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Supporting English language learners: New Zealand secondary mainstream teachers' knowledge and use of recommended teaching resources and strategies

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Mainstream teachers in New Zealand secondary schools are expected to be able to support learners from linguistically diverse backgrounds, providing both content instruction and language support that enables them to access curriculum content. The New Zealand Ministry of Education has produced resources designed to enable mainstream teachers to bring a language focus to their teaching in order to provide support for their English language learners (ELLs). This study investigated mainstream teachers' knowledge of second language acquisition and their knowledge and use of teaching resources and strategies for supporting ELLs in the mainstream. The eighteen teachers who participated in the study felt that they needed to know more about second language acquisition. They were also not fully aware of, and were not using, the range of resources and strategies available. These findings have implications for the professional development of New Zealand secondary mainstream teachers, and for the education of ELLs.

Keywords: ELLs, mainstream, resources, strategies.

Introduction

There are now significant numbers of English language learners (ELLs) in New Zealand schools, from many different countries and language backgrounds. Although it is difficult to obtain an accurate total number of ELLs, recent figures show that almost 25% of learners in New Zealand secondary schools are probably learning English as an additional language – a figure derived from combining the total numbers of Pasifika, Asian, MELAA (Middle East, Latin America and Africa), "Other" and International students in years 9-15 (Education Counts, 2012).

As well as making up a significant proportion of enrolled students, the Ministry of Education (MOE, and referred to as the Ministry in the text) also acknowledges that ELLs are "over-represented in the group of students who are not achieving at expected levels" (MOE, 2011a: Rationale for the key outcome). Also of concern is the fact that New Zealand has the largest gap in achievement among OECD countries between ELLs and their peers (MOE, 2011b, p. 22), making it "crucial" that ELLs are provided with language learning support that they need if they are to access curriculum content at year-appropriate levels. (MOE, 2011a).

The current study

The research reported in this paper is part of a wider investigation into the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of mainstream teachers in New Zealand secondary schools regarding the teaching and support of English language learners,

a topic which has not been widely investigated to date in the New Zealand context. In the current study, which is of an exploratory nature, eighteen secondary mainstream teachers were asked to report on their knowledge of the ELLs in their mainstream classes, their knowledge of second language acquisition, their knowledge and use of resources and strategies for working with ELLs, and their planning for teaching ELLs. Results relating to teacher knowledge of learners, their educational and cultural backgrounds and level of English, as well as their perceived importance of that knowledge, are reported elsewhere (Edwards, 2012). Findings so far point to varying degrees of teacher knowledge about their ELLs and their level of English proficiency, with the majority of participants reporting that time was the main factor preventing them from obtaining this knowledge. A positive finding was that teachers generally perceived that knowledge of these areas was important, and three-quarters of participants stated that they would like to know more about their ELLs. This paper reports on further aspects of the study.

Background to the research

The role of mainstream teachers in the education of ELLs

There has been a trend in recent years in English-speaking countries world-wide towards supporting ELLs in mainstream classes rather than in withdrawal classes, and New Zealand has followed this trend. Reasons for this include the perception that the mainstream classroom can provide better access to the regular curriculum, better integration with native English speakers, and an authentic context for learning academic English (Wang, Many & Krumenaker, 2008). In the U.S., "inclusionary practices rather than separate programs" are encouraged (de Jong and Harper, 2005, p. 101). Similarly, in the U.K., South (2012) reports that EAL teaching and learning in U.K. schools happens as part of the mainstream curriculum. This implies that mainstream teachers are largely or wholly responsible for the learning of ELLs. However, mainstream teachers are likely to have little or no training in modifying instruction to accommodate ELLs, and there may be minimal support from a language specialist for either the learners or the teachers (Baker, 2011).

In New Zealand, many schools prefer to adopt "a middle position, which is not in favour of simply mainstreaming EAL students" (Haworth, 2009, p. 2181). English Language Learner support may be provided in the mainstream classroom or in a withdrawal situation, by either ESOL-specialist teachers or non-specialist teacher aides. Targeted support for ELLs is usually dependent on whether they fall below a benchmark level of proficiency and are eligible for government-provided "ESOL funding" (MOE, 2012a). However, withdrawal-type support may only amount to a few hours a week for each student, and most ELLs spend the majority of their time in the mainstream classroom (Haworth, p. 2181), where they are likely to have limited understanding of classroom instruction (Baker, 2011).

Key documents in the New Zealand education system outline expectations of mainstream teachers in regard to ELLs. The Graduating Teacher Standards require graduate teachers to have "content and pedagogical content knowledge" for supporting ELLs to succeed in the curriculum (New Zealand Teachers' Council, 2007). The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) states that all students will need specific

help from teachers to learn the specialist vocabulary and texts associated with their subject area, and that new learners of English need explicit and extensive teaching of English vocabulary, word forms, sentence and text structures, and language uses. (MOE, 2007a, p. 16). The Ministry requires that ELL progress in the curriculum areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics is reported against the New Zealand National Standards, with the use of the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP, MOE, 2008a) optional for ELLs who are yet to meet the National Standards (MOE, 2013). Mainstream teachers also need to report ELL proficiency twice a year to determine eligibility for ESOL funding. There have been a number of workshops for teachers focussing on the MOE resources for supporting ELLs (e.g. Luxton, 2009), but school leaders are also responsible for ensuring that their staff are able to adequately support their ELLs, with the assistance of online professional learning materials (e.g. MOE, 2011a).

Teacher knowledge and skills for supporting ELLs

The field of research that has most immediate relevance to this investigation is teacher cognition. Borg (2006, p. 1) defines the field as being broadly concerned with "the way in which teachers' beliefs and knowledge influence what teachers do in the classroom" (Borg, 2006, p. 40). Shulman (1987), a very influential contributor to related research, has proposed seven categories of teacher knowledge and the two categories that are most relevant to the research reported here are "Knowledge of Learners and their characteristics" (KL), and "Pedagogical Content Knowledge" (PCK).

Knowledge of Learners is defined as "knowledge of student characteristics and cognitions, as well as knowledge of motivational and developmental aspects of how students learn" (Borg, 2006, p. 37). In regard to ELLs, this implies teacher knowledge of how languages are learned and expected language learning progress. Teacher knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA) has been acknowledged as being fundamental to understanding how best to support ELL learning. Lucas, Villegas and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008, p. 362) assert that teachers with ELLs in their class are best equipped to teach them if they have knowledge of some key principles of SLA, and they propose six essential understandings about SLA. In the New Zealand context, the ELLP, a document written for both ESOL specialists and mainstream teachers, states: "Informed teachers, who understand how additional languages are learned, are more effective" (MOE, 2008, p.6). Samson and Collins (2012) maintain that teachers need to be aware of the similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition, including common patterns and milestones of each.

However, acquiring knowledge of second language acquisition may not be valued by mainstream teachers. Two decades ago, Constantino (1994) found that teachers were unconcerned that they did not have an understanding of second language learning, maintaining that their role was to teach the content of their subject, not language. A decade later, Harper and de Jong (2004, p. 156) reported that most secondary-level teachers do not think of themselves as language teachers, meaning that "English is invisible". They also commented that mainstream teachers are often unaware of the complex learner variables in second language acquisition, including personal, attitudinal, affective and sociocultural factors.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) was defined by Shulman (1987) as "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers" (p. 8), which gives a teacher "the capacity….to transform the essential content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students" (p. 15). Shulman proposed a model of pedagogical reasoning in which PCK includes understanding of the subject area, possession of a repertoire of teaching strategies, the ability to select appropriate strategies, taking into consideration student characteristics, and the ability to evaluate and reflect on student learning and one's own performance.

The concept of PCK applied to teaching ELLs in mainstream classrooms implies that teachers' content knowledge needs to include not just their subject area, but also aspects of the language used to convey the subject content. Recently, the term "pedagogical language knowledge" has been used to describe " a knowledge of language directly related to disciplinary teaching and learning" (Bunch, 2013, p. 307). This concept draws on the well-established notion of "academic language", which is considered a key area of teacher knowledge for supporting ELLs (e.g. Samson and Collins, 2012; Scheppegrell and O'Halloran, 2011; Gibbons, 2010; Lucas et al, 2008). A distinction is made between "basic interpersonal communicative skills" and "cognitive academic language proficiency", also called "conversational fluency" and "academic language proficiency" (Cummins, Mirza & Stille, 2012), based on research showing that it usually takes ELLs one to two years to become conversationally fluent, but at least five years to match native English speakers' academic language. The use of the terms "social language" and "academic language" are in wide use internationally, and are used in current resources for teachers in New Zealand, including the ELLP (MOE, 2008a).

Knowledge of academic language in their subject area is thus considered essential for mainstream teachers if they are to anticipate language-related difficulties for ELLs and plan effectively for their learning. Lucas et al (2008) assert that teachers in training should be shown how to carry out a linguistic analysis of a text to identify key vocabulary and other aspects of language likely to be problematic for learners. Of six key principles suggested by the Ministry for teaching ELLs, the first is: "Identify the learning outcomes including the language demands of the teaching and learning" (MOE, n.d.a). The Ministry recommends that teachers use the ELLP to "analyse the complexity of oral and written texts" (MOE, 2008a, p. 2) and that teachers need to consider text features which may be difficult for ELLs, such as idioms and colloquial language (MOE, 2008b, p. 14). However, these may not be realistic expectations, given that "the language demands of content instruction are often invisible to mainstream teachers" (de Jong & Harper, 2004, p. 156).

PCK also implies teacher knowledge of resources that have been developed to assist them to support ELLs. The Ministry has developed a number of resources for this purpose (MOE, 2012b). A key resource is the ELLP (MOE, 2008a), which describes expected English language learning progress, and includes suggestions for teaching ELLs. Another key resource is the ESOL Online web site, "a site for teachers to respond to the needs of their English language learners" (MOE, n.d.b). The Ministry

has also produced DVDs demonstrating principles and techniques for supporting ELLs at secondary level, in English, Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Science. (MOE, 2007b, 2008c). Further resources are the ESOL Assessment Funding Guidelines (MOE, 2004), and the English Language Intensive Programme, which "provides resources and clear guidance on language teaching points for learners" (MOE, 2003, p.14).

Teaching strategies for ELLs in mainstream classrooms are largely focused on the issue of "how to adapt instruction to make the content of the school curriculum accessible" (Lucas et al, 2008, p. 366). Two adaptions that are commonly emphasised for ELL learning and teaching are "scaffolding" and "differentiated instruction". Gibbons (2002) points out that scaffolding for ELLs is not just "helping" learners, nor is it about simplifying tasks for these learners (Gibbons, 2010), but about providing support that will enable them to carry out the same academic tasks as their native-English-speaking peers. This means creating a "high-challenge, high support" learning environment. (Gibbons, 2010, p. 16). Gibbons (2010) distinguishes between "designed" or "macro" scaffolding, which is preplanned support, and, "interactional" or "micro" scaffolding, which occurs spontaneously in the classroom context. Although appropriate scaffolding for ELLs may present a challenge for mainstream teachers, it "can also be at the same time a catalyst for the kind of language-focussed curriculum that will be of benefit for all children" (Gibbons, 2002, p.11). Scaffolding is considered to be a key teaching strategy for New Zealand teachers, with the ELLP document stating that "Learning should be carefully scaffolded", and "Scaffolding the learning is vital" (MOE, 2008a, p.9).

When learning is differentiated for ELLs, the core content remains the same, and students' access to it is differentiated in a variety of ways, such as the use of texts at multiple levels, activities at different levels of difficulty, and differing amounts of teacher and peer support (Wang et al, 2008; Gregory & Burkman, 2012). In the New Zealand context this strategy is encouraged, being listed as the second of six key principles for supporting ELLs: "Maintain and make explicit the same learning outcomes for all the learners using different levels of support to reach the same goals" (MOE, n.d.a).

Methodology

The investigation involved a survey methodology and an online questionnaire, which was piloted, to gather data for the study.

The questionnaire was designed to gather information from a sample of New Zealand secondary school teachers about four areas of their knowedge concerning the teaching and learning of ELLs:

1. Teacher knowledge of second language acquisition
2. Teacher knowledge and use of resources for teaching ELLs
3. Teacher knowledge and use of strategies for teaching ELLs
4. Teacher knowledge of planning for ELL learning

The questionnaire included closed and open-ended items. The closed questions asked teachers to select knowledge, resources or strategies that they were aware of,

or that they had used, from options provided. The open-ended questions elicited whether teachers had other knowledge, or had used other resources or strategies than those listed. Questions regarding strategies and planning were formulated from an analysis of the ELLP document (MOE, 2008a, 2008b), which identifies teacher actions in these areas. The participants were informed that they did not need to respond to all items, and as some teachers chose this option, the information obtained was less than it could have been.

Participants and sampling

Secondary mainstream teachers of English, Science, Mathematics or Social Science were invited to participate in the research. These subject areas were chosen because the Ministry has produced resources specifically for mainstream teachers in these areas who are working with ELLs (MOE, 2007b, 2008c), and it was hoped that teachers in these curriculum areas might be aware of these or had used them.

Of the 18 participants, ten were English teachers, two were Social Science, three were Mathematics and four were Science. Two teachers reported teaching more than one subject, and two teachers did not supply this information. The participants had between 18 months and 35 years of teaching experience, with seven having 20 or more years. Seventeen held a Bachelor's degree and/or a Graduate Diploma in Teaching, and one a Master's degree. Five participants had completed all or part of an English language teaching (ELT) qualification. Eight participants reported that they had completed some professional development for teaching ELLs, although for all except one, who had completed an in-service course, this was obtained as part of their teaching degree or ELT qualification.

The link to the online questionnaire was initially distributed to all secondary school principals in the moderately large city where the researcher is located, as well as to schools within a 20km radius of the city, and the principals were asked to forward the link to their staff. It is not known whether this was done, but this approach produced very few responses, so convenience sampling was adopted, with the researcher asking mainstream teachers who were acquaintances or graduates of the TESOL programme on which the researcher teaches, to encourage their secondary mainstream colleagues to complete the questionnaire. However, even after this approach, only 18 teachers chose to respond to the survey. This is a key limitation of the study, and means that the results cannot be generalised. A further limitation of the study is that teachers may not have accurately reported their responses to the survey questions. In addition, the closed questions, with a range of options to choose from, may have encouraged participants to over-report their knowledge and use of survey items.

Findings

1) Teacher knowledge of second language acquisition

All 18 participants answered the two questions in this section of the survey, which are shown in Tables 1 and 2. As shown in Table 1, only a third of the teachers

reported that they were aware of significant factors in second language acquisition, while the remainder reported some or no knowledge. As indicated in Table 2, only a small number (3) appeared confident about their knowledge of second language acquisition.

Table 1: Teacher knowledge of second language acquisition

Are you aware of significant factors involved in second language acquisition?	**Yes**	**Some**	**No**
n = 18	6 (33%)	7 (39%)	5 (28%)

Table 2: Adequacy of teacher knowledge of second language acquisition

Do you feel you know enough about second language acquisition?	**Yes**	**Unsure**	**No**
n = 18	3 (17%)	7 (39%)	8 (44%)

2) Teacher knowledge and use of resources for teaching ELLs

Table 3 shows teachers' awareness of selected resources for supporting ELLs and their actual use of these resources. Only ten of the 18 participants responded to the "awareness" question, and only eight responded to the "use" question.

Table 3: Teacher awareness and use of resources for teaching ELLs

Which of the following resources, published by the Ministry of Education, are you aware of? **Which of these resources have you used?**	**I am aware of this resource** (n=10)	**I have used this resource** (n=8)
The ESOL Online web site	10 (100%)	5 (62.5%)
The English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP)	5 (50%)	4 (50%)
DVD: Making Language and Learning Work 1: Integrating language and learning in secondary Maths and Science	5 (50%)	2 (25%)
DVD: Making Language and Learning Work 2: Integrating language and learning in secondary English and Social Sciences	5 (50%)	4 (50%)
The ESOL Assessment Funding Form	3 (30%)	1 (12.5%)
The English Language Intensive Programme	2 (20%)	2 (25%)
The ESOL Funding Guidelines	2 (20%)	1 (12.5%)

When asked if they were aware of any other resources, 11 teachers responded, giving one specific Reading resource, and seven general resources, such as "*Macmillan resources"* and

"*some British web sites"*. When asked if they had used any other resources for teaching ELLs, "graded readers" was the only one listed. Thirteen of 18 who responded (72.2%) indicated that they would like to learn more about different resources for teaching ELLs, although four (22.2%) were unsure if they would like to learn more, and one teacher stated that they did not want to learn more.

Teachers were also asked if there was anything that had prevented them finding out about resources available for teaching ELLs. Of the 15 who responded to this question, nine (60%) listed "*time*" or "*time constraints"*. Three teachers (30%) stated that a lack of knowledge and guidance about where to access information was a preventing factor, but three teachers commented that "*nothing*" had prevented them from finding out more about resources.

Teacher knowledge and use of strategies for teaching ELLs

Strategies for supporting oral language skills

This section presented teachers with eight strategies, taken from the ELLP document (MOE, 2008b, p.8). Seventeen teachers responded to this question, with results indicating (Table 4) that three strategies were used by over half of the respondents, but the remaining five strategies were used by less than a half.

Table 4: Teachers' use of strategies for supporting oral language skills

Which of the following strategies have you used in your classroom to support ELLs when teaching oral language?	**Total (n=17)**
Shared reading and writing	11 (64.7%)
Help learners to make links between their oral and written language	9 (52.9%)
Guided reading and writing	7 (41.2%)
Provide a range of models of oral language	6 (35.3%)
Provide opportunities for ELLs to use their first language	5 (29.4%)
Use of manipulative materials e.g. magnetic letters, picture cards, board games	5 (29.4%)
Experience-based learning	5 (29.4%)
Use of audio materials and digital media	4 (23.5%)

Strategies for supporting reading skills

Thirteen teachers responded to this question. Table 5, shows that of the strategies for teaching reading skills (MOE, 2008b, pp. 14-15), all except two were used by more than half of the respondents.

Table 5: Teachers' use of strategies for supporting reading skills

Which of the following strategies have you used in your classroom to support ELLs when teaching reading skills?	**Total (n=13)**
Provide access to dictionaries in the learners' first languages	12 (92.3%)
Draw attention to text features in a deliberate and explicit way	11 (84.6%)
Explicit teaching of vocabulary	10 (76.9%)
Explicit teaching of language	9 (69.2%)
Use of pre-reading activities to help activate learners' prior knowledge and vocabulary	8 (61.5%)
Provide supplementary visuals for reading texts	6 (46.2%)
Provide ELLs with texts in English on culturally familiar topics	3 (23.1%)

Strategies for supporting writing skills

Seven strategies for supporting ELL writing were listed (MOE, 2008b, p. 51). As shown in Table 6, almost all of the 15 respondents reported using the strategy of helping learners to remember what they already know. Over half of respondents had also used the remaining strategies, except for encouraging learners to write in their own language.

Table 6: Teachers' use of strategies for supporting writing skills

Which of the following strategies have you used in your classroom to support ELLs when teaching writing skills?	**Total (n=15)**
Help learners to remember what they already know about the topic	13 (86.6%)
Ensure that learners understand the purpose for their writing and who their audience will be	10 (66.6%)
Ensure that learners are familiar with the text features of the kind of text they are writing	10 (66.6%)
Ensure that learners have time to plan their writing	8 (53.3%)
Help learners to acquire a bank of general vocabulary and vocabulary for curriculum contexts	7 (46.6%)
Provide opportunities to write in English about culturally familiar topics	7 (46.6%)
Encourage learners to write in their first language	2 (13.3%)

When asked to list any other teaching strategies which they had used with ELLs which they thought had been useful, seven teachers responded, with nine strategies listed. These included: *"Visual aids to help students understand the readings"; "Vocab*

flashcards in Maths"; "Reciprocal reading"; "Pair/share"; "Get help from fellow students who can speak their first language"; "Grouping students with like-minded kiwi kids"; "using models to demonstrate the difference between atoms, compounds and mixtures"; "Use mini whiteboard to draw diagrams"; "Give then more than one method of understanding e.g. verbal and written instructions."

Teachers were also asked if they thought they knew enough teaching strategies for working with ELLs. Of the 17 teachers who responded, 10 (59%) reported that they did not think they knew enough, although 7 (41%) considered that they did know enough.

When asked in an open-ended question about where they would go if they wanted to find out more about strategies for teaching ELLs, 11 of the 16 respondents (68.7%) indicated that they would go to an ESOL teacher or the ESOL department. The ESOL Online web site was suggested by four teachers (25%), and the following were suggested by one teacher each: "*Talk to the ELLs' teachers*"; "*PD courses*"; "*Advisor*"; "*Read current research*"; "*Exploring opportunity to enrol in Dip TESOL programme*".

In response to a question asking if anything had prevented them from learning more about teaching strategies for ELLs, 10 of the 14 respondents (78.5%) stated "*time*", "*lack of time*", or "*time factor*". While three (21.4%) responded that "*nothing*" had prevented them from learning more, other comments were: "*Lack of urgency – they are getting by in mainstream classes okay*"; "*Lack of direction*"; "*Time for preparation, the enormous amount of testing and paper work and the large size of classes are the biggest barriers to effective teaching and learning*".

4) Teacher knowledge of planning for ELL learning

Five options were presented to teachers, derived from suggestions provided in the ELLP (MOE, 2008a, 2008b). All 14 respondents indicated that they had previously planned to pair or group students in a way that might benefit ELLs (Table 7). However, very few teachers reported planning to differentiate instruction or analysing the language of classroom texts.

Table 7: Planning for ELL learning

Have you done any of the following as part of your lesson planning?	Total (n=14)
Plan to pair or group students in a way that might benefit ELLs	14 (100%)
Plan extra or different activities for ELLs	5 (35.7%)
Analyse vocabulary content of classroom texts	5 (35.7%)
Analyse the grammatical difficulty of texts	4 (28.6%)
Analyse the text structure of classroom texts	3 (21.4%)

Teachers were also asked if they planned specifically for ELLs in their class. Of fourteen respondents, six stated "No", or similar ("*not really*", "*not in a formal way*",

"*not specifically*", "*I don"t plan so much as adjust"*). Two teachers responded "*Yes, as above"*, referring to the list of suggestions provided. A further two reported that they made sure ELLs had written as well as oral instructions. Five more "planning" actions were reported: "*group them with students who will support them*", "*focus on teaching and understanding of Vocab*", "*give them more time for tasks and try to guide them through the process*", "*allow the ELL student to gain the basic understanding before moving on to the task in class*", "*pair them up with another student who has an appropriate level of communication to help the ELL student to understand the work*". However, one teacher stated: "*The ELL student works with the ESOL teacher twice a week, with a specific programme of learning*", indicating that he/she did not feel the need to plan for ELL learning in the mainstream class.

Discussion

Two main concerns have emerged from the study. Firstly, only a small proportion of the mainstream teacher participants (17%) indicated that they were confident in their knowledge of second language acquisition, an aspect of knowledge of learners and their characteristics. This is a concern when the literature suggests that an understanding of second language acquisition is necessary for effective teaching of ELLs.

Secondly, teachers' pedagogical content knowledge for supporting ELLs appeared to be lacking, as shown by their low level of knowledge and use of recommended resources and strategies for supporting ELLs, and their ability to plan for ELL learning. Only half of the participants responded to questions about resources, only one of the resources was known to all participants, and no more than five had used any of the resources. This is a concern given the fact that even the most recently introduced resource, the ELLP document, had been in schools for at least two years prior to the research being conducted. The findings also indicated variable use of suggested teaching strategies, with more participants using strategies for supporting reading and writing skills than oral language skills. As ELLs often have adequate social language, mainstream teachers "may not pay explicit attention to the level and development of (academic) oral proficiency for ELLs" (de Jong and Harper, 2005, p. 104). Similarly, preplanned support for ELL learning, or "macro-scaffolding", was quite low, apart from planning to pair or group learners. Few teachers indicated that they planned to differentiate instruction or analyse the language of classroom texts in advance of lessons, and "Micro-scaffolding", or spontaneous scaffolding in the classroom, seemed to be more common.

Overall, a picture emerges of mainstream teachers whose awareness and use of planning and teaching resources and strategies for supporting ELLs is low, and lack of time may be preventing teachers from increasing their knowledge in this area. Similar findings emerged from a much larger study in California (Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). However, a positive finding was that almost three-quarters of participants indicated that they would like to know more about resources, and over half would like to know more about strategies, for supporting ELLs. Although the limited sample size precluded generalisation of these findings to

all secondary mainstream teachers, they do indicate a number of areas for further research, and some recommendations can be made.

Further research

Teacher knowledge of second language acquisition would be a useful area to examine in more depth, as the current study investigated this only in a general way. It would also be useful to know more about secondary mainstream teachers' knowledge of the language of their subject area, and to what extent they are able to analyse classroom texts and anticipate language difficulties for ELLs. As relatively few teaching strategies were inquired about in the current study, it would also be useful to further investigate what strategies mainstream teachers are actually using to support ELLs.

Implications and recommendations

The study has implications for ELLs in mainstream classes, and the teachers who work with them. ELLs will have a greater chance of developing academic language and succeeding in mainstream classrooms if their teachers are aware of the differences between social and academic language and how to scaffold learning for ELLs so that they are challenged to learn, and are appropriately supported. There are resources available for teachers to develop their understanding of how to do this, but teachers may not be aware of or using them. Professional development opportunities for mainstream teachers of ELLs are therefore vital (Price, 2008, Gandara *et al*, 2005).

There are also implications for secondary mainstream teacher education. Previous research, and the current study, suggests that teacher education needs to equip teachers with an understanding of second language acquisition and also "an understanding of the language demands of common genres and tasks in their subject areas" (Schleppegrell & O'Halloran, 2011, p. 8). Samson & Collins (2012) recommend that "the special needs of ELLs are addressed at multiple stages of the teacher-preparation process" (p. 9). However, to do so requires agreement on what these special needs are and what constitutes essential mainstream teacher knowledge for supporting ELLs, something which is still being clarified, along with what KL, and PCK are in regard to ELLs. This study has assumed that teacher knowledge of SLA is an aspect of KL, and that knowledge of teaching resources, strategies, and planning for ELL learning are part of a teacher's PCK, but most research has not focussed on this. Recent research suggests that teachers and teacher educators may need to "re-think their understandings of bilingual language development to develop language pedagogical knowledge" (Faltis, 2013, p. 26), as well as or instead of PCK.

Collaboration between mainstream and ESL/ESOL specialist teachers is also suggested as a way forward (Luxton, 2009; Dellicarpini, 2008, Mittica, 2003). Gandara *et al* (2005) reported that mainstream teachers of ELLs wanted professional development which would allow them to work in-class alongside an ESL professional. Given that mainstreaming of ELLs is now established as the norm in English-speaking countries, this may be a practical way to increase mainstream teachers' understanding of the needs of ELLs, as well as resources and strategies that can be used to support their learning of both language and content.

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