be equipped with various tools and strategies appropriate for English Language Learners (ELLs) in PreK–12 grade settings. Now, more than ever, teacher candidates need to be prepared to understand the challenges faced by ELLs and provide various pedagogies for online platforms. This qualitative investigation explored 57 educators' perspectives from PreK–12 schools, districts, and preparation programs in higher education in an effort to obtain relevant approaches in technology strategies and pedagogical frameworks that support ELLs' remote learning. The study also draws on the knowledge needed to implement Social and Emotional Learning. Based on the findings, the study revealed (a) there are gaps between what teachers gain from the districts and what they have previously learned from their teacher preparation programs; (b) some teachers were not completely aware of the Social and Emotional Learning approach; (c) participants identified three pedagogical frameworks as most commonly used and they interchangeably used frameworks, programs, some online platforms, and resources in one section; and (d) educators' insights highlighted what teachers should take into consideration (e.g., scaffolding/differentiated strategies) when planning, creating, and delivering instruction for ELLs in an online platform. Overall, participants emphasized the much-needed dedication to explore technology tools for various pedagogical approaches in hybrid/virtual learning spaces.

Keywords: English learners, COVID-19 pandemic, preservice teachers, hybrid/virtual learning, pedagogical approaches

Introduction

In our world today, replete with uncertainties, educators experiencing the current COVID-19 pandemic are compelled to think rapidly in creating virtual learning spaces for all students. Specifically, English language learners (ELLs) in PreK–12 schools have been immensely affected by the COVID-19 disruptions. Now, more than ever, preservice teachers (PSTs) need to be prepared in understanding the challenges faced by ELLs and provide various pedagogies for online platforms.

In preparing our PSTs, we, the researchers, are driven to answer critical questions on classroom instruction, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and pedagogical frameworks for ELLs in hybrid/virtual learning spaces. The continuous rapid growth of ELLs in California necessitates teachers to implement distance learning to all students, including ELLs, due to the pandemic (Francom et al., 2021; CA

Department of Education, 2018). In response to this directive, current initiatives such as the EL Roadmap and Global 2030 have guided educators "towards a coherent and aligned set of practices, services, relationships, and approaches to teaching and learning that add up to a powerful, effective, twenty-first century education for all English learners" (CA Department of Education, 2018). To enhance the development of SEL identities for our students in this new virtual world, getting to know students is a critical step in creating a safe learning environment. Lastly, we emphasize having knowledge of pedagogical frameworks would provide PSTs a start towards a solid foundation in implementing approaches that would positively impact their ELL instruction in remote learning. This study will empower teacher candidates to leverage relevant technology-based practices and be equipped with various tools and strategies appropriate for ELL students.

Literature Review

ELLs in California

California's K–12 system has 1.2 million ELLs, nearly 20 percent statewide (Billings & Lagunoff, 2020). ELLs face many challenges during normal circumstances; however, during the COVID-19 pandemic, those challenges have escalated. According to Billings and Lagunoff (2020), one area that has been an evident challenge is the digital divide that exists for ELLs, particularly those from a lower socio-economic status.

In addition, half of ELLs in many districts (with highest population of ELLs) were not logging onto their online courses, mostly due to lack of digital access, parents' limited knowledge of online learning, language barriers, and untrained teachers (Sugarman & Lazarín, 2020). According to Sugarman and Lazarín (2020), if this above-mentioned situation continues with remote online learning, ELLs may face losing 7 to 11 months of learning. Indeed, the following literature review demonstrates that the devastating loss of learning among ELLs has been apparent during this COVID-19 pandemic as the digital divide increases.

The COVID-19 Pandemic: Virtual/Hybrid Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly made the digital divide worse than ever. The teachers and students who were already familiar with and had access to technology have been able to continue with distance learning without a problem. However, those who have not been exposed, let alone those without access to technology, have no means of continuing or even beginning remote education.

Although the digital divide has been an issue for decades now, it has become more evidently undesirable since the start of the pandemic due to the "abrupt, unforeseen, and unplanned shifts to remote learning" (Hodges et al., 2020, para. 5). Unfortunately, teachers, students, and parents are not prepared for this sudden shift due to the difficulty of logging in, troubleshooting, and navigating through the online platforms (Trust & Whalen, 2020).

Moreover, with the rapid change to hybrid/virtual learning due to the pandemic, ELLs have been affected dramatically. In a survey conducted by Tang and Flores (2020), ELLs were left on their own to self-tutor and find their own solutions and were not given ample opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities in a virtual classroom. Due to these challenges faced by ELLs, it was inevitable that PreK–12 classroom teachers had to make some rapid changes in their lesson delivery, curriculum, and instruction.

Teacher Education in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era

Aside from the drastic shift that teachers had to take in the PreK–12 systems, PSTs were also highly impacted. The educational programs designed for PSTs were among those changes. Griffin et al. (2020) noted, "Within this larger context, pre-service teacher training practices, particularly field experiences came to a pause as well and many teacher education programs innovative strategies to maintain the fidelity and integrity of school-based field experiences through providing various virtual practicum experiences" (as cited in Turkan, 2021, p. 92).

In addition, Gutierrez et al. (2021) stated that PSTs need to be prepared to teach online, but the reality is, many are not adequately prepared. The authors also pointed out that typical face-to-face teaching instruction (field experience) was now replaced with virtual teaching instruction due to school closures. Nevertheless, the authors stated that although this was an abrupt circumstance, participants gained positive outcomes from their circumstance-necessitated virtual field experience and asynchronous or synchronous online teaching. Among the list of gains, the study showed that their PSTs who had asynchronous field experience created engaging presentations, gained educational technology tools, developed pedagogical strategies for teaching online, considered equity issues around resources, and practiced effective virtual communication and collaboration with project team members. In contrast, their PSTs who taught synchronous classes gained experience with technology tools, learned to support students' independence, gained appreciation for learning alongside students, and received valuable content skills (Gutierrez et al., 2021).

However, Turkan (2021) recommended that teacher educators should be warned that despite the intersections between technology and teacher education practice, other critical aspects of teacher education for emerging bilinguals (also known as ELLs) such as co-teaching and connecting with families should be addressed. PSTs were not the only ones affected by the pandemic. Classroom teachers were impacted by this devastating phenomenon as well.

K–12 Classroom Teachers of ELLs

Among those who have been affected by the pandemic are the K–12 classroom teachers who had to find alternative approaches to supporting and teaching their ELLs remotely (Billings & Lagunoff, 2020). Not only did some educators struggle with the newness of having to learn the new digital world and new programs online to assist their students, they also had make drastic switches to provide adequate scaffolding and differentiating classroom instruction to support their ELLs online. In addition, teachers need to take into consideration the building of a safe space where students are heard and valued and their well-being is supported (Billings & Lagunoff, 2020). Some classroom teachers felt that they were inadequately prepared to teach online and were also concerned that their students would not have the proper online resources and WiFi to adapt to remote learning.

However, according to Turkan (2021), there were two positive outcomes in education that resulted due to the pandemic. First, during the pandemic, there were various approaches of experimenting and exploring among PreK–12 teachers as they implemented new ways to teach and learn through innovative technologies. Secondly, educational problems became more evident than ever during the pandemic. This turned out to be a positive phenomenon because educators realized the severity of students' access issues when confronted with students without computers, internet access, or food to eat while not in school. Gutierrez et al. (2021) stated, "The pandemic was a highlighter and a magnifying glass, showing us where we needed to grow" (p. 11).

State and Local Education Agencies

Local Education Agencies (LEAs), high-need districts, and schools needed to pivot to provide equitable access where learners, particularly ELLs and students with disabilities, are often unable to complete their work and have poor educational outcomes (Catalano et al., 2021). Below is how an LEA is defined by EdSource (Osborn & Levin, 2021):

A public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state. School districts and county offices of education are both LEAs. Under the Local Control Funding Formula, charter schools are increasingly treated as LEAs. (p. 1)

On a larger scale, state education agencies have made great strides in identifying the following areas of agreement on remote learning policy: remote learning support, equity and access, statewide assessments, attention to a range of student needs, and attention to special populations (Reich et al., 2020). In addition, within the state level, there seems to be a debate about whether LEAs should pursue *enrichment* or *new material*. Reich et al. (2020) explained the difference between the two: "Enrichment approaches emphasize review of previously taught skills [and] . . . meaningful learning experiences that may not be explicitly aligned with state standards or pacing guides. 'New material' approaches recommended that LEAs continue to advance standards-based learning, either by maintaining progress in existing courses . . . or focusing on a more limited set of critical standards" (p. iii). Although LEAs follow the guidelines from the state education agencies, there are policies and initiatives such as the English Learner (EL) Roadmap and Global 2030 that guide educators towards implementing and supporting ELLs in the 21st century.

EL Roadmap and Global 2030

The California EL Roadmap policy guides LEAs on how to support ELLs and provide access to 21st century education. The EL Roadmap includes the following key components: strengthening comprehensive educational policies, programs, and practices for ELLs in an effort to provide guidance on educating ELLs (California Department of Education, 2020). Additionally, the Global California 2030 initiative, a part of a larger effort to promote multilingualism, recognizes ELLs as assets and acknowledges the rich cultural and linguistic diversity these students bring to their classrooms and communities (California Department of Education, 2018). In an endeavor to align with the California EL Roadmap policy and Global 2030 initiative, it is critical to seek effective online learning for ELLs.

Distance Learning Instruction for ELLs

According to Billings and Lagunoff (2020), there are four key practices for effective ELL distance learning instruction during school closures: (a) provide students with linguistic and content support; (b) engage ELLs in routines that support socialization and focused learning; (c) provide frequent opportunities for ELLs to engage in meaningful collaborative activities; and (d) invite ELLs to engage in multimodal tasks that support and reinforce listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. In addition, creating a safe learning environment for students is important so that they feel connected. Billings and Lagunoff (2020) further explain, "Students must get the message that teachers are going to be a consistent presence in their lives during this period [of virtual learning]" (p. 3).

Nevertheless, for schools or districts that have the capability to conduct face-to-face instruction in a safe environment during the pandemic, Sugarman and Lazarín (2020) found that prioritizing in-person

learning with increased time for ELLs has proven to be beneficial for their learning outcomes. In-person learning has its advantages because the positive impact of social and emotional learning can be more easily attained in a face-to-face interaction.

Social and Emotional Learning for ELLs

According to Sugarman and Lazarín (2020), the pandemic has caused a greater social and emotional divide, particularly among ELL youth in immigrant families. There has been an increased lack of mental health support, food resources, and jobs. The pandemic has caused many disruptions in the education for students, especially those who now need to care for their siblings (Sugarman & Lazarín, 2020). Hence, teachers should take into consideration the value of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) for ELLs. According to CASEL (2021), "SEL is a lifelong process of learning how to better understand ourselves, connect with others, and work together to achieve goals and support our communities" (para. 1). SEL can help mitigate the students' declining sense of belonging (particularly for ELLs) by engaging them in the initial preparation and ongoing development of culturally-relevant, technology-mediated care practices (Miller, 2021).

Similarly, Farber and Rutter (2021) considered ways to improve students' social and emotional well-being with caring pedagogies through coursework. They suggested instructors to do the following: (a) check-in often with students; (b) rethink office hours; (c) create an inclusive syllabus that emphasizes student success; (d) model SEL and Caring Pedagogies (CP); (d)nurture students' intrinsic motivations in courses; and (e) promote CP for all (p. 37).

In addition to promoting CP, fostering mindfulness and compassion in teaching and learning provides educators an avenue to face adversity and weather changing times, especially in the COVID-19 era (Castek & Ryoo, 2021). As educators, we need to empathize, listen, and redesign to meet the needs of our learners. The strategies of mindfulness and compassion are not meant to always be a roadmap for everyone, but current circumstances have compelled the need to implement mindfulness, compassion, and prioritization of well-being into lessons, with heavy consideration especially for many students (e.g., ELLs) who have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

ELLs in PreK–12 grades have faced many challenges during this COVID–19 pandemic. Since ELLs are among one of the groups that have been affected most throughout the remote learning experience, it is essential that support for ELLs be a high priority. One area of focus in this study is the preparation and training provided for teacher candidates with the transition to hybrid/virtual learning. This study will empower teacher candidates to leverage relevant technology-based practices and be equipped with various tools and strategies appropriate for ELLs. As we prepare our teacher candidates, we are driven to answer three critical questions:

1. Why do preservice teachers need to explore classroom instruction for ELLs in hybrid/virtual spaces?
2. How can aspiring teachers be cognizant of implementing SEL in hybrid/virtual spaces?
3. What pedagogical frameworks do future educators need to apply in ELL hybrid/virtual classrooms?

Methodology

This qualitative investigation focused on preparing educators, specifically PSTs, with relevant pedagogical approaches that support ELLs in a hybrid/virtual environment. This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of educators serving ELLs during the COVID-19 pandemic and hybrid/virtual learning.

Participants

This study consisted of 57 participants in the field of education who served in the PreK–12th grades (i.e., teachers, coaches, teachers on special assignment (TOSA), administrators, paraprofessionals) and higher education settings (i.e., professors, adjunct instructors, teacher educators, individuals from institution of higher education (IHE), and county office administrators). Participants were invited to complete a thirteen-question online survey. The majority of the participants were PreK–12 teachers (43.9 percent) and university educators (43.9 percent). Please see Figure 1 to learn more about the breakdown of percentages. From this point on, we will refer to all the participants listed in Figure 1 as educators. Most participants had over 21 years of teaching experience (52.6 percent) and less than 20 percent had 16–20 years of teaching experience. See Figure 2 for the general overview for the educators' years of experience.
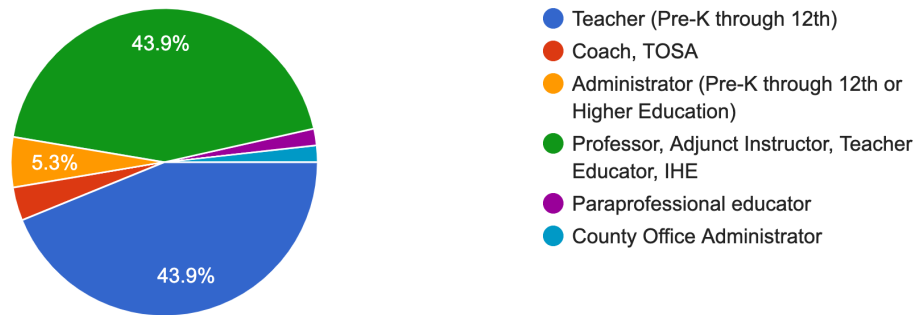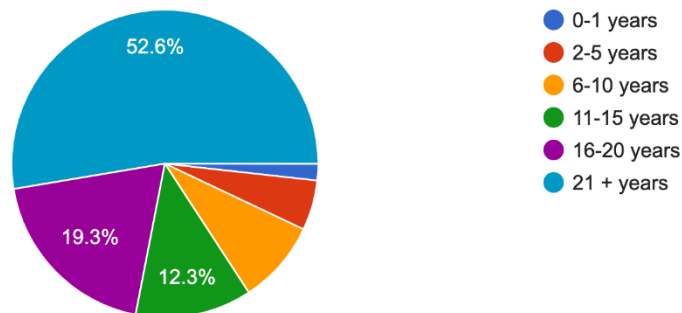
Figure 1
Participants' Job Titles

Figure 2
Educators' Years of Experience

Context

The context of this qualitative research study was shaped by the current pandemic, where distance learning has become the new norm. We investigated the best practices that educational leaders in the field have learned, implemented, and continue to implement in classrooms to support ELLs. In addition, the study brought to light the different programs and pedagogical frameworks such as SEL that educators have been trained on and have been found effective. This study was intended to equip PSTs and all educators seeking pedagogical approaches that support ELLs in hybrid/virtual spaces.

Collection of Data

In this study, we collected data for a span of two months. We reached out to various organizations and social media platforms by email to request educators complete an online Google survey. The research included informed consent notices at the beginning of the online Google survey to inform participants of their rights and the nature of the study prior to proceeding with the questionnaire. To minimize coercion or undue influence, the researchers provided ample time for the participants to read the informed consent and ask questions. This study was completely anonymous, and the participants were able to leave the survey at any time at their own discretion.
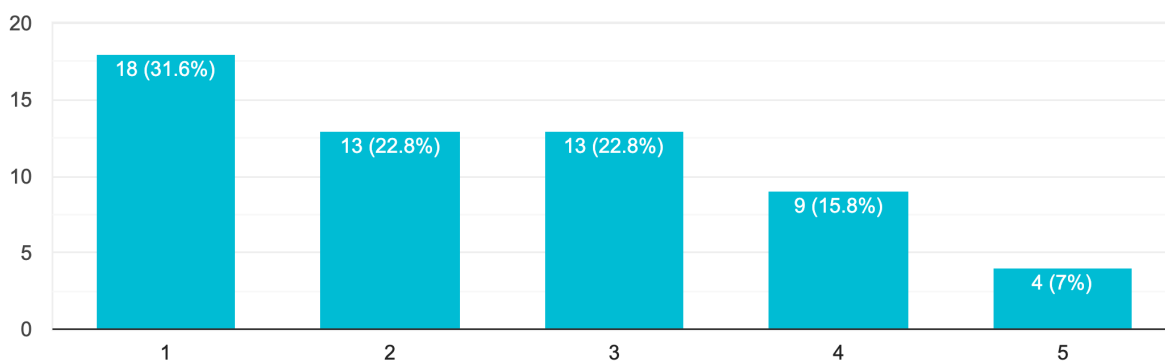
Findings

Introduction to Findings

Out of the 57 participants, 54.4 percent felt they were limited or ill-equipped for teaching a hybrid/virtual classroom and more specifically to instruct ELLs online, while 22.8 percent felt adequately or fully prepared prior to the pandemic. Figure 3 below demonstrates the self-perception of educators' level of preparedness for teaching online (1 = not prepared, 5 = very prepared).

Figure 3
Self-Perception of Educators' Level of Preparedness for Teaching Online

Finding 1: Why Do PSTs Need to Explore Classroom Instruction for ELLs in Hybrid/Virtual Spaces?

PSTs are constantly seeking better approaches and strategies for teaching their ELL students. In their teacher preparation program, they learn the theories and practices of reaching their ELL students in the classrooms. Although PSTs are taught these approaches, many still feel they could learn more, particularly with hybrid/virtual learning and teaching ELLs. However, the reality outside of the four walls of the teacher preparation program is different from what PSTs are experiencing with the current pandemic situation. Hence, PSTs need to be exposed to the challenges encountered by in-

service teachers in an effort to provide insights on the need to explore classroom instruction for ELLs virtually.

The following are the challenges expressed by participants. One of the participants stated:

The major systems' challenge was the inequitable access to devices and connectivity for all students and inadequate connectivity at school sites to be able to provide uninterrupted instruction. Instructionally, a major challenge was developing virtual lessons that provide opportunities for academic discourse among students. While some teachers quickly implemented routines to support the use of breakout rooms for small group discussions, not all teachers were equipped to implement these practices. The stress for teachers that are not tech savvy impacted the appropriate academic [support] being provided to English learners. The lack of preparedness to transition to a distance learning environment was also impacted by the emotional stress caused by the pandemic.

Another participant stated how they "[c]an't wait until this pandemic subsides! Sad that our English learners have been ignored since teachers are trying to focus on students that show up, participate, and turn in assignments, and our English learners can't because of working parents, lack of infrastructure[,] or knowledge on how to manipulate the technology!" Other educators felt that in-person teaching was a better approach for supporting ELLs. One of the educators mentioned, "Honestly, it's been the most difficult year of my teaching career and the thing that worked best was creating an in-person academic support program for our ELLs back in October [2020]. Distance learning was not working for many of them." In addition, there were many challenging issues that arose with accessibility particularly among ELLs (see Table 1).
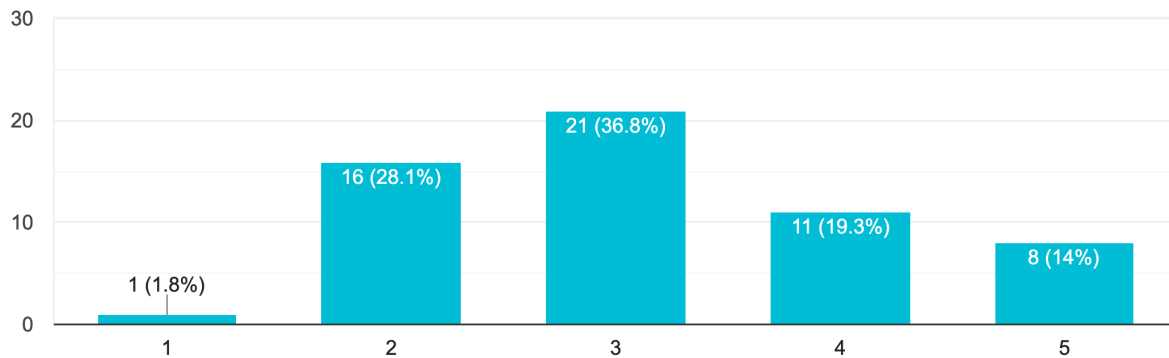
Table 1
Challenges Educators Faced While Teaching ELLs Remotely

- Limited access to technology resources;
- Connectivity issues;
- Shortened school day;
- Difficulty with scaffolding and differentiating instruction online;
- Lack of student engagement/motivation online;
- High absenteeism;
- Unfavorable learning environment;
- Lack of support from home;
- Limited communication or language barrier with families; and
- Families' lack of familiarity with technology platforms.

Finding 2: How Can Aspiring/New/Veteran Teachers be Cognizant of Implementing SEL in virtual spaces?

Results obtained from the survey responses revealed that nearly 33 percent of the participants were familiar to very familiar with the concept of SEL, while 67 percent of the participants had some/limited to no exposure to SEL (1 = no exposure, 5 = full exposure). See Figure 4 below.

Figure 4
Extent to which Educators are Exposed to SEL

The following are some specific training and professional development workshops the participants have been involved in:

Table 2
Professional Development Training/Workshops on SEL

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL);
- Expository Reading & Writing;
- Project GLAD/BEGLAD;
- Second Step Early Learning Program;
- Harmony & Inspire from Quality Teaching for ELLs (QTEL);
- Teach Like a Champion;
- Mind Up SEL Curriculum;
- California Reading Literature Project (CRLP);
- California Subject Matter Project (CSMP);
- Character Counts Program;
- Neurodiversity;
- Capturing Kids' Hearts SEL Program;
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL); and
- Leader in Me workshops.

Aside from the above-mentioned professional development training workshops provided by the school, some participants also decided to seek on their own outside SEL-related resources that best suited the needs of their students, particularly ELLs. The following are some examples of what the participants have learned from: mindfulness activities and restorative justice practices from webinars; Facebook/TikTok activities shared by teachers; ELL coaches; applications such as chat, audio, Flipgrid, and Google docs; surveys; activities embedded into the credential program; and monthly staff meetings.

This study also found that participants suggested communicating and building relationships with student's parents and families. One participant suggested, "Being able to effectively communicate with families can be so powerful in supporting our students, even more so in a virtual setting." Another recommended, "Preservice teachers should learn to communicate with families to update them on student progress and needs . . . [it's important to build] relationships with students and their

parents/families and create parent activities that support language [development,] i.e.[,] family games, nature walks, family interviews, [and] movie reviews."

Finding 3: What Pedagogical Frameworks/Programs do Future Educators Need to Apply in ELL Hybrid/Virtual Classrooms?

Nearly 44 percent of participants rated their institutions as providing minimal to no pedagogical frameworks/programs for ELLs in a hybrid/virtual platform, while 42 percent had rated theirs as somewhat adequate. Only 14 percent of participants rated their institutions' provision of pedagogical frameworks/programs for ELLs in hybrid/virtual classrooms as adequate to very adequate (1 = none provided, 5 = very well provided).

Figure 5
Participants' Rating of Their Institutions' Provision of Pedagogical Frameworks/Programs
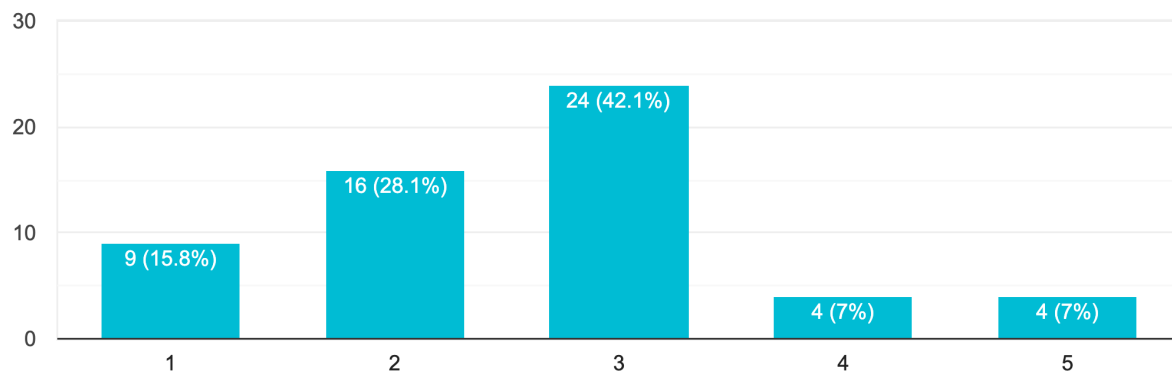
In addition, due to the interrelated nature of pedagogical frameworks, programs, approaches, and models, for example, participants have interchangeably listed these categories in one section.

Table 3 below demonstrates the pedagogical frameworks. Table 4 describes the participants' recommendations of pedagogical frameworks/programs as intertwined with models, teaching approach, and professional learning opportunities.

Table 3
Pedagogical Frameworks/Programs

Pedagogical Frameworks for ELLs	Description
CA English Language Development/English Language Arts (ELD/ELA) Framework & Standards	Maintain California's commitment to providing English learner students with a high-quality program that will enable them to attain proficiency in English—developing the skills and confidence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/
Equity Frameworks for California	Addresses the needs of disadvantaged communities. CA Equity Framework

| Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - Framework | A framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. [Learn more about the Universal Design for Learning framework](#) from CAST. |

Table 4
Models, Teaching Approach, & Professional Learning for ELLs

Pedagogical Frameworks for ELLs (Based on Participants' Perceptions of Terminologies)	Description
Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) - Model	A research-based model that transforms school systems by providing professional development, curriculum support, and technical assistance. https://seal.org/
Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) - Model	A learning model that incorporates research-based strategies supported by theories on language development and language acquisition. In California, there are two major training centers: OCDE Project GLAD https://ocde.us and BeGLAD https://begladtraining.com/.
Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) - Model	A research-based and validated model of sheltered instruction that helps teachers plan and deliver lessons that allow English learners to acquire academic knowledge as they develop English language proficiency. https://cal.org/siop/
Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) - Teaching Approach	A teaching approach that uses various strategies to teach academic content to ELL students; focuses on curriculum and teaching content to students.
EL Rise! - Professional Learning	Research-based professional learning opportunities to support English learning students to thrive and lead in a culturally diverse global world. https://www.californianstogether.org/el-rise/

Along with the frameworks, participants have also provided effective hybrid/virtual platforms and resources that their school sites used in supporting ELLs (see Table 5). Responses reported a wide range of technology resources that pertain to three categories: (a) learning management and/or communication platforms; (b) interactive learning platforms; and (c) web resources. Canvas, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Nearpod, and Google Classrooms were among the most popular learning management and/or communication platforms, where students had a mutual place to meet with the teacher and their classmates to learn online; in addition, some of these platforms had built-in learning management features. One participant elaborated:

Canvas is the learning management system adopted by the county office. The platform includes many features to ensure accessibility for all learners and is easy to navigate. Many additional platforms can be integrated into Canvas, making it an effective one-stop learning environment.

Another participant suggested that Nearpod was the most effective online platform for ELLs at their district:

Nearpod was determined to be the most effective online instructional program that could meet the needs of ELL in a virtual classroom. The program can be used to guide . . . lessons both synchronously or asynchronously and includes a multitude of formative assessment tools. When trying to meet the needs of various districts, this platform seemed the most practical as it includes ready-made standards aligned lessons but can also be used to create lessons from scratch. It also includes accessibility features making it conducive to meeting the unique needs of ELLs.

Among the most common interactive learning platforms for ELLs' learning experiences included Padlet, Flipgrid, Jamboard, Edpuzzle, Newsela, Kahoot, and Peardeck. As far as web resources are concerned, YouTube, Colorín Colorado, and TeachingChannel.org were the most sought after. A participant expressed great satisfaction with Newsela: "I love Newsela as a literacy support. Many documents are in Spanish and English, and the Lexile level can be adjusted to meet the students' reading needs."

Table 5

Online Platforms and Resources Utilized for ELLs

Learning Management and/or Communication Platforms	Interactive Learning Platforms	Web Resources
Canvas	Flipgrid	Colorín Colorado
Collaborate	Peardeck	CUE web sources
Google Classroom	Talking Points	IRIS web sources
Google Suite	Jamboard	YouTube
Google Meets	Imagine Learning & Language	Study.com
Intrado	Seesaw	Educeri online ELD resources
Microsoft Teams	Nearpod	Newsela
Moodle	Canvas	Achieve 3000
WebEx	Flocabulary	California Office of Education –
Webinar	Rosetta Stone	ELD resources
Zoom	Class Dojo	Teaching Channel.org
Blackboard	Padlet	Teach Like a Champion
Livestorm	Lexia	Social Media (i.e., Twitter,
LearnBrite	Kami	Facebook, TikTok, Instagram)
	PopUp Videos	Read 180
	myOn and happy Numbers	CalState TEACH curriculum
	BrainPop ELL	WIDA,
	Duolingo	https://wida.wisc.edu/about
	IXL	
	Kahoot	
	Parlay	
	Listenwise	
	VoiceThread	
	Pixton	
	Screencastify	
	Screencast-o-matic	
	Quizlet	
	Quizizz	
	JeopardyLabs.com	
	Menus & Choice Boards	

Finding 4: Educators' Insights on Preparing PSTs in ELL Hybrid/Virtual Instruction

As online platforms and resources are recognized and utilized by various educators in supporting ELLs, there are factors to keep in mind based on the perspectives of educators in online learning settings for this student population. Educators emphasized the importance of making time and space to build student relationships. By providing safe learning environments, ELLs feel welcomed and valued. Educators expressed how an Assets Based Mindset is key in seeing the students for the positive assets they bring to the classroom and not only what they may lack. It is important to steer away from the deficit mentality. In addition, educators frequently mentioned being flexible and adaptable. One participant shared her adaptability: "Using what I knew already about supporting ELLs, I adjusted my

instruction to take advantage of the tools I had and could access to keep language learning and language teaching at the center of everything I do."

Findings also revealed that recognizing students' cultural and linguistic background knowledge is essential, particularly with ELLs. One participant mentioned how "[s]uccessful teachers of ELLs have expertise in language-acquisition theories and best practices; they understand language from multiple perspectives such as function, culture, and learning." In agreement, another participant stated that "[a]ll teachers are language teachers and therefore need expertise in linguistics as well as pedagogy." In addition, educators discussed the importance of utilizing evidence and research-based resources.

Prior to starting instruction, participants discussed the value of backwards planning, "[d]esign instruction with the end in mind. Clear outcomes will dictate clear tasks." For backwards planning, the ELD/ELA framework/standards and EL Roadmap teacher toolkits were among the main resources that participants referred to and aligned with when creating unit/lesson plans. Moreover, the use of clear content and language objectives/goals are highly recommended. When teachers are preparing for lessons that support ELLs, they should promote engaging interaction, choice of books, short answer responses, feedback, and participation. A participant also recommended that "in teaching complex skills, it is best to utilize different grade level content for ELLs that is more relatable or familiar . . . rather than the curriculum recommended content." Another participant shared: "I have noticed students learn well through repetitive sentence structure and making connections to content material." This opportunity allows for more success and engagement during assessment. In addition, for Google Slides, educators should utilize interactive and animated presentations. There should also be a focus on big ideas and the use of text as part of instruction. In addition, some participants mentioned that Flipped Classrooms worked well depending on the students' level of education.

It is important to scaffold and provide differentiated instruction. Having various strategies to suit the individual needs of ELLs is critical. Table 6 below is a list of scaffolding and differentiated strategies suggested by the participants:

Table 6
Scaffolding and Differentiated Strategies

Visual Learning Materials	Reciprocal Teaching
Sentence Frames	Revoicing/Recasting
Videos with Captions	SIOP Model
Different Modalities of Work	Small Group/Cooperative learning
SDAIE Strategies	Total Physical Response (TPR)
Virtual Manipulatives	Songs/Chants/Music
Vocabulary Development (Frayer Model)	Skits/Role-playing
Graphic Organizers	Think/Pair/Share
Literature Circle	Learning Games

Along with the scaffolding and differentiated strategies, it is recommended that teachers should develop confidence in using technology. They should be familiar and/or adept with learning virtual dictionaries, virtual libraries, chat features, accessibility apps (especially in assisting reading), Google translator, Speak to Type, and other integrated technology tools for making learning comprehensible and, as one participant put it, "building ELLs' confidence." Please refer to Table 5 to review the list of Online Platforms and Resources Utilized for ELLs which includes the following: learning

management/communication platforms, interactive learning platforms, and web resources that participants recommended as effective. As one participant emphatically stated: "DON'T BE AFRAID OF TECHNOLOGY."

Discussion and Implication

Reflecting on the findings of this qualitative research study, we discovered four major themes that have emerged from the data.

First, there are gaps between what educators gain from the districts and what they have previously learned from their teacher preparation programs. Hence, PSTs need to explore classroom instruction for hybrid/virtual settings specifically for ELLs in order to understand and be equipped to fill in those gaps.

Second, some educators were not completely aware of the SEL approach even though this term has been coined since 1994 and has been shown to make a positive impact on students, especially for ELLs. Unfortunately, only a few participating educators have been fully immersed in the SEL framework. Therefore, there is a need for PSTs to be cognizant of SEL by learning from seasoned teachers, researching on their own, and attending professional development training workshops provided by school districts on a consistent basis.

Third, there were three pedagogical frameworks identified by the participants as most commonly used. Aside from these frameworks, programs, some online platforms, and resources were interchangeably listed in one section.

Fourth, in addition, educators' insights highlighted what teachers should take into consideration (e.g., scaffolding/differentiated strategies) when planning, creating, and delivering instruction for ELLs in an online platform. Among the suggested ways, having an Assets Based Mindset was found to be a key factor in seeing the students for their positive qualities. Overall, participants emphasized the much-needed dedication to explore technology tools for relevant pedagogical approaches (e.g., cooperative learning in hybrid/virtual learning spaces).

Clearly, the analyses above highlighted some of the complex and interconnected aspects of the relevant pedagogical approaches for ELLs in online learning. However, a question remains: Do all these approaches work for all ELLs in all settings? The most reasonable answer to this is: Not all approaches are applicable to every ELL in every situation. By emphasizing the social (i.e., SEL) and the interactive (i.e., Assets Based Mindset) natures of these pedagogical approaches, this study raises a larger question in education research that warrants a follow-up research study: How do we make these pedagogical frameworks relevant for ELL students, PSTs, and educators in their everyday lives within and beyond the classroom?

Limitations and Future Research

There were limitations that were identified in the study. First, the study involved only 57 participants and, thus, the findings cannot be generalized. For a future study, more participants could be recruited for an extended period of time. Another limitation pertains to the scope of the participants' job roles. In the future, a wider range, particularly with County Office administrators, coaches/teachers on special assignments, and paraprofessionals, could be randomly recruited. Having a larger group could give us a broader perspective towards our findings. In addition, having only one instrument for gathering data, such as the online survey, created another limitation. The single survey used in this study did not provide

a comprehensive list of pedagogical approaches, but it did present the lived experiences and expertise of the 57 participants. Adding interviews, observations, and pedagogical program reviews in the future will expand and clarify the limited responses. Furthermore, the study could have recruited participants outside of California to gather nationwide perspectives and gain a more robust set of insights from educators across the nation.

Recommendations

The recommendations proposed by this study involve three areas that can empower PSTs in supporting ELLs in hybrid/virtual spaces: (a) support for families; (b) school involvement and technology; and (c) students' identities, academic statuses, mental health, and social predispositions.

First, the family is an essential part of a student's life. As educators, it is best to understand students' backgrounds and their home languages. In addition, it is necessary to have virtual communication opportunities to reach out to parents about their child's learning progress and needs. Moreover, educators can encourage parents to get involved in community engagement activities (e.g., family games, nature walks, family interviews, movie reviews) for families to develop pride in their heritage, language, and culture. Although home visits are not mandatory, it is an excellent way to build relationships with the school community as educators initiate family projects, office hours, online, or in-person meetings with parents and students.

Second, they should also encourage students to access bilingual books or sites in their home language. In addition, providing support for students and parents in the introduction, exposure, and integration of technology should be emphasized by educators. It is highly recommended for educators to explore the ideas of leveraging technology and immerse themselves into pedagogical approaches through technology, especially when teaching in hybrid/virtual learning spaces. For example, attending virtual and in-person professional learning, webinars, and trainings will help educators develop creative ways to design and implement relevant pedagogical approaches for ELLs.

Lastly, this investigation recommends that identity (i.e., through Assets Based Mindset) and social issues (i.e., through CP and SEL) be at the forefront of the discussion as an awareness develops with regards to incorporating them into the current pedagogical models/approaches that support ELLs. Since ELLs are individually unique in their own identities, languages, social and cultural capitals, and lived experiences, it behooves educators to be cognizant and proactive towards these students' academic statuses, mental health, and social predispositions, especially in these difficult times of the pandemic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has made an important contribution by adding to the literature with supporting evidence that relevant pedagogical approaches do prepare and empower PSTs in providing instruction for ELLs in hybrid/virtual learning spaces. Now that we have knowledge of useful technology tools and strategies, we need to implement them in the delivery of instruction in order to support ELLs. It is suggested that districts, schools, and teacher preparation programs keep these findings in mind when preparing future teacher candidates. These aspiring teachers will more than likely have to continue some sort of online hybrid/virtual teaching for their students, including ELLs, in PreK–12 settings, even in a post-pandemic era. Similarly, professors in higher education teacher preparation programs who currently have PSTs should continue to think about revisiting or improving the technology taught in their credentialing programs to better suit these hybrid/virtual learning environments.

In addition, families are another factor that teachers must keep in mind. Particularly with ELL families, educators need to make sure that these families have adequate online learning resources to allow them to succeed with distance learning. As more schools do face-to-face instruction, educators will also need to be sensitive to the trauma that some families have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, despite the challenges this past year has brought, research demonstrates the use of technology has been useful or helpful towards ELLs and will likely continue to be so even in the years to come. Since this transformation in education was immensely impactful, specifically with the use of technology, these acquired skill sets will now be ingrained into the students' lives and become part of 21st century college and career readiness.

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