PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON ASSESSMENT AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
A PILOT STUDY

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This study used a structured open interview approach to gather information from school-based professionals who work with English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York State regarding their assessment practices for identifying and placing students in ELL programs. The goal of the study was to document current assessment practices and criteria used to determine the placement of ELLs in school contexts. The results found that professionals use a standard list of tools, mandated by the state and local districts, to assess and identify ELLs, which inform placement in general education settings. Findings indicate that these instruments require examination to determine their accuracy in measuring English proficiency. A multidisciplinary approach may improve the diagnostic process to ensure the appropriate recommendation of educational placement to support ELLs academic and language needs.

Significant population growth in students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) has challenged educational systems of students enrolled in grades K-12 across the United States (Abedi, 2008). Large achievement gaps between ELLs and their native English-speaking peers have long been a source of concern, casting doubt on current ELL educational practices (Umansky & Dumont, 2021; Marsh, 2018). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), approximately 4.95 million ELLs attend public elementary and secondary schools in the United States. The rise of ELLs has prompted districts to examine service provisions to ensure that students achieve academic and language standards (Abedi, 2010). For students identified as ELLs, school districts must design programs that teach English as well as a curriculum comparable to English-speaking students' educational services (Crawford, 2004). Therefore, the assessment of language proficiency is imperative to determine the programs that will support language needs.

English language proficiency (ELP) assessments are used to determine both entry into ELL programs and movement into grade-level content in English without support (Stephenson et al., 2003). However, studies criticize that ELP assessments evaluate academic content knowledge rather than language

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proficiency (Bailey & Caroll, 2015). In addition, previous research argues that ELP assessments fail to demonstrate students' true academic abilities, neglect linguistic diversity, and ignore the influence of second language learning (Abedi, 2004; Hesson, 2013).

Also, these assessments are created from a monolingual perspective and typically do not allow for freedom of responses or permit students to express themselves using multilingual modalities (Abedi, 2004). Since assessment protocols drive instructional and educational programming, it is imperative to evaluate assessment and service provisions to ensure that students receive appropriate services.

Laws Influencing the Assessment of ELLs

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) impacted educational policies for ELLs. Specifically, Title I "Improving the Academic Achievement of the Economically Disadvantaged" and Title III "Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students" required states to obtain an adequate yearly progress (AYP), a report that outlines all students' progress relative to the academic goals established in each state. To ensure that state requirements were being met, federal law enforced that ELLs be placed in "language instruction education programs" to promote English acquisition and mastery of academic content as outlined in state ELP and academic standards (NCLB, 2002). To reduce achievement gaps, districts are urged to design programs that support their students' language needs (Hakuta & Pecheone, 2016).

NCLB also changed ELL educational practices (Tanenbaum et al., 2012), which included allowing state autonomy in developing ELP assessments. However, state control of ELL policies creates variability in how English proficiency is measured (Wolf et al., 2008; Niell, 2005). Variations among ELL policies at the local and state level have resulted in difficulties designing reliable and valid assessments to measure students' English proficiency (Wolf et al., 2010; Abedi, 2008). Therefore, professionals working with ELLs are challenged with developing assessments that accurately identify students.

Current federal policies for ELLs are driven by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015). States are required to develop a uniform procedure for identifying ELL students, placing them in the appropriate classrooms, and eventually moving students into the general education setting (Villegas & Pompa, 2020). This consistency serves as a foundation for creating a coherent system that can be implemented statewide. Additionally, under ESSA, schools must demonstrate that ELLs are improving their English language proficiency. Finally, schools are held accountable for providing appropriate services (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016). For example, states are tasked with implementing evidence-based interventions that must be approved and monitored by school districts, as well as show improved student outcomes. These services are intended to use research-based strategies to strengthen programs for ELLs and monitor English learning progress (Oakes et al., 2017).

Assessment Practices for English Language Proficiency

The National Council of Teachers of English (2006) reported that under federal policy, once a student enrolls in a school, guardians must report if they speak a language other than English in their home. If a language other than English is spoken, testing the child's English proficiency occurs within the first month of school enrollment (NCTE, 2006). This test determines if a child's English proficiency requires English language support. Individual states and school districts regulate the interpretation of testing results, the classification of students, and determining specific educational accommodations for students. NYS uses a Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) as a screening procedure. If a language other than English is spoken, then a battery of testing is completed, which includes an interview and two-state assessments, the NYSITELL, for initial determination of placement, and the NYSESLAT, for students currently receiving language support.

Research examining ELP assessments has criticized their limitations in assessing ELLs academic and linguistic capabilities. Abedi (2004) asserts that these assessments were developed for native English

speakers; therefore, they cannot accurately assess ELLs' academic performance. ELP assessments play a vital role in the service provision of ELLs; thus, they must consider ELLs' learning profiles, which include language proficiency and academic achievement in both languages, to accurately assess students' abilities (Gottlieb & Sanchez-Lopez, 2008). However, because ELLs are still developing their English proficiency, content knowledge assessments may not represent their content knowledge and may only measure their English language proficiency (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2019). ELP placement tests occur when a student first enters a school, with little known about the student and their abilities (Papageorgiou & Cho, 2014). School officials then categorize students based on their English proficiency to make teaching and learning more efficient. Language proficiency levels are based on a cut-off score, which may be arbitrary and may not have appropriate diagnostic accuracy. Additionally, the linguistic complexity of ELP placement tests may hinder performance, as students are not given sufficient time to develop English proficiency for accurate testing. Stakeholders are urged to reassess ELP assessments across and within states to ensure tests avoid cultural biases and reduce linguistic complexity (Abedi, 2004).

Current Study

Although previous federal, state and local school districts have policies in place to guide the assessment of ELL students, there is limited research examining the assessment processes from the perspectives of professionals who conduct these assessments. There is also little research documenting the criteria used to identify students and how the criteria will impact the various educational services available to ELLs. By understanding how districts measure students' abilities to classify them as ELLs, more accurate assessment tools can be developed to ensure that ELL students are receiving appropriate academic programs. The specific aims of this pilot study are:

1. To identify the assessment process used to classify students as ELLs from the perspective of TESOL professionals.
2. To examine the criteria used to place ELL students in various programs from the perspective of TESOL professionals.
3. To identify the various professionals that TESOL professionals work with to make assessment and placement decisions for ELL students from the perspective of TESOL professionals.

Methods

Research Design

The current study used qualitative content analysis (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2001) to complete an across-subject comparison of participant perspectives. By using this methodology, the investigators were able to assess and establish a commonality of experiences and behaviors related to the research questions and aims. This methodology also employed qualitative interview techniques, which is an approach that allows investigators to understand the actions and behaviors of participants (Seidman, 2006). This methodology has been used in the field of communication disorders and sciences to examine perspectives from clinicians and patients (e.g., Anderson & Felsenfeld, 2003; Fraas & Calvert, 2009; Pelletier, 2004). The investigators also used the consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research to ensure research design, data collection, and analysis conformed to established and accepted qualitative research standards (Tong et al., 2007).

Participants

Phone interviews were conducted with five school-based employees working in New York State (NYS) public schools. To be included in the study, participants had to meet the following criteria: (a) employed by a school that offers services to children who are learning English as a second language, (b) worked in a school setting for a minimum of five years, (c) provided education services or made educational placement decisions for students who were identified as ELLs for a minimum of five years, and (d) were a proficient English speaker. Participants included three English as a second language (ESL) teachers and two ESL administrators working in different districts in NYS. Following approval by the secondary investigator's institutional review board, participants were identified via searching personnel on publicly available NYS school websites. Potential participants received recruitment emails that included information regarding the study and instructed them to email the second author if they were interested in participating. Interested participants provided consent through a written document sent via email and verbally during the phone interview's opening statement.

Participants were all female, ranged from 26 - 57 years of age, and practiced for an average of 6.2 years, ranging from 3 - 28 years. All respondents worked in a public-school setting and in the following employment placements: elementary school (*n*=4), middle school (*n*=4), and high school (*n*=4). Based on participant responses, four participants identified themselves as white, and one participant identified as Hispanic/Latino. All participants were employed in school districts in New York State.

Data Collection

The current study utilized a structured open interview approach to conduct phone interviews with participants. Also referred to as a *standardized open interview* (Patton, 2001, 2014), a standard set of interview questions was used to analyze and compare responses across participants. Creswell (2007) suggests structured open interviews follow these steps: (a) preparation for the interview, (b) construction of effective interview questions, and (c) implementation of the interview. Preparation for the interview consists of selecting the appropriate participants for the interview. The second step, generating effective interview questions, consists of open-ended questions with neutral vocabulary (McNamara, 2009). Additionally, Creswell (2007) encourages follow-up questions for clarification and understanding. Lastly, the implementation stage of the interview process includes ensuring that the interviewer remains neutral throughout the interview and provides participants with transitions between the change of topics and questions (McNamara, 2009). The current study followed the format mentioned above during the interview process to encourage participants to disclose unrestricted responses and discuss their perspectives openly (Stake, 1995).

Phone interviews lasted approximately 15 - 30 minutes. Before the interview, the secondary investigator received verbal consent from the participant to audio record the interview. The audio recording was used for transcription and data analysis. Participants were asked a total of 19 questions. Eight questions were asked to ascertain demographic information, six questions were asked to examine programs and services currently available to ELLs in their employment settings, and five questions were asked to gain information on how ELL students are assessed (see Appendix A for the interview questions). All participants were asked the same open-ended questions. Follow-up questions were asked for clarification and elaboration of responses. The follow-up questions were not standardized across all participants, but were dependent on the responses of the participants.

Data Analysis

A qualitative content analysis approach was utilized to analyze the data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This approach is defined as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). It aims to utilize the participants' perspectives to identify common behaviors or

patterns of a given phenomenon (Jackson et al., 2007). Phenomena, as described by Vagle (2014) are, "the ways in which we find ourselves being in relation to the world throughout day-to-day living" (p. 20). In essence, qualitative analysis allows for the investigation of the experiences of those who are living them. Zhang and Wildermuth (2002) suggest that this approach consists of the following steps: (1) preparing the data; (2) defining the unit of analysis; and (3) developing a coding scheme, and (4) finding and analyzing common categories/themes. For the current study, transcriptions of the audio recorded interview sessions were created to prepare the data. The participants' responses were used as the unit of analysis to generate a coding scheme, and the primary investigator reviewed all excerpts within a specific code to generate the categories/themes. The authors of the current study also used the consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) to ensure the research design, data collection and analysis methodologies were consistent with standards in qualitative research (Tong et al., 2007).

Transcription. Transcription of the audio-recorded interviews was completed by the first author, who typed the phone interviews verbatim, including interviewer questions and participants' responses. To ensure the transcriptions were correct, one interview was checked by the second author for completeness and accuracy. There were no errors or inaccuracies noted and therefore, the second author considered the first author trained in transcription. The first author did not report any difficulties with audio or speaker intelligibility when completing the transcription. The participants of this study did not receive a typed transcript for review.

Coding. Utilizing the software program Dedoose®, the investigator created a coding system and applied them to the transcriptions. Dedoose® allowed the investigators to segment and highlight parts of transcripts that were of interest, make a coding scheme, and apply the coding scheme to the relevant transcript excerpts. The use of coding supports identifying common and uncommon perspectives reported by the participants and is a central tenant in qualitative content analysis (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Theron, 2015). Coding allows investigators to take one singular account from a participant and compare and combine that with other participant excerpts that are similar in nature (Ayers et al., 2003). The coding process was divided into two steps: (1) initial coding of interview transcripts, and (2) a response analysis for all coded interview excerpts. To create code names and definitions, the first author read through two interview transcripts and designated a word or a phrase that represented the idea the participant discussed during a particular response. Then, the authors reviewed the words and phrases to generate code names and operational definitions for each code. Code names and their definitions were revised until a consensus was achieved and it was deemed appropriate for a given response. The code names generated corresponded to the interview questions asked. However, if a participant provided a response that was characteristic of a previous code, the response would be coded with the most appropriate code and/or codes. After generating the codes and operational definitions, the investigators coded two transcripts separately and achieved over 90% reliability to confirm coding stability.

Response Analysis. Categories were identified by analyzing transcript excerpts that received the same code during the initial coding process (identified categories and their definitions are in Appendix B). This process was implemented to identify commonalities and differences across participants. To construct theoretical relationships between the data in this study, all transcript excerpts were individually assessed. The two authors read aloud interview excerpts that shared the same code and highlighted the main idea. Excerpts with similar main ideas were grouped together and a category was assigned to the cluster. When all were grouped in their respective cluster, they were read aloud to ensure each excerpt was in the appropriately designated cluster.

Results

Findings for this study are the common categories derived from the content response analysis, which included the following themes: (a) assessment tools and rationale; (b) identification and placement criteria; and (c) other professionals involved in working with TESOL professionals. The results of the study

focused on the similarities and variety of perspectives. Direct quotes from participants, with a participant identification number in brackets, are used as exemplars that illustrate each common response category. The number of participants whose transcripts excerpts were included in a common response category are provided to show the concentration or scarcity of the common categories.

Assessment Tools and Rationale

The assessment tools used included informal and formal measures, such as a HLQ, an interview, the NYSITELL, and the NYSESLAT. For each assessment tool reported, participants were asked why they used the specific assessment tool. Participants reported five reasons for using the above-mentioned assessment tools. The common categories included: (1) required by state regulations (n=4), (2) determination of English language proficiency (n=2), and (3) identification of students' strengths and needs (n=2). Less common responses included: (1) time efficiency (n=1), and (1) comprehensive assessment of students' abilities (n=1).

Required by State Regulations. The most common response amongst participants was that the assessment tools were used as they were mandated by NYS. Participant 4 stated, "Okay, most of the tools I use due to the NYS regulations...." Participant 2 said, "We follow the state guideline... You give the interview, you interview the child, then you give the NYSITELL, which is the state exam and based on that exam, that tells you the level of support that the child gets, how many minutes a day they receive, and depending on their level it's going to tell you if it's completely integrated or if they get pull-out time too. So that's how they get their minutes and determines their level of service."

Determination of English Language Proficiency. Two participants indicated that the assessment tools were used because they provided information regarding students' language ability. Participants described these tools as ways to measure students' English proficiency. One professional (participant 4) reported, "So, the NYSITELL then will say their abilities and that then allows the placement team to indicate where are they in the progression of English." Participant 3 reported, "If they're coming from a different state or from a different country, then they come in and we give them right away the NYSITELL exam and so that gives us a proficiency ranking. They rank 1-5, so entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding, or commanding and that [test] gives us their score."

Identification of Students' Strengths and Needs. Another common response was that the assessment tools were used to provide professionals with insight into students' abilities. Participants described the assessment tools to assess students' abilities and limitations in English. Participant 3 said, "So the NYSITELL is obviously required...the most important part is getting them and seeing what their strengths and needs are." Similarly, participant 5 reported, "Well, the NYSITELL is required along with the interview and we are required to have some form of a home language survey, but all of them are very helpful tools actually in giving us some guidance in where the student is in their language abilities."

Identification and Placement Criteria

Participants were asked to describe the factors that influenced their decision making regarding the educational placement of ELL students. The most influencing factors included: (a) scheduling demands (n=4), (b) proficiency (n=3), and (c) regulations (n=3). Other less common categories included: (a) professional judgement (n=1), (b) parent choice (n=1), and (c) student needs (n=1).

Scheduling Demands. Four participants reported that scheduling influenced the educational placements for ELLs. Participants indicated that placements available for students were dependent on teacher availability and classroom size. Participant 4 stated, "We usually try to put students who are getting the same amount of ESL time in the same room because it makes scheduling easier so that's usually what we look at." Similarly, another participant reported, "Due to the influx, it's the first seat that's available, that's the seat that the student is going to get."

Proficiency. Three of the participants discussed students' English proficiency as being a significant factor in determining their educational placement. Participants described proficiency in terms of students' spoken English or the proficiency they demonstrated on formal assessments. Participant 3 stated, "I look at their proficiency of their spoken English, I look at how they do in the co-taught class…[for example if] she is a very basic beginner, very low level maybe knows 10 words in English…So, for [those] Entering and Emerging students it is mandatory, and we do provide the stand-alone [program] for all Entering and Emerging students."

Regulations. Four professionals indicated that an influential factor in determining student placement was the student's scores on state mandated assessments. Regulations provided a protocol for placing students in educational placements based on their scores on the NYSESLAT. Participant 1 stated, "Their level of service is based on what they get on the NYSESLAT." Other participants reported that regulations made by the state determined educational placements. Participant 3 provided this response, "…So based on the regulations, all students up through commanding level should receive a certain amount of co-taught hours."

Other Professionals Involved in Working with TESOL Professionals

To understand the individuals who work with TESOL professionals, participants were asked who they collaborated with when working with ELL students. Participants reported six different professionals involved in the identification and service provision for ELL students. The most common professionals included: (1) ELL teachers (*n*=4), (2) content teachers (*n*=2), (3) speech-language pathologists (*n*=2), and (4) administrators (*n*=2).

ELL Teachers. Four participants reported that ELL teachers were involved in assessing and providing services to ELL students. Participants described these professionals as the primary stakeholders in the assessment, identification, and service provision process. Participant 5 stated, "So I co-teach with classroom teachers when I do push in or do like pull to the side. I also provide…professional development for teachers as well as providing resources or making sure students get appropriate…differentiation in their classwork." Participant 3 stated, "We do a stand-alone class and then we also do co-taught classes and overall just responsible for helping the kids out whenever they need it, being in those classes co-teaching and then doing a stand-alone class with the beginners."

Content teachers. Participants discussed working with content teachers, as they typically provided general education curriculum experiences to ELL students. Content teachers were described as professionals involved in the teaching of English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Participant 3 reported, "It's mostly just the two ESL teachers and the content teachers when it comes to dealing with…the whole child."

Speech-language pathologists. Two participants reported collaborating with a speech-language pathologist regarding services provided to ELL students. Participant 2 stated, "…one of our students has worked with a speech teacher in a small group because she was doing the phonics component, so he blended into a group that she had because she was doing things that would help him because he had difficulties with the /th/ sound and he had a lot of lisping going on too so she was trying to help him with that." Participant 5 reported, "well many of these students have a lot of different services so I do communicate regularly with their speech teacher if they're getting speech services…For example, if they need speech services…that's one of the issues where I would ask one of the speech teachers to come in and observe and just listen to the student's speech."

Administrators. Participants mentioned working with administrators to support ELL students. Participant 1 reported, "So when the registrar does get a family that comes in that's an ELL family…after my HLQ then she contacts…one of the ELL [teachers] to see if they can do the questions to the families, just to get a gauge on what level of English they're at. Then they let me know what grade level, I get the NYSITELL test out of the vault for the grade level that the student is registering for, we schedule an

appointment with the teachers so they can administer it, and then see what level of ELL classroom support that they'll be in."

Discussion

The current study investigated the assessment tools used by TESOL professionals, their rationale for using assessment tools, the eligibility criteria for placement in ELL programs, and the other professionals involved in the identification and placement of ELL students. The qualitative analysis suggests that TESOL professionals use assessment protocols dictated by federal and state guidelines. While the rationale for selecting these assessments is primarily due to school regulations, TESOL professionals stated that these assessments help understand students' academic abilities. ELL students are placed into specific programs based solely on English proficiency tests and identified content teachers as their primary collaborators.

Perspectives Regarding the Assessment of ELL Students

Our findings are comparable to other studies examining ELL identification procedures that use a two-step process: (1) identifying potential ELL students through an HLQ and (2) determining if a student requires a formal measure of assessment (Linquanti & Cook, 2013). As discussed, the identification of ELLs consists of formal assessments such as the NYSITELL and the NYSESLAT. These tests are intended to aid professionals in placing students into a language instruction program appropriate for their English proficiency level (Lopez et al., 2016). Regulations set at the federal and state level were the primary reasons participants provided for using these measures. These tests have been designed to measure, monitor, and support students to fulfill the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)(NYSED, 2009). However, discrepancies on what constitutes language proficiency continues to influence how tests are designed and how students are assessed (Clark-Gareca, 2016).

The New York State Education Department (2014) stated that the NYSITELL and NYSESLAT were designed to measure ELP; however, the testing guidelines do not clarify the specific linguistic components that constitute English proficiency. Research has questioned whether ELP assessments measure language proficiency or content proficiency (Clark-Gareca, 2014). As stated in the State Education Department (2003) testing guidelines, the purpose of the NYSESLAT is "to measure the English language-arts proficiency of limited-English proficient students," (p. 1), suggesting that the NYSESLAT was developed as a language arts test rather than a language proficiency test. In 2015, test materials reported that the NYSESLAT content reflected the language required for students to access grade-level content (NYSED, 2015). However, limited information is provided regarding how language to access content differs from the language of the content itself. As research questions the ability of these assessments to capture and describe a student accurately, professionals should consider using a more holistic assessment approach where a collaboration is involved, and data is collected using varying methods (Gottlieb & Sanchez-Lopez, 2008).

Placement Criteria

The results of this study suggest that professionals primarily use formal measures to place ELL students in appropriate programs. Placement decisions were also guided by state regulations. These regulations are designed to create a cohesive identification process that eliminates variations in procedures (National Research Council, 2011). However, these current placement measures cannot be tailored to fit the individual language needs (Wixom, 2015). Typically, these placement procedures must be followed despite language, cultural, and learning differences among students, resulting in an inaccurate portrayal of students' capabilities (Callahan et al., 2010; Saunders & Marcelletti, 2013; Robinson-Cimpian et al., 2016). Therefore, students may be placed in inappropriate programs that do not support their language needs and can impact their academic success (Olsen, 2014; Umansky & Porter, 2020).

Other Professionals Involved in ELL Assessment

The TESOL professionals in this study discussed primarily collaborating with content area teachers. Typically, participants worked with content teachers to implement curriculum-specific language in stand-alone programs or plan co-taught lesson plans. While other professionals, such as speech language pathologists (SLP), were mentioned as potential collaborators, they were typically only working with TESOL professionals when an ELL student was already identified as having a language disorder. The participants in this study did not discuss collaborating with other professionals for the ELP examination or decisions regarding criteria and placement into an ELL program. Research focused on ELL students has recommended that assessment includes a multidisciplinary team of qualified bilingual and bicultural professionals (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017). By enforcing a multidisciplinary team, data can be gathered from specialists in different areas to collect an accurate assessment of ELLs. Collaboration between TESOL teachers and SLPs has previously been suggested for all purposes, including ELP (Rosa-Lugo & Fradd, 2000). SLPs are able to collaborate with TESOL professionals on assessment activities including: (a) collecting and analyzing assessment data, (b) providing critical information on language development and code-switching, (3) collection of data from multiple sources, and (4) analysis and decisions on language differences versus language disorders (Gottlieb & Sanchez-Lopez, 2008). Other professionals typically involved in multidisciplinary teams include school psychologists or school counselors. School psychologists provide consultation support that incorporates language and cultural considerations at the individual, family, and systems level (National Association of School Psychologists, 2015). One of our participants did mention that the school counselor was a crucial team member in the assessment of ELL learners. Their expertise in cultural differences and language development can help gather relevant data to plan and develop appropriate academic interventions. For example, in the American School Counselor Association (2016) position statement regarding cultural diversity, school counselors must "identify the impact of family culture upon student performance", and use "data to measure access to programs and to close disproportionate gaps in opportunity, information and resources that affect achievement among diverse student populations." Ultimately, school psychologists and counselors play a significant role in providing culturally responsive support to close achievement gaps between ELLs and their peers (O'Bryon, & Rogers, 2010).

Limitations

There are limitations in this study that need to be acknowledged. First, the current study utilized a limited sample size of participants. Five professionals participated in the study; therefore, the generalization of placement criteria cannot be made across school districts. Secondly, the study did not assess the educational practices used across the US, so it is not possible to conclude if other ELL practices are also federally regulated. Limitations on the sample size and focus on the educational practices for NYS prohibit the generalization of these findings to other states.

Future Research

Although this pilot study provides information on current assessment practices for ELLs in NYS public schools, further research is needed to generalize the educational practices for ELLs. Future work should explore assessment and educational procedures used to identify ELLs across states and grade levels to make results comparable. In addition, the roles and responsibilities for all relevant professional stakeholders should be examined to develop interdisciplinary strategies to serve ELL students. Understanding professional roles and the criteria used to identify ELLs aids in determining the most appropriate educational placements that support these students' academic and language needs. In addition, future work should focus on the needs of students who are emerging in their bilingual/multilingual status and develop assessments or assessment adaptations that consider their

multilingual learner status. Furthermore, it will be critical to ensure that teacher education programs train upcoming professionals to understand and address the needs of the ELL students.

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Appendix A
Interview Questions

Demographic Questions
1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender?
3. How would you identify your race/ethnicity?
4. What educational setting do you work in?
5. How long have you been working in this educational setting?
6. How long have you been practicing in the field?
7. Could you please describe your roles and responsibilities as it relates to children who are identified as bilingual?
8. How many children do you work with who are identified as bilingual?

Bilingual Program Questions
1. What is the overall goal for your educational programs?
2. Could you please describe your English as a Second Language Program?
3. When looking at your website, I noticed that you also have an English as a New Language Program. Could you please describe this program and how it is different from the ESL program?
4. Who are the different professionals that are involved in working with your bilingual children?

Appendix B

Table 1: *Common Categories and their Definitions*

Category	Sub-category	Definition
Assessment Tools and Rationale	Required by State Regulations	Tools used for the identification of ELLs and rationale for the assessment measures
	Determination of English Language Proficiency	
	Identification of Students' Strengths and Needs	
Identification and Placement Criteria	Scheduling Demands	Factors that influenced professionals' decision making regarding the educational placement of ELL students
	Proficiency	
	Regulations	
Other Professionals Involved in Working with TESOL Professionals	ELL Teachers	The professionals involved in the identification and service provision for ELL students.
	Content Teachers	
	Speech-language pathologists	
	Administrators	