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## Teachers' Perceptions of the Effects of Small Pull-Out Instruction in English Language Arts on Students with Interrupted Formal Education from Central American Countries at the Secondary School Level

Barbara Jean

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Teachers' Perceptions of the Effects of Small Pull-Out Instruction in English Language Arts on  
Students with Interrupted Formal Education from Central American Countries at the Secondary  
School Level

Barbara Jean

Long Island University

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At the beginning of my journey, I was unsure who my third committee member would be. I was given a list of professors that I should consider. Searching for a third committee member, I encountered Dr. June-Ann Smith. One aspect that drew me closer was her statement. Dr. June-Ann Smith states, "...Seek to help families become stable and stay functional. I promote

wellness and optimum living. Treat people fairly and well. Be considerate and kind to those you meet on your way up, because you may need them on your way down. Life is a journey, live it well and make a difference for those you encounter.” This resonated with me and connected to my topic. Dr. Smith had experience and a strong background in life's social and emotional aspects. Therefore, I am very grateful that I could work with her throughout my journey. These educated women were different, empowered me through this process, and allowed me to grow as a student.

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## DEDICATION

I want to thank the Lord for giving me the strength and wisdom to go through this journey. Proverbs 3:5 - 6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your path straight.” I want to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Carline Jean, and my brother, Warren Jean, who is deceased.

To my loving mother, I want to thank her for making me the woman I am today. I am the first person in my family to receive a doctoral degree. This is a huge accomplishment for my family. Without my mother’s guidance and dedication, I would not be the woman I am today. My mother took education seriously and encouraged me to excel in my career. Before my mother passed away in 2018, I promised her I would receive my doctoral degree and make her proud. She cannot be with me physically, but I know she is with me spiritually.

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the effectiveness of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts (ELA) on the academic performance of Central American Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) at the secondary level. Specifically, the study explored the perceptions of ENL teachers regarding the impact of small-group instruction on SIFE students. A mixed methods approach was used to achieve the research objectives, including a survey questionnaire and interview questions. The study also explored themes such as how small group instruction can positively impact SIFE students, the challenges of academic readiness and reading skills, and the roles of specialized programs and resources. This study provided insights into effective teaching strategies to help SIFE students achieve academic success and participate effectively in the United States school system. The study contributes to the existing literature on English Language Learners (ELLs) education and provides insights for teachers and educators working with this student subpopulation.

Keywords: Pull-out instruction, Small group instruction, Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), ENL teachers, English Language Learners

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The academic performance and overall educational attainment of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) are growing concerns within the secondary education landscape (Custodio & O’Loughlin, 2020). These students, who have missed substantial portions of their formal education due to migration, displacement, or other factors, often need help catching up academically and adapting to new educational systems. This study is designed to explore one approach that can potentially help SIFE students improve their academic performance and integration into the secondary education system—namely, the implementation of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts.

The United States has seen significant demographic shifts recently, most notably an increase in the prevalence of minority communities. The implications of these shifts in the education system have been profound. From 1992 to 2003, the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in schools doubled, reaching three and a half million children with limited English proficiency (VanTassel-Baska, 2021). Frydland (2022) asserted that more than ten million children lived in homes where children spoke another language other than English. Limited English Proficient (LEP) children spoke Spanish as a second language 80% of the time (Casanova & Alvarez, 2022). Many children developed proficiency in English in addition to learning academic skills and content in their second language (Casanova & Alvarez, 2022).

Most students with interrupted formal education entered schools with little or no native language literacy, little English proficiency, and low academic content knowledge. This subpopulation of English language learners (ELLs) was mainly a challenge for educators, especially at the secondary level, where students had a relatively short time to develop English

language proficiency while developing literacy skills and catching up on academic content knowledge (DeCapua et al., 2007).

Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) needed to learn to participate effectively in U.S. schools because of their limited exposure to Western-style education (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002). Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) were a diverse subset of the English language learner population with several unifying characteristics. SIFE were usually new to the United States school system and previously had interrupted or limited schooling opportunities in their native country. Custodio & O'Loughlin (2020) explained that the highest percentage of SIFE in the United States came from countries in Latin America, mainly Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. SIFE students also experienced poverty, lived in isolated geographical locales, and experienced limited transportation options. Hence, interrupted formal education led to poor performance in their below-grade-level academic skills (Freeman & Freeman, 2002). There were differences in personal backgrounds, which created potentially wide variations in their linguistic and educational profiles and the goals they held for the future. Furthermore, older students with interrupted formal education who entered high school experienced challenges since they were particularly at risk and had little time to develop the skills and knowledge needed for graduation (Freeman, 2002).

Classroom teachers in the United States had to balance a variety of languages and diverse needs at the same time. Teachers and schools were also responsible for educating children, regardless of their background, ethnicity, or home language, based on Federal guidelines that guided educational options for English language learners (Every Student Succeeds Act U.S, n.d.). Many of these students were marginalized and ignored as having learning difficulties due to social or emotional adjustment issues.

Furthermore, according to “No Child Left Behind,” all students were expected to meet federal standards regardless of whether they were English-language learners (Bradford, 2019). As a result of this requirement, teachers, schools, districts, and states were under significant pressure to make ELLs succeed.

The public school district had to provide these students with the appropriate program. It could be a bilingual program, an immersion program, a pull-out program, or any other acceptable program so that the students could succeed. The number of English language learners grew, and the fastest-growing group was Hispanic-origin immigrants (Bradford, 2019).

According to U.S. Census Bureau data (Guzman, 2001), the Hispanic population increased by about 58 percent, from 22 million in 1990 to 35 million in 2000, compared with an increase of about 13 percent for the total U.S. population. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the number of Hispanics to be about 50.5 million, or about 16 percent of the U.S. population, up 43 percent from the 2000 census. The increase of over 15 million Hispanics from 2000 to 2010 accounted for more than half of the total population increase in the U.S. (Humes et al., 2011). As these data reflect, the proportion of the Hispanic U.S. population is increasing over time.

According to a National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) study conducted in 2009, it was revealed that only 44% of Latino students performed at or above the basic level (Bradford, 2019). This disparity highlights the importance of addressing the unique needs of English Language Learners (ELL) in the school system. Creating a conducive learning environment for ELL students is crucial to their success. Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring these students feel safe, accepted, and comfortable in the school setting, as their requirements and challenges differ from those of English-speaking students (Frydland, 2022). When ELL

students feel supported and welcomed, they are more likely to engage actively in learning, leading to improved academic performance and personal growth. Recognizing that Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) should not be seen as liabilities is essential. Instead, with the right tools and adequate support, they have the potential to become valuable assets in the learning environment (Bradford, 2019). When teachers and schools invest in understanding and addressing the unique needs of SIFE students, they foster an atmosphere where these students can thrive and achieve their full potential.

However, despite the challenges, teachers took on the crucial task of ensuring rapid language acquisition for students requiring additional help and practice (Frydland, 2022). They wholeheartedly embraced their responsibility to educate the English Language Learner (ELL) population. Understanding how students learn a new language and employing effective strategies to address their ever-changing needs became a cornerstone of their approach (Ledger & Montero, 2022). Remarkably, ELLs achieved conversational fluency within one to two years of learning a second language (Ledger, 2022). Acknowledging the significance of their first language acquisition, educators recognized its role in facilitating learning a second language. It took about seven to ten years for non-native speakers to reach the same academic level as their peers (Ledger & Montero, 2022), showcasing the impressive progress made by these dedicated students. Frydland (2022) emphasized that English language learning could be an overwhelming challenge, particularly when teachers need more specialized training. Nonetheless, the commitment shown by teachers to embrace the needs of ELL students contributed significantly to their language development and academic success.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the efforts to accommodate ELLs and SIFE students, ensuring rapid language acquisition and academic success remains a significant challenge. ELLs typically become conversationally fluent in English within one to two years and take around seven to ten years to reach academic proficiency equivalent to their native English-speaking peers (Ledger & Montero, 2022). However, SIFE students will need more time to develop literacy skills, catch up on academic content knowledge, and adjust to a new education system (DeCapua et al., 2007). While educators embrace their responsibility of teaching this diverse population, SIFE will often struggle due to the need for specialized training and strategies to meet the ever-changing needs of their students (Frydland, 2022). Education will be further complicated by the diverse personal backgrounds of SIFE students, leading to wide variations in their educational profiles and goals for the future.

Evidence-based teaching strategies are needed to support SIFE students' rapid language acquisition and academic success. Therefore, more comprehensive studies must investigate the effectiveness of specific instructional methods, such as small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts. Small pull-out instruction underlines the need for this study, which will address this literature gap and provide practical insights for educators working with SIFE students.

## **Purpose of the Study**

This study investigates the teachers' perception of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on the academic performance of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). Specifically, the study aims to explore the perception of small group instruction on SIFE students' reading comprehension and writing skills in English and their confidence in using the language. The study addresses the teachers' perception of challenges SIFE students face, who

often need help to catch up on academic content knowledge and develop English language proficiency quickly, especially at the secondary level.

The study also explored how small group instruction can address the unique needs of SIFE students, who often come from diverse backgrounds and have limited exposure to Western-style education. By examining this perception, the study hopes to shed light on effective teaching strategies to help SIFE students achieve academic success and participate effectively in the United States school system.

Additionally, the study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on English Language Learners (ELLs) education and provide insights to teachers and educators working with this student subpopulation.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study has important implications for theory, policy, and practice. In addition, this study examines perceptions of a segment of the U.S. student population not thoroughly studied previously. Furthermore, this study provides a comprehensive picture of the perceptions of educational outcomes of English language learners, primarily immigrants, in a New York State school system that is neither underperforming nor under-resourced (Oaxaca, 2021) to inform the immigration debate. This contrasts with another study by Michaud et al. (2022), which demonstrated how SIFE students performed when not placed in inadequate schools or given adequate services. Furthermore, as suggested by Warner (2019), since this research is focused on the progress and perception of the resilience of ELLs, it may help reverse the stereotype that immigrant children are underachievers and thereby help reduce their stigmatization.

## **Research Questions**

The study explores teachers' perceptions of the effects of small pull-out instruction in English language arts on students with interrupted education. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

RQ1: Will small group pull-out instruction improve teachers' perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during ELA co-teaching for SIFE students learning English at the secondary level?

RQ2: What challenges have teachers faced in providing services for Central American SIFE students, and how have they addressed them?

RQ3: What are educator's perceptions of preparing Central American SIFE students for College & Career Readiness at the secondary level?

## **Definitions of Key Terms**

*Benchmark assessments measure a student's progress toward specific academic goals or standards. They are often used to monitor the progress of ELLs in English language proficiency and academic content knowledge (NYSED, 2018).*

*Bilingual Education:* This approach provides instruction in the student's primary language and English. In a bilingual education program, students receive instruction in academic content areas (such as math, science, and social studies) in their primary language and English instruction (García & Li, 2019).

*Co-teaching Model:* This is an instructional model where two teachers (one general education teacher and one ENL teacher) work together to provide instruction to a group of students. In a co-teaching model, both teachers are responsible for planning and delivering

instruction and work collaboratively to meet the needs of all students (Freeman & Freeman, 2018).

*Integrated ENL (English as a New Language) Class:* is a classroom setting where ELLs simultaneously receive instruction in English language development and content area instruction. This approach is designed to provide students with the language skills they need to succeed academically while learning content in all subject areas (Linan-Thompson et al., 2019).

*Interventions:* Actions or strategies implemented to address a problem or improve a situation. Educational interventions may include academic or behavioral interventions to improve student outcomes (Larson & Carnine, 2019).

*Language Proficiency Levels:* Refer to the stages of language development that ELLs progress through as they acquire proficiency in English. These levels are classified as entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding, and commanding (Linan-Thompson et al., 2019).

*Mixed Methods Design:* Mixed methods refers to an approach in research that combines qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of a research topic by integrating different data collection and analysis techniques. It aims to provide a more holistic and nuanced perspective, enhancing the validity and reliability of research findings (Creswell, 2018).

*Part 154 regulations:* These are state regulations in New York that mandate specific guidelines and requirements for educating English language learners (ELLs). These regulations include identification, placement, and instructional provisions for ELLs in New York State (NYS) public schools (NYSED, 2020).

*Pull-out Instruction:* An educational approach in which students are temporarily removed from their regular classroom to receive specialized instruction in a smaller group setting. This

type of instruction is often used during independent assignments and for students in the beginning stages of learning English (Freeman & Freeman,2018).

*Screening Evaluation:* This assessment determines whether a student needs additional support or intervention in a particular area. For ELLs, screening evaluations often identify students needing English language instruction (Genesee et al., 2019).

*Small Group Instruction:* This type of instruction involves a teacher working with a small group of students (usually three to six students) to provide targeted instruction and support. Small group instruction can be used in various educational settings, including language instruction for ELLs (Goldenberg, 2019).

*Stand-alone ENL Class:* This class is designed for ELLs and focuses on instruction in English. In a stand-alone ENL class, students receive targeted instruction in English language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Genesee et al., 2019).

*ENL Teacher:* ENL stands for English as a New Language (ENL) teacher. An ENL teacher is a certified educator specializing in teaching English language learners. ENL teachers have training and expertise in language acquisition, instruction, and cultural responsiveness (TESOL International Association, 2018).

*The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT):* An assessment used by the New York State Department of Education to measure the English language proficiency of ELLs in grades K-12. The test assesses students' abilities to listen, speak, read, and write in English (New York State Education Department, 2018).

*The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL):* An assessment used by the New York State Department of Education to identify students who are English language learners (ELLs) and determine their English proficiency levels. The test is

administered to students recently enrolled in New York State public schools whose home language is not English (New York State Education Department, 2018).

### **Theoretical Foundations**

This study is grounded in three theoretical frameworks: Sociocultural Theory, Culturally Relevant Teaching, and Phenomenology. These frameworks provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the social, cultural, and instructional aspects related to the effectiveness of small pull-out instruction for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) in English Language Arts (ELA) at the secondary level.

Sociocultural theory, pioneered by Lev Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural factors in shaping cognitive development and learning (Vygotsky, 1978; McLeod, 2022). According to this theory, learning is a socially mediated process through collaborative interactions within a cultural context. The theory recognizes that individuals construct knowledge and meaning through interactions with others and that cultural values, norms, and practices deeply influence learning. In the context of this study, Sociocultural Theory provides a lens to explore how small pull-out instruction can facilitate language acquisition, academic progress, and cultural integration for SIFE students. Sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interactions, peer collaboration, and cultural context in supporting one's learning journey.

Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT), developed by Gloria Ladson-Billings, focuses on incorporating students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives into the instructional process (Abt-Perkins et al., 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This framework recognizes that students' cultural identities and experiences significantly influence their learning and engagement in the educational setting. CRT promotes using instructional strategies that value and incorporate

students' cultural assets, foster positive identity development, and create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. In the context of this study, CRT offers a framework to examine how small pull-out instruction can be tailored to meet the unique cultural needs and backgrounds of SIFE students. It highlights the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in promoting their academic success, confidence, and overall well-being.

Phenomenology is a philosophical movement that focuses on the nature of experience from the point of view of the person experiencing the phenomenon (known as "lived experience"). Phenomenology focuses on consciousness and the content of conscious experience, such as judgments, perceptions, and emotions (Balls, 2009). A phenomenological researcher examines the qualities or essence of an experience through interviews, stories, or observations with people experiencing the researcher's interest.

The theoretical foundations provided by Sociocultural Theory, CRT, and Phenomenology guide the investigation of social, cultural, and instructional factors that influence SIFE students' academic performance and cultural integration. Culturally Relevant Teaching informs the research questions, methodology, and analysis.

### **Limitations**

This mixed-method study's limitation lies in its small sample size, which comprises ENL teachers from only middle and high schools. As a result, the findings are confined to the methods used on the secondary level. Using an in-depth survey and interview with this limited sample size means that the study's conclusions may only apply to specific TESOL programs and teachers within school districts similar to where the participants work.

## **Assumptions**

The researcher assumes that research participants could volunteer freely since their names were not used. Finally, this researcher assumes that the sample participants taking the survey and interview do not work in the researcher's school district.

## **Delimitations**

One of the delimitations of this study is that it focuses solely on SIFE students from Central American countries. The study's results cannot be generalized to other populations. Different schools and districts may have different student populations, resources, and instructional approaches. Another delimitation of this study is that it only considers the impact of small group pull-out instruction in English Language Arts. This means that the study excludes other instructional approaches and subjects. These delimitations were made because the study focuses on the perception of improvement of SIFE students' reading comprehension and writing skills through this setting. However, it is essential to acknowledge that other instructional approaches and subjects could also effectively improve SIFE students' academic success.

Additionally, the study only measures perceptions of reading comprehension and writing skills in English and does not include other academic subjects or measures. These delimitations were made to keep the study focused and manageable. However, it is essential to recognize that small group pull-out instruction may have long-term effects that need to be captured in a future study.

## **Chapter Summary**

Chapter one introduces the purpose and focus of the study, which is to investigate the perception of the effectiveness of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on the academic performance of secondary education students. SIFE students struggle to catch up on

academic content knowledge and develop English language proficiency quickly, are also discussed. The study explored the perception of small group instruction on SIFE students' reading comprehension and writing skills in English and their confidence in using the English language. It also addresses the perceived needs of students with interrupted formal education from Central American countries who often come from diverse Central American backgrounds and have limited exposure to Western-style education.

The study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on the education of English Language Learners (ELLs) and to provide insights for teachers and educators working with this student subpopulation. By examining the impact of small group instruction, the researcher hopes to shed light on effective teaching strategies to help SIFE students achieve academic success and participate effectively in the US school system. Chapter two will discuss relevant literature reviews associated with the impact of students' interrupted formal education. The literature will discuss different types of ELLs, limited formal schooling, SIFE experiences, professional development, and teaching methods.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study explored teachers' perceptions of the effects of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on Students with Interrupted Education at the secondary level. This study aimed to ensure that the findings aided classroom teachers in supporting students of non-native citizenship who have difficulties with language acquisition and academic approaches. Some topics researched in preparation for this study included pull-out instructional programs, students with interrupted formal education, schooling gaps, emergent bilinguals, and professional development. The search yielded 110 peer-reviewed articles, from which this literature review includes 76.

### *Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)*

According to DeCapua and Marshall (2010), some SIFE students only attended school after entering the United States. On the other hand, some SIFE's have been enrolled in school in their home countries for the same number of years as their U.S. peers but experienced limited education due to a lack of trained educators and resources or the limited learning environment they attended. Many of these students had interrupted formal schooling and needed more literacy skills and the content knowledge of their grade-level peers. Moreover, they may not know how to 'do school,' ranging from the basics, for example, how to handle notebooks, to engaging in academic tasks (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Miller et al., 2005). These factors were in addition to the lack of English language proficiency. As a result, schools struggled to identify what exactly characterized this diverse sub-group of ELLs, ranging from those who have never had any schooling and arrived pre-literate to those who were two to three years behind grade-level peers in content knowledge and literacy skills.

### ***English Language Learners (ELLs)***

ELLs were students whose first language was not English and who needed help learning to speak, read, and write in English. Due to immigration and the high levels of ethnic diversity in the U.S. student population, ELLs increased significantly in the past 15 to 20 years (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA, 2011). According to Fuller's (2011) study, there were different types of ELLs, ranging from educated students to those with limited schooling, from children from professional families to children of migrant workers, and from recent arrivals to the U.S. to those born here. These students also navigated two cultures and functioned in two languages. According to statistics compiled by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA, 2011), the number of ELLs increased by 51 percent from 1999 to 2009, totaling more than 5.3 million students. Since 2004, people in the United States have spoken over 400 languages, with Spanish representing over 79 percent of all ELLs (NCELA, 2004, 2005, 2008).

### ***Emergent Bilinguals***

People refer to students learning English in school within the United States in many ways. The most commonly utilized terms were "limited English proficient students" (LEP) and "English language learners" (ELLs). As García, Kleifgen, and Falchi (2008) noted, these children became bilingual through school, where they acquired English and continued functioning in their home language and English, their new language. Nevertheless, emergent bilinguals focused on learning more than one language.

According to an article from Lexialearning, "Bilingualism is a benefit, as students who speak more than one language have demonstrated advantages in language awareness, communication skills, memory, decision-making, and analytical skills. In addition to being

bilingual, they are bicultural, which involves developing empathy through awareness and respect for other cultures and customs” (Lexia. 2019, July 23).

### ***Limited English Proficiency (LEP)***

Limited English Proficiency was the most critical predictor of educational outcomes for children of immigrant parents attending English-only schools (Michaud et al., 2022). Limited English Proficiency SIFEs often failed to achieve their academic and career objectives in English-only schools because they needed more English proficiency, which resulted in their slipping into hopelessness and settling for lower educational and career aspirations or sliding down academic spirals (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). Therefore, LEP students were more likely to fail when schools did not offer bilingual instruction (Orfield, 2021).

Limited English Proficiency adversely affected a student's academic performance due to the time it took to acquire English. The English proficiency needed for SIFE to succeed in school typically took many years, even when provided with special English classes. On average, it took three years but could take up to seven years (Harris, 2022). Studies showed that ELLs or emergent bilinguals’ educational outcomes were adversely affected until they acquired sufficient English proficiency. School districts agreed that LEP was a significant predictor of dropping out. In addition, the universal agreement indicated that ELLs had a higher dropout rate than other groups with similar demographics (Michaud et al., 2022).

U.S. Census data and the status rate method showed that 18% of foreign-born youth with LEP dropped out of school, while the overall U.S. dropout rate for native-born children was below 14% (Hedman & Magnusson, 2020). The dropout rate for ELLs was similar to or lower than that of the non-ELLs in another study that used an eventuate estimation method (Hedman & Magnusson, 2020). Furthermore, studies using the eventuate estimation method showed that the

type of support ELLs received strongly influenced their dropout rate. A wide range of educational programs and well-designed English for speakers of other languages courses provided excellent support for ELLs (Mossgrove, 2021). However, school systems that offered few services pushed children out after 18, which resulted in high dropout rates (Hedman & Magnusson, 2020).

Studies suggested that SIFE's educational outcomes depended on their English proficiency level. The disadvantage of limited English proficiency lasted a long time since learning academic English took time. On the other hand, it was essential to note that the outcomes for ELLs were remarkably variable and dependent upon several contextual factors, such as the influence of their community and the support they received at school.

### ***Limited Formal Schooling (LFS) and Educational Outcomes***

Most schools regarded Limited Formal Schooling as SIFE with limited academic background knowledge and limited language literacy due to their interrupted, inadequate, or non-formal schooling (Echevarria et al., 2012). Formal educational backgrounds varied greatly despite all students being classified as ELLs by their state. Some students were very well prepared for U.S. schools, while others had little formal schooling experience depending on their formal schooling background,

According to Carrass (2022), Limited Formal Schooling was a prominent academic disadvantage for SIFE. Despite many years of education in the United States, SIFE generally had lower English proficiency, grades, standardized test scores, and graduation rates.

Limited Formal Schooling negatively affected English reading standardized test scores. Flucker concluded that Limited Formal Schooling substantially impacted students' English reading skills more than their age at arrival. SIFE arriving without formal schooling were the

least likely to develop full proficiency in English reading (Flucker, 2021). Due to this factor, resilient SIFEs who earned high grades in high school and eventually enrolled in college still needed help with academic English, which impeded their long-term career and educational goals (Flueckiger, 2020). SIFEs took longer to improve their reading skills and English proficiency than ELLs without Limited Formal Schooling. In addition, teachers quickly understood that SIFE students scored lower on standardized tests and in English (Carrass, 2022).

High grades attained by other ELLs have been primarily due to effort rather than skills. The educators assumed that students with interrupted education also had lower graduation rates since they scored lower on standardized tests and did not put forth effort (Kiiskila, 2018). Therefore, teachers chose to teach what they thought was the best for students. Those from countries such as Guatemala and Honduras with less public education created a higher dropout rate than those from countries that provided more public education. Additionally, SIFE dropout rates were meager in programs that provided academic support during their U.S. schooling (Hedman & Magnusson, 2020). The dropout rate was lower among recent-arrival Hispanic adolescents with LFS than for Hispanics born in the U.S. (Kiiskila, 2018).

In conclusion, although Limited Formal Schooling lowered graduation rates, the research showed that educators significantly reduced or even eliminated this effect by providing appropriate support. Many people generally associate LFS with lower educational outcomes, such as lower English proficiency, standardized test scores, grades, and graduation rates.

## ***Understanding the Dimensions of Limited Formal Schooling***

Understanding the dimensions of Limited Formal Schooling helped identify why SIFE had lower educational outcomes. Understanding the dimensions made educators see Limited Formal Schooling as a collection of variables rather than a single variable. Several key components of LFS included low literacy skills in the native language (L1 language), low language proficiency, low academic background knowledge, and a history of interrupted or inadequate formal schooling at the time of arrival (Kiiskila, 2018). Carras (2022) defined interrupted education as six or more consecutive months of non-attendance at school (not including vacations).

Inadequate formal schooling did not prepare students for grade-level instruction due to a lack of resources, such as, qualified teachers, instructional time, and textbooks. In the countries where the SIFE's lived, authorities closed schools frequently, and many countries lacked teachers, chalkboards, desks, and books (Flaitz, 2006; Hillman & Jenkner, 2004). Educational outcomes, however, differed depending on the degree to which the authorities perfectly correlated and wholly connected instruction with United States norms.

Therefore, some people from different cultures outside the U.S. needed to gain literacy skills, ranging from generation to generation without formal education (Scribner & Cole, 1978). Therefore, some students arrived exhibiting below-grade-level knowledge in content areas despite having academic transcripts indicating consistent formal education (Hedman & Magnusson, 2020).

## ***Schooling Gaps***

Students who recently arrived in the United States joined grades appropriate to their age, regardless of their previous formal education, until 9th grade, when they joined mainstream

classes based on their credits. Due to their age, it was typical for immigrants who did not complete 8th grade in their homeland to be placed in 9th grade in the U.S. According to the New York State Department of Education (2011), schooling gaps, or missing years of schooling relative to grade, were the primary criterion for identifying ELLs with Limited Formal Schooling.

One dimension of LFS was schooling experience relative to grade placement. Bigelow & Schwarz (2010) believed that time spent in school facilitated future learning by developing cognitive abilities. On the other hand, the unschooled had to learn to associate academic material with concrete meanings and experiences in school. This disadvantage affected everything from grammar to mathematics across all types of learning (Tarone et al., 2006). As a result, teachers had to develop cognitive functions among these students before they thoroughly benefitted from formal schooling.

Another way through which previous formal education facilitated future learning was learning about the culture of schooling. During formal schooling, the traditional society formed a subculture within a culture in its own right (Ostrosky-Solis et al., 2004). It had norms and values different from those of the larger culture. For instance, in other countries, schooling often packaged knowledge in material learners owned, bought, or sold. Authority figures, like teachers, controlled knowledge in schools. However, in the U.S., schooling relied on abstract concepts, such as, theories, principles, formulas, and rules, instead of direct experience. The commodification of learning continued in schooling through standardized tests and grades.

Moreover, out-of-school education involved little observable teaching (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Many Central American countries geared “schooling” towards solving real-world problems rather than discussing abstract ideas and contextualizing and pragmatizing them

(DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). For example, out-of-school learning involved people having donkeys and mules in front of them while discussing their differences. Different cognitive and cultural backgrounds explained why SIFE, who had missed some schooling before coming to the U.S., had lower educational outcomes.

### ***Pull-Out Model***

The pull-out method involved pulling the student out of the classroom for direct instruction for a small portion of the day while teachers mainstreamed the student in the regular classroom for most of the day. Typically, the students' language level determined the level of direct English services. The placement focused on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. According to Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 (CR,2014, Part 154), the minimum instructional time ENL students are required to receive special services is between 360 minutes to 180 minutes per week based on the student's English level and considering the student's literacy and language skills. Echevarria et al. (2012) estimated that about 60% of English learners in 2001-02 received instruction entirely in English. Approximately 50% of students received all English instruction with some LEP services (Mossgrove, 2021).

Many school districts used pull-out programs, and the English language learner pull-out model integrated ELL students into regular classrooms most of the day. Every ELL student in the classroom followed the same curriculum (Em, 2022). Teachers modified assignments or made accommodations for the ELL student based on the student's skills and abilities. At some ELL levels, educators adjusted the suggested time to accommodate the student; for example, teachers set aside an hour or more for pull-out services (Echevarria., 2012). This instructional strategy aimed to support ELLs/SIFE students with direct instruction during independent work or

workstation time during the ELA or literacy block. It was challenging to schedule, but if an ELL student constantly missed direct instruction, they continued lagging behind their peers.

When SIFE students learned English, the educators suggested a timeline that included rubrics outlining what ELLs should accomplish at each level in the classroom and in the pull-out programs. Both general education and ENL teachers usually collaborate to develop rubrics and modify curricula. ELL pull-out programs within districts used various reading platforms to enhance student learning. For instance, Reading A to Z, Lexia, Freckle, and Leveled Literacy Instruction allowed the English for Speakers of Other Languages teachers to work closely with smaller groups of students. The programs enhanced students' language and reinforced the current content texts as curriculum. The ENL teacher decided which curriculum helped each student learn the skills and concepts they lacked and made instructional decisions for each child (Charmaz, 2014).

Research and sound pedagogical principles supported specific teaching strategies and practices (Flucker, 2021). Schools became more active in training teachers in the best strategies and practices that meet the needs of SIFE students, given the increasing population in U.S. school systems (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2022). Each school district was responsible for providing adequate services to ELLs and practical teacher training (Flucker, 2021).

### ***Push-In Model***

The push-in model consisted of the general education teacher and the special education or ENL teacher working in close collaboration. The idea of providing push-in support began to be more common among schools. The focus was to ensure that students received full access to the general education curriculum while limiting any disruption to their daily schedule, such as students being pulled out of a classroom (Morin, n.d.).

The push-in teaching approach allowed teachers to form groups of two or three students, grouped according to their level. The decision for push-in often lies within the district's philosophy and classroom curriculum. Barton (2016) mentioned that teachers differentiated lessons so that all students were taught at the same level. Differentiated instruction required additional training for general education teachers. Barton claimed this helped create a community in the classroom that was enabling students to support each other and not feel excluded.

### ***Professional Development***

According to research by Silva and Staddon (2019), professional development was a crucial factor in enhanced instructional practices. The strength of classroom instruction heavily relies on the competence of the educators delivering it. To effectively cater to their English Language Learner (ELL) students, teachers require proper training, ongoing support, relevant knowledge, and access to appropriate resources. Investing in teacher development significantly improved ELL students' educational experiences and outcomes.

Oral language development, second-language acquisition, scaffolded instruction, differentiated assessments, and literacy instruction were best practices and strategies for ENL teacher training (Lewis-Morena, 2007; Quick, 1998). Authorities challenged educators to provide meaningful curriculum and instruction to all learners in the face of an ever-changing population (Gill, 2008). Population growth and changing needs drove these changes. All educators, especially those working with SIFE, knew how literacy developed through stages. Developing literacy skills in SIFE students was similar to how it developed in other learners. Still, educators need to use special strategies to assist SIFEs. Therefore, professional development staff are trained to use programs and give presentations on specific ENL materials.

Embedded staff development and strategies strengthened best practice skills in the classroom. It was also vital for school districts to determine which program worked best for SIFE students (Quick, 1998).

### ***Constructivist Theory***

Constructivist theory is a concept of teacher decision-making and reflection. Jean Piaget's theory holds that individuals construct meaning and understanding through prior knowledge as they apply it to new and current situations. Jean Piaget introduced the idea that children construct their knowledge rather than just memorize information offered by teachers (Hein, 1991). Thus, students connected what schools expected them to learn with their own experiences and consciously engaged in the cultural construction of knowledge. Teachers who reflected on their practice employed a constructivist perspective. They constantly reviewed significant events in the classroom and tried to clarify and improve their understanding of teaching and learning (Gagnon & Collay, 2006).

Fuller (2011) indicated that a constructivist classroom was where the teacher understood students' concepts and then structured learning opportunities around these understandings. Educators refined or revised these understandings by posing contradictions, presenting new information, asking questions, encouraging research, and engaging students in inquiries designed to challenge current concepts. In addition, there were five overarching principles in a constructivist classroom: (1) teachers sought and valued their students' points of view, (2) classroom activities challenged students' suppositions, (3) teachers posed problems of emerging relevance, (4) teachers built lessons around primary concepts and "big" ideas, and (5) teachers assessed student learning in the context of daily teaching. As a result, this model allowed

students to actively seek understanding and gain knowledge by relating new investigations to previous understandings (Gagnon & Collay, 2006; Marlowe & Page, 2005).

### ***Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)***

One of the best-researched and most highly developed models to teach ELLs was the sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarria et al., 2012). The SIOP model was originally a lesson plan observation protocol but evolved into a practical lesson planning and delivery system. It was a way to plan and teach content understandably for ELLs and promote their English language development. The SIOP model facilitated meeting the needs of ELLs as student diversity in language increased because it provided more flexibility in the design and delivery of instruction. Teachers used the SIOP model as a lesson planning guide for sheltered content lessons, and it embedded features of high-quality instruction into its design. In addition, the model was a planning framework that ensured the implementation of effective practices to benefit all learners. Mainstream teachers of ELLs at all grade levels effectively used the SIOP model to benefit all classroom learners.

### ***Pedagogy and Culture***

Cultural assumptions about learners and learning influenced educators in the United States. Educators were unaware of how these assumptions affected mainstream education and pedagogical practices until a decade ago. As of 2022, the education system considered scaffolding to be one of the best practices for encouraging learning because it provided students with necessary support (Johnson, 2022). The system gradually removed different supports until the learner could learn independently (Flueckiger, 2020).

Scaffolding's goal of promoting independent learning conflicted with a collectivist view despite its invaluable role in making classroom knowledge accessible to learners. Furthermore,

the purpose of K-12 instruction was to prepare students for college and career readiness, and life beyond education. The educators generally developed academic knowledge through higher-level thinking skills, formal schema, and ongoing repetition. They considered insights and expertise gathered over a lifetime of funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005). However, some cultures aim to develop and advance proficiency in specific, applied skills such as pottery, farming, and masonry. These cultures brought quite the opposite to schools regarding what they expected and needed. In addition, students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) were generally members of collectivistic cultures. Hence, the information they brought to the school setting differed from the knowledge valued by formal education since practical learning shaped their lives.

Unfortunately, not all U.S. schools were responsive to the needs of SIFE despite efforts to recognize, promote, and integrate knowledge and practices (Em, 2020). The students experienced feelings of isolation, confusion, disengagement, and inadequacy caused by cultural dissonance as they encountered the formal education system of U.S. schools. The school needed to meet their needs in a mainstream classroom with higher-level ELLs. They needed to experience adequate schooling (Casanova & Alvarez, 2022).

### ***Culturally Responsive Teaching***

Culturally responsive teaching, defined as using ethnically diverse students' cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives to teach them more effectively, became a successful educational approach. Researcher Geneva Gay invented the term in 2000, writing that "when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference for students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly " (Najarro et al., 2023). Culturally responsive teaching was based on academic knowledge and skills from students' experiences and frames of reference.

Ethnically diverse students' academic achievement improved when they were taught through their own cultural and experiential filters.

Public schools organized curricula for students of color around mainstream white American culture. The culture many students experienced at home and in their communities was only sometimes represented at school. The research found that 80 percent of teachers were white. Teachers were just as likely to have racial biases as non-teachers, influencing their expectations for their students and their ways of managing their classrooms. Culturally responsive teaching helped students of color see themselves and their communities as belonging in academic spaces, facilitating more engagement and success (Will & Najarro, 2002).

### ***A Lack of Authoritative Parenting at Home***

If parents were authoritarian, and focused on their child's achievement in school, then there would be no negligence or lack of supervision in the child's education. Those with authoritative parenting styles were likely to have better educational outcomes (Juma, 2022). According to Antoon (2022), authoritative parenting involves love, reasoning, clearly defined, consistent expectations, and strong support in meeting those expectations. The children of parents who are authoritative in their parenting styles have better educational outcomes because children are taught to reason, take responsibility for their circumstances, and believe in themselves (Welsh, 2020). At-risk students, such as labor migrants, benefited from this parenting style (Antoon, 2022). The likelihood of students dropping out of school was significant when they did not have authoritative adult supervision (Ledger & Montero, 2022). Immigrant children's educational outcomes were highly influenced by authoritative parenting, which included high parental expectations for their children's education (Juma, 2022).

Asian and English-speaking students have shown that their parents' educational expectations significantly affected their grades (Aker et al., 2022). There is also evidence that parents who provided their children with the support and supervision they needed to be effective (Friedman et al., 2022) and Asians performed well on the SAT (Bozoian, 2019)). As a result of immigration conditions before, during, and after immigrant arrival in the U.S., immigrant family relationships were frequently disrupted. As a result, families had difficulty providing consistent adult supervision for all their children (Friedman et al., 2022). A problem for immigrant parents was that they often worked long and odd hours, so they could not supervise their children as much as they would have liked (Oliver, 2021). It was more likely that children skipped school or neglected their homework if faced with such circumstances (Zablonski, 2022).

In general, these situations were more prevalent among SIFE. They were reported to be more likely to be unaccompanied by adults, be labor migrants, and come from low-income families (Zablonski, 2022). There was no doubt that family structure played a vital role in determining whether the family provided adequate adult supervision at home.

There was a potential correlation between the number of parents and the effectiveness of those parents in supporting better educational outcomes. For parenting style to be effective, adult supervision did not necessarily have to be the mother or father. An extended family of immigrants was also more likely to grow up with multiple generations at home to provide supervision and support (Trinh, 2022). A study conducted explicitly with undocumented immigrants found that students with two biological parents did not achieve significantly higher GPAs than students with one. It was explicitly attributed to the presence of extended families (Oaxaca, 2021). However, SIFE might have been more likely than ELLs to lack authoritative

adult supervision at home due to economic or immigration circumstances. Without caring, present adults and youth were likely to be at greater risk (Frydland, 2022).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed the literature on SIFE's educational outcomes and its impact on teaching methods, such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, pull-in and pull-out instruction model, professional development for ENL teachers, cultural responsiveness, and the lack of parental supervision. Thus, the researcher discussed various limited experiences faced by students with interrupted formal education when there are gaps in their learning, lack of resources, and cultural mismatches.

The researcher noted Jean Piaget's constructivist theoretical framework, which guided many studies. Thus, the five overarching principles in a constructivist classroom supported teaching and learning for ELL students.

Chapter three explains the researcher's methodology that was used to answer the research questions. It describes the selection of participants and addresses the procedures for data collection and analysis. Chapter three also discusses the survey and interview instruments utilized for the data analysis. In addition, the researcher discusses validity, reliability, ethical considerations, and methodological limitations.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Research Design

This phenomenology research investigated teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on the academic performance of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). The design of this study was built around a mixed-methods research approach, strategically incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. This approach was designed to answer the specific research questions for this study. The research focused on teachers' perceptions when Central American SIFE students in a U.S. school system received small group pull-out instruction in English Language Arts.

**Quantitative Component:** The quantitative part of the study was intended to analyze and leverage numeric data to measure outcomes and effectiveness. A Likert-scale survey determined the broad range of experiences and perspectives within the target population of ENL teachers. The study yielded measurable data on the perceptions of how instructional practices such as small group pull-out instruction contributed to language acquisition, student achievement, and preparation for college and career readiness at the secondary level.

**Qualitative Component:** The study used qualitative data to delve into the more subjective and complex research questions. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand ENL teachers' challenges when servicing Central American SIFE students and the culturally relevant aspects of the pull-out teaching method (Hirose & Creswell, 2023).

The mixed-methods approach allowed for both the breadth of statistical trends from the survey (quantitative) and the depth of thematic understanding from the interviews (qualitative), providing a comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon being studied (Hafsa, 2019). This

comprehensive approach was critical to addressing the complexities inherent in educational contexts, providing a robust foundation for meaningful insights and recommendations.

### **Research Questions**

This study explored the effects of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on Students with Interrupted Education. The study answered the following questions:

RQ1: Will small group pull-out instruction improve teacher perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during ELA for SIFE students learning English at the secondary level?

RQ2: What are educators' perceptions of challenges faced in providing services for Central American SIFE students, and how have they addressed them?

RQ3: What are educators' perceptions of preparing Central American SIFE students for College & Career Readiness at the secondary level?

### **Participants**

This study consisted of a survey (quantitative) with a minimum of 30 volunteer ENL teachers. The voluntary participants were middle and high school teachers who taught for three or more years, obtained New York State certification, and held a Master's degree. In addition, an interview (qualitative) was conducted with the first five volunteer participants who completed the survey. The researcher contacted former colleagues and administrators in New York State to start the initial snowball effect. Therefore, the recruitment emails were shared and disseminated to potential participants (English as a New Language teachers (ENL) in New York State.)

The recruitment emails were sent to the contacts with an overview of the study and the link to the survey. Before the participants completed the online survey, they read the consent form. By continuing to the survey, participants consented to participate in the study. The

researcher interviewed the first five people interested in continuing the study. The participants were identified only as “participant 1-5” during the interview. Before the participants began, they were directed to display participant 1 through participant 5 during the Zoom session. The participant had the option to turn off their camera.

The researcher developed questions from the literature review and administered a survey to gather data. Students did not partake in this study. Therefore, thirty voluntary participants answered twenty-two survey questions on a Likert scale, and five voluntary participants participated in an interview. An analysis of teachers' backgrounds and questions about SIFE students helped the researcher formulate data, and the researcher hopes that this data will direct future research.

### **Instrumentation**

The researcher provided voluntary participants with a survey. The survey had at least 30 participants. The researcher used the SurveyMonkey tool to gather perceptions from voluntary participants systematically. SurveyMonkey is an online survey platform that allows users to create and administer surveys. The platform provides various question types, including multiple-choice, rating scales, and open-ended questions, to help researchers collect data.

The survey was a self-administered tool used to gather information from participants in a systematic manner (Warner, 2019). Questions were piloted with a few colleagues to receive feedback before administering the survey and interview questions to voluntary participants. The survey was designed to ensure that it was straightforward and took approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey was anonymous to ensure the confidentiality of the voluntary participants. The survey questions covered the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of small group pull-out instruction, challenges teachers face in providing services for Central American

SIFE students, culturally relevant teaching, and preparing SIFE students for college and career readiness. Once the voluntary participants completed the survey, the researcher exported the data from SurveyMonkey into a spreadsheet for analysis. Afterward, five voluntary participants were interviewed. It was important to note that the interview questions also served as a valuable instrumentation tool for gathering essential data.

### **Sampling Strategy**

The sampling method that was employed in this study was purposive sampling. This type of non-probability sampling was chosen because the researcher wanted to focus on a specific population characteristic with the required knowledge and experience.

Furthermore, the 30 voluntary participants chosen in the study were English as a New Language (ENL) teachers with experience teaching SIFE students. This type of purposive sampling is often called total population sampling because it aims to include all individuals within a specific population (Etikan et al., 2016). The researcher distributed the online survey created on SurveyMonkey to these teachers.

The following steps were followed:

Step 1 - The recruitment emails were sent to the contacts with an overview of the study and the link to the survey.

Step 2 - Before the participants completed the online survey, they read the consent form.

By continuing to the survey, participants consented to participate in the survey aspect of the study.

Step 3 - The researcher interviewed the first five people interested in continuing the study.

Here, the sampling method can be described as a combination of purposive and convenience. ENL teachers who indicated interest and availability for further participation

during the survey were chosen, thus maximizing the use of available resources and ensuring that the selection of participants could contribute valuable insights to the study.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection is a crucial step in this educational research and is essential to ensure that the process is systematic and follows ethical guidelines. In this study, the data was collected through a survey and an interview administered to a mixture of middle school and high school teachers at least 30 voluntary ENL teachers who teach SIFE students at the secondary level. The researcher analyzed the information from the survey to obtain quantitative data. In addition, the researcher followed up with a Zoom interview to ask in-depth questions based on the perceptions of the voluntary participants' survey responses to gather qualitative data. The researcher recruited participants through email invitations to voluntary ENL teachers who taught SIFE students at the secondary level. The email explained the purpose of the study, the nature of the survey, and the potential benefits of participating. The researcher labeled participants 1 through 5 to ensure confidential information. In addition, the researcher kept the data on a password-protected system.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process for this mixed-methods study involved quantitative and qualitative strategies (Hafsa, 2019; Kimmons, 2022; McKim, 2017), each appropriate for the data collection type. The researcher reported the results using percentages of respondents who rated each statement at each point on the Likert scale. The survey data were used to gain additional quantitative information based on the benefits and disadvantages of the pull-out model. The survey data and scribed interviews were analyzed using the Nvivo platform.

**Quantitative Data Analysis:** The survey responses provided quantitative data, which the Nvivo software statistically analyzed. The platform was particularly effective for analyzing survey data.

**Qualitative Data Analysis:** The qualitative data came from the interviews. It was analyzed using the NVivo software for coding and thematic analysis of qualitative data. An inductive thematic analysis approach was applied, whereby perceptions within the data were identified and analyzed (Hafsa, 2019; Kimmons, 2022). This process involved open coding, creating theme categories, and abstraction. The transcribed interviews were read and re-read to gain a comprehensive understanding, and initial codes were generated. These codes were grouped into potential themes, then reviewed and refined to create a thematic map of the data (Hirose & Creswell, 2023). By combining these analytical techniques, this study drew on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, enhancing the validity and depth of the findings (McKim, 2017).

### **Validity**

In this study, it was crucial to ensure that the data collected accurately reflected the phenomena under investigation – the perceptions of the experiences of ENL teachers working with SIFE students. To ensure the validity of this research, several measures were employed:

**Content validity:** Content validity ensures that the survey and interview questions possess strong content validity. This approach guarantees that the questions are highly relevant to the research objectives and that the variables of interest are effectively measured.

**Face validity.** A piloted survey and interview questions were conducted with a few colleagues to receive feedback before distributing it to voluntary participants. Any ambiguities or

confusing aspects were revised or removed, ensuring the survey and the interview questions were understandable to all voluntary participants.

### **Reliability**

Reliability is a significant aspect of this study, referring to the consistency and stability of the collected data. The following measures were employed to assure reliability:

1. Likert Scale reliability: All participants were asked to complete the survey within one week. It was essential to note that teachers' experiences can change over time due to various factors, making this measure partially reliable. The surveys were administered within one week to ensure as much reliability as possible.
2. Internal consistency: Similar to validity, the survey included multiple questions that measure the same construct, ensuring the collected data's consistency.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the research design and the methods employed in this study, which focused on teachers' perceptions of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts and its impact on the academic performance of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) at the secondary level. The study used a mixed-methods approach, harnessing quantitative and qualitative data to understand the data generated by the research questions.

The study sample consisted of ENL teachers with three or more years of teaching experience with SIFE students at the secondary level. Moreover, the teachers who volunteered to participate in the study met specific criteria, including a Master's degree, ensuring that their insights were valuable and relevant.

To uphold ethical considerations in the data collection process, informed consent was obtained from all voluntary participants, and measures were taken to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of all involved. The validity and reliability of the survey questionnaire and interview questions were ascertained through various measures. Each measure was designed to ensure that the data collected is accurate and reliable. The data was subjected to analysis using appropriate statistical analysis software, namely, NVivo. This combination of methods facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the data to facilitate an answer to the research questions.

The findings from this study contributed to the existing body of literature on the perceptions of effective teaching strategies for SIFE students, providing valuable insights for educators working with this unique group of students in a pull-out system with specific methodologies. In summary, the methodology outlined in this chapter provided a robust and rigorous approach to investigating the research questions in this study. Chapter four presents the quantitative data collected from the survey, the qualitative data from the focus group interview discussion, and the researcher's analysis of that data.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### Introduction

This study explored teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on the academic performance of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). This was designed to answer the specific research questions for this study. It focused on teachers' perceptions when Central American SIFE students in a U.S. school system receive small group pull-out instruction in English Language Arts. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

*RQ1: Will small group pull-out instruction improve teacher perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during ELA for SIFE students learning English at the secondary level?*

*RQ2: What are educators' perceptions of challenges faced in providing services for Central American SIFE students, and how have they addressed them?*

*RQ3: What are educators' perceptions of preparing Central American SIFE students for College & Career Readiness at the secondary level?*

This mixed-method study aimed to identify statistical trends from the survey (quantitative) and allow for the depth of thematic understanding from the interviews (qualitative), providing a comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon being studied (Hafsa, 2019). This comprehensive approach is critical for addressing the complexities inherent in educational contexts and providing a robust foundation for meaningful insights and recommendations.

## **Demographic Analysis**

This research involved quantitative and qualitative methods, commencing with a survey of 30 voluntarily participating English as a New Language (ENL) teachers. The researcher recruited teachers currently teaching at middle or high school levels, possessed three or more years of teaching experience, held New York State certification, and a Master's degree.

Recruiting participants for a study can be challenging, especially when specific criteria (e.g., years of teaching experience, certification, and educational level) limit the pool of potential participants. Setting a minimum of 30 participant balances achieving a sample size that can provide meaningful data and recognizing the practical limitations of participant recruitment.

The recruitment process began with the researcher reaching out to former colleagues and administrators in New York State, utilizing snowball sampling after the researcher reached out to people. Recruitment emails containing information about the study were then distributed to potential participants, specifically English as a New Language (ENL) teachers in New York State.

### **Theme 1: The Impact of Pull-Out Instruction is Positive**

The Q1 results (I feel the pull-out model will positively change the educational system for students with interrupted formal education) indicate that 56.67% of respondents strongly agree, and an additional 33.33% express agreement with the statement. Only 6.67% disagree, while a minimal percentage of 3.33% strongly disagree. This distribution highlights a notable level of agreement within the surveyed participants, with the majority expressing positive views or alignment with the statement presented.

The themes and interviews support the idea that teachers perceive small group pull-out instruction positively. Participants emphasized the benefits of smaller settings, modified

curricula, and focused attention, creating an environment conducive to language acquisition and improved student achievement. The interviews underscored the importance of culturally responsive teaching, recognizing SIFE students' unique needs and challenges. The focus on vocabulary development, flexibility in instruction, and addressing cultural shock collectively contribute to an affirmative response to RQ1. In all five interviews, a consistent theme emphasizes the positive impact of small group pull-out instruction for SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) students learning English at the secondary level. This theme is particularly relevant to answering Research Question 1, which explores whether small group pull-out instruction can improve teacher perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching for SIFE students during English Language Arts (ELA).

Participants believed that students in small instructional groups feel more comfortable, especially when dealing with the challenges of adapting to a new language and educational system. The smaller setting provides a conducive environment where they can voice their opinions, ask questions, and actively participate in learning.

**Table 1**  
*Teacher Survey Quantitative Component*

Question (Q#)	Summary of Question	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total Responses
Q1	Perception of the pull-out model's positive impact on the educational system for SIFE students.	56.67	33.33	6.67	3.33	30
Q2	Belief in language acquisition improvement for SIFE students through the pull-out model during ELA.	41.38	41.38	17.24	0.00	29
Q3	Improvement in academic test scores for SIFE students with small group pull-out model support in ELA.	60.00	26.67	13.33	0.00	30
Q4	Support for a semester benchmark in a small pull-out model setting before entering the ELA classroom.	51.72	37.93	6.90	3.45	29
Q5	Benefits of the push-in model for SIFE students during ELA.	10.00	40.00	36.67	13.33	30

**Table 1 Continued**

Q6	Improvement in academic test scores for SIFE students with small push-in model support during ELA.	13.33	36.67	40.00	10.00	30
Q7	Having the professional development training needed to implement strategies in the co-teaching classroom.	20.00	63.33	16.67	0.00	30
Q8	Need for better professional development to support SIFE students in the ELA co-teaching classroom.	26.67	56.67	13.33	3.33	30
Q9	Ongoing professional development need for providing services for SIFE students, including updated programs.	73.33	23.33	3.33	0.00	30

The survey and interviews collectively provide a comprehensive insight into educators' perceptions of the impact of small pull-out instruction for Central American students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) at the secondary level, particularly in English Language Arts (ELA). The survey results highlight a strong belief among teachers in the effectiveness of the pull-out model. A significant majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that this model can positively change the educational system for SIFE students (Q1), enhance language acquisition (Q2), and improve academic test scores (Q3). Teachers also support the idea of having a benchmark of one semester in a small pull-out model before SIFE students enter the general ELA classroom (Q4), although they show more mixed feelings about the benefits of the push-in model (Q5, Q6)

The interviews reinforce these survey findings, with participants discussing the specific challenges faced by SIFE students, such as adapting to a new educational system, overcoming language barriers, and dealing with the trauma of migration. Participants highlighted the benefits of small group settings, including more personalized attention, the opportunity for students to feel comfortable and less intimidated, and the ability to tailor instruction to the student's language and academic levels.

One key theme from the survey and interviews is the need for ongoing professional development for educators to implement strategies tailored to SIFE students' needs effectively. Teachers needed better professional development to support students within the ELA co-teaching classroom (Q8). They strongly agreed on ongoing professional development regarding resources and updated programs (Q9).

Additionally, the survey respondents overwhelmingly agree that culturally responsive education is crucial (Q14, Q15) and that Central American SIFE students require after-school

programs to support social and emotional learning (Q16). This is echoed in the interviews where educators discuss the importance of understanding students' backgrounds and providing a supportive learning environment that acknowledges their unique challenges and strengths.

Overall, both the survey and interviews suggest a consensus among educators on the value of small pull-out instruction, the need for ongoing professional development, and the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching approaches. They also highlight the significance of additional support mechanisms outside the classroom to ensure the holistic development of SIFE students. These findings underscore the complexity of teaching SIFE students, and the multifaceted support required to help them succeed academically and socially.

In the interviews, Participant 3 discussed the cultural shock and adaptation challenges faced by SIFE students: "A second factor is not being able to adapt to their peers right away. These students must have experienced a culture shock to their new environment and a new education system. Lastly, students with interrupted formal education must have an academic deficiency that prevents them from excelling like their peers in the classroom". This quote highlights the cultural shock and academic challenges faced by SIFE students, underscoring the importance of addressing these challenges through supportive educational models like the pull-out program, which allows for a more gradual social and academic adaptation.

Teachers highlighted the importance of addressing these challenges through a pull-out model, acknowledging that students may need time to adapt socially and academically. Participant 3 explicitly emphasized the benefits of the pull-out model in addressing the challenges faced by SIFE students, acknowledging the need for students to adapt socially and academically. "I always think a smaller setting should be implemented as an entry to their education. However, integrating the SIFE students into the classroom after one semester of small

pull-out instruction will increase their ability to participate and feel comfortable around their other peers." This statement underscores the teacher's belief in the efficacy of the pull-out model as a means to address the unique challenges SIFE students face, specifically highlighting how this model facilitates students' adaptation both socially, by feeling more comfortable in smaller groups, and academically, through tailored instruction and a gradual integration into the larger classroom environment.

The smaller setting allows educators to tailor instruction to the cultural and linguistic needs of the students. Small pull-out groups are seen as a means to provide targeted academic support. Students with interrupted education often have significant academic deficiencies due to missed schooling in their home countries. Pull-out instruction allows teachers to address these gaps, offering a modified curriculum that caters to SIFE students' specific needs and pace. In the context of the pull-out model serving as a steppingstone, Participant 3's remarks provide clarity: "I always think a smaller setting should be implemented as an entry to their education. However, integrating the SIFE students into the classroom after one semester of small pull-out instruction will increase their ability to participate and feel comfortable around their other peers".

This quote reflects that pull-out instruction is not an end goal but a transitional phase or "steppingstone." It suggests that the ultimate aim is to integrate SIFE students into the regular classroom environment after receiving the initial support needed to overcome their unique challenges. The pull-out model, therefore, is seen as an essential preparatory step that equips students with the necessary skills and confidence to succeed in a more traditional educational setting. Participants mentioned the importance of eventually integrating SIFE students into mainstream classes after an initial period of pull-out instruction. This phased approach is

beneficial for gradually increasing their ability to participate and feel comfortable in larger classroom settings.

The interviews highlight that the pull-out model facilitates language development, focusing on speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Teachers use strategies like the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to reinforce content and language aspects of learning, especially in ELA classrooms. Participant 1 mentions that "students who are in instructional groups can gain faster with their learning" in a smaller classroom setting. This sentiment is echoed by Participant 3, who notes that smaller settings provide students with a more comfortable space to share and participate, overcoming the potential intimidation they might feel in a larger class. The interviews consistently emphasize the role of pull-out instruction in fostering a conducive environment for language acquisition.

Moreover, the interviews delve into the challenges in general education classes, supporting the need for pull-out instruction. Participant 2 highlighted the difficulty SIFE students face in large classrooms, noting that "they are still adjusting emotionally to being away from their parents" and might not readily participate in class discussions. This underscores the importance of tailored approaches like pull-out instruction to bridge these challenges. Participant 4 reinforces this idea by stating that pull-out instruction allows for a modified version of the curriculum at the student's academic levels, enabling them to participate effectively. Culturally responsive teaching is also addressed within this theme. Participant 1 indicates the necessity of understanding the diverse levels of English language learners, particularly students with interrupted education, and the importance of adapting teaching strategies accordingly. The interviews collectively portray pull-out instruction as a mechanism to implement more targeted

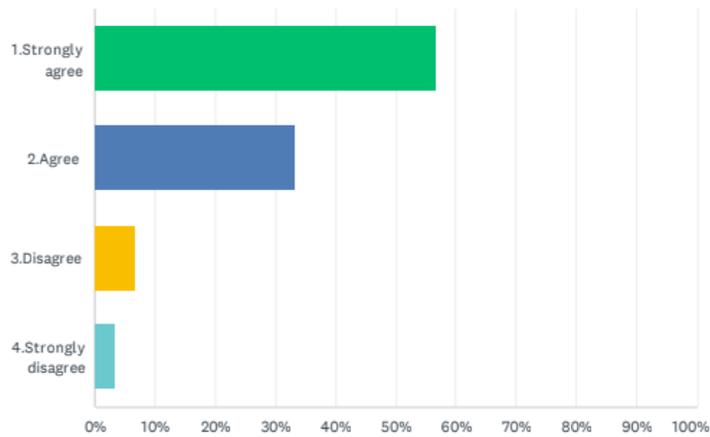
and culturally responsive teaching methods, acknowledging the diverse backgrounds and learning needs of SIFE students.

**Figure 1**

*The Positive Impact of the Pull-Out Instructional Model*

Q1 I feel the pull-out model will positively change the educational system for students with interrupted formal education.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



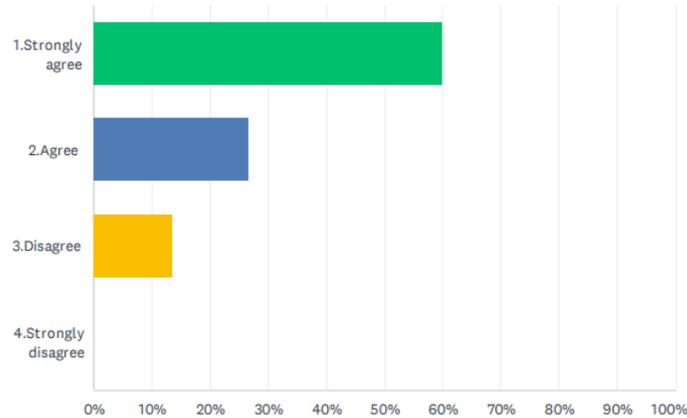
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	56.67%	17
2. Agree	33.33%	10
3. Disagree	6.67%	2
4. Strongly disagree	3.33%	1
TOTAL		30

**Figure 2**

*Academic Test Scores During Small Group Pull-Out Instructional Model*

Q3 I think students with interrupted formal education will improve their academic test scores if they have small group pull-out model support during English language arts (ELA).

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1. Strongly agree	60.00% 18
2. Agree	26.67% 8
3. Disagree	13.33% 4
4. Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
TOTAL	30

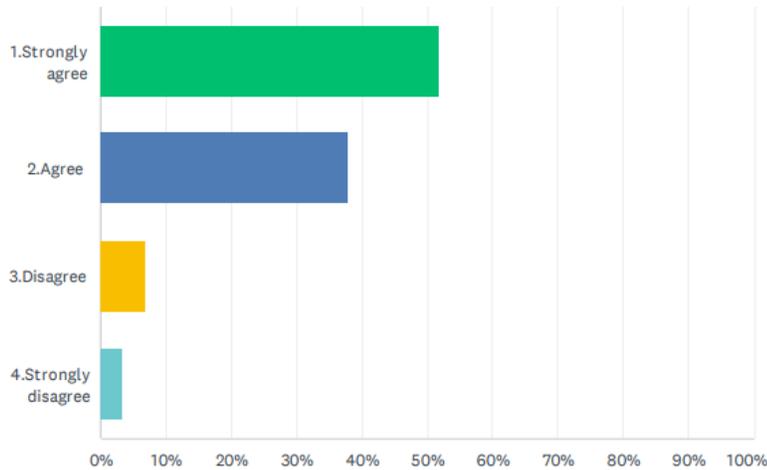
Question 3 results reveal a predominant consensus among participants, with 60.00% strongly agreeing and 26.67% expressing agreement that students with interrupted formal education will improve academic test scores if they have small group pull-out instruction during Language Arts. Notably, 13.33% respondents indicated disagreement and no participants strongly disagreed. This overwhelming agreement underscores a unified stance among the surveyed individuals, pointing towards a shared perspective or consensus within the surveyed group.

**Figure 3**

*Benchmark of One Semester in a Small Group Pull-Out Model*

Q4 I feel like students with interrupted formal education should have a benchmark of one semester working in a small pull-out model setting before entering the English language arts classroom.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1

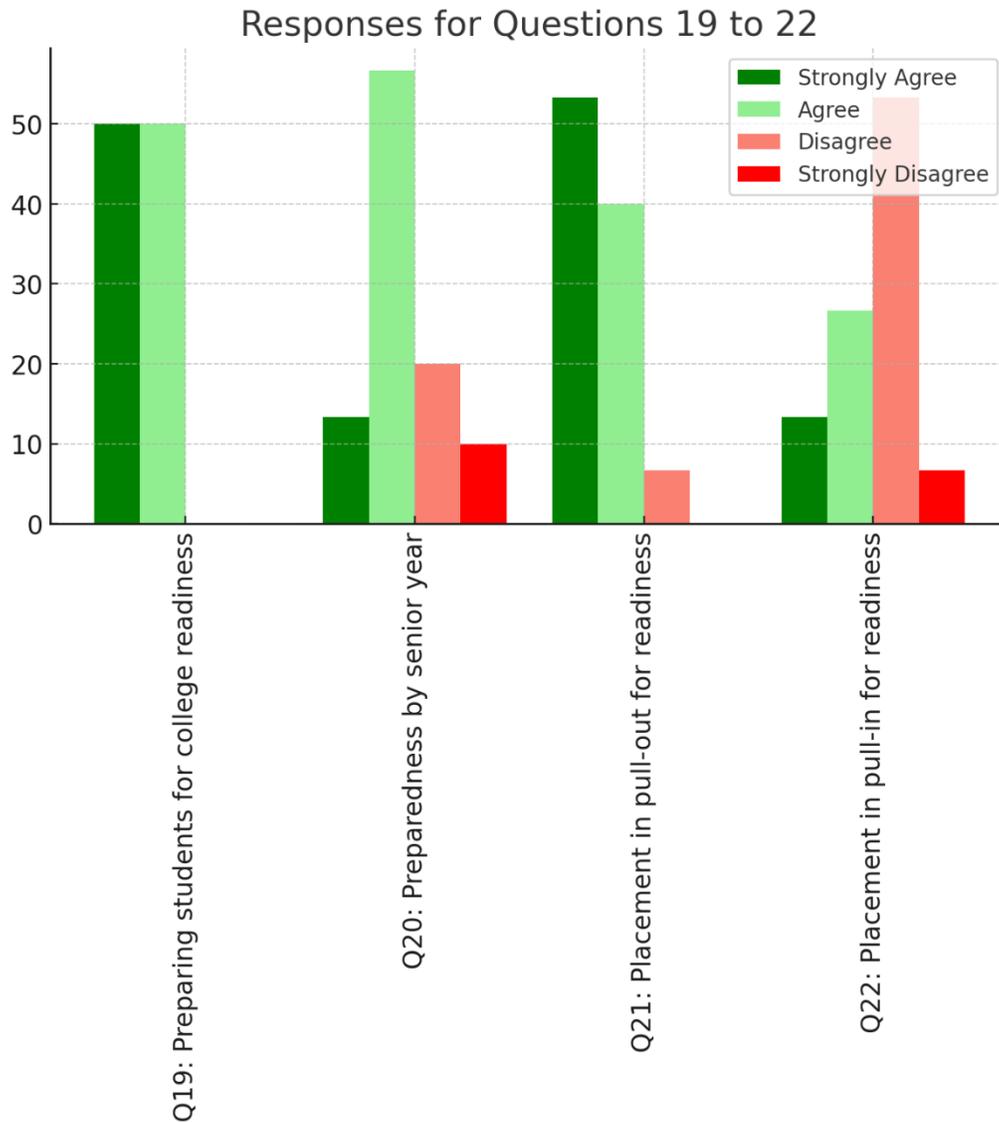


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	51.72%	15
2. Agree	37.93%	11
3. Disagree	6.90%	2
4. Strongly disagree	3.45%	1
TOTAL		29

Overall, the consistent positive perception of small group pull-out instruction reflects its perceived effectiveness in addressing the unique needs of SIFE students, contributing to language acquisition, academic progress, and culturally responsive teaching.

**Figure 4**

*Preparing for College and Career Readiness Q19-22*



The survey data from questions 19 to 22 reveal a strong consensus among teachers on the positive impacts of small pull-out instruction for students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), particularly in preparing them for college and career readiness. The unanimous support, illustrated by 50% of responses falling into strongly agree and agreement categories for question 19, emphasizes belief in the efficacy of effective teaching strategies tailored to these students.

For question 20, most teachers believe that SIFE students in middle school will be well-prepared for college and career readiness by their senior year of secondary education, with over 70% agreeing or strongly agreeing. This optimism extends to the pull-out model discussed in question 21, where 93.33% of teachers support its role in preparing students for future success, showcasing a clear preference for this approach.

However, responses to question 22 suggest a divergence of opinion on the push-in model, with a significant 53.33% disagreement, indicating mixed views on its effectiveness compared to the pull-out method. This data collectively underlines a robust endorsement from educators for the pull-out model as a strategic and effective tool in supporting SIFE students' transition to higher educational aspirations and career readiness.

Incorporating insights from the fifth interview into Theme 1, which discusses the positive impact of small pull-out instruction, enriches our understanding of how educators perceive the effectiveness of these strategies for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE).

Participant 5 highlights several critical risk factors affecting Central American SIFE students, such as transitioning to a new country, experiencing culture shock, and the trauma associated with asylum situations and separation from families. These insights emphasize these students' significant emotional and educational challenges, underscoring the necessity of welcoming environments and culturally responsive teaching.

Participant 5 believes in the benefits of pull-out instruction, particularly for newcomers who, under New York State education requirements, are not held to the same standardized testing criteria in their first year. This exemption provides a unique opportunity for focused, skill-based learning in smaller settings, allowing SIFE students to catch up academically without the pressure of immediate standard assessments. Participant 5's observation that many middle

school SIFE students perform at a second-grade level in English underscores the crucial role of pull-out instruction in providing tailored support to enhance reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

The resources and strategies employed by Participant 5's district further illustrate a comprehensive support system for SIFE students. Utilizing platforms like Lexia English and PowerUp, alongside differentiated instruction techniques, such as, color coding and images, facilitates personalized learning experiences. Additionally, the district's provision of technology, free and reduced lunch, and parent engagement initiatives, such as PTA and Family University, exemplify a holistic approach to supporting not just the students, but their families as well, fostering a community that acknowledges and addresses the multifaceted needs of SIFE students.

The emphasis on the positive impact of small pull-out instruction for SIFE students is echoed across various aspects of their educational experience. The survey results and interview feedback consistently highlight the effectiveness and benefits of the pull-out model, underscoring its role in facilitating language acquisition, academic achievement, and culturally responsive teaching for SIFE students at the secondary level.

Starting from the outset, the strong agreement in questions 1 through 4 demonstrates a foundational belief in the pull-out model's capacity to alter the educational landscape for SIFE students positively. Specifically, 56.67% strongly agreed that the pull-out model would change the educational system for the better (Q1), with similar sentiments reflected in the belief in its benefits for language acquisition (Q2) and academic test scores (Q3). The support for establishing a benchmark of one semester in a small pull-out setting before transitioning SIFE students into the general ELA classroom (Q4) further cements the model's perceived value in laying a solid groundwork for these students' success.

Moreover, the responses to questions 5 through 9 broaden the discussion, revealing a more mixed perspective on the push-in model than the pull-out approach. However, they also highlight a unanimous recognition of the need for ongoing professional development to better serve SIFE students, with a strong consensus on the importance of culturally responsive education (Q14, Q15) and the necessity of after-school programs to support their social and emotional learning (Q16).

In essence, the data from questions 1 to 22 seamlessly tie into Theme 1, reaffirming the positive impact of the pull-out instruction model as seen through the lens of the educators surveyed. This collective insight not only validates the initial hypothesis of the study, but also enriches our understanding of the complexities inherent in teaching SIFE students. The overwhelming support for culturally responsive teaching, the acknowledgment of the pull-out model's benefits, and the call for enhanced professional development encapsulate a multifaceted approach toward improving educational outcomes for SIFE students. It's noteworthy that while questions 17 to 22 primarily address broader concerns of readiness for college and career, their implications for Theme 1 lie in reaffirming the necessity and effectiveness of targeted support and instructional strategies that address the unique needs of SIFE students, thereby contributing to their overall academic and social development.

This comprehensive examination of the survey data underlines a consistent endorsement of the pull-out model from participating educators. It highlights its integral role in fostering an environment conducive to the holistic development of SIFE students, thereby making a compelling case for its continued and expanded implementation in educational settings catering to this unique student population.

## **Theme 2: The Challenge of Academic Readiness and Reading Skills of SIFE Students**

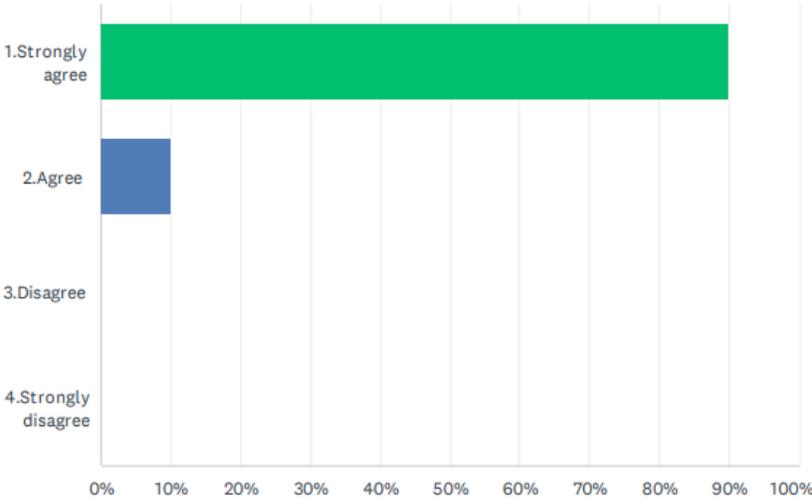
The summarized data indicates that 90.00% of respondents strongly agree that Central American students with interrupted formal education need academic support in Q13, while the remaining 10.00% express agreement. There are no respondents who disagree or strongly disagree. This overwhelming agreement underscores a strong consensus among participants regarding the positive impact or relevance of the mentioned aspect. The absence of disagreement further reinforces that most respondents share a unified perspective on this particular issue. Teachers employ various strategies to address these challenges. One recurring theme is the implementation of specialized reading classes and modified assignments to accommodate different literacy levels. For instance, Participant 3 suggests, "the ELA curriculum can be modified for these students," emphasizing the need for scaffolded instruction. Participants underscored the importance of creating a supportive environment, incorporating visual aids, and providing emotional support to help students navigate their new educational landscape.

### **Figure 5**

*Academic Support in Reading and Writing*

Q13 I think the vast population of secondary Central American students with interrupted formal education in my district needs academic curriculum support in reading and writing.

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



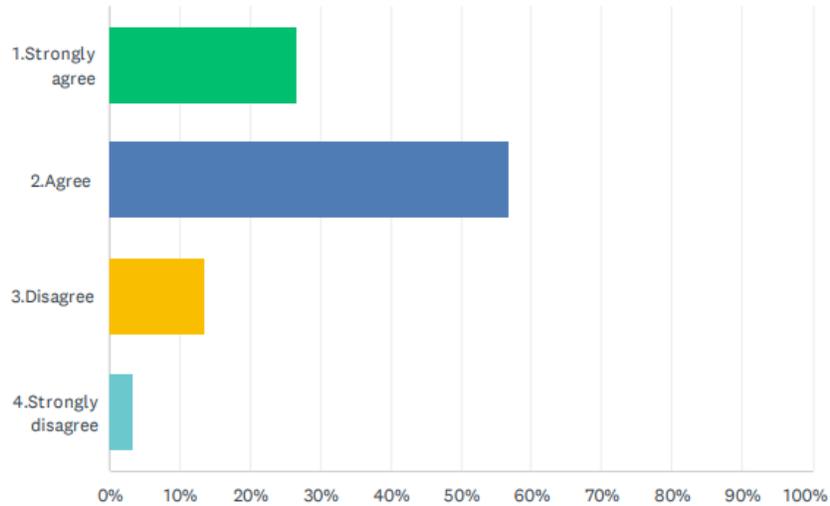
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.Strongly agree	90.00%	27
2.Agree	10.00%	3
3.Disagree	0.00%	0
4.Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		30

**Figure 6**

*Professional Development Training in the ELA Co-Teaching Classroom*

**Q8 I feel that I need better professional development to support students with interrupted formal education in the ELA co-teaching classroom.**

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.Strongly agree	26.67%	8
2.Agree	56.67%	17
3.Disagree	13.33%	4
4.Strongly disagree	3.33%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>30</b>

The summarized results indicate that 56.67% of respondents agree and an additional 26.67% strongly agree that professional development is needed to support students with interrupted education better in ELA. A minority, constituting 13.33%, maintain disagreement, while only 3.33% express strong disagreement. This distribution suggests a predominant agreement among the surveyed participants about professional development. The substantial percentage of strong agreement, coupled with a considerable agreement percentage, highlights a consensus in the perception that professional development likely has a positive influence. The limited disagreement further emphasizes the prevailing positive sentiment among participants.

One prominent challenge highlighted by participants is the academic readiness of SIFE students, particularly in reading skills. The interviews reveal that many SIFE students lack foundational literacy skills in their native language, making it challenging to transfer these skills to English. The teachers express concerns about assuming that providing translated texts would be sufficient, emphasizing the importance of addressing literacy gaps directly, even in the student's native language.

The interviews also shed light on SIFE students' complex social and emotional challenges. Many arrive in the United States without parents, with unfamiliar relatives or sponsors. This aspect poses a significant emotional burden, affecting students' ability to feel safe and secure in their new environment. Teachers acknowledge the importance of understanding and addressing the emotional trauma of these students' journeys and their experiences upon arrival. Additionally, the interviews highlight the socio-cultural challenges of transitioning from smaller, more rural educational settings to larger, more complex middle or high school environments. Adjusting to switching classes and adapting to a new educational system is a substantial challenge, especially for students from more rural backgrounds.

In response to these challenges, teachers adopt diverse strategies. They emphasize the need for specialized reading classes, visual aids, and modified assignments to cater to varying literacy levels. Teachers also stress the importance of providing emotional support, acknowledging students' diverse experiences, and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. Theme 2 underscores educators' intricate web of challenges in supporting Central American SIFE students. It emphasizes the importance of addressing academic and socio-emotional needs. It showcases the adaptability and creativity of teachers to overcome these challenges and create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

**Table 2**

*Teacher Interview Qualitative Component*

<b>Interview Questions</b>
What are your perceptions of the benefits of pull-out instruction during an ELA co-teaching general education class?
Based on your perceptions, what risk factors are the most difficult when teaching Central American Students with Interrupted Formal Education?
What tools or resources does your district provide to support Students with Interrupted Formal Education?

Interviewees express concerns about assuming that providing translated texts is sufficient for comprehension. Participant 4, for instance, underscores this issue by noting that "they might not even be able to read in their native language," highlighting the need to address foundational literacy skills directly. Another participant emphasizes the importance of differentiated instruction, stating, "the small pull-out instructional groups allow the students the opportunities to speak and ask questions. It allows the ENL teacher to focus more on vocabulary." This exemplifies a strategy where educators tailor instruction to address specific academic needs.

The interviews also delve into SIFE students' social and emotional challenges, particularly their arrival in the United States without parents. Participant 2 emphasizes the emotional impact, stating, "They are still adjusting emotionally to being away from their parents." This highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing the emotional trauma of the student's experiences. Participant 4 provides further insight into the social challenges, mentioning that "they have to switch classes, adjust to a larger and new schooling environment."

The interviews collectively bring attention to the required socio-cultural adjustments, demonstrating that educators must consider the broader context beyond academics.

The challenges of academic readiness and reading skills among students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) are notably addressed through questions 19 to 22, offering a nuanced perspective on educators' strategies for enhancing academic achievement and preparing students for college and career readiness. While these questions predominantly align with the overarching effectiveness of pull-out and push-in models, their implications extend into the academic readiness and specialized support necessary for SIFE students to succeed.

Question 19, which probes the capacity of educators to prepare SIFE students for college and career readiness using effective teaching strategies, yielded an encouraging response, with 100% of participants expressing agreement or strong agreement. This consensus underscores a critical recognition among educators of their pivotal role in employing targeted strategies to elevate the academic and language skills essential for SIFE students' future endeavors.

Question 20 further explores the premise of preparing SIFE students from secondary education for college and career readiness by their senior year, with a significant majority affirming this potential. This reflects a positive outlook on the long-term impact of specialized instructional methods, highlighting a collective belief in the possibility of bridging the academic gaps faced by SIFE students through dedicated support and tailored teaching approaches.

However, the responses to questions 21 and 22 reveal a divergent perspective on the effectiveness of the pull-out versus push-in models in addressing the specific challenges of academic readiness and reading skills. While the pull-out model receives overwhelming support for its role in preparing students for future success, the push-in model elicits mixed reactions,

suggesting a nuanced debate among educators regarding the most effective strategies for enhancing the academic readiness of SIFE students.

This discussion encapsulates the complex interplay between instructional models and their impact on academic readiness. It highlights the educators' nuanced understanding of the multifaceted support required to elevate SIFE students' educational outcomes. It emphasizes the necessity for a strategic approach that addresses language acquisition and cultural integration and directly confronts the academic challenges, particularly in reading and writing, that these students face.

Integrating insights from the fifth participant into the discussion on Theme 2, which addresses SIFE students' academic readiness and reading skills, provides a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges and strategies employed to support these students. Participant 5 highlighted several key issues, such as the profound impact of transitioning to a new country, the culture shock experienced, and the trauma associated with asylum situations and separation from families. These factors significantly affect students' social, emotional, and academic well-being, emphasizing the need for educators to adopt a culturally responsive approach to create a welcoming and supportive school environment.

Moreover, Participant 5 pointed out the lack of prior education as a critical risk factor, with some students facing months or years without formal education due to survival factors in their home countries. This gap presents a considerable challenge in adjusting to a new social, emotional, and academic classroom environment as students strive to catch up with their peers. The emphasis on the importance of pull-out instruction, as described by Participant 5, aligns with the findings from the survey and other interviews, reinforcing the benefit of providing targeted

academic support in a smaller, structured setting. This approach facilitates language acquisition and helps students to catch up academically, particularly with reading and writing skills.

Additionally, the resources and tools mentioned by Participant 5, such as Lexia English and PowerUp, alongside strategies like differentiation and scaffolding, underscore the tailored support necessary for SIFE students. The district's provision of technology, parental engagement programs, and community involvement initiatives further illustrates the holistic approach required to address SIFE students' academic and socio-emotional needs.

When combined with the insights from the quantitative data and the first four interviews, adding Participant 5's perspectives enriches the understanding of Theme 2. It highlights the complex interplay between academic challenges and the socio-emotional hurdles SIFE students face, underscoring the critical role of specialized reading classes, modified assignments, and supportive educational environments. These findings collectively emphasize the necessity for ongoing professional development for educators, targeted academic support, and culturally responsive teaching strategies to effectively address the needs of Central American SIFE students and facilitate their successful integration into the academic community.

Integrating the survey data into Theme 2, which addresses the academic readiness and reading skills of students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), requires a comprehensive overview of all questions, including those that may not directly fit the theme. The responses across questions 1-22 offer a spectrum of insights that collectively inform SIFE students' academic challenges and the effectiveness of strategies employed to address these challenges. Starting from the initial questions, a strong belief in the pull-out model's positive impact on SIFE students is evident, with most teachers highlighting its benefits for language acquisition and academic performance (Q1-Q4). This sentiment aligns with Theme 2 by underscoring the critical

need for targeted instructional strategies that cater to the unique needs of SIFE students, particularly in developing reading and writing skills.

The nuanced perspectives on pull-out vs. push-in models (Q5-Q6) further illuminate the broader discussion of the best approaches to enhance academic readiness among SIFE students. While the pull-out model receives more favorable feedback for providing a conducive learning environment, the mixed responses to the push-in model reflect the complexities of integrating SIFE students into the general education classroom.

Professional development emerges as a key theme across questions 7-9, with many educators advocating for ongoing training to better support SIFE students. This aligns with Theme 2 by highlighting educators' need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively address the academic challenges these students face. The data also emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive education (Q14-Q15) and the need for after-school programs (Q16) to support social and emotional learning, aspects that, while not directly linked to academic readiness, play a significant role in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for SIFE students.

Interestingly, the overwhelming agreement on the necessity for additional academic support in reading and writing (Q13), along with a strong consensus on the value of social-emotional learning (Q17) and the need for family engagement (Q18), underscores a holistic approach to addressing the multifaceted needs of SIFE students. These aspects, though broader than the specific focus on academic readiness, are integral to the overall educational success of SIFE students.

In synthesizing the data, it becomes apparent that while certain responses directly reinforce the challenges of academic readiness and reading skills identified in Theme 2, others

provide a broader context for understanding the educational landscape for SIFE students. The emphasis on professional development, cultural responsiveness, and the socio-emotional aspects of learning, alongside the specific instructional strategies highlighted in the survey, contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the efforts required to support SIFE students' academic journey effectively. The integration of specialized reading classes and modified assignments (as suggested by educators in the interviews) aligns with the survey data, indicating a consensus on the need for scaffolded instruction and targeted support. This collective insight reaffirms the critical challenges of academic readiness among SIFE students and highlights the educators' dedication to devising strategies that foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

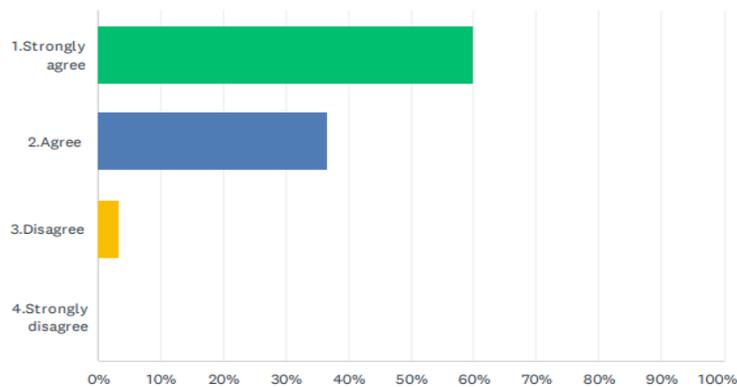
**Theme 3: The Role of Specialized Programs and Resources**

**Figure 7**

*After-School Programs Supporting Social and Emotional Learning*

**Q16 I feel Central American students with interrupted formal education need after-school programs to support their social and emotional learning.**

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



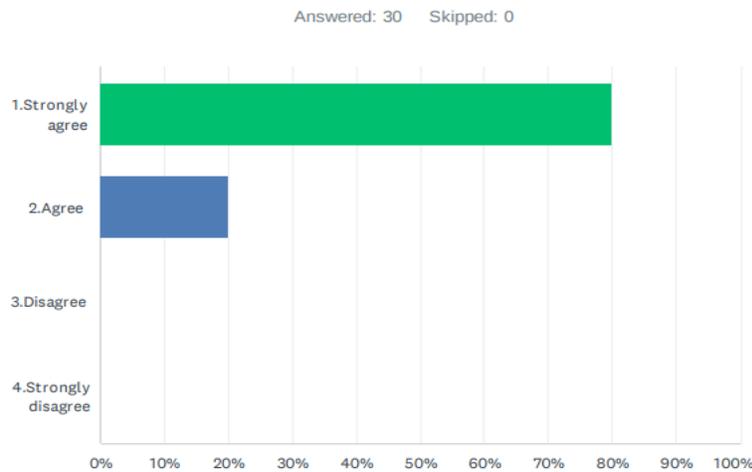
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	60.00%	18
2. Agree	36.67%	11
3. Disagree	3.33%	1
4. Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>30</b>

After-school programs are also valued by teachers, as shown in Q16. The summarized data reveals that 60.00% of respondents support the statement, while 36.67% express agreement to a lesser extent. 3.33% indicated disagreement, and no respondents strongly disagreed with the given statement. Most participants lean towards agreement, suggesting a predominantly positive inclination toward the identified factor, with a notable minority expressing a more moderate level of agreement. Participant 2 mentions using a systematic program like Imagine Learning, which focuses on phonics and foundational language skills. This underscores the importance of having tailored language development tools to bridge the gap for SIFE students with varying proficiency levels in their native language.

**Figure 8**

*Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom*

**Q17 I feel that social-emotional learning is important to incorporate in the classroom.**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	80.00%	24
2. Agree	20.00%	6
3. Disagree	0.00%	0
4. Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		30

Socio-emotional support and learning are also highly valued by teachers, as shown in Q17. In summary, 80.00% of respondents strongly feel that social-emotional learning is critical to incorporate in the classroom, while 20.00% express agreement to a lesser extent. No respondents disagreed with the statement. The overwhelming majority of participants strongly support integrating social-emotional learning in the classroom, indicating a consensus on the significance of this aspect in the educational environment.

Furthermore, the interviews shed light on after-school and homework programs as essential components of preparing SIFE students for college and career readiness. Participant 4 discusses students' involvement in an ENL group, where the focus was on literacy skills. These programs prepare SIFE students for college and career readiness. Participant 4's focus on literacy skills, exemplifies the targeted approach needed to equip these students with foundational competencies for their academic and professional futures. Literacy skills are not just a prerequisite for academic success; they are critical for navigating the complex texts, communications, and problem-solving scenarios students will encounter in higher education and the workforce. These after-school programs extend learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting, providing a supportive space for SIFE students to practice and enhance their language abilities, engage with challenging materials at their own pace, and receive personalized feedback and instruction. This focused attention helps bridge gaps in their education, boosting their confidence and competence in academic tasks.

Moreover, by participating in these programs, SIFE students can develop soft skills such as time management, perseverance, and self-advocacy, which are equally important for success in college and career environments. The ability to work independently, seek help when needed, and consistently improve upon one's skills are attributes that higher education

institutions and employers highly value. Thus, the role of after-school and homework programs, as highlighted through Participant 4's experience, extends beyond immediate academic assistance; it lays a broader foundation for college and career readiness by fostering a comprehensive skill set encompassing academic competencies and essential soft skills. These programs are instrumental in ensuring that SIFE students are prepared to meet the academic demands of their future educational pursuits and equipped with the skills needed to thrive in their chosen careers. This indicates a targeted effort to enhance language and literacy abilities, aligning with broader college and career readiness goals. The provision of health and community services, as highlighted by Participant 4, also contributes to a holistic preparation for college and careers. Offering health services and providing families with food support demonstrates a recognition of the broader socio-economic challenges SIFE students and their families face. Such support goes beyond the classroom, addressing the multifaceted needs that could otherwise hinder the educational journey.

This indicates a targeted effort to enhance language and literacy abilities, aligning with the broader goals of college and career readiness. The provision of health and community services, as highlighted by Participant 4, also contributes to holistic preparation for college and careers. Offering health services and providing families with food support demonstrates a recognition of the broader socio-economic challenges SIFE students and their families face. Such support goes beyond the classroom, addressing the multifaceted needs that could otherwise hinder the educational journey.

The connection between the positive impact of pull-out instruction and college and career readiness, though not explicitly stated, seems to be inherently significant and strategically vital. The foundation established through enhanced teacher perceptions, facilitated language

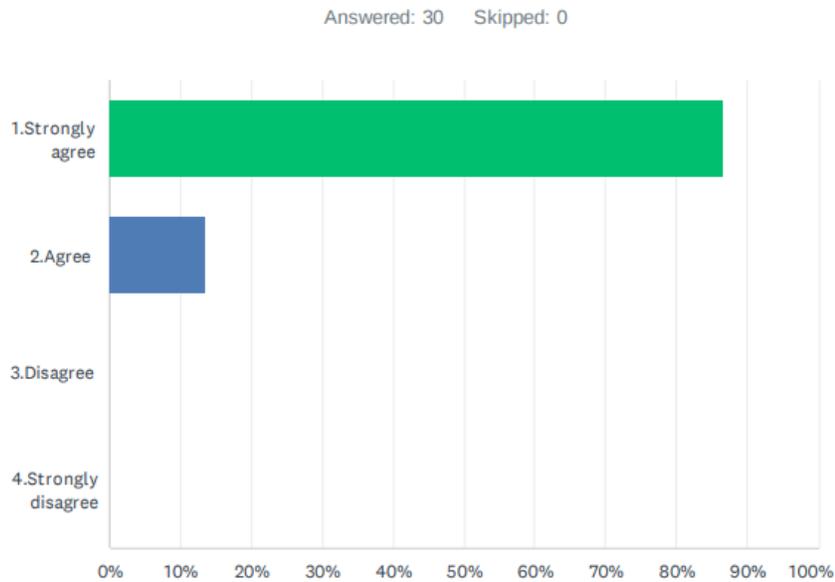
acquisition, and culturally responsive teaching seems to directly contribute to preparing SIFE students for future academic and professional challenges. Data from survey responses 19-22 identifies structured settings for individualized attention and targeted teaching strategies. Pull-out instruction addresses immediate educational needs and builds essential skills for lifelong learning and adaptability, which are key components of college and career readiness.

As per Participant 5, the tailored educational environment fosters language proficiency, which is fundamental for academic success in higher education and professional settings, and encourages the development of critical thinking, cultural awareness, and social integration skills. The integration of culturally relevant materials and practices into the curriculum not only aids in making the learning process more relatable and engaging for SIFE students but also prepares them to navigate diverse environments and collaborate effectively with people from various backgrounds and skills that are highly valued in both college settings and the workplace. The observed improvements in academic performance and engagement among SIFE students due to pull-out instruction indicate their growing readiness to meet the demands of higher education and the workforce. By laying a solid foundation for academic success and social integration, educators equip SIFE students with the tools they need to pursue further education and career opportunities confidently. While the primary focus of pull-out instruction may be on immediate language acquisition and cultural integration, its long-term impact extends to enhancing students' readiness for the challenges and opportunities of college and career paths, underscoring the comprehensive benefits of this educational approach.

**Figure 9**

*Families Supporting College and Career Readiness*

**Q18 I think that the families of Central American students with interrupted formal education need additional support with their child's education to prepare for college and career readiness.**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1. Strongly agree	86.67%	26
2. Agree	13.33%	4
3. Disagree	0.00%	0
4. Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		30

Additional support programs provide a unique role in parents' lives as well. In summary, 86.67% of respondents strongly agree with the given statement, while 13.33% express agreement to a lesser extent. No respondents disagreed with the statement. Teachers and parents are supported with special programs. The interviews reveal a comprehensive array of programs designed to bolster academic and social support for Central American SIFE students while simultaneously playing a crucial role in their parents' lives. Among these initiatives, the Parent-

Teacher Association (PTA) engagements and the Bridges program stand out, with the former keeping parents actively involved in community discussions and school events, and the latter focusing on enhancing English learners' language skills and academic development. Another notable initiative is the New Arrivals Program, an English immersion endeavor tailored to newcomer students' specific educational backgrounds and needs, offering intensive support to those significantly lagging in literacy through a phonics-based curriculum.

Additionally, after-school and homework programs extend the learning day, providing critical literacy support and reinforcing daily lessons. At the same time, efforts to integrate cultural aspects and family outreach activities aim to build a bridge between the student's heritage and their new educational environment. The employment of digital tools and online platforms, such as Lexia, Freckle, Padlet, and Duolingo, further exemplifies educators' adaptive strategies to engage students in personalized and accessible learning experiences. This holistic approach not only underscores the significant impact of specialized programs on the educational journey of SIFE students but also highlights the essential support these initiatives offer to their families, ensuring a collaborative and inclusive path to academic success and social integration.

The interview evidence supports theme three by showcasing the diverse resources and programs educators employ to prepare Central American SIFE students for College & Career Readiness at the secondary level. Participant 3 highlighted the district's initiatives, such as engagement through the PTA and using programs like Bridges to support English learners and readers in reaching grade-level skills, alongside the SIOP model to meet the academic needs of English learners, especially those with interrupted education. Participant 1 discussed utilizing digital tools like PDFs or Google Docs with spoken words for better accessibility, alongside tangible resources for learning support, and mentioned platforms like Lexia and Freckle that

engage students in learning at their level. Participant 2 noted the importance of hiring additional English language and bilingual teachers due to the influx of migrant students. The school integrated cultural aspects and provided outreach and communication with parents, using student-friendly teaching platforms like Padlet and Duolingo.

Participant 4 talked about a new arrivals program designed for newcomer students, which acts like an English immersion program, and mentioned after-school programs and homework assistance, as well as providing services for families, like health centers and food assistance programs. These insights demonstrate a comprehensive approach towards supporting Central American SIFE students, combining academic support, cultural integration, community involvement, and accessibility of resources to ensure these students are prepared for future college and career opportunities. From specialized programs like language services to targeted language development tools, after-school programs, and community services, educators are actively creating a comprehensive support system to foster SIFE students' academic success and prospects.

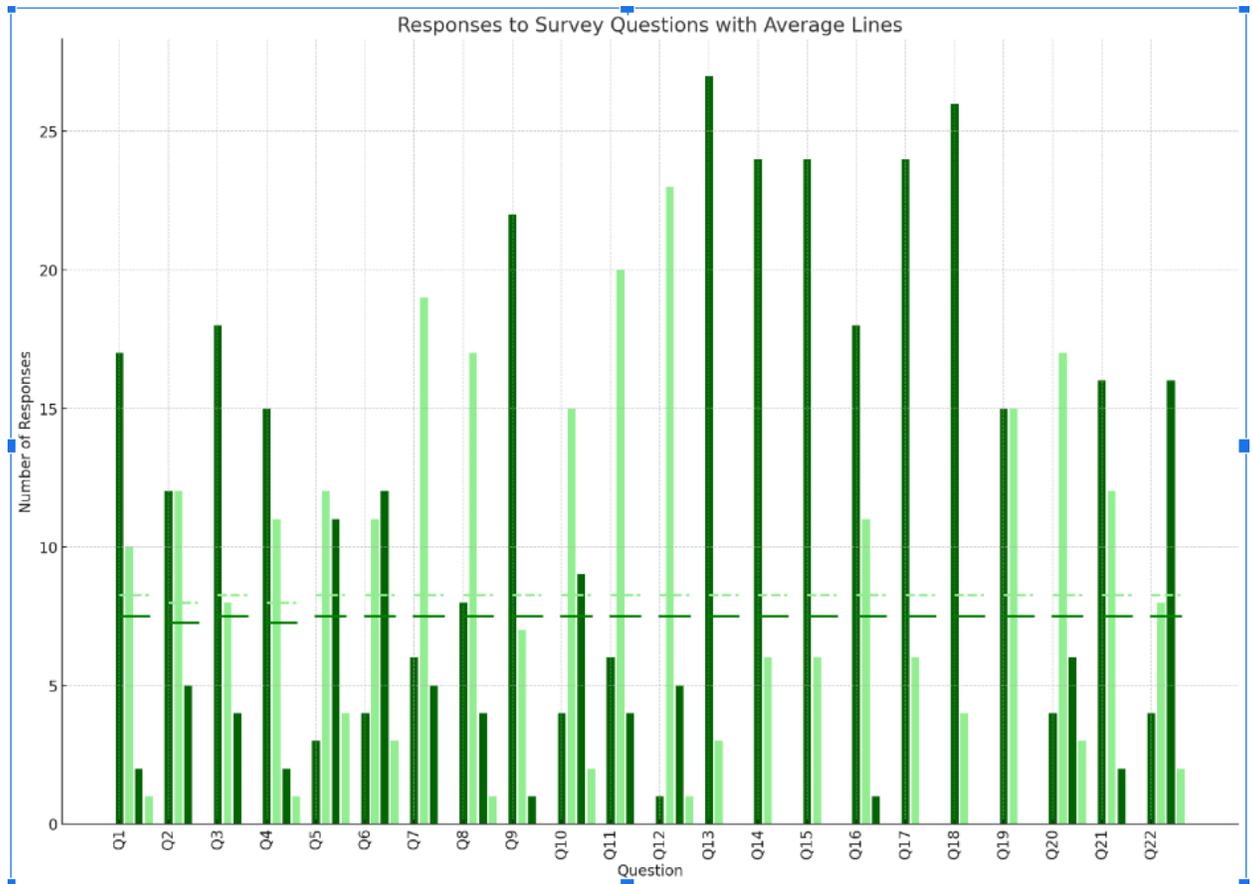
One critical aspect highlighted by participants is the role of specialized programs and resources. Participant 4, for instance, emphasizes the significance of a new arrivals program in their district. This program provides targeted support, allowing students to attend a middle school designed for newcomers. The duration of 7 to 8 months in this program helps build foundational skills, preparing SIFE students for integration into the general education population. This opinion illustrates a structured approach to addressing the unique needs of SIFE students, ensuring they receive the necessary support before transitioning to more mainstream educational settings.

Within Theme 3, the focus shifts toward the role of specialized programs and resources in supporting students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), particularly in their journey toward college and career readiness. Questions 19 to 22 provide valuable insights into this aspect, highlighting the educators' perspectives on the effectiveness of various instructional models and their implications for SIFE students' preparation for future academic and professional pursuits. Question 19, which addresses the potential of educators to prepare SIFE students for college and career readiness through effective teaching strategies, received unanimous agreement, signaling a solid belief in the power of targeted instructional approaches. This consensus underscores the critical importance of specialized programs and resources in equipping SIFE students with the necessary skills and knowledge to transition to higher education and the workforce. The optimism continues with Question 20, where most educators expressed confidence in the ability of secondary SIFE students to achieve college and career readiness by their senior year. This response reflects a positive outlook on the impact of specialized instruction and support programs, suggesting that SIFE students can overcome their unique challenges and achieve their educational and career goals with the right resources.

However, the responses to Questions 21 and 22 highlight a nuanced perspective on the comparative effectiveness of pull-out versus push-in models in supporting the specialized needs of SIFE students. While there is overwhelming support for the pull-out model as a beneficial strategy for preparing students for future success, the push-in model garners mixed reactions. This divergence indicates a complex dialogue among educators about the most appropriate and effective instructional strategies for addressing the multifaceted needs of SIFE students, particularly in the context of providing specialized programs and resources that cater to their academic readiness and language development needs.

**Figure 10**

*Teacher Survey Questionnaire Correlated to Research Questions*



The insights from Questions 19 to 22 encapsulate a broader discussion on the necessity and impact of specialized instructional strategies and support mechanisms for SIFE students. This theme highlights the educators' collective acknowledgment of the crucial role that tailored programs and resources play in fostering an environment where SIFE students can thrive academically and prepare for the challenges and opportunities of college and career readiness. The data suggests a shared vision among educators for a comprehensive support system that addresses the unique educational landscapes of SIFE students, paving the way for their successful integration into higher education and the professional world.

Specialized programs and resources are crucial to support students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), particularly in their journey toward college and career readiness. As highlighted in questions 19 to 22, the consensus among educators underscores the effectiveness of both pull-out and push-in models, albeit with a noted preference for the pull-out model due to its structured support for language acquisition and academic skills development.

Adding Participant 5's perspective enriches understanding of the challenges and support necessary for Central American SIFE students. Participant 5 emphasizes the risk factors, such as transitioning to a new country, experiencing culture shock, and the trauma of separation from families, which can significantly impact students' social, emotional, and academic adjustment. These insights resonate with the survey findings where educators highlight the need for targeted academic support, especially in reading and writing, to bridge the educational gaps experienced by SIFE students.

Participant 5 outlines the benefits of pull-out instruction, particularly for newcomers exempt from English Language Arts assessments in their first year in the U.S. This approach allows for the focused development of essential academic skills in a supportive setting. This approach enhances reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, which are crucial for catching up with their peers.

Resources and support strategies discussed by Participant 5, including the use of Lexia English and PowerUp platforms, scaffolded instruction, and the provision of technology, free and reduced lunch, and community-engagement programs like PTA and Family University, are pivotal in creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment for SIFE students. These strategies align with the broader theme of the necessity for ongoing professional development for

educators and the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching approaches highlighted in the interviews and survey responses.

Integrating Participant 5's insights with the existing findings emphasizes a holistic approach toward supporting SIFE students. This approach involves direct academic support and addresses the socio-emotional challenges these students face, providing a comprehensive support system that fosters academic success and prepares them for future college and career opportunities. The collective data from the interviews and survey responses underscore the multifaceted support required to help SIFE students overcome their unique challenges and succeed academically and socially, reflecting a shared commitment among educators to ensure the holistic development of these students.

Incorporating all aspects of Theme 3, which highlights the role of specialized programs and resources in supporting Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), the responses to questions 1 through 22 provide a comprehensive overview of educators' perceptions of the efficacy of such interventions. The overwhelmingly positive responses to questions regarding the pull-out model (Q1: 56.67% strongly agree, 33.33% agree) underscore its perceived value in enhancing the educational experiences of SIFE students. Similarly, strong endorsements for language acquisition improvements through the pull-out model (Q2: 82.76% agreement) and the belief in improved academic test scores with small group pull-out support (Q3: 86.67% agreement) further solidify the model's importance.

The nuanced view of the push-in model, reflected in the divided responses to Q5 and Q6, points to a more complex discussion about the most effective support mechanisms for SIFE students. However, the unanimous agreement on the need for ongoing professional development (Q9: 96.66% agreement) and the overwhelming support for culturally responsive education (Q14

and Q15: 100% agreement) reflect a shared commitment to addressing these students' unique challenges.

Q16's strong support for after-school programs (96.67% agreement) highlights the educators' recognition of SIFE students' broader socio-emotional and academic needs, underscoring the critical role of comprehensive support systems. The necessity of these programs is further emphasized by the near-universal agreement on the importance of incorporating social-emotional learning in the classroom (Q17: 100% agreement) and the strong consensus on the need for additional family support to prepare SIFE students for college and career readiness (Q18: 100% agreement).

The responses to questions 19 through 22 particularly illuminate the consensus on the effectiveness of targeted teaching strategies and support mechanisms in preparing SIFE students for future academic and professional challenges. The data reveals a collective belief in the ability of educators to use effective teaching strategies to build academic and language skills, provide access to resources and support, and foster a culture of high expectations and readiness for college and career paths.

This thematic analysis indicates that while there is a strong belief in the positive impact of specialized programs and resources on SIFE students' education, there is also an acknowledgment of the multifaceted nature of their needs. The educators' responses suggest a comprehensive approach that includes academic support, social-emotional learning, cultural responsiveness, and family engagement as essential components of a successful educational model for SIFE students.

## Chapter Summary

The study's three identified themes collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding small pull-out instruction for Students with Interrupted Education (SIFE) in English Language Arts (ELA) at the secondary level. The perceived positive impact of pull-out instruction, as emphasized in Theme 1, establishes a foundation for improved teacher perceptions, language acquisition, and culturally responsive teaching. The perception of pull-out instruction creates a vital foundation that enhances teacher perceptions, facilitates language acquisition, and fosters culturally responsive teaching. This approach is recognized for providing a supportive and tailored educational environment where students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) can thrive. By focusing on small, structured settings, pull-out instruction allows for individualized attention and targeted teaching strategies that directly address the unique needs of these students, particularly those from Central American countries. Such a specialized setting not only aids in the more effective acquisition of language skills but also enables educators to integrate culturally relevant materials and practices into the curriculum. This dual focus on linguistic and cultural responsiveness enriches the educational experience for SIFE students, promoting a deeper connection to the content and a stronger sense of belonging within the school community. Consequently, teachers observe significant improvements in their students' academic performance and engagement, reinforcing the value of the pull-out model as a cornerstone for developing comprehensive educational strategies that support the diverse needs of SIFE students. Through this approach, educators are better equipped to build on their students' strengths, laying a solid foundation for their future academic success and social integration.

The recognition of small group settings as conducive to addressing the unique needs of SIFE students, coupled with an awareness of cultural shock and the need for flexibility, underscores

the significance of this instructional approach. In Theme 2, the challenges presented by the academic readiness of SIFE students, particularly in reading skills, provide essential context for the study. The interviews illuminate their perceived lack of readiness. The multifaceted obstacles these students face encompass academic, emotional, and socio-cultural dimensions. Teachers' adaptive strategies, ranging from specialized reading classes to emotional support and tailored assignments, showcase the educators' commitment to addressing these challenges comprehensively.

Theme 3 explores the role of specialized programs and resources such as health services, aligning with the broader goal of preparing SIFE students for College and Career Readiness. A holistic support system includes new arrivals programs, systematic language development tools, after-school programs, and community services to provide opportunities or basic necessities like language skills needed to operate in the workforce. This comprehensive approach underscores educators' recognition of the diverse needs of SIFE students and their commitment to fostering success beyond academic achievements.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings**

### **Introduction**

The findings from this study contribute to the existing body of literature on perceptions of teaching strategies for SIFE students, providing valuable insights for ENL educators working with this unique group of students. By addressing the distinctive challenges SIFE students face, this study aimed to analyze teachers' perceptions.

RQ1: Will small group pull-out instruction improve teacher perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during ELA for SIFE students learning English at the secondary level?

RQ2: What are educators' perceptions of challenges faced in providing services for Central American SIFE students, and how have they addressed them?

RQ3: What are educators' perceptions of preparing Central American SIFE students for College & Career Readiness at the secondary level?

#### Response to Research Questions

Examining the participants' experiences identified three group themes and provided insights to address the three guiding questions of this research study.

***RQ1: Will small group pull-out instruction improve teacher perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during ELA for SIFE students learning English at the secondary level?***

Implementing small group pull-out instruction indicated that ENL teachers feel this approach positively shapes language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during English Language Arts (ELA) for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) at the secondary level. This approach involves direct English instruction, specifically concentrating on reading, writing, listening, and speaking, allowing teachers to address the distinct language needs of SIFE students (Echevarria et al., 2012). The individualized timing of pull-out services based on each student's English level and consideration of their literacy and language skills demonstrates a personalized approach, which is also based on Part 154 of the English Language Learners Regulations within the New York State Education Department's

guidelines. This part of the regulations outlines requirements for identifying and serving English Language Learners, including consideration of their language proficiency levels.

Integrating ELL students into regular classrooms most of the day fosters inclusivity and cultural responsiveness (Em, 2022). Teachers' adaptations and accommodations, such as modifying assignments based on student skills, further contribute to an effective learning environment (Echevarria et al., 2012). Flexibility in scheduling pull-out services, tailored to accommodate the diverse needs of ELL students, underscores the adaptability of this strategy. Overall, small group pull-out instruction emerges as a thoughtful and flexible approach that holds the potential to positively impact language acquisition, student achievement, and cultural responsiveness in ELA for SIFE students at the secondary level. The data shown in interviews related to Q1, Q3, and Q4 highlighted the perception of the positive impact of small group pull-out instruction, significantly contributing to answering RQ1. The thematic focus on the affirmative perceptions of teachers is crucial to understanding how pull-out instruction influences language acquisition and student achievement for SIFE students. Teachers consistently expressed positive beliefs regarding the effectiveness of small group pull-out instruction. The emphasis on smaller settings within this theme is noteworthy, indicating that teachers perceive these settings as conducive to fostering language acquisition and promoting student achievement. As highlighted in the interviews, the modified curriculum tailored to the needs of SIFE students aligns with positive teacher perceptions, emphasizing the adaptability of instruction to address academic deficiencies. The interviews and data within Theme 1 collectively underscore the significance of creating an environment where SIFE students can actively participate and engage in the learning process. The focus on the challenges of adapting to a new language and educational system, coupled with the acknowledgment of the cultural

shock experienced by SIFE students, reinforces the importance of pull-out instruction to provide targeted support. This theme establishes a connection between teachers' positive perceptions and the potential benefits of pull-out instruction, thus contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of RQ1. The study aimed to investigate the perception of the potential impact of small group pull-out instruction on teacher perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during English Language Arts (ELA) sessions for secondary SIFE students. This investigation was essential given the critical role of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in predicting educational outcomes for children of immigrant parents attending English-only schools (Michaud et al., 2022). SIFE students often face challenges in achieving academic and career objectives in such environments, leading to long-term consequences (DeCapua and Marshall, 2010).

The literature suggests that Limited English Proficiency (LEP) significantly affects academic performance, with SIFE students requiring several years to attain the English proficiency necessary for success (Harris, 2022). Additionally, LEP is identified as a predictor of dropout rates, emphasizing the need for effective interventions to support SIFE students (Michaud et al., 2022). The dropout rates for ELLs with LEP vary, highlighting the importance of tailored interventions and support systems (Hedman & Magnusson, 2020). Limited Formal Schooling (LFS) further compounds SIFE students' challenges, impacting English proficiency, grades, standardized test scores, and graduation rates (Kiiskila, 2018). The research indicates that while LFS is associated with lower educational outcomes, appropriate support and interventions can mitigate its effects (Hedman & Magnusson, 2020). Understanding the dimensions of LFS involves recognizing it as a collection of variables, including low literacy skills in the native language, low language proficiency, low academic background knowledge, and a history of

interrupted or inadequate formal schooling (Kiiskila, 2018). The degree to which authorities correlate and connect LFS programs varies, contributing to differing education outcomes for SIFE students.

In summary, the current study addressed the critical issues of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and LFS faced by SIFE students and aims to explore the perceptions of the potential benefits of small group pull-out instruction to improve teacher perceptions of language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching during ELA for secondary-level SIFE students learning English. The research design and analysis carefully considered the multifaceted nature of LEP and LFS, providing insights into effective strategies for supporting this student population.

Moreover, the thematic emphasis on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model and other strategies reveals how educators actively implement culturally responsive teaching in pull-out settings. This aligns with the broader goal of addressing the unique needs of SIFE students in ELA classrooms. Recognizing diverse backgrounds and learning needs is integral to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, reinforcing that small group pull-out instruction positively influences culturally responsive teaching. Theme 1, The Impact of Pull-Out Instruction is Positive, significantly answers RQ1 by providing evidence that teachers perceive small group pull-out instruction as a positive and effective approach. The emphasis on smaller settings, modified curricula, and culturally responsive teaching collectively contributes to a nuanced understanding of how pull-out instruction influences language acquisition and achievement for SIFE students at the secondary level.

***RQ2: What are educators' perceptions of challenges faced in providing services for Central American SIFE students, and how have they addressed them?***

Teachers providing services for Central American SIFE students have encountered several challenges in implementing pull-out programs. The pull-out model, designed for direct English instruction, involves removing ELLs from the whole group classroom instruction for a short period of time and integrating them back into the mainstream classroom. Direct English services are tailored to the student's proficiency level, focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Echevarria et al., 2012). One challenge teachers face is scheduling pull-out services based on students' English levels and literacy and language skills. The amount of time for these services is crucial to align with students' needs, but it can be challenging to accommodate them within the ELA schedule.

To address this challenge, teachers have modified assignments and made accommodations for ELL students within the regular classroom setting. The curriculum remains consistent for all students, but adjustments are made to support ELL students' specific skills and abilities. The pull-out model aims to enhance reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills by providing direct instruction during independent work. The collaborative effort between general education and ENL teachers is essential when developing rubrics and modifying curricula to suit the needs of ELL students (Echevarria et al., 2012). Educators have also employed various reading platforms, such as Reading A to Z, Lexia, Freckle, and Leveled Literacy Instruction, to enhance language learning for SIFE students. These platforms allow ENL teachers to work closely with smaller groups, reinforcing language skills through leveled texts on the secondary level with SIFE students. The selection of curricula is based on individual student needs, with the ENL teacher making instructional decisions tailored to each child (Charmaz, 2014).

To overcome challenges and enhance teaching practices, research, and sound pedagogical principles support some teaching strategies. Schools have increasingly taken an active role in training teachers to employ effective strategies and practices that meet the needs of SIFE students, recognizing the growing population in U.S. school systems (Custodio & O’Loughlin, 2022). School districts are crucial in providing adequate services to ELLs and ensuring practical teacher training to address SIFE students' unique challenges (Flucker, 2021). Data shown in interviews and Q7, Q8, and especially Q13 support the idea that the main challenge is the academic readiness of SIFE students, particularly reading skills. This theme comprehensively explores the complexities of supporting this specific student demographic by delving into the multifaceted nature of the hurdles encountered. The interviews illuminate a significant challenge revolving around the academic readiness of SIFE students, with a particular emphasis on reading skills. Acknowledging that many SIFE students lack foundational literacy skills in their native language establishes a foundational understanding of teachers' difficulties. Highlighting concerns about assuming the adequacy of translated texts alone underscores the intricate nature of this challenge, thereby emphasizing the necessity for a more holistic approach to tackle literacy gaps directly.

Moreover, the theme goes beyond academics, shedding light on SIFE students' socio-emotional challenges, including their arrival in the United States without parents and adjusting to a new, larger educational environment. Teachers express profound concerns about the emotional impact on students, recognizing the need to provide academic and emotional support. By addressing socio-emotional challenges, this theme acknowledges the broader context within which teachers navigate difficulties, understanding the socio-cultural adjustments essential for creating an effective and supportive learning environment.

Importantly, the interviews underscore the adaptability and creativity exhibited by teachers in formulating strategies to overcome these challenges. Implementing specialized reading classes, visual aids, and modified assignments exemplifies the proactive measures educators take to address the specific academic needs of SIFE students. Additionally, the recognition of emotional trauma and the importance of creating a safe and inclusive learning environment exemplify the holistic approach adopted by teachers to address socio-emotional challenges. In summary, Theme 2 comprehensively responds to RQ2 by providing in-depth insights into teachers' challenges while delivering services to Central American SIFE students. By focusing on academic readiness, socio-emotional challenges, and the innovative strategies educators employ, this theme contributes significantly to the broader goal of identifying and addressing obstacles to enhance the effectiveness of services for Central American SIFE students at the secondary level.

***RQ3: What are educator's perceptions of preparing Central American SIFE students for College & Career Readiness at the secondary level?***

Educators perceive that they can prepare Central American SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) students for college and career readiness at the secondary level by implementing best practices and strategies based on their positive perspectives toward using pull-out methods and relevant specialized programs and resources in these pull-out situations. The study's results highlight the importance of professional development programs for ENL teachers, focusing on various essential aspects, such as oral language development, second-language acquisition, scaffolded instruction, differentiated assessments, and literacy instruction (Lewis-Morena, 2007; Quick, 1998). These strategies are essential for addressing the unique needs of SIFE students, who may have limited or interrupted formal schooling. The professional

development programs equip teachers with the necessary tools to make instructional decisions that align with the developmental stages of literacy in SIFE students, similar to other learners. The goal is to provide meaningful curriculum and instruction to all learners, especially in the context of a changing and diverse student population (Gill, 2008)

Constructivist theory is highlighted as a guiding principle for teacher decision-making and reflection. Teachers understand students' conceptual backgrounds in a constructivist classroom and structure learning opportunities accordingly. The theory emphasizes that individuals, including SIFE students, construct meaning and understanding through prior knowledge and experiences. Teachers are crucial in challenging students' suppositions, presenting new information, encouraging research, and engaging students in inquiries designed to challenge their current concepts. The constructivist approach allows students to actively seek understanding and knowledge by relating new investigations to their previous understandings (Fuller, 2011; Gagnon & Collay, 2006; Marlowe & Page, 2005).

By incorporating these best practices, strategies, and constructivist principles, educators can create an environment that fosters college and career readiness for Central American SIFE students at the secondary level. The emphasis on literacy development, differentiated instruction, and understanding students' points of view contributes to preparing SIFE students for future academic and career success. Ongoing professional development and the identification of effective programs further enhance educators' ability to meet the specific needs of SIFE students in their journey toward college and career readiness. Data from interviews and Q16, 17, and Q18 show that educators with the support of special programs and resources feel that they can better prepare these students at the secondary level for readiness in areas such as academics, language, socio-emotional issues, career, and college. Examination of the interviews reveals a multifaceted

approach employed by educators, encompassing various programs and resources to equip SIFE students for success in college and career endeavors. A critical element in addressing RQ3 is emphasizing specialized programs tailored to Central American SIFE students' unique needs. The interviews showcase the significance of initiatives like new arrivals programs, designed explicitly to provide targeted support during the transitional phase. Participant 4's emphasis on a dedicated middle school for newcomers, offering a specific timeframe to build foundational skills before integration into mainstream education, exemplifies educators' commitment to mitigating the challenges SIFE students face. This tailored approach signifies a proactive stance to ensure these students receive the necessary support to thrive academically and socially, a fundamental aspect of college and career readiness.

Furthermore, Theme 3 underlines the pivotal role of language development programs in preparing SIFE students for the demands of higher education and future careers. Participant 2 mentions utilizing Imagine Learning, a systematic program focusing on phonics and foundational language skills, which illustrates a strategic initiative to bridge language proficiency gaps. This acknowledgment of varying proficiency levels in the student's native language highlights educators' dedication to addressing specific academic needs crucial for success in both college and careers. The deliberate use of targeted language development tools signifies a commitment to overcoming linguistic barriers, an integral aspect of preparing SIFE students for the challenges beyond secondary education.

The after-school and homework programs illuminated in Theme 3 further contribute to the comprehensive preparation of SIFE students for college and career pathways. Participant 4's discussion of involvement in an ENL group focusing on literacy skills is an example of targeted efforts to enhance language and literacy abilities. This nuanced approach recognizes that college

and career readiness extend beyond the confines of regular classroom hours, emphasizing the need for additional support structures to address specific academic challenges. By acknowledging the importance of extended learning opportunities, educators aim to ensure that SIFE students are well-equipped with the necessary skills for future success. Additionally, the provision of health and community services, as underscored by Participant 4, adds a holistic dimension to the preparation process. Recognizing SIFE students and their families' socio-economic challenges highlights educators' awareness of the broader factors that can impact the educational journey. By addressing health and socio-economic well-being, educators contribute to a holistic understanding of college and career readiness, acknowledging that academic proficiency alone is insufficient for future success.

In conclusion, Theme 3 provides a rich tapestry of evidence that collectively responds to RQ3. The diverse resources and programs highlighted in the interviews showcase educators' intentional efforts to create a comprehensive support system. This approach recognizes the multifaceted nature of college and career readiness, addressing both academic proficiency and linguistic, socio-economic, and emotional dimensions. Through these concerted efforts, educators strive to ensure that Central American SIFE students are well-prepared and supported as they navigate the challenges of higher education and pursue successful careers beyond secondary schooling.

### **Analysis Results**

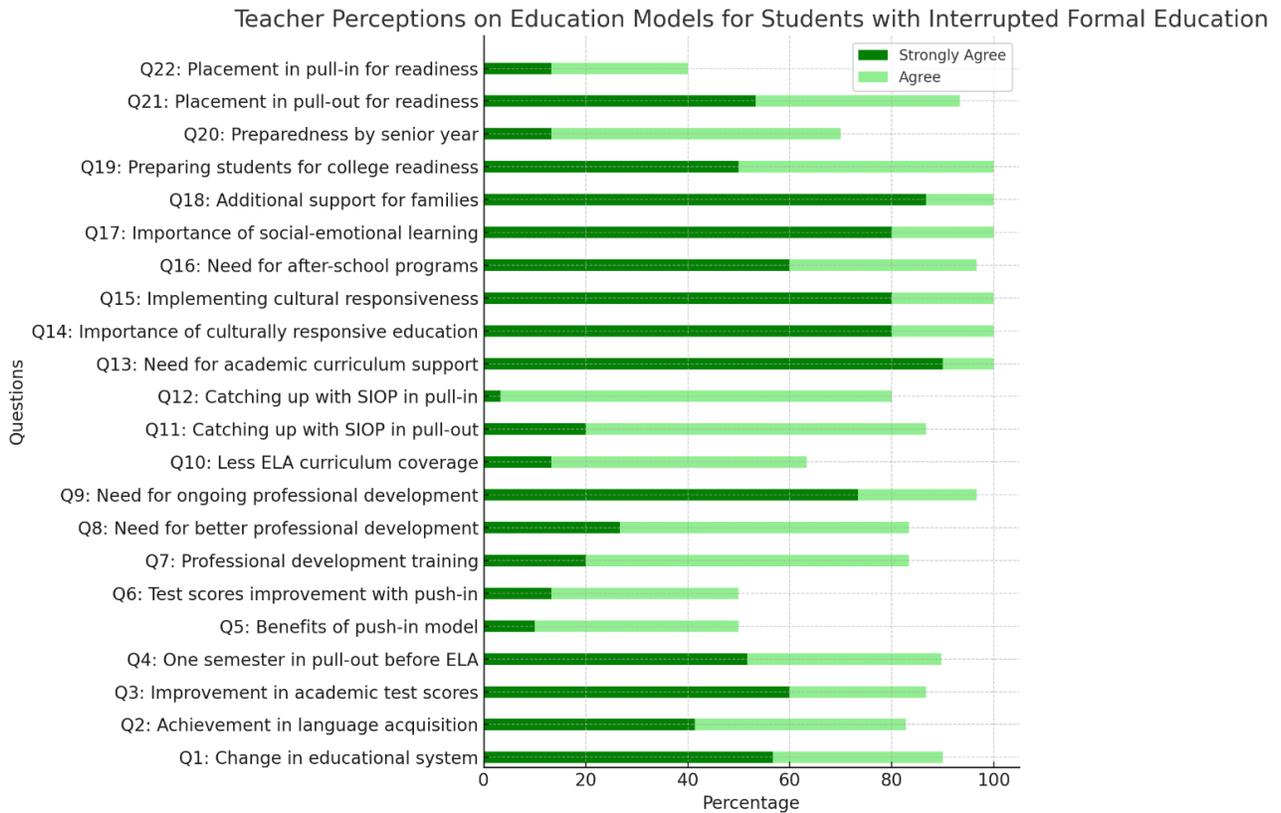
The researcher considered both qualitative and quantitative results, providing a robust understanding of the impact of small pull-out instruction on Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) and the challenges teachers face in serving Central American SIFE students. Qualitatively, the interviews consistently highlighted the teachers' positive perceptions of small

pull-out instruction. Teachers expressed the belief that smaller settings enhance language acquisition and student achievement. The emphasis on culturally responsive teaching was evident, acknowledging the unique needs of SIFE students. The qualitative data revealed specific strategies employed, such as vocabulary development, flexible instruction, and addressing cultural shock, contributing to a positive response to Research Question 1 (RQ1).

Qualitative analysis delved into the challenges teachers face, notably the academic readiness of SIFE students, particularly in reading skills. The interviews provided insights into literacy gaps and socio-emotional challenges, emphasizing the need for specialized reading classes, visual aids, and modified assignments. This theme contributes to a nuanced understanding of the perceived obstacles educators face in addressing the academic needs of Central American SIFE students, aligning with the exploration of challenges in Research Question 2 (RQ2). Qualitative data sheds light on the perceived role of specialized programs and resources in preparing SIFE students for college and career readiness. The interviews highlighted the significance of new arrivals programs, language development tools like Imagine Learning, after-school programs, and community services. This theme directly addresses Research Question 3 (RQ3), providing qualitative evidence of the varied and targeted approaches educators employ to support the holistic development of SIFE students. The quantitative component of the study, represented by the survey administered to English as a New Language (ENL) teachers, complements the qualitative insights. The survey results provide a numerical overview of teacher perceptions, attitudes, and practices related to small pull-out instruction for SIFE students.

Figure 11

*Teachers Perceptions of Small Group Pull-Out Instruction*



The key findings include positive perceptions, such as a significant percentage of teachers expressing positive perceptions of small pull-out instruction. Likert scale responses indicated clarity of pull-out instruction’s effect on SIFE students and its impact on language acquisition, student achievement, and culturally responsive teaching. The challenges included questions about teachers' challenges when serving Central American SIFE students. Quantitative analysis allows for identifying prevalent challenges, providing a numerical ranking that supplements the qualitative narratives. Quantitative data can be used to assess the perceived

effectiveness of specialized programs. Teachers' responses regarding the impact of new arrivals programs, language development tools, and after-school programs contributed to the researcher's quantitative insights.

The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data enriches the overall analysis. For instance, qualitative narratives about the positive impact of pull-out instruction are substantiated by quantitative data indicating a high percentage of teachers endorsing its effectiveness. Challenges identified qualitatively, such as academic readiness, find quantitative validation through survey responses, providing a comprehensive understanding. In conclusion, the data analysis combines the depth and breadth of qualitative insights and quantitative findings, offering a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The researcher's methods enhanced the validity and reliability of the study, providing a nuanced portrayal of the experiences, perceptions, and practices related to small pull-out instruction for Central American SIFE students.

### **Implications**

The study's findings hold relevant implications for educational practices, policies, and future research endeavors. Firstly, the positive perceptions surrounding small pull-out instruction underscore its potential as a valuable strategy for enhancing language acquisition and student achievement among SIFE students. The study suggests that educators should consider implementing or expanding such instructional models, given their potential to provide focused attention, modified curricula, and a conducive environment for language development. Moreover, the emphasis on culturally responsive teaching practices within small pull-out groups highlights the importance of tailoring instruction to the unique needs of SIFE students. Educators are encouraged to incorporate strategies that address cultural shock, vocabulary development,

and flexible teaching methods to create inclusive and supportive learning environments. This underscores the significance of recognizing and accommodating the diverse backgrounds and challenges SIFE students face in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom beyond existing literature that provides an idea of how teaching SIFE's can be addressed innovatively that is inclusive of the challenges that students face. These findings indicate that acknowledging these challenges helps increase academic readiness and adaptability.

Addressing the challenges related to academic readiness, particularly in reading skills, is another crucial implication. The study suggests that targeted interventions, such as specialized reading classes, visual aids, and modified assignments, should be explored to effectively address literacy gaps among SIFE students. This insight is valuable for educators and policymakers seeking to implement evidence-based strategies for improving the academic outcomes of this specific student population. The role of specialized programs and resources, as highlighted in the study, implies the need for comprehensive support systems. Educational institutions should invest in and expand programs like new arrivals programs, language development tools, after-school initiatives, and community services to comprehensively address SIFE students' multifaceted needs. This holistic approach aims to foster not only academic success but also the socio-emotional well-being of students.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of a phased approach in transitioning SIFE students from pull-out instruction to mainstream classes. This suggests that educators should consider gradually integrating students into more extensive classroom settings after an initial period of targeted support. Such a strategy aims to build the confidence of SIFE students and facilitate their adaptation to the new academic environment. Professional development for

educators is also highlighted as a critical implication. This proposed professional development program could include the following components derived from the study’s implications.

Phased Transition Approach:

**Table 3**

Phase 1 Transition Approach

<i>Targeted Support</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Identify SIFE students and provide pull-out instruction or small-group support to address specific academic and language needs.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Offer intensive language instruction, academic remediation, and socio-emotional support to build foundational skills and confidence.</li></ul>

**Table 4**

Phase 2 Transition Approach

<i>Gradual Integration</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Gradually integrate SIFE students into larger classroom settings, starting with selected mainstream classes where they receive additional support.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Collaborate with subject-area teachers to ensure that instruction is differentiated and responsive to the needs of SIFE students.</li></ul>

**Table 5**

Phase 3: Transition Approach:

<i>Full Inclusion</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fully integrate SIFE students into mainstream classes, with ongoing support and monitoring to ensure their continued success.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provide peer support, mentorship, and academic accommodations as needed to facilitate adaptation to the new academic environment.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Professional Development for Educators:</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Understanding Diverse English Language Learners:</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provide training on SIFE students' characteristics, needs, and challenges, including their diverse cultural backgrounds and educational experiences.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Offer workshops, seminars, and online resources to increase educators' awareness and sensitivity to SIFE students' linguistic and academic needs.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Adapting Teaching Strategies:</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Equip educators with effective instructional strategies for supporting SIFE students' language development, academic skills, and socio-emotional well-being.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Guide differentiation, scaffolding, and language modeling techniques to promote student engagement and success.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Creating Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Environments:</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Foster a school culture that values diversity and promotes equity by addressing bias, stereotyping, and discrimination.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Encourage collaboration among educators to share best practices and develop culturally responsive teaching approaches that meet the needs of all students.</li></ul>

The study emphasizes the importance of educators understanding diverse English language learners, particularly those with interrupted education. Professional development programs should be designed to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt teaching strategies, fostering a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment.

Another key implication is advocating for socio-emotional support, especially in light of SIFE students' unique challenges. Schools should prioritize resources and programs that address the emotional well-being of students, acknowledging the distinct challenges associated with their journeys. From a policy perspective, this study suggests that policymakers should consider the importance of specialized programs, language development tools, and after-school initiatives in preparing SIFE students for college and career readiness. Strategic investments in these resources can contribute significantly to the long-term success of SIFE students beyond secondary education.

Despite the insights provided by this study, the researcher is going to do further research to explore the long-term outcomes such as different instructional models and support programs for SIFE students. Understanding the impact on college and career readiness beyond the secondary level can inform more effective educational strategies and policies. The implications drawn from these findings advocate for a holistic, targeted, and collaborative approach to supporting Central American SIFE students. This implies the need for a College and Career Readiness Program for SIFE students to address these concerns. The program may include academic support, socio-emotional support, career exploration and guidance, and parent and community engagement to respond to the determined issues and challenges. These components meet students' needs and might improve their college and academic readiness.

Moreover, this approach encompasses instructional practices, such as differentiated instruction to tailor teaching practices to the diverse instructional needs of students, such as project-based learning (PBL), culturally responsive teaching, collaborative learning, college and career readiness courses, and more. This also includes socio-emotional support and comprehensive programs designed to foster an inclusive and effective educational environment for diverse learners.

### **Future Research**

Firstly, I intend to investigate further the long-term outcomes of SIFE students beyond the secondary level, which may provide valuable insights into their trajectories regarding college enrollment, career readiness, and overall success in post-secondary education. Secondly, I could research a comparative analysis of various instructional models, including small pull-out instruction, mainstreaming, and other interventions, which could offer a nuanced understanding of their relative effectiveness for student outcomes, teacher perceptions, and impact on language acquisition and academic achievement. Thirdly, exploring the impact of targeted professional development for teachers in effectively addressing the needs of SIFE students could be a valuable area of research. Identifying specific skills and strategies that contribute to more culturally responsive and inclusive teaching practices could inform the design of professional development programs. Additionally, investigating the role of parental and community involvement in supporting the educational journey of SIFE students could provide insights into how schools can collaborate with families and communities to offer holistic support.

Moreover, considering the increasing role of technology in education, future research might explore the effectiveness of integrating technology, such as language learning apps or online resources, to support language acquisition among SIFE students. Cross-cultural

comparative studies, comparing the experiences of Central American SIFE students with those from different cultural backgrounds, could shed light on unique challenges and strengths specific to various groups. Understanding the impact of educational policies on the support provided to SIFE students and exploring the effectiveness of socio-emotional support programs within and outside the academic context could be additional areas of interest.

Furthermore, conducting a larger-scale mixed-methods study involving a more extensive participant pool could enhance the generalizability of findings. Collaborating with multiple school districts and regions could capture broader experiences and perspectives. Lastly, a more in-depth exploration of specific language development strategies within ELA classrooms, including the effectiveness of different instructional approaches, language assessment tools, and vocabulary-building techniques, could contribute to refining best practices. Through these diverse research endeavors, the field can work towards improving educational practices and policies to effectively support Central American SIFE students, fostering their short- and long-term success.

Future research in this domain should consider long-term outcomes beyond the secondary level, cultural groups beyond Central American students - such as Palestinian and Haitian-Creole students, the psychological conditions impacting these students, comparative analyses of instructional models, professional development's impact on these students, and technology's role in supporting language development. Exploring cross-cultural perspectives, educational policies' influences, and socio-emotional support programs' effectiveness would further contribute to the evolving body of knowledge. A larger-scale, multi-district study and a deeper examination of specific language development strategies within ELA classrooms could further refine best practices for educators.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the findings of this study shed light on the perceived complexities surrounding the educational experiences of Central American Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) in English Language Arts (ELA) at the secondary level. The exploration of themes related to small pull-out instruction, academic challenges, specialized programs, and resources has provided valuable insights into effective strategies educators employ to address the unique needs of SIFE students. The perceived positive impact of small group pull-out instruction, the perceived challenges associated with academic readiness, and the perceived role of specialized programs collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted support required for these students.

Implications drawn from the findings underscore the importance of recognizing the individualized needs of SIFE students and tailoring instructional approaches to address academic and socio-emotional challenges. The role of specialized programs, language development tools, and comprehensive support systems seemed apparent to the participants when preparing SIFE students for College & Career Readiness. Additionally, the researcher emphasizes the potential significance of ongoing professional development for teachers, collaborative efforts with parents and communities, and the potential integration of technology to enhance language acquisition among SIFE students. In essence, this study serves as a steppingstone for continued efforts to enhance Central American SIFE students' educational experiences and outcomes. By addressing the perceived challenges and building on the perceived strengths, educators, policymakers, and researchers can collaboratively contribute to more inclusive, culturally responsive, and effective educational practices for SIFE students at the secondary level and beyond.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT RECRUITING EMAIL

**Study Title:** Teacher's Perceptions of the Effects of Small Pull-Out Instruction in English Language Arts on Students with Interrupted Formal Education from Central American Countries at the Secondary School Level

Dear Voluntary Participants,

My name is Barbara Jean. I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. program at Long Island University, NY. I am seeking volunteers to complete a survey on the perceptions of English as a New Language (ENL) teachers on Students with Interrupted Formal Education. I am recruiting a minimum of 30 voluntary participants who meet the following criteria as part of the requirements for my doctoral

program at Long Island University. Any assistance you can provide me in disseminating the email below would be greatly appreciated. I am specifically seeking the following:

- Does not work in the East Ramapo School district.
- Have three or more years of teaching experience with Central American Students with Interrupted Formal Education at the secondary level.
- Have obtained New York State certification and hold a master's degree.
- Work in a New York State public school full-time only.
- Do not have a history of being a Student with Interrupted Formal Education.

**If you do not meet the criteria, please do not continue.** If you qualify and want to participate, please click the link below as consent to complete the 10 minute survey. Thank you for your time and consideration.

### [Survey Questions](#)

Sincerely,

Barbara Jean

### **Appendix B – Survey Questions**

**Directions: Please complete the survey by clicking your response and selecting “submit” when finished. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.**

1. I feel the **pull-out** model will positively change the educational system for students with interrupted formal education.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

2. I think students with interrupted education would show achievement with language acquisition through the **pull-out** model during English language arts (ELA).

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

3. I think students with interrupted education will improve their academic test scores if they have small group **pull-out** model support during English language arts (ELA).

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

4. I feel like students with interrupted education should have a benchmark of one semester working in a small **pull-out** model setting before entering the English language arts classroom.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

5. I feel the **push-in** model benefits students with interrupted education during English language arts (ELA).

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

6. I feel students with interrupted education will improve their academic test scores if they have small **push-in model** support during English language arts (ELA).

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

7. I feel that I have the **professional development** training needed to implement strategies in the general education co-teaching classroom for students with interrupted education.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

8. I feel that I need better **professional development** to support students with interrupted education in the ELA co-teaching classroom.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

9. I feel that teachers need ongoing **professional development** to provide services for Central American Students with Interrupted formal education, including resources and updated programs.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

10. I feel that less of the ELA **curriculum** is being covered due to having students with interrupted education in the classroom.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

11. I think students with interrupted formal education will academically catch up to their peers when instructed with the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) language and content **curriculum** during pull-out instruction.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

12. I think students with interrupted formal education will academically catch up to their peers when instructed with the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) language and content **curriculum** during pull-in instruction.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

13. I think the vast population of secondary Central American students with interrupted education in my district needs academic **curriculum** support in reading and writing.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

14. I feel that **culturally responsive** education is very important.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

15. I think I should implement **cultural responsiveness** teaching during instruction.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

16. I feel Central American students with interrupted education need after-school programs to support their **social and emotional learning**.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

17. I feel that **social-emotional learning** is important to incorporate in the classroom.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

18. I think that the families of Central American students with interrupted formal education need additional support with their child's education to prepare for **college and career readiness**.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

19. I think educators can prepare Central American students with interrupted education for **college and career readiness** at the secondary level by using effective teaching strategies that focus on building academic and language skills, providing access to resources and support, and fostering a culture of high expectations and college readiness.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

20. I think students with interrupted form secondary education (middle school) will be prepared for **college and career readiness** by their senior year.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

21. I feel students with interrupted formal secondary education (high school) should be placed in the pull-out model to prepare for **college and career readiness**.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

22. I feel students with interrupted formal secondary education (high school) should be placed in the pull-in model to prepare for **college and career readiness**.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

Thank you for completing this survey. If you are interested in participating in a follow-up interview via Zoom, you may email [barbara.jean@my.liu.edu](mailto:barbara.jean@my.liu.edu) indicating your interest. Please note the first five participants who indicate an interest will be interviewed.

### **Appendix C- Interview Questions**

1. During an ELA co-teaching general education class, what are your perceptions of the benefits of pull-out instruction?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Based on your perceptions, what risk factors are the most difficult when teaching Central American Students with Interrupted Formal Education?

3. What tools or resources does your district provide to support Students with Interrupted Education?

Appendix -D IRB Research Participant Informed Consent Form

**LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)**

**RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

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**Study Title:** Teachers' Perceptions of the Effects of Small Pull-Out Instruction in English Language Arts on Students with Interrupted Formal Education from Central American Countries at the Secondary School Level

**Faculty Investigator:** Dr. Louisa Vida, Professor, Educational leadership and Interdisciplinary Ed.D, LIU Post Campus, [Louisa.Vida@liu.edu](mailto:Louisa.Vida@liu.edu)

**Student Investigator:** Barbara Jean, Educational leadership and Interdisciplinary Ed.D, LIU Post Campus, [Barbara.jean@my.liu.edu](mailto:Barbara.jean@my.liu.edu), 845-770-4547

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You are being asked to join a research study. Participation in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to join now, you can change your mind later.

### 1. **Research Summary:**

This phenomenology research investigates teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on the academic performance of Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE).

Specifically, the study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of the impact of small group instruction on Students with Interrupted Formal Education's reading comprehension and writing skills in English, as well as their confidence in using the language. The study seeks to address the challenges Students with Interrupted Formal Education face, who often need help to catch up on academic content knowledge and develop English language proficiency quickly, especially at the secondary level.

### 2. **Why is this research being done?**

The research is being done to explore the perceptions of voluntary participants with three or more years of teaching experience with Students with Interrupted Education at the secondary level.

The study also explores teachers' perceptions of small group instruction that can address the unique needs of Students with Interrupted Formal Education, who often come from diverse backgrounds and have limited exposure to Western-style education. Additionally, the study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on the education of English Language Learners (ELLs) and provide insights for teachers and educators who work with this subpopulation of students.

The teachers being surveyed are masters-level professionals and have received certification as teachers of students who speak English as a second language.

Therefore, there is an assumption that they are capable of sharing their perspective on this important topic of inquiry.

### 3. **What will happen if you join this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

**Step 1** - The recruitment email will be sent to you with the link to the survey.

**Step 2** - Before you complete the online survey, you must read the consent form and by continuing to the survey, you consent to participate in the survey aspect of the study.

**Step 3** - The researcher will interview the first five people who are interested in continuing with the study. If they contact me stating they are interested in being interviewed, they will be presented with a second consent form that will need to be signed.

The potential participants will be identified only as “participants 1-5” during the interview. Before the participant begins, he/she will be directed to display "participant 1, participant 2, etc" during the Zoom session. If the participant would like, they can turn off their camera.

Your willingness to voluntarily participate is greatly appreciated and may benefit school districts and add to the research literature.

#### **Photographs/Video recordings:**

As part of this research, I am requesting your permission to create and use a virtual Zoom or audio recording (e.g., photographs, video recordings, audio recordings). Any Zoom audio or video will not be used for advertising or non-study-related purposes.

You should know that:

- You may request that the video and audio recording be stopped at any time.
- If you agree to allow the video and audio recording and then change your mind, you may ask me to destroy that imaging/recording. If the imaging/recording has had all identifiers removed, I may not be able to do this.
- I will only use these recordings for the purposes of this research.

- The audio recording will be transcribed by Nvivo software, which will keep all data confidential.

Please indicate your decision below by checking the appropriate statement:

\_\_\_\_\_ **I agree** to allow the study to make and use photographs/video recordings/audio recordings of me (or the participant I represent) for the purpose of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ **I do not agree** to allow the study team to make and use photographs/video recordings/audio recordings of me (or the participant I represent) for the purpose of this study.

---

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature  
(or Legally Authorized Representative Signature, if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

#### 4. **What are the risks or discomforts of the study?**

- The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life [or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests].
- You may get tired or bored when I am asking you questions or you are completing questionnaire. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer.
- Although your IP Address will not be stored in the survey results, tampering from an outside source is always possible when using the Internet to collect information. While the confidentiality of your responses will be protected once the data is downloaded from the Internet, there is always the possibility

of hacking or other security breaches that could threaten the confidentiality of your responses.

- There is the risk that your information may become known to people outside this study.
- Even if identifiers are removed, the information will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

5. **Are there benefits to being in the study?**

This study may benefit society if the results lead to a better understanding of the effects of small pull-out instruction in English Language Arts on Students with Interrupted Formal Education from Central American countries at the secondary school level.

6. **What are your options if you do not want to be in the study?**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You choose whether to participate.

If you decide not to participate, there are no penalties, and you will not lose any benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.

7. **Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**

No, it will not cost you anything.

8. **Will you be paid if you join this study?**

No, you will not be paid if you join this study.

9. **Can you leave the study early?**

- You can agree to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty or loss of benefits.

- If you wish to stop, please tell me right away.

#### 10. **Why might we take you out of the study early?**

You may be taken out of the study if:

- You fail to follow instructions.
- The study is canceled.
- There may be other reasons to take you out of the study that I do not know at this time.

If you are taken out of the study early, LIU may use or give out the information that it has already collected if the information is needed for this study or any follow-up activities.

#### 11. **How will the confidentiality of your data be protected?**

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of the Long Island University Institutional Review Board and officials from government agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the Office for Human Research Protections. (All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential.) Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Initial interactions will be via email, where participants will agree or disagree to participate per the information listed on the form.

Upon approval, the participants will receive an online survey (Likert scale) to provide their responses. There will be explicit directions for the voluntary participants to answer the questions. In addition, the voluntary participants will have one week to complete the survey.

Then, the researcher will schedule a virtual Zoom interview that is convenient for the five voluntary participants. Before the participant begins, he/she will be directed to display the

word “participant” and their assigned number (1-5) during the Zoom session. If the participant would like, they can turn off their camera.

The interaction with the voluntary participant will be via Zoom (an online platform), where three focus questions will be asked and answered by the voluntary participant. The interview will require one hour of uninterrupted time via the virtual Zoom platform.

Furthermore, privacy will be maintained because the answers will only be recorded by the researcher and transcribed by the NVivo software. The data will be kept for a minimum of three years after the study's completion and then destroyed as per federal guidelines.

12. **What is a Certificate of Confidentiality?**

Your study information is protected by a Certificate of Confidentiality. This certificate allows me, in some cases, to refuse to give out your information even if requested to do so using legal means.

13. **What does a conflict of interest mean to you as a participant in this study?**

If you have any questions about this financial interest, please contact the Office of Sponsored Projects at 718-488-1413 for more information. The Office of Sponsored Projects reviews the financial interests of researchers and/or LIU.

14. **What other things should you know about this research study?**

**What is the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and how does it protect you?**

This study has been reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), a group of people that reviews human research studies. The IRB can help you if you have questions about your rights as a research participant or if you have other questions, concerns, or complaints about this research study. You may contact the IRB at [osp@liu.edu](mailto:osp@liu.edu).

**What should you do if you have questions about the study?**

Call the principal investigator, Barbara Jean, at 845-770-4547 or barbara.jean@my.liu.edu. If you wish, you may contact the principal investigator by letter. The address is on page one of this consent form. You can also contact the department chair, Dr. Tonie McDonald, at Tonie.McDonald@liu.edu. If you cannot reach the principal investigator or wish to talk to someone else, contact the IRB office at osp@liu.edu.

You can ask questions about this research study now or at any time during the study by talking to the researcher(s) working with you or by contacting Barbara Jean, doctoral student at 845-770-4547.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or feel that you have not been treated fairly, please call the Institutional Review Board at Long Island University at osp@liu.edu.

**15. What does your signature on this consent form mean?**

Your signature on this form means that you understand the information given to you in this form, you accept the provisions in the form, and you agree to join the study. You will not give up any legal rights by signing this consent form.

**WE WILL GIVE YOU A COPY OF THIS SIGNED AND DATED  
CONSENT FORM**

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Signature of Participant (Print Name) Date/Time

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Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (Print Name) Date/Time

**NOTE: A COPY OF THE SIGNED, DATED CONSENT FORM MUST BE KEPT BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR; A COPY MUST BE GIVEN TO THE PARTICIPANT.**

16. **What does your agreement on this consent form mean?**

By clicking the “Agree to Participate” box below, you are indicating that you have fully read the above text and have had the opportunity to print the consent form and ask questions about the purposes and procedures of this study. If you choose not to participate, please click the “Decline to Participate” button below or simply close your browser.

- I agree to participate
- I decline to participate

\_\_\_\_\_ Date