THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL): 2023-24 Implementation Report

The QTEL initiative in Philadelphia began in 2016, and previous reports have described implementation and outcomes related to the project. In 2023-24, the QTEL initiative was a series of professional development opportunities for K-12 educators across 42 schools. This report summarizes the results of a year-long implementation evaluation of the 2023-24 QTEL initiative.

Key Findings

- Teachers who participated in QTEL reported that they were implementing what they learned in their classrooms at least weekly.

- QTEL participants felt that training was beneficial across subject areas and improved their knowledge of best practices and instruction for ELs, especially scaffolding.

- QTEL participants indicated that they would benefit from more time to collaborate and plan together.

- QTEL participants recommended that their administrators receive QTEL training to better inform their understanding and support of best practices for ELs.

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Contents

About the 2023-2024 QTEL Initiative

The *Quality Teaching for English Learners*™ initiative is a research-based professional development program for teachers, coaches, and school leadership devoted to improving educator capacity to support the linguistic and academic development of English Learners (ELs) and other students needing to develop academic uses of English. QTEL specifically addresses the development of EL students' abilities to read, write, and discuss academic texts in English across the disciplines. Five guiding principles for quality instruction are embedded throughout the professional development:

1. Sustain academic rigor in teaching English Learners.
2. Hold high expectations in teaching English Learners.
3. Engage English Learners in quality interactions.
4. Sustain a language focus in teaching English Learners.
5. Develop a quality curriculum for English Learners.[1]

Since 2016-17, QTEL has grown from supporting 21 teachers to over 200 SDP teachers annually.[2] In 2023-24, the QTEL Initiative consisted of large group professional development through the 2023 QTEL Summer Building the Base Institute, followed by two professional development sessions during the 2023-24 school year. These professional development sessions provide participants with time to plan and reflect on their instruction using QTEL principles. Participants attend professional development within grade- and content-level cohorts. The QTEL initiative was implemented in Philadelphia during the 2023-24 school year with teachers and Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs (OMCP) staff. Teachers served grades K-12 from 42 SDP schools.

Additionally, during the 2023-24 school year, the SDP QTEL program introduced the WestEd Apprentice Professional Developers (ADPs) program to prepare QTEL apprentices. This program focuses on the fundamentals of sociocultural pedagogy and language acquisition to enhance professional development and develop exemplary sample units. ADPs received training throughout the 2023-24 QTEL program year.

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[1] Visit https://www.qtel.wested.org/ for more information on Quality Teaching for English Learners.
[2] Visit https://www.philasd.org/research/category/equity/english-learners-els/ for ORE reports and briefs about QTEL and other topics related to English Learners.

Research Questions

To better understand the satisfaction, implementation, and associated benefits of the QTEL model, ORE posed the following research questions:

Part 1: QTEL Summer Institute

1. To what extent were participants satisfied with the QTEL Summer Institute, and did they perceive their participation as being useful and beneficial to their practice?
2. How did participant knowledge of quality instruction for ELs change after participation in the QTEL Institute?
3. To what extent did participants agree with statements about their ability to teach ELs and their attitudes and beliefs related to teaching ELs after the QTEL Institute?

Part 2: Implementation of the QTEL model during the 2023-24 school year and related changes in practices

4. How frequently did QTEL participants report using QTEL practices during the school year?
5. What did participants report as the primary challenges to implementing the QTEL model?
6. To what extent did participants report implementation of the QTEL model changing their approach to teaching ELs?
7. In what ways did respondents find that implementing the QTEL model benefited students?

Part 3: Participant attitudes and beliefs after QTEL implementation

8. To what extent did participants agree with statements about their ability to teach ELs and their attitudes and beliefs related to teaching ELs after the 2023-24 QTEL program year?

Data Collection

The data used to answer the research questions were collected through four different online surveys that were administered at four different time points during the 2023-24 QTEL program year (Table 1). All four surveys were developed collaboratively by WestEd, the Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs, and the Office of Research and Evaluation.[3]

- **Pre-Implementation Survey of Experience, Knowledge, and Attitudes:** Administered prior to the June 2023 QTEL Summer Institute and designed to measure participants' pedagogical knowledge related to ELs, beliefs about instruction for ELs, and the instructional practices they already employed before participating in QTEL .

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[3] Visit https://www.qtel.wested.org/about for more information on WestEd. Visit https://www.philasd.org/multilingual/ for more information on the Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs (OMCP).

- **Post-Institute Satisfaction Survey:** Administered at the conclusion of the June 2023 QTEL Summer Institute to capture information about satisfaction with the Institute and perceived usefulness of Institute sessions and content.
- **Post-Institute Survey of Experience, Knowledge, and Attitudes:** Administered at the conclusion of the June 2023 QTEL Summer Institute to measure changes in teacher pedagogical knowledge related to ELs and beliefs about instruction for EL students.
- **Post-Implementation Survey:** Administered in March 2024 to measure implementation of QTEL practices, beliefs about instruction for ELs and the QTEL practices they employed after their participation in the 2023-2024 QTEL program year, including QTEL Summer Institute and the last school year professional development held in March 2023.

Table 1. Surveys administered for the 2023-24 QTEL evaluation

Survey Name	Time of Administration	Related research questions	Number of respondents	Response rate
Pre-Implementation Survey of Experience, Knowledge, and Attitudes	Prior to the June 2023 QTEL Summer Institute	2, 3, 8	200	93%
Post-Institute Satisfaction Survey	At the conclusion of the June 2023 QTEL Summer Institute	1	173	80%
Post-Institute Survey of Experience, Knowledge, and Attitudes	At the conclusion of the June 2023 QTEL Summer Institute	2, 3	177	82%
Post-Implementation Survey	At the conclusion of 2023-24 programming in March 2024	4-8	163	83%

To understand how teacher knowledge of best practices and attitudes about teaching ELs changed as a result of participation in the QTEL Institute (Part 1, research questions 2 and 3), we used only the responses of participants who took both the Pre-Implementation and Post-Institute Surveys of Experience, Knowledge, and Attitudes before and after the Institute. Of the 215 participants who were sent the surveys, 170 (79%) had both Pre-Implementation and Post-Institute surveys that could be matched using names and/or email addresses.

To understand implementation of the QTEL approach during the 2023-24 school year, and related changes in practices and participant attitudes and beliefs after QTEL implementation (Parts 2 and 3), we used only the responses of participants who took both the Pre-Implementation and Post-Implementation surveys. Of the 196 participants who were sent the post-survey, 158 (79%) had both Pre-Implementation and Post-Implementation surveys that could be matched using names and/or email addresses.

Findings Part 1: QTEL Institute

In Summer 2023, 215 SDP teachers and OMCP staff participated in a large-group professional development called the QTEL Summer Institute. The goal of the Institute was to provide teachers with a firm foundation of theoretical understanding and corresponding strategies for teaching conceptual, analytic, and disciplinary language practices to all students. Participants were administered a survey before attending the QTEL Institute (the Pre-Implementation Survey of Experience, Knowledge, and Attitudes) and again after attending the Institute (the Post-Institute Survey of Experience Knowledge, and Attitudes).

Nearly all survey respondents indicated that they felt the QTEL Institute would help them positively impact student achievement.

At least 98% of participants who took the Post-Institute survey agreed or strongly agreed with each of a set of statements saying that they could use the training to positively impact the achievement of their students; new practices were modeled and explained through the Institute; the Institute facilitators were knowledgeable and helpful; and the goals and objectives of the Institute were clearly specified. Approximately 91% of Post-Institute survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that time was used efficiently and effectively during the Institute (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Respondents' levels of agreement with statements about the usefulness, effectiveness and efficiency of the QTEL Institute (n=173)
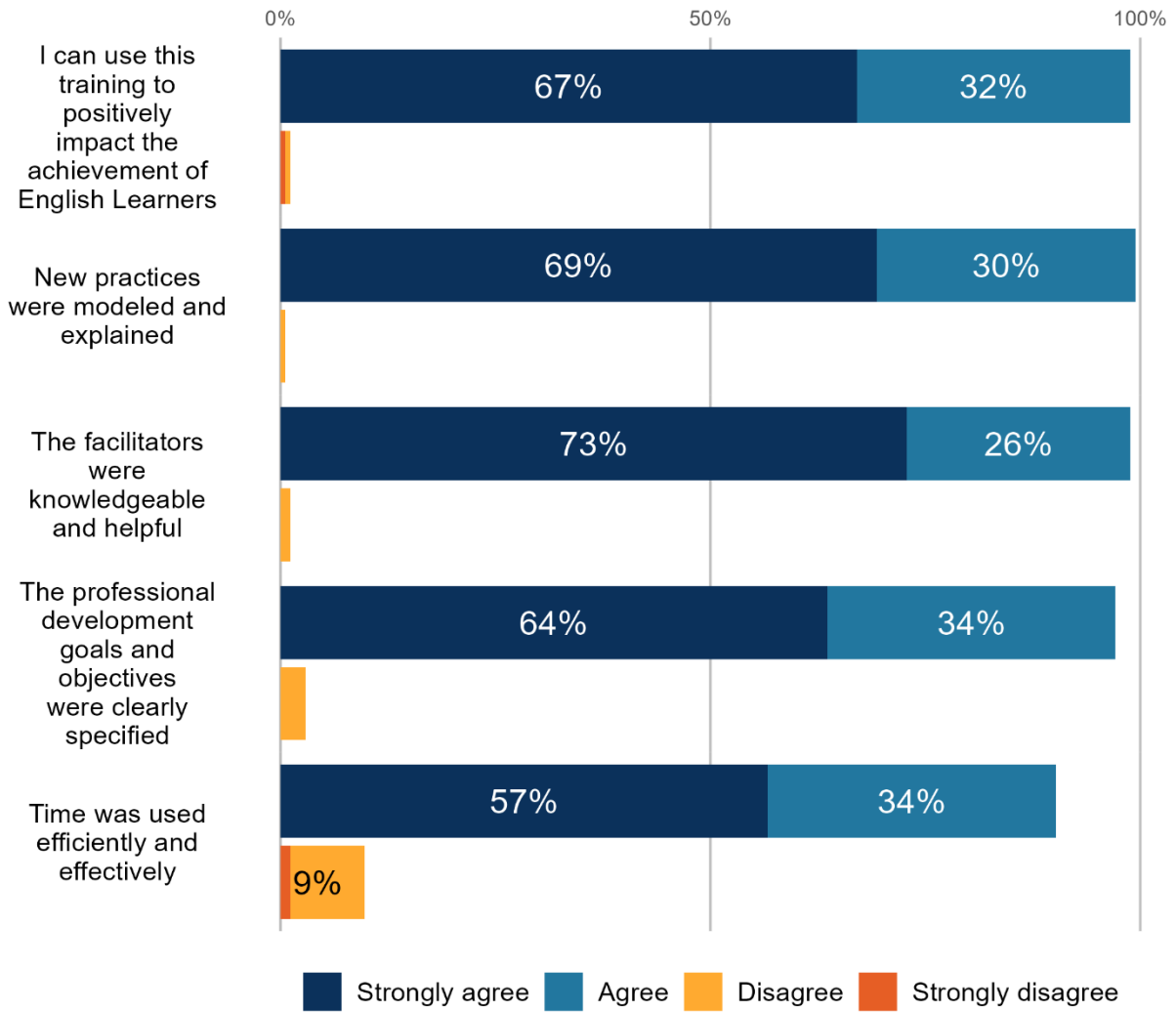
Source: QTEL Post-Institute Survey

Participant open-ended feedback also indicates satisfaction with the QTEL Summer Institute

When participants were asked open-ended questions about how the content and facilitation of the Institute could be improved, and about what else participants would like facilitators to know, 196 responses were received. Of those responses, 49 said the Institute was well run, the facilitators did a good job, the content was important and relevant to their work, or respondents thought more schools and employees should participate in the Institute. One participant wrote, "Thank you for all of your hard work. This is so important, and I know it's one of many competing agendas in such a large District. I appreciate your expertise and advocacy." Another participant wrote, "I enjoyed this PD and it will completely change the way I lesson plan and set the culture of my classroom in the best way." Some of the other participants wrote comments such as, "Make sure that every school in the district participates into this program," and "The facilitators were outstanding."

Another 42 responses to the open-ended questions mentioned aspects of time management that participants thought could be improved. Nine of those responses recommended more time for lesson planning, studying lessons, and planning overall, and 15 recommended shorter days or fewer days, while four recommended longer days or more days.

Forty responses to the open-ended questions mentioned improving the materials used, including 20 suggestions that more examples of lessons, assessments, and work completed by real EL students be provided. One participant wrote, "provide independent work samples—so many teachers have such low expectations of their ELL—seeing the end result and their mastery of these lessons will help build awareness of what kids can do and are capable of doing" [sic]. Other responses included suggestions that materials geared toward a wider range of grade levels be used—especially materials geared toward elementary-school grade levels.

Other responses to the open-ended questions suggested clearer communication about various aspects of the Institute, a focus on students with a wider range of English proficiency, and more movement breaks.

Respondents indicated that QTEL Institute improved knowledge and practices related to teaching ELs.

Fifty-nine percent of Post-Institute survey respondents reported that their participation in QTEL greatly improved their focus on rigorous, grade-level academic content, and another 34% reported it was somewhat improved. At 66%, two-thirds of post-survey respondents said that QTEL greatly improved their setting of high expectations for all of their students, and another 28% said it was somewhat improved by attending the QTEL PD (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Respondents' responses to the prompt, "Please indicate the extent to which participating in QTEL affected the following" (n=172)
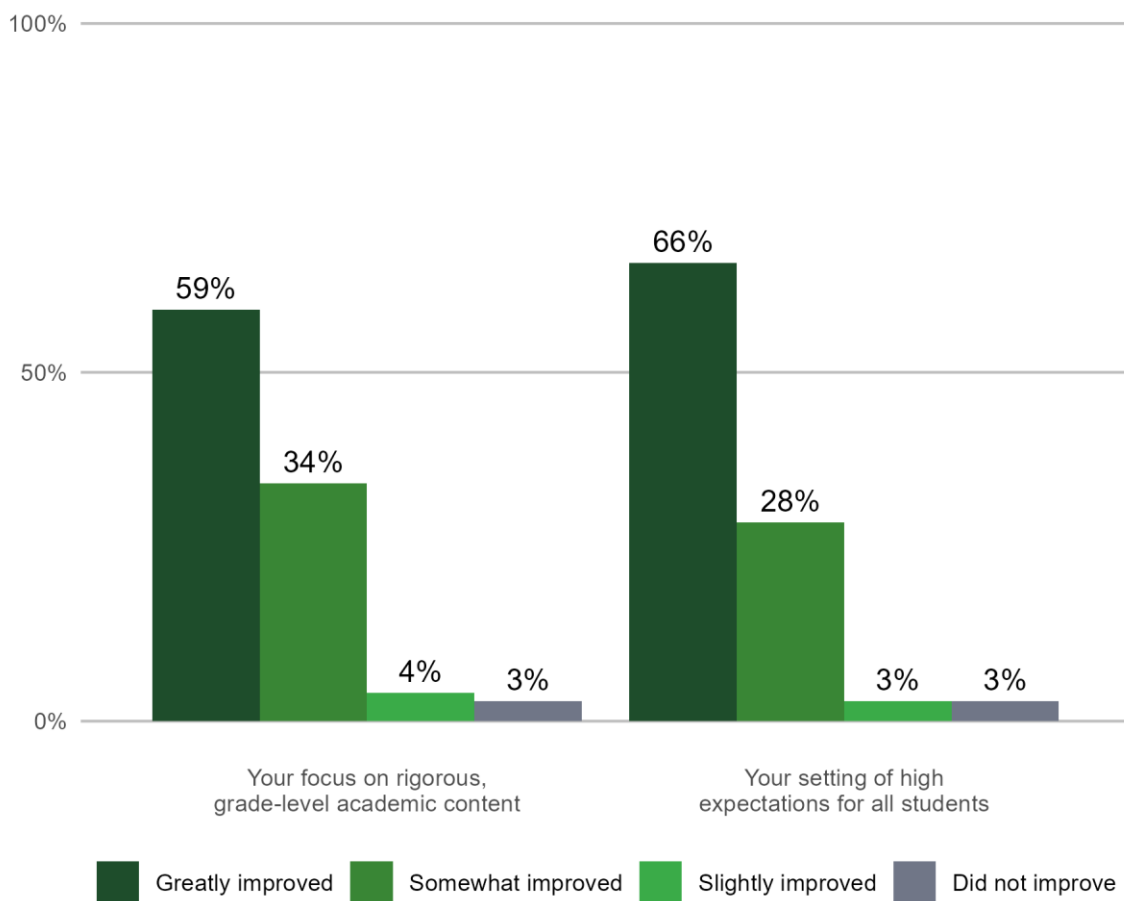
Source: QTEL Post-Institute Survey

Two-thirds (66%) of participants who took the Post-Institute survey said that QTEL greatly affected their confidence in implementing the QTEL framework and tasks in their classrooms, with another 31% saying their confidence was somewhat improved. Sixty-four percent said that QTEL greatly improved their general understanding of a theory of teaching and learning, with 29% saying their understanding was somewhat improved. Similarly, 62% said that QTEL greatly improved their knowledge of the needs of English Learners, with another 34% saying their knowledge was somewhat improved (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Responses to the prompt, "Please indicate the extent to which participating in QTEL affected the following" (n=173)
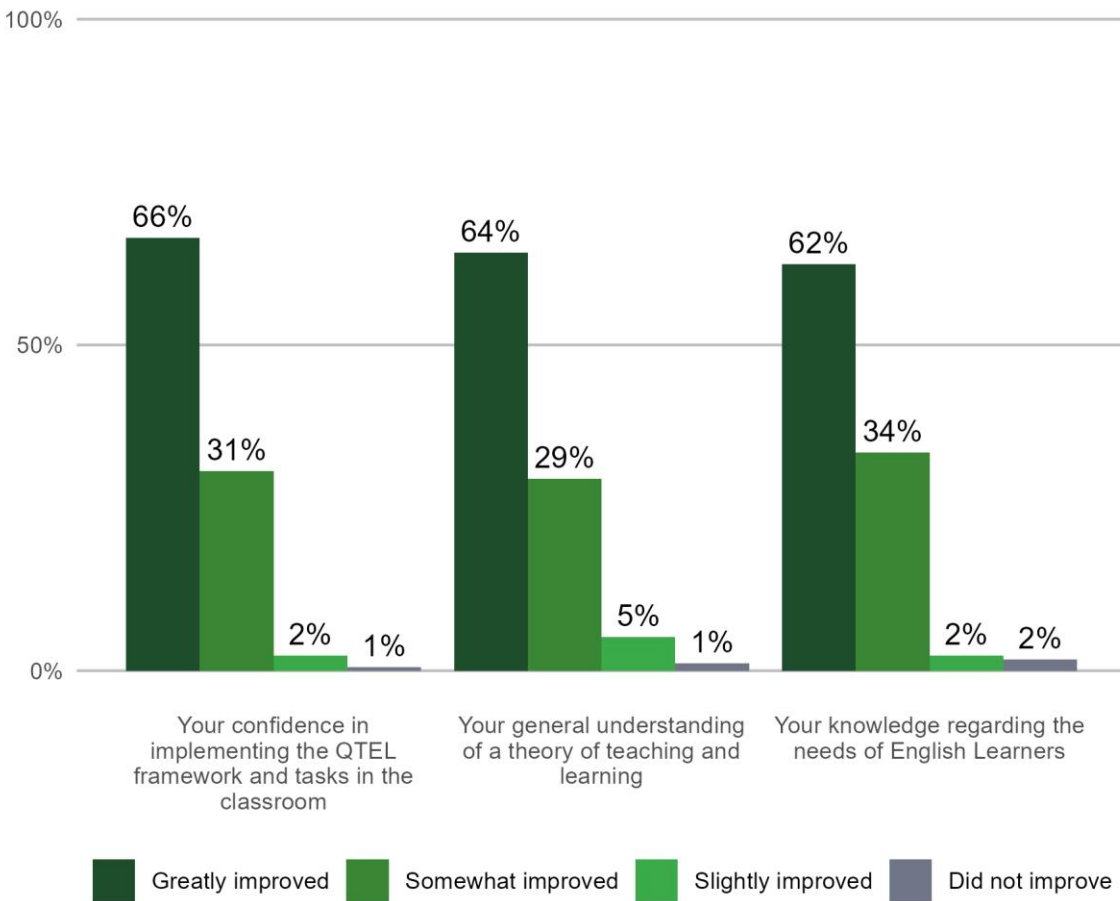
Source: QTEL Post-Institute Survey

Sixty-two percent of post-survey respondents said the QTEL Institute greatly improved their ability to design useful scaffolds for English Learner students, and another 33% said the Institute somewhat improved their scaffolding ability. A total of 72% of respondents said QTEL greatly improved their knowledge of the purposes of scaffolding, with another 24% saying the Institute somewhat improved their knowledge (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Responses to the prompt, "Please indicate the extent to which participating in QTEL affected the following" (n=173)
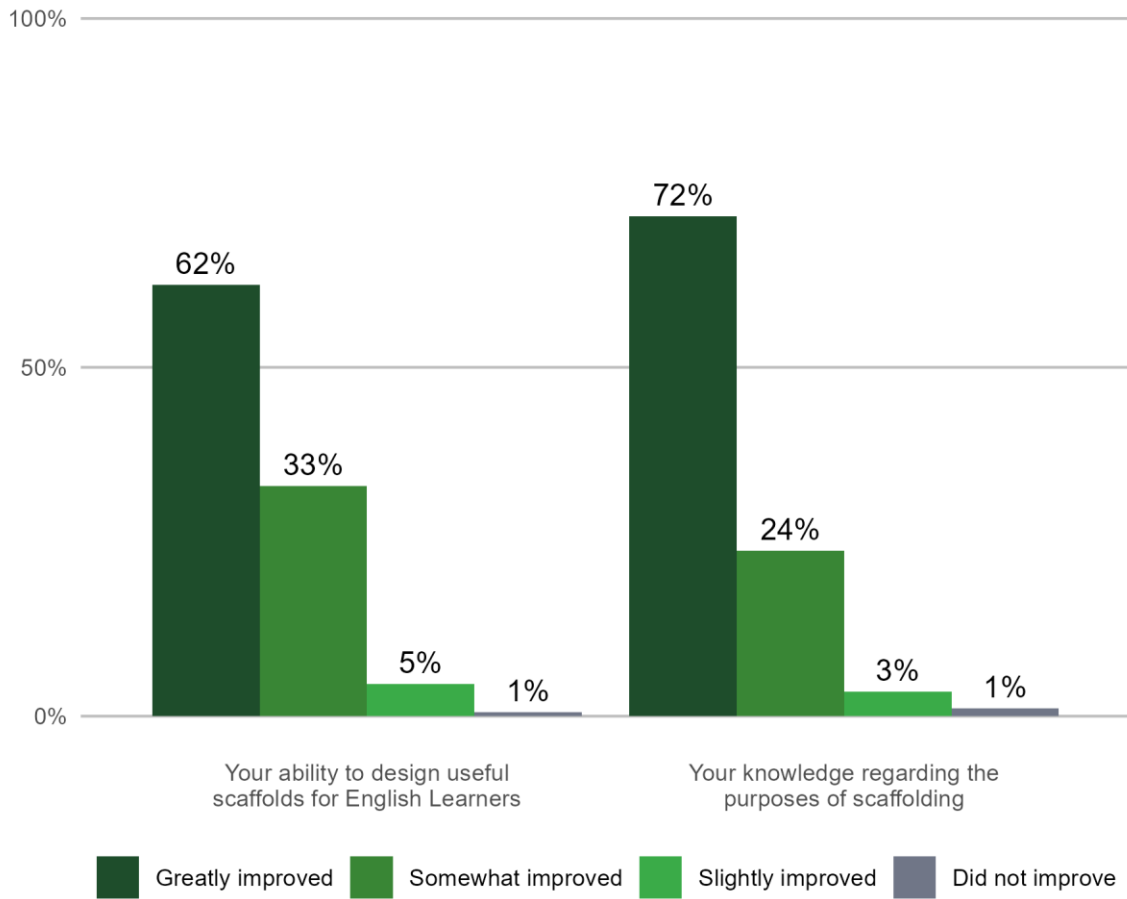
Source: QTEL Post-Institute Survey

Respondent knowledge about quality instruction for English Learners increased after participating in the QTEL Institute

To measure changes in participant knowledge after the Institute, we examined the number correct on five questions about quality instruction for ELs. The biggest change, of 54 percentage points, was in the percentage of respondents who correctly said that a three-moment lesson/unit should not prioritize discrete language learning. The smallest change, of 33 percentage points, was in the percentage of respondents who correctly said that quality learning opportunities for ELs are characterized by high-challenge, high-support opportunities to engage in academically rigorous work (Figure 5; See Appendix A for changes in the percentages of respondents who both correctly and incorrectly answered questions related to best practices in teaching ELs before and after QTEL).

Figure 5. Changes in the percentages of respondents who correctly answered questions related to best practices in teaching ELs before and after QTEL (n=170)

When considering the role of language in planning lessons for English Learners, teachers should:

Pre-Implementation Survey — 41%
Post-Institute Survey — 89%

■ Amplify communications rather than simplify language.

The following statements reflect sociocultural learning theory EXCEPT:

Pre-Implementation Survey — 23%
Post-Institute Survey — 59%

■ Mastery is achieved by learning from more expert peers.

Quality learning opportunities for English Learners are characterized by:

Pre-Implementation Survey — 53%
Post-Institute Survey — 84%

■ High-challenge, high-support opportunities to engage in academically rigorous work.

All of the following are important actions in designing instruction for English Learners EXCEPT:

Pre-Implementation Survey — 40%
Post-Institute Survey — 89%

■ Creating separate, simplified texts and tasks for English Learners to complete.

A Three Moment Lesson / Unit should do all of the following EXCEPT:

Pre-Implementation Survey — 34%
Post-Institute Survey — 89%

■ Prioritize discrete language learning, including grammatical forms and language functions.

Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

13

After participating in the QTEL Summer Institute, respondents reported they were better prepared to effectively teach ELs.

More respondents reported they felt prepared to meet the needs of ELs after attending the QTEL Institute. The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they had the professional preparation they needed in order to meet the needs of EL students rose from 62% before the Institute to 98% after the Institute, with the percentage who strongly agreed rising from 10% to 32%. The percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed fell from 39% to 3%, with those strongly disagreeing falling from 5% of respondents to 1% (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "I have the professional preparation necessary to meet the needs of English Learners" (n=166)
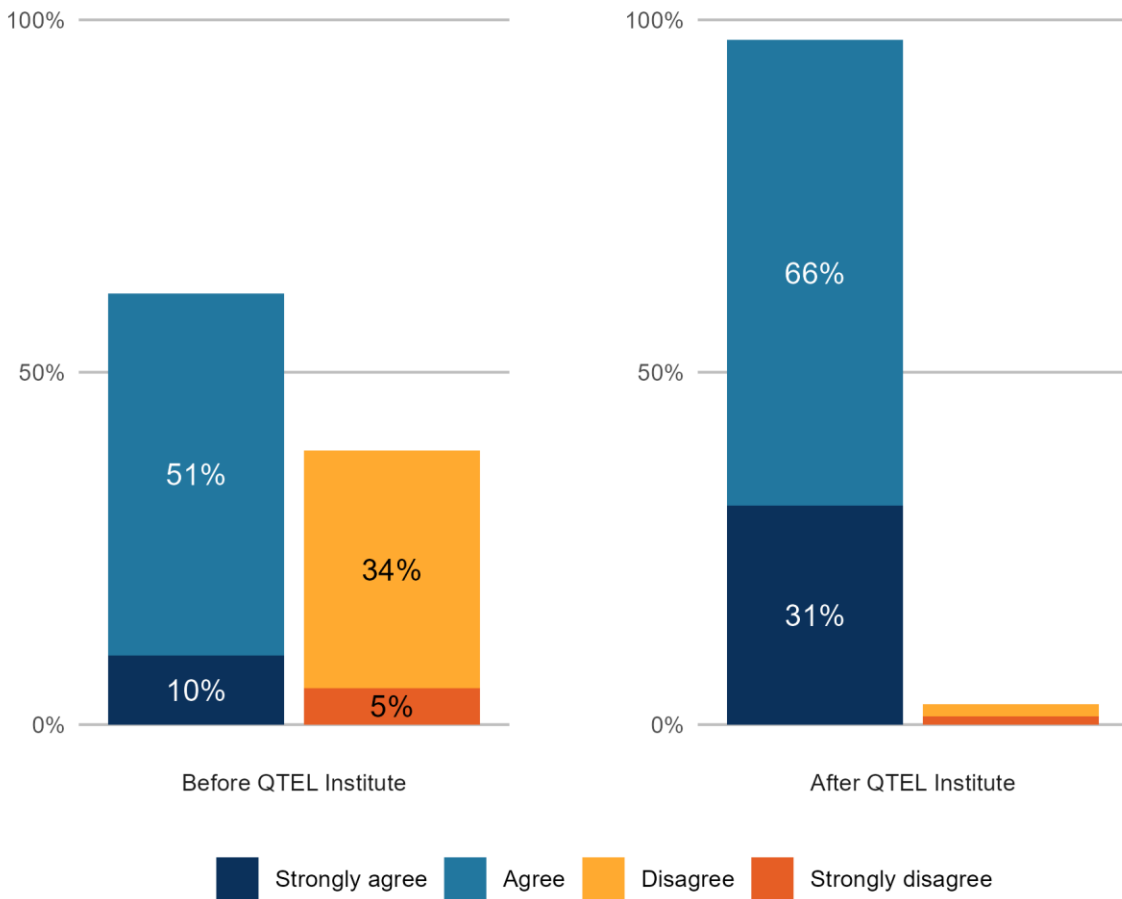
Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

14

The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they were effective at designing instruction that supports ELs rose from 69% to 93%. The percentage who strongly agreed rose from 9% to 23%. The percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed fell from 32% to 7%, with those strongly disagreeing falling from 4% to 0% (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "I am effective at designing instruction that supports English Learners" (n=165)
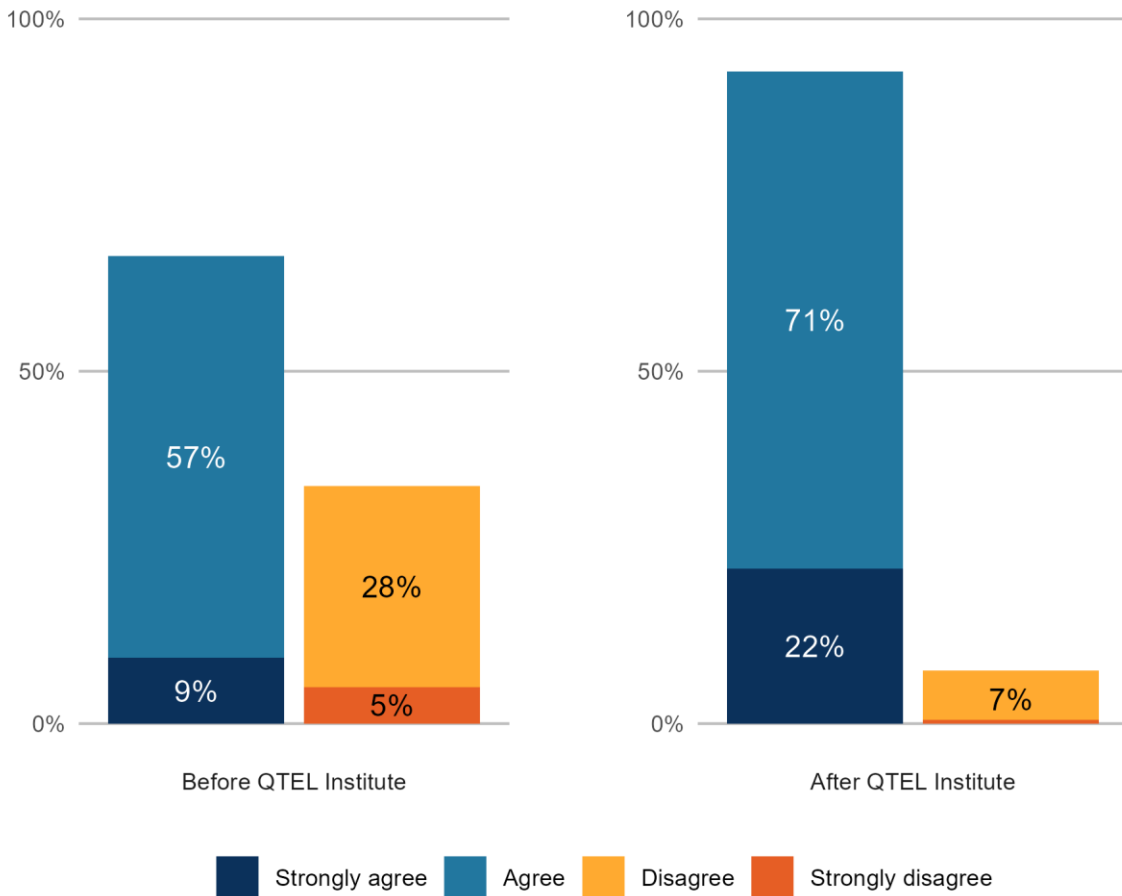
Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

After participating in the QTEL Institute, respondents reported positive shifts in their perceptions about the capabilities of ELs.

The percentage of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed that ELs can tackle complex, grade-appropriate subject matter in all content areas with enough support rose from 94% to 99%, with those strongly agreeing rising from 39% to 57%. The percentage of respondents who disagreed fell from 5% to 0% and the percentage who strongly disagreed remaining unchanged, at 1% (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "English Learners are capable of tackling complex, grade-appropriate subject matter in all disciplines/content areas with appropriate scaffolding and support" (n=167)

Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that ELs are able to participate in quality interactions with their peers around disciplinary content rose from 96% to nearly 100%, with the percentage who strongly agreed rising from 42% to 61%. The percentage who disagreed changed from 4% to 0%, though the percentage who strongly disagreed changed from 0% to 1% (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "English Learners are capable of participating in quality peer-to-peer interactions around disciplinary content" (n=167)
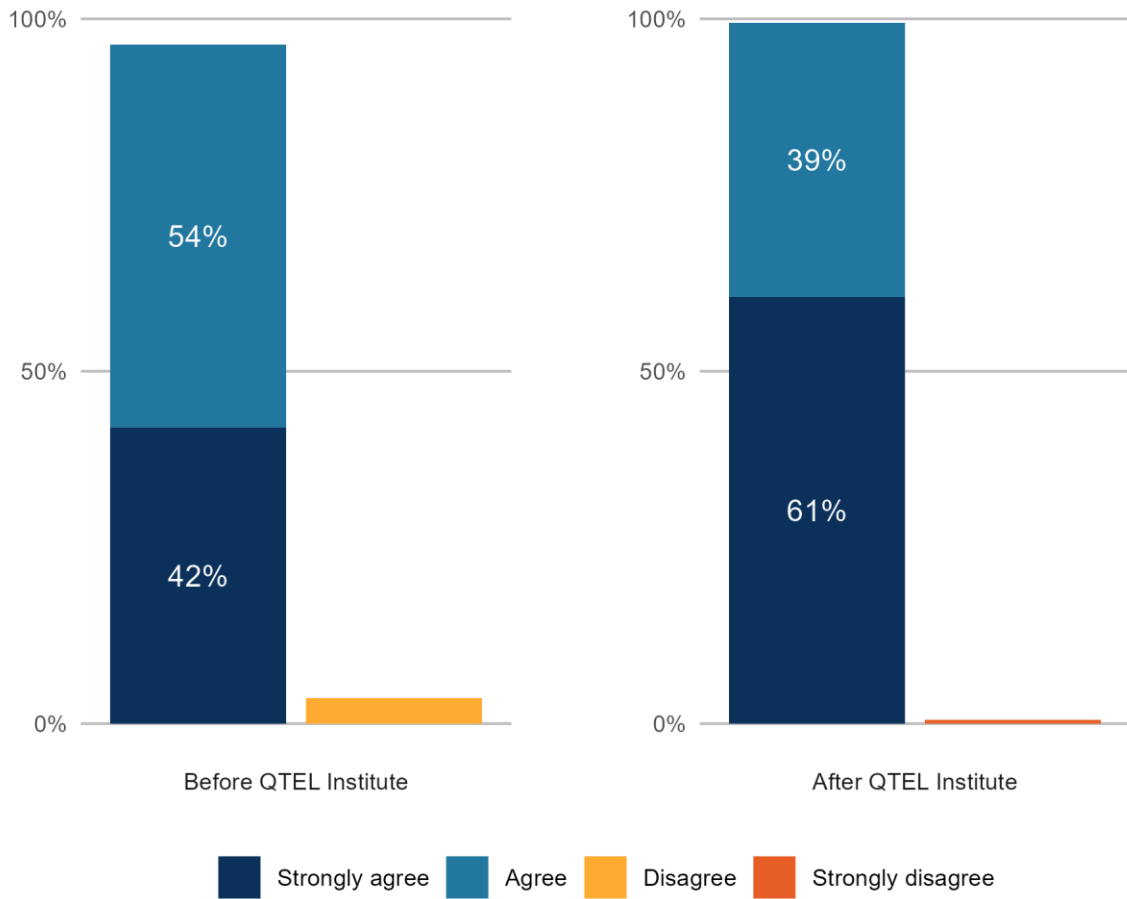
Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

The percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that ELs can learn language and content at the same time rose slightly, from an already very high 97% to 99%. Over the course of the Institute, the percentage who strongly agreed rose from 43% to 57%. The percentage of respondents who disagreed changed from 2% to 0%, though the percentage who strongly disagreed held steady at 1% (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "English Learners are able to learn content and language simultaneously" (n=167)
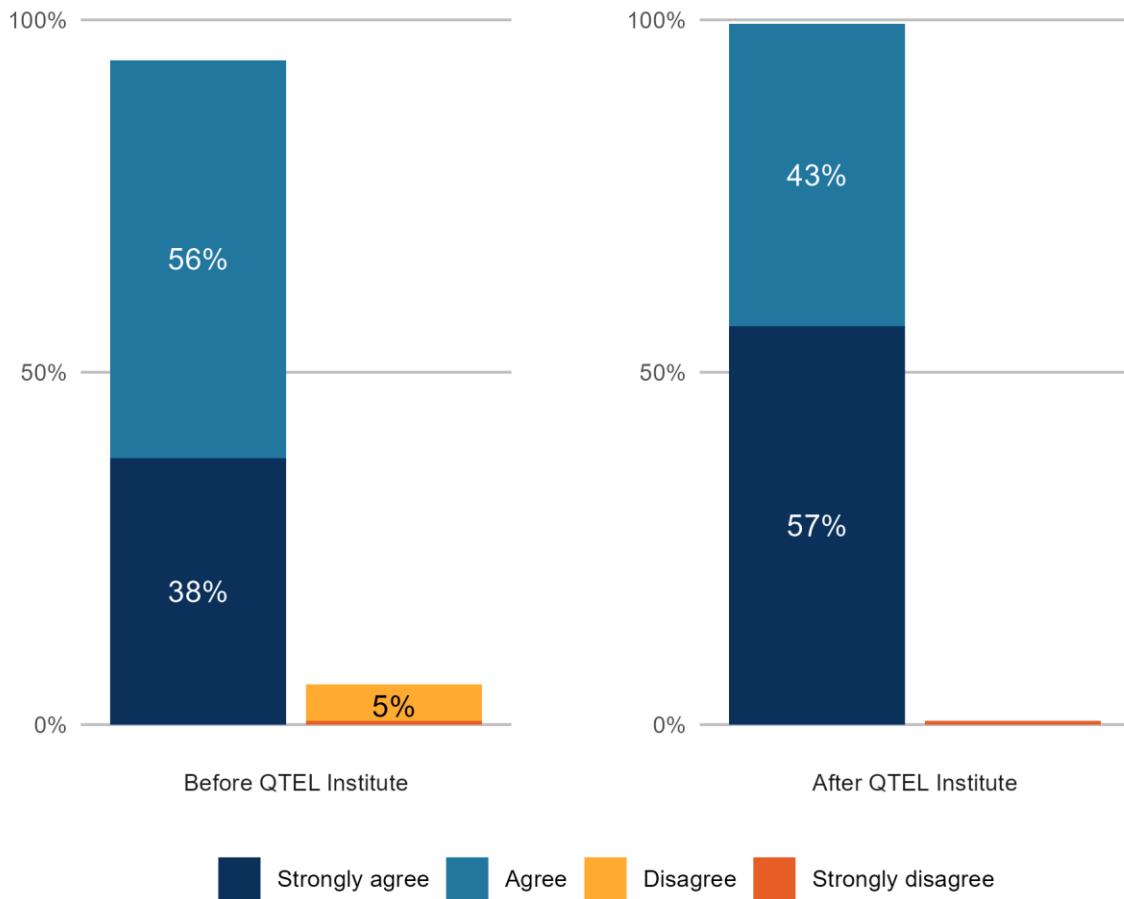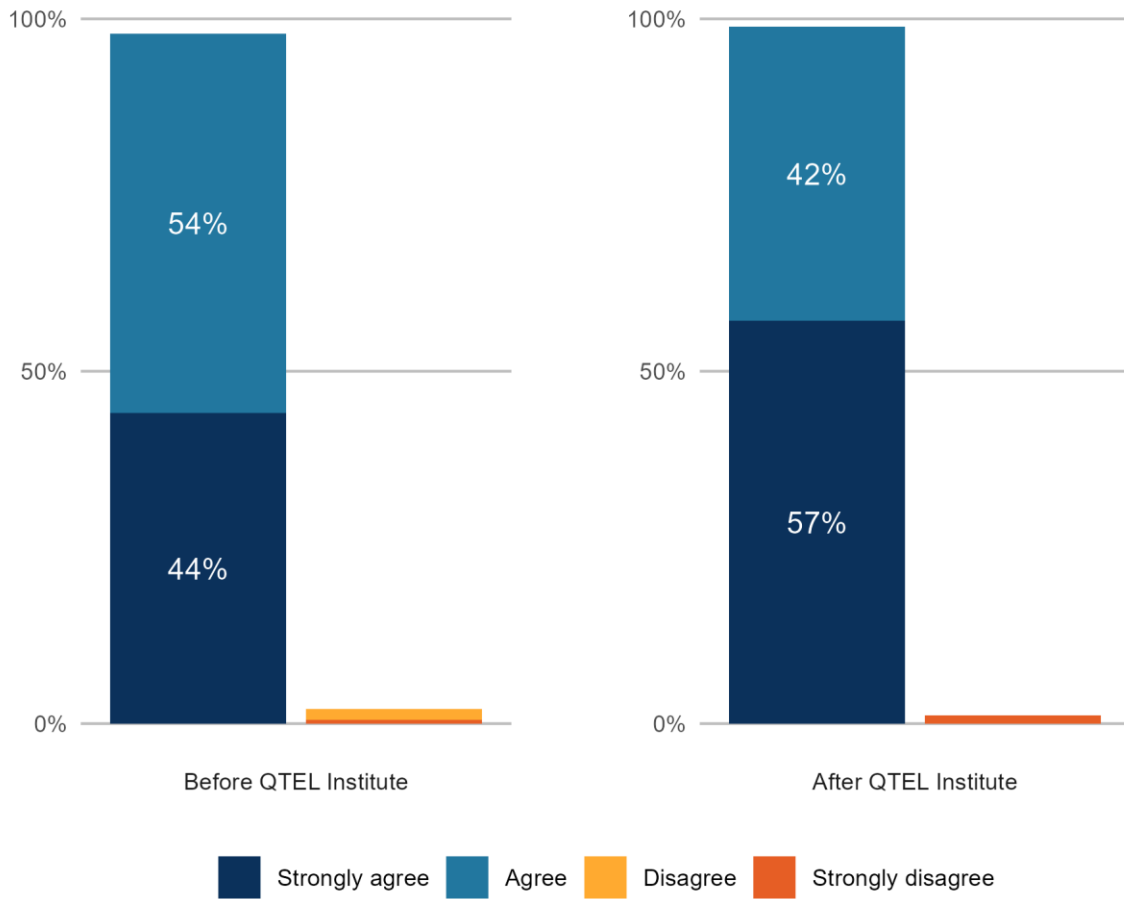

Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

After participating in the QTEL Summer Institute, respondents reported positive shifts in their attitudes and perceptions related to teaching ELs.

There was little change in the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that when ELs use their mother tongues in the classroom to collaborate with peers it can support their English language development. The percentage of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed held steady over the course of the Institute, at 93%, with the percentage strongly agreeing rising from 25% to 40%. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed stayed at 7%, with the percentage strongly disagreeing holding steady at 1% (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "English Learners' use of their primary language in the classroom to collaborate with peers can support English language development" (n=165)
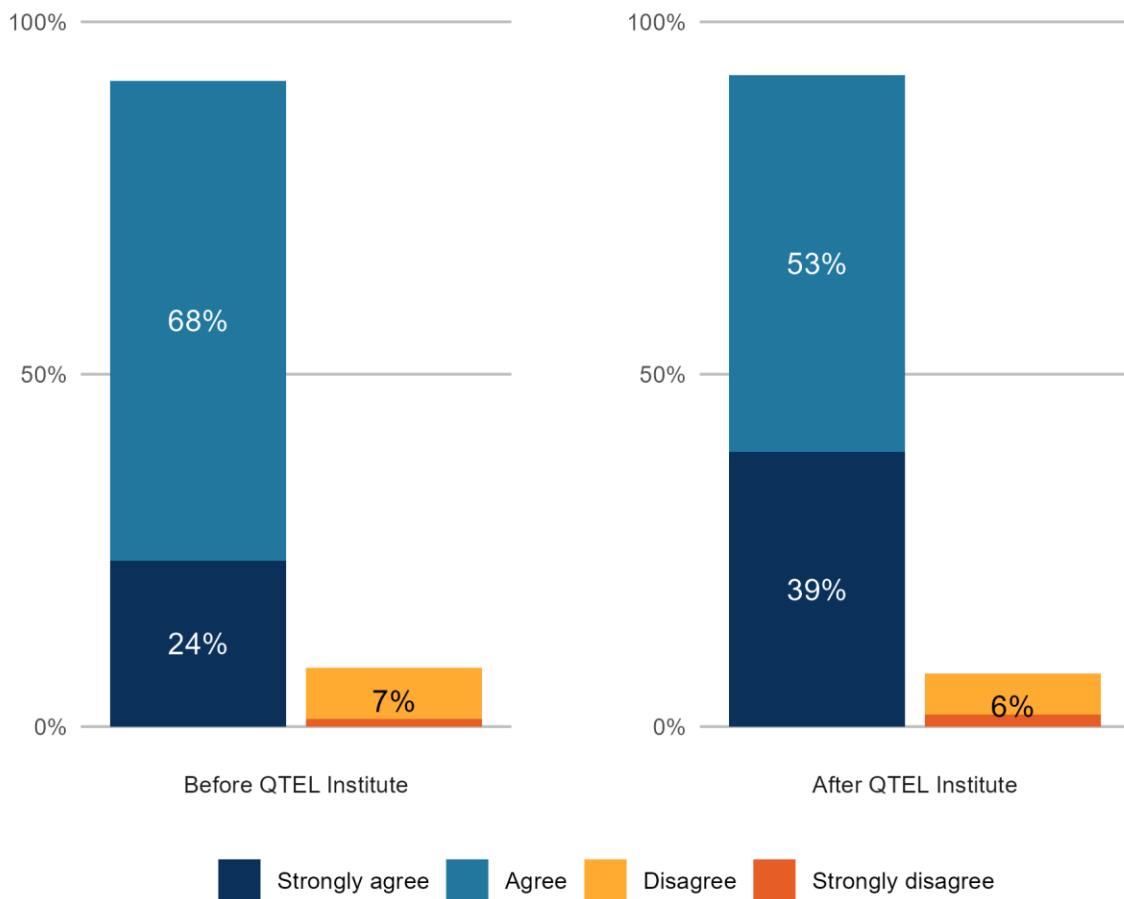
Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

The percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is primarily the responsibility of the ESL teacher at their school to support ELs rose from 75% to 81%, with the percentage who strongly disagreed rising from 32% to 42%. The percentage who either agreed or strongly agreed fell from 25% to 19%. However, the percentage who indicated that they strongly agreed rose slightly, from 5% to 6% (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "It is primarily the ESL teacher's responsibility to support the English Learners at my school site" (n=167)
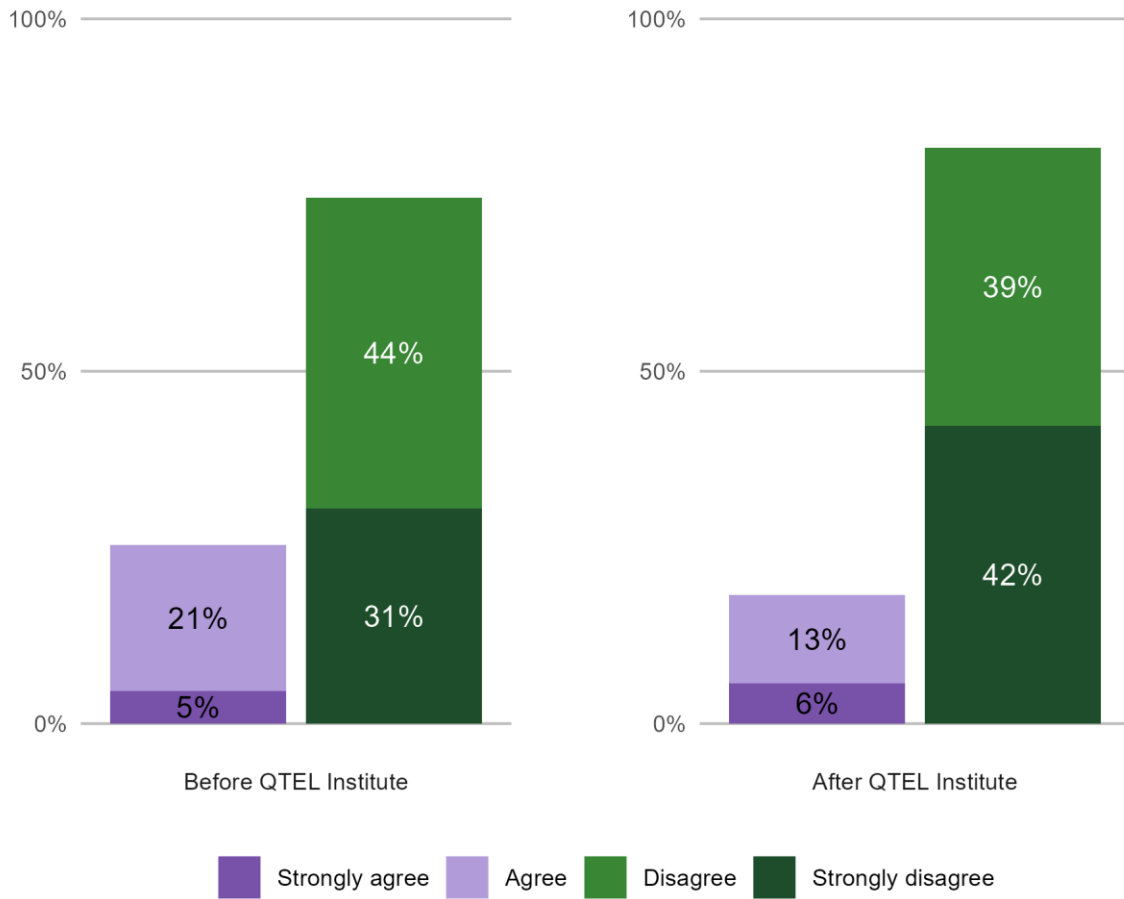
Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

The percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that ELs need to build basic skills in English before tackling content-area language rose from 58% to 92%, with the percentage strongly disagreeing rising from 10% to 43%. The percentage who agreed or strongly agreed fell from 42% to 9%, with the percentage strongly agreeing falling from 8% to 2% (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "English Learners need to build their basic language skills before they can engage with discipline/content area language" (n=163)
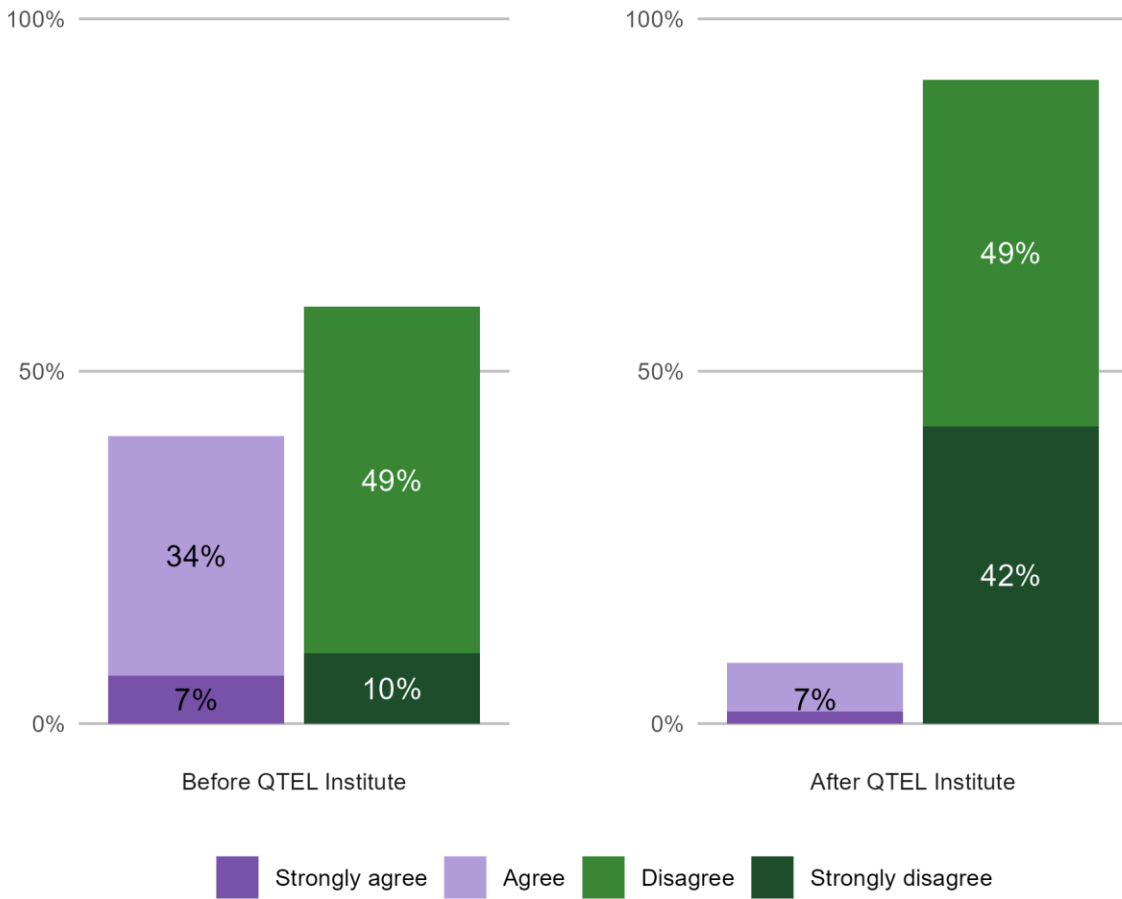
Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

The percentage of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the presence of ELs in the classroom has a negative impact on the achievement of other students rose from 89% to 96%, with the percentage who strongly disagreed rising from 52% to 70%. The percentage who agreed or strongly agreed fell from 10% to 4%, though the percentage who strongly agreed held steady, at 2% (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Changes in respondents' levels of agreement with the statement, "The presence of English Learners in mainstream classes has a negative impact on the achievement of other students" (n=165)
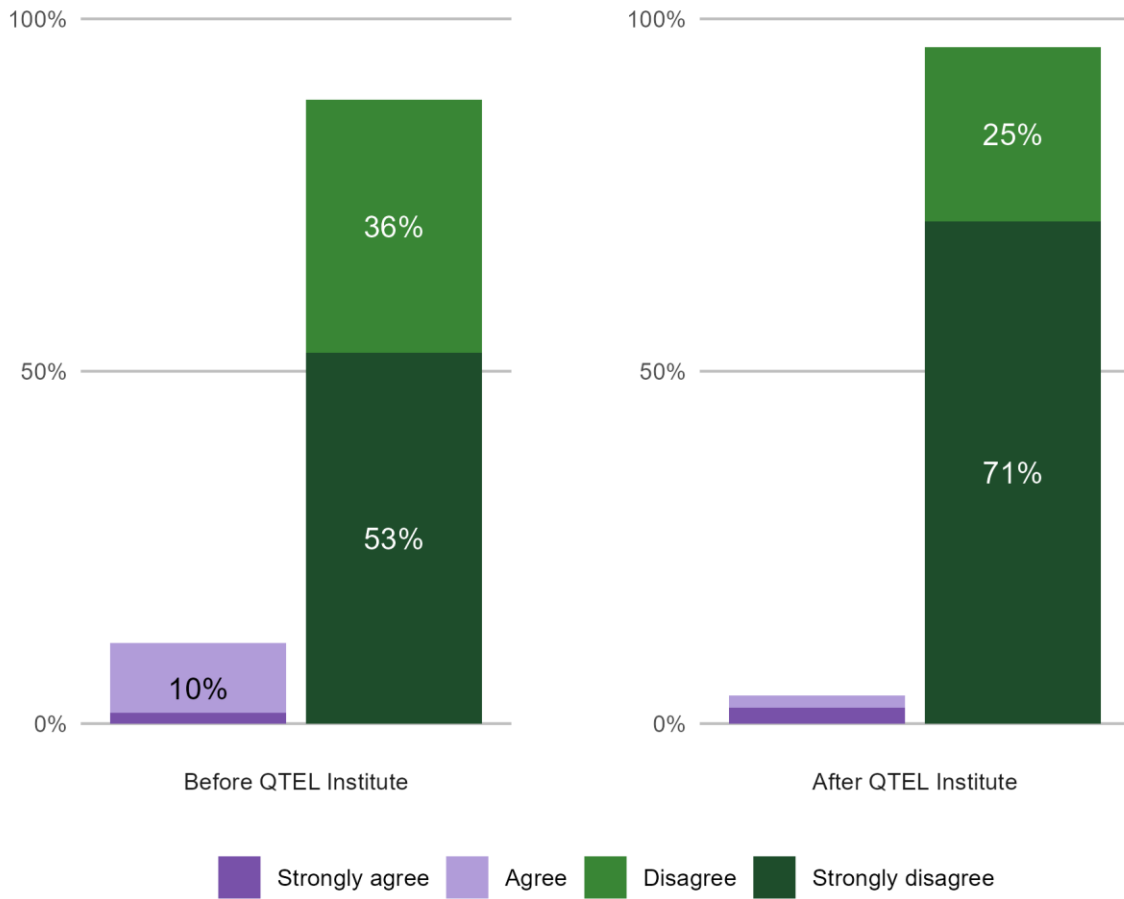
Source: QTEL Pre-Implementation Survey and Post-Institute Survey

Findings Part 2: Implementation of QTEL practices and related changes in instructional practices

To understand implementation of QTEL practices and related changes in instructional practices, we examined survey data in two ways. First, to understand implementation of the QTEL model during the 2023-24 school year, we looked at the 163 responses of all of the QTEL participants who responded to the Post-Implementation survey. This survey is separate from the Pre- and Post-Institute surveys described above in Part 1. The Post-Implementation survey is administered after all of the QTEL professional development is finished and includes questions about how often QTEL practices were used and what challenges were encountered. Second, to understand related changes in practices and participant attitudes and beliefs after QTEL implementation, we looked at the Pre-Implementation and Post-Implementation surveys. We analyzed only the responses of participants who took both the Pre-Implementation- and Post-Implementation surveys. The pre-survey was administered before the QTEL Summer Institute, before participants received any QTEL training. The Post-Implementation survey was administered during the last QTEL training, after participants had been trained in and applied QTEL best practices. Of the 196 participants who were sent the post-Implementation survey, 158 (79%) had both pre- and post-Implementation surveys that could be matched using names and/or email addresses.

How frequently did QTEL participants report using QTEL practices during the school year?

To examine QTEL program implementation, participants were asked how often they used QTEL practices. The Post-Implementation survey asked participants to rate how often they used nine specific QTEL practices, which are best practices to incorporate into lesson planning and instruction for English Learners. The Post-Implementation survey also asked participants to rate how often they engaged English Learners in the use of eight specific QTEL practices in the classroom, which are also best practices to implement with English Learners during instruction.

A large majority of respondents reported using QTEL practices at least once per week.

The Post-Implementation survey asked participants to rate how often they incorporated nine specific QTEL practices into their classroom instruction. Responses show that participants used the practices learned and reinforced in the QTEL program frequently. In fact, over 75% of participants indicated that they used all of the QTEL practices highlighted on the survey often or almost always (Figures 15 and 15a). Notably, over half (56%) of participants reported that they used scaffolds to move English Learners to higher levels of work or understanding always or daily (Figure 15). Results indicate that participants gave English Learners explicit models of language to engage in disciplinary practices and provided English Learners with amplified or 'scaffolded up' (versus simplified) language or texts less frequently (Figure 15a).

Figure 15. Respondent ratings of frequency of use of QTEL practices during the school year

How often do you do the following for your English Learners?

	Always (daily)	Often (at least once a week)	Sometimes (a couple times a month)	Rarely (once a month or less)	Never
Use scaffolds to move English Learners to higher levels of work or understanding (n=147)	56%	33%	8%		
Teach vocabulary in context and throughout a unit (n=145)	46%	41%	10%		
Provide English Learners with amplified or 'scaffolded up' (versus simplified) language or texts (n=145)	37%	39%	17%		
Provide English Learners with examples of high quality work (n=146)	39%	38%	18%		
Give English Learners explicit models of language to engage in disciplinary practices (n=143)	35%	42%	17%		

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

24

Figure 15a. Respondent ratings of frequency of use of QTEL practices during the school year

How often do you do the following for your English Learners?

Question	Always (daily)	Often (at least once a week)	Sometimes (a couple times a month)
Involve English Learners in interactions where they give extensive or elaborated responses (n=145)	37%	41%	17%
Involve English Learners in interactions where they must reason, apply ideas, argue, generalize and ask questions (n=144)	39%	39%	18%
Incorporate learning activities and experiences that require structured and quality oral interactions with disciplinary content (n=144)	49%	33%	15%
Create lesson plans that incorporate the multiple modes of communication (n=146)	47%	39%	10%

Legend: Always (daily) | Often (at least once a week) | Sometimes (a couple times a month) | Rarely (once a month or less) | Never

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

A majority of respondents reported that English Learners use QTEL practices in the classroom at least weekly.

The QTEL Post-Implementation survey also asked participants how often they engaged their students that were English Learners in eight specific QTEL practices in their classroom. Over half of respondents reported that English Learners did all eight practices at least once a week (Figures 16 and 16a). Specifically, almost 80% of respondents indicated that their English Learners were doing the following almost always (daily) or often (at least once a week): (1) participating in higher-order thinking, problem solving, and constructing new understandings their discipline/content area (Figure 16); (2) connecting discipline/content area ideas with their personal experiences (Figure 16); or (3) elaborating their thinking beyond one word answers (Figure 16a). Moreover, just over half of respondents indicated their students listened to classmates and responded to their ideas or work with peers to collaborate on a task always (daily; Figure 16a). Areas where QTEL could bolster support for teachers include: helping students produce or reflect on discipline/content area or genre-specific language and facilitating students to read challenging and interesting discipline/content area texts (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Respondent ratings of frequency of students engaging in use of QTEL practices in the classroom

How often do English Learners do the following in your classroom?

Practice	Always (daily)	Often (at least once a week)	Sometimes (a couple times a month)	Rarely (once a month or less)	Never
Read challenging and interesting discipline/content area texts (n=144)	26%	44%	18%	8%	
Produce or reflect on discipline/content area or genre-specific language (n=145)	29%	41%	21%		6%
Participate in higher-order thinking, problem solving, and constructing new understandings in my discipline/content area (n=145)	36%	45%	15%		
Connect discipline/content area ideas with their personal experiences (n=144)	40%	40%	16%		

Legend: Always (daily), Often (at least once a week), Sometimes (a couple times a month), Rarely (once a month or less), Never

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 16a. Respondent ratings of frequency of students engaging in use of QTEL practices in the classroom

How often do English Learners do the following in your classroom?

	Always (daily)	Often (at least once a week)	Sometimes (a couple times a month)	Rarely (once a month or less)	Never
Work with peers to collaborate on a task (n=143)	53%	31%	10%		
Listen to classmates and respond to their ideas (n=144)	56%	28%	11%		
Engage in sustained talk with classmates about discipline/content area ideas (n=144)	36%	39%	18%		
Elaborate upon their thinking beyond one-word answers (n=145)	48%	34%	13%		

Legend:
- Always (daily)
- Often (at least once a week)
- Sometimes (a couple times a month)
- Rarely (once a month or less)
- Never

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

28

What did participants report as the primary challenges to implementing the QTEL initiative?
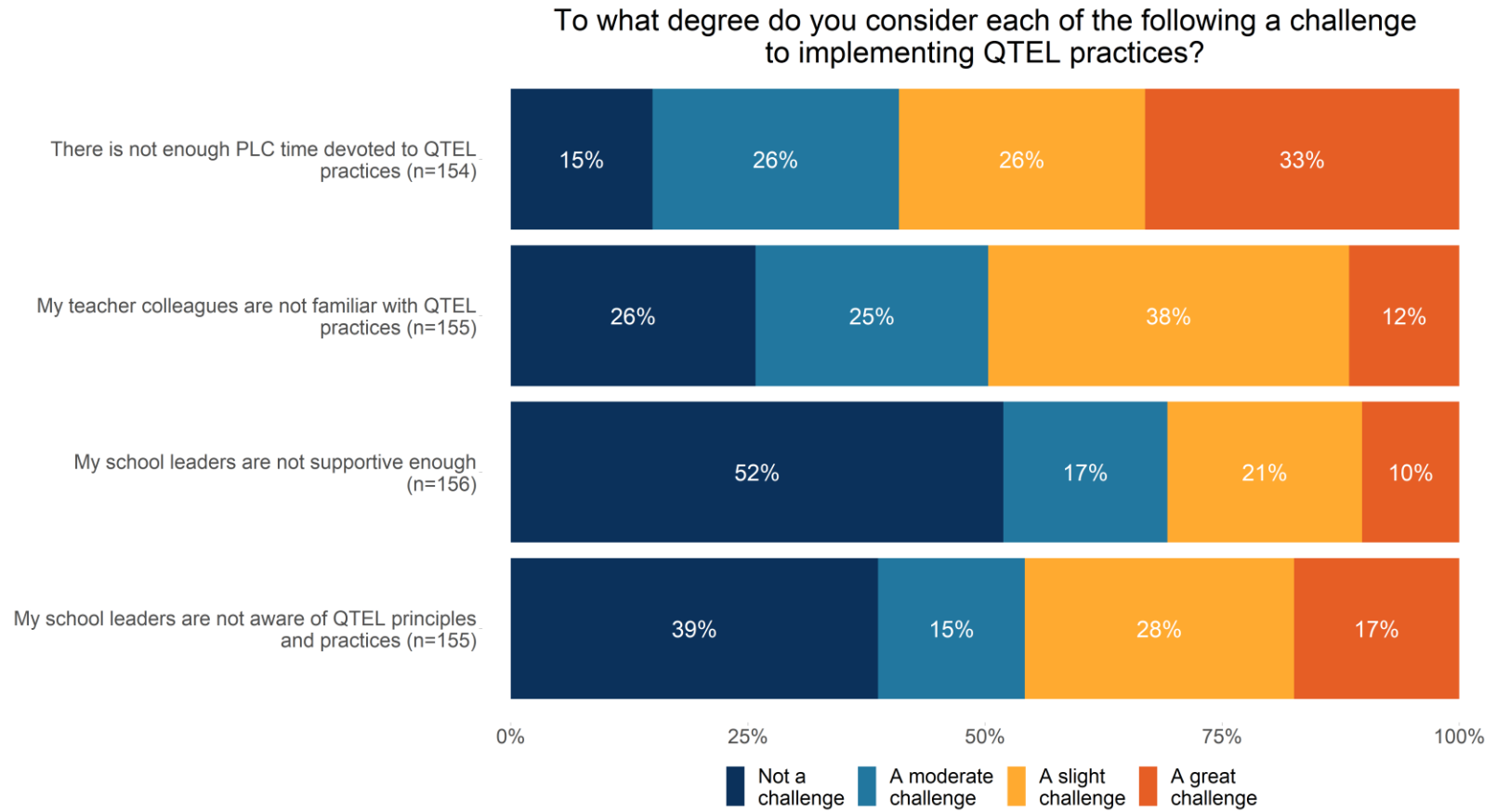
The Post-Implementation survey asked the degree to which participants considered nine factors to be a challenge to implementing QTEL practices. It also asked participants to provide open-ended feedback about additional challenges, as well as how to mitigate challenges to program implementation.

Respondents rated not having enough Professional Learning Community (PLC) time devoted to QTEL practices as a primary challenge.

Participants were asked to identify the degree to which specific factors were challenges to implementing QTEL practices. "Not enough PLC time devoted to QTEL practices" emerged as a primary challenge to QTEL implementation, with a majority of respondents (85%) noting this challenge and 59% indicating that it was a moderate or great challenge (Figure 17). Not having enough PLC time devoted to QTEL practices was also the primary challenge indicated by QTEL participants during the 2022-2023 school year.[4] The fact that their teacher colleagues and school leaders were not familiar with QTEL practices was also noted as a challenge (Figure 17), pointing to the fact that QTEL participants might want more chances to collaborate on implementing what they learned in their daily practice. Conversely, "QTEL practices are not a good fit for my subject area" was not seen as a challenge to implementation for the majority of respondents (80%) (Figure 17a).

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[4] View the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL): 2022-23 Implementation Report here: https://www.philasd.org/research/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2023/11/Quality-Teaching-for-English-Learners-2022-23-Implementation-Report_November-2023-1.pdf

Figure 17. Respondent ratings of challenges to implementing QTEL practices during the 2023-24 school year

To what degree do you consider each of the following a challenge to implementing QTEL practices?

	Not a challenge	A moderate challenge	A slight challenge	A great challenge
There is not enough PLC time devoted to QTEL practices (n=154)	15%	26%	26%	33%
My teacher colleagues are not familiar with QTEL practices (n=155)	26%	25%	38%	12%
My school leaders are not supportive enough (n=156)	52%	17%	21%	10%
My school leaders are not aware of QTEL principles and practices (n=155)	39%	15%	28%	17%

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 17a. Respondent ratings of challenges to implementing QTEL practices during the 2023-24 school year

To what degree do you consider each of the following a challenge to implementing QTEL practices?

	Not a challenge	A moderate challenge	A slight challenge	A great challenge
QTEL practices take up too much class time (n=154)	34%	19%	40%	7%
QTEL practices are still new to me (n=153)	26%	23%	43%	8%
QTEL practices are not a good fit for my subject area (n=155)	80%	8%	12%	
My classes are too large (n=155)	44%	18%	25%	13%
Individual student needs are too varied (n=155)	18%	27%	42%	13%

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

31
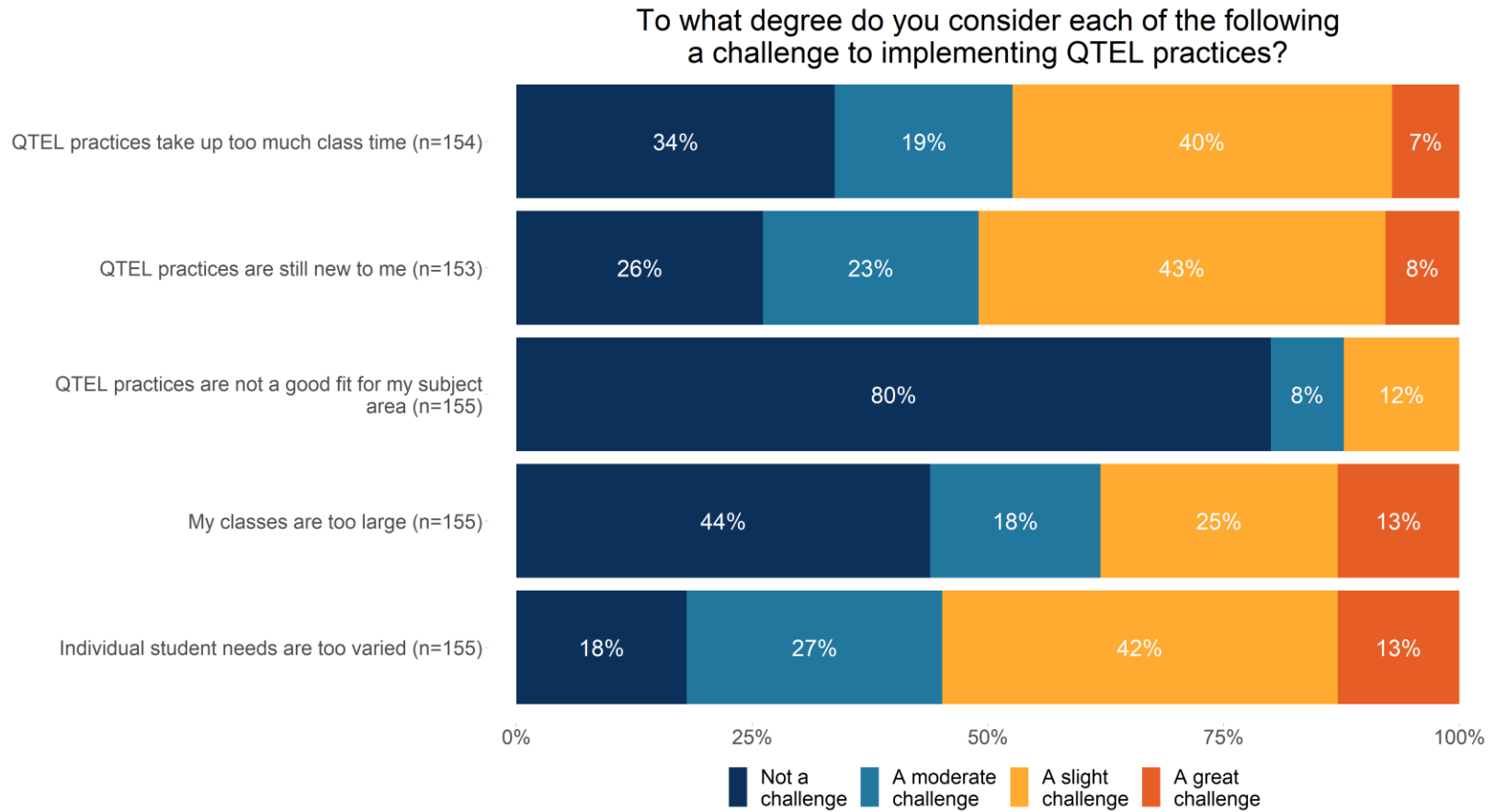
The Post-Implementation Survey asked participants to describe any other challenges in addition to the nine factors listed on the survey (listed in Figure 17 and 17a), and 46 respondents wrote in comments (comments such as "N/A" or "none" were excluded). Of those respondents, 13 described logistical challenges with planning and teaching QTEL-related lessons, including a lack of planning time, or time to collaborate with other teachers. One respondent explained, "Time to plan and prepare materials can be challenging, as QTEL lessons take a lot of planning and prep." Another respondent said, "We really need devoted time to work together. Our prep time is not enough. The teachers in the QTEL program often meet after school and on weekends without pay. We really need a dedicated time in the school day or paid after school weekly Zoom or in person meetings...."

"Time to plan and prepare materials can be challenging, as QTEL lessons take a lot of planning and prep."

Another five respondents expanded upon the challenge of trying to implement QTEL with students who are behind academically or have behavioral or attendance issues. One participant responded, "All of my students have extremely limited education/literacy in any language. I don't know how to support these students in a text-based curriculum." Another participant noted "behavior and emotional regulation practices" as a setback, while a third wrote, "Student attendance has been a challenge."

The Post-Implementation survey also asked respondents what supports could be provided to mitigate moderate or great challenges to QTEL implementation, and 96 respondents wrote in comments (comments such as "N/A" or "none" were excluded). Thirty-five respondents suggested the inclusion of sessions on QTEL practices in professional developments and professional learning communities, or that more teachers attend the QTEL Institute. One respondent suggested that "PLC time could be spent sharing and collaborating QTEL strategies," while another recommended "[more] training for EVERYONE involved with the teaching of newcomers regarding QTEL principles." A third respondent suggested, "Encouraging teachers to join QTEL in future sessions. Promoting it in our weekly updates for teachers to sign up."

Twenty-three respondents recommended that school administrators be taught the importance of QTEL practices, with some saying they want administrators to attend QTEL themselves. One respondent said, "Administration should be trained on QTEL.... Teachers are experiencing much frustration with having to defend best practice to administrators. Admin should know best practices for ELs also." Another respondent recommended, "Please have required QTEL training for school and network administrators.... QTEL is impossible to implement if this is not allowed and encouraged."

"Administration should be trained on QTEL.... Teachers are experiencing much frustration with having to defend best practice to administrators."

Another 24 respondents reiterated that they need more time to incorporate QTEL strategies into their lesson planning and collaborate with colleagues around QTEL practices. One respondent explained, "We need more time to collaborate with colleagues and leadership around planning for English language learners." Another respondent expressed a wish for "[more] planning time to work with content teachers I co-teach with," saying, "Quality work takes time."
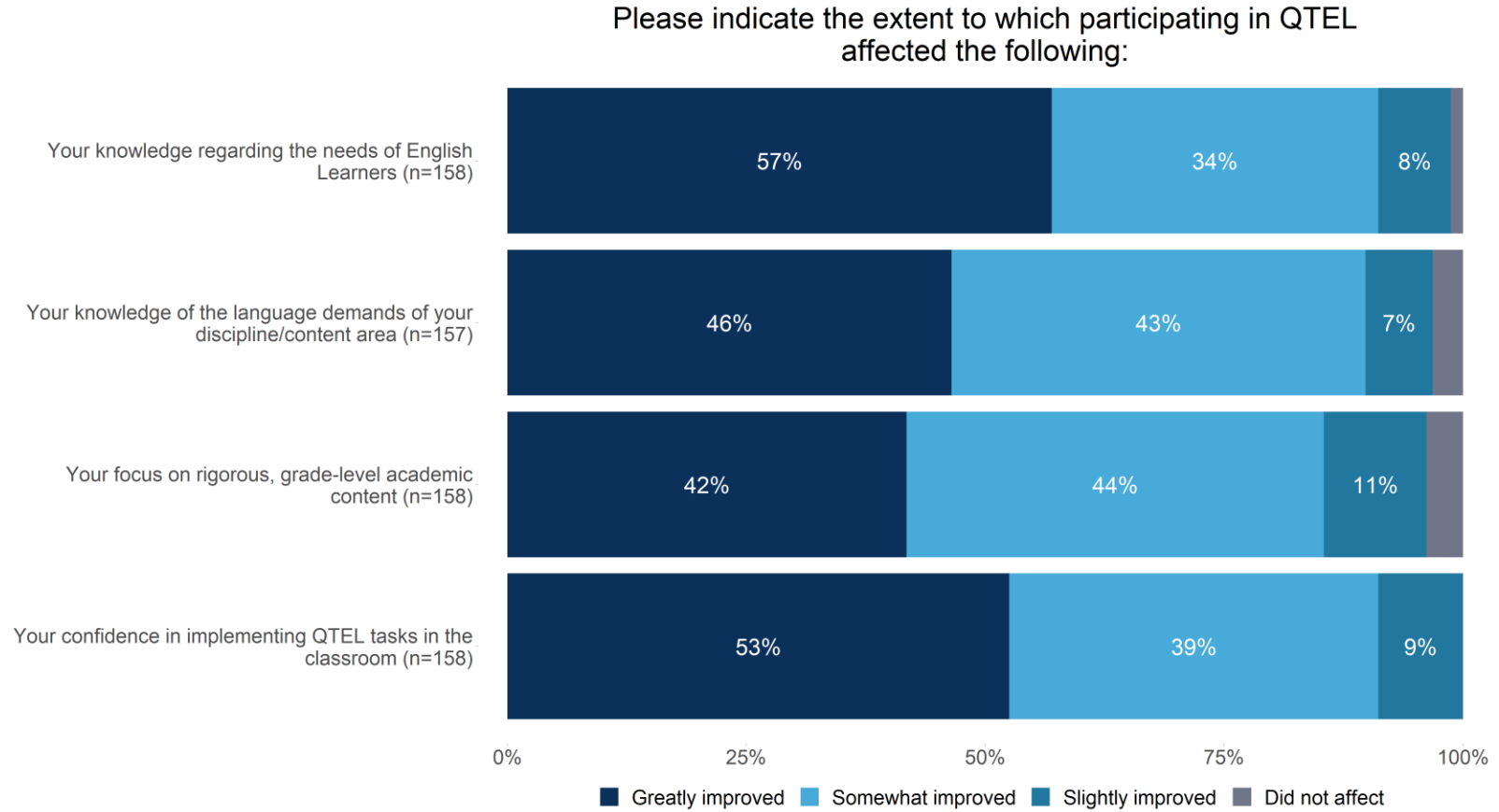
To what extent did participants report implementation of the QTEL model changing their approach to teaching ELs?

To examine changes in participants' practice as a result of QTEL implementation, the Post-Implementation survey asked participants to indicate how participating in QTEL affected their approach to teaching ELs. The Post-Implementation survey also asked participants to provide open-ended feedback about which aspects of their teaching they think were most affected by implementing the QTEL model. Finally, it asked participants to provide open-ended feedback about any other aspects of their teaching that were affected by implementing the QTEL model.

Respondents reported that participating in QTEL greatly improved their approach to teaching ELs.
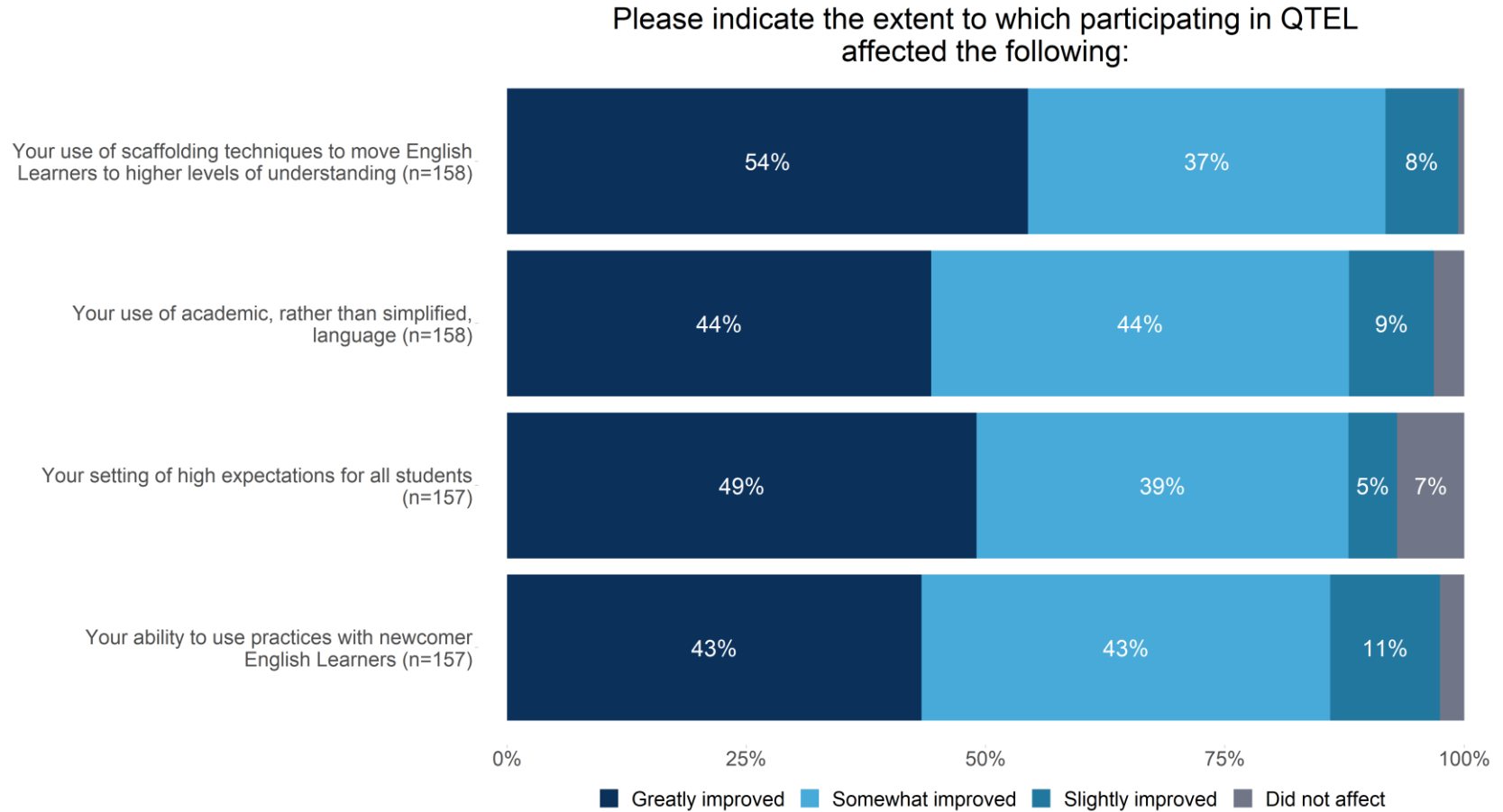
All respondents reported that participating in QTEL improved their confidence in implementing QTEL tasks in the classroom and almost all (98%) reported that participating in QTEL improved their knowledge regarding the needs of English Learners (Figure 18). One area of note is that 55% of respondents reported great improvement in their use of scaffolding techniques to move students to higher levels of understanding (Figure 18a)—a practice that was reported to be used daily by a majority of respondents (see Figure 15 above).

Figure 18. Respondent ratings of changes in their own teaching as a result of participating in QTEL

Please indicate the extent to which participating in QTEL affected the following:

	Greatly improved	Somewhat improved	Slightly improved	Did not affect
Your knowledge regarding the needs of English Learners (n=158)	57%	34%	8%	
Your knowledge of the language demands of your discipline/content area (n=157)	46%	43%	7%	
Your focus on rigorous, grade-level academic content (n=158)	42%	44%	11%	
Your confidence in implementing QTEL tasks in the classroom (n=158)	53%	39%	9%	

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

34

Figure 18a. Respondent ratings of changes in their own teaching as a result of participating in QTEL

Please indicate the extent to which participating in QTEL affected the following:

	Greatly improved	Somewhat improved	Slightly improved	Did not affect
Your use of scaffolding techniques to move English Learners to higher levels of understanding (n=158)	54%	37%	8%	
Your use of academic, rather than simplified, language (n=158)	44%	44%	9%	
Your setting of high expectations for all students (n=157)	49%	39%	5%	7%
Your ability to use practices with newcomer English Learners (n=157)	43%	43%	11%	

Source: QTEL Post-Implementation Survey

Participants were also asked which of the above aspects of their teaching they think were most affected by implementing the QTEL model, and why (see Figure 18 and Figure 18a). Of the survey respondents, 137 wrote feedback (excluding responses such as "not sure"), 45 of which mentioned scaffolding. One respondent wrote about "Learning how to better scaffold for students, because ELs need to build their confidence that they can tackle difficult texts with a few supports. This builds their confidence in English."

"My knowledge of the needs of the English Language Learners most affected my ability and success in implementing the QTEL model. I think by learning the needs, it builds a compassion inside of me that wants to do whatever is possible to help support each student's content and language growth."

Seventeen respondents cited their knowledge of the needs of English Learners as being most affected by QTEL, with one teacher saying, "My knowledge of the needs of the English Language Learners most affected my ability and success in implementing the QTEL model. I think by learning the needs, it builds a compassion inside of me that wants to do whatever is possible to help support each student's content and language growth. Without that knowledge or compassion, the strategies just become another 'thing' to check off the list." Another teacher wrote, "My knowledge regarding the needs of English language learners has changed, in that I used to feel that translation needed to coincide with instruction, but that's not the case," while a third explained that QTEL most affected their "knowledge [of] the needs of English Learners because I now understand the importance of English Learners' communication with English speaking students."

In addition, participants were also asked if any other aspects of their teaching were affected by participating in QTEL and, if so, to describe them. Of the survey respondents, 52 wrote comments, with 14 respondents mentioning that they use aspects of the QTEL model across all subject areas, and that it benefits all students, not just English Learners. One respondent wrote that "every aspect of my teaching is affected. All of my lessons are planned and designed with three moments in mind." A second respondent wrote that QTEL "made me more aware about the types of scaffolding I can use for my regular classes." Another eight respondents wrote that QTEL affected the ways they collaborate with other teachers. One participant explained that QTEL "provided great opportunity for collaboration and meeting of other teachers in my grade band across the district." A second participant wrote, "My relationships with my colleagues deepened as a result of my participation in QTEL."

"My relationships with my colleagues deepened as a result of my participation in QTEL."

In what ways did respondents find that implementing the QTEL model benefited students?

The Post-Implementation survey asked respondents two open-ended questions about the benefits of implementing the QTEL model to students. First, it asked: "From your perspective, what were the primary benefits of QTEL for EL students in your classroom?" Second, it asked: "From your perspective, what were the primary benefits of QTEL for non-EL students in your classroom?"

Respondents felt that implementing the QTEL model increased EL students' engagement in class and interactions with other students, their academic achievement, and their use of their own languages in class.

> "Students this year are communicating more with one another. Students this year are interacting more profoundly with grade/age-appropriate content discourse."

Of the survey respondents, 130 wrote comments about the benefits of QTEL for EL students, with 40 of those respondents noting that QTEL increased student participation and engagement with class content, as well as their interactions with other students. One respondent explained: "I believe that the interactive nature of QTEL is great for EL students. Students have an innate desire to make sense of the world around them. Meaningful interactions are essential for student success." A second respondent wrote of QTEL's effect on their students that it "built their capacity for learning high level complex rigorous skills and supported them in being an ACTIVE learner in the classroom," while a third respondent wrote, "Students this year are communicating more with one another. Students this year are interacting more profoundly with grade/age-appropriate content discourse."

Another 17 respondents wrote about QTEL's effect on student performance. For example, one respondent explained that QTEL benefited their students by "Giving access to all of our many EL students through the use of the various scaffolds to help engage them in the lessons. Our Kindergarten has had TREMENDOUS success with the students -- NONE of them testing "red" or below basic." Another respondent wrote of their EL students that "They were able to do rigorous work that at times was even higher than the regular education students."

> "[EL students] were able to do rigorous work that at times was even higher than the regular education students."

Five respondents also wrote that implementing QTEL in the classroom helped them encourage EL students to use their mother tongues in class. One teacher said, "I am able to more confidently include [students'] L1 throughout lessons." Another teacher wrote that the primary benefit of QTEL for EL students was "Quality interactive activities that promote using languages 1&2."

Sixty-four respondents interpreted the survey question about benefits of QTEL for their EL students as asking about what they had started doing differently in the classroom in order to help ELs. Their answers centered around better lesson planning and scaffolding, mentioned by 29 respondents, as well as their improved knowledge and awareness of the needs of EL students, mentioned by 13 respondents, and their collaboration with other teachers, mentioned by six respondents.

Respondents indicated that implementing the QTEL model benefited non-EL students by increasing their interactions with other students and their engagement in class overall, and their academic achievement.

Of the survey respondents, 116 wrote comments about the benefits of QTEL for non-EL students (excluding comments that indicated the respondent does not teach non-EL students), with 48 respondents writing that QTEL practices led to increased engagement in class and interactions with other students among non-ELs. One respondent explained: "Those students are learning how to have academic discussions and debates with peers. They are learning to be tolerant of others. They are learning the beauty of languages other than English." Another respondent wrote, "QTEL provided interactive tasks (i.e. Mind Mirror, double entry journals) that are engaging and productive for all students," while a third respondent stated that the biggest benefit they saw from QTEL for non-ELs was "Pushing the non-English learners to take part in conversation with English learners."

"Those students are learning how to have academic discussions and debates with peers. They are learning to be tolerant of others. They are learning the beauty of languages other than English."

"The strategies and ideas learned in QTEL, have helped all learners access the curriculum. Some non ELs who might be struggling benefited from the scaffolding. But also, my lessons were more fun and improved student engagement."

In addition, 20 respondents specifically noted that their non-EL students also performed better academically after exposure to QTEL teaching strategies. One respondent wrote, "The strategies and ideas learned in QTEL, have helped all learners access the curriculum. Some non ELs who might be struggling benefited from the scaffolding. But also, my lessons were more fun and improved student engagement." Another respondent explained, "Many students do not read or discourse at grade-level; providing the support and scaffold for the diverse population normalizes the use of such tools for all students, boosting achievement across the board."

Seventeen teachers interpreted the question on benefits for non-EL students as a question about what strategies they were using in the classroom that helped non-ELs. Ten of those respondents cited their use of scaffolding and better lesson planning in general.

Findings Part 3: Respondents' attitudes and beliefs related to teaching ELs

To what extent do participants agree with statements about their ability to teach ELs and their attitudes and beliefs related to teaching ELs after the 2023-24 QTEL program year?

To examine participant knowledge of best practices and attitudes about teaching English Learners after implementation of the QTEL model during the 2023-24 school year, participants were asked the extent to which they agree with statements about (1) their ability to teach ELs and (2) their beliefs about the capabilities of ELs; and (3) their attitudes and beliefs related to teaching ELs.

After participating in QTEL, respondents felt positively about their ability to teach ELs.

The Pre- and Post-Implementation surveys asked respondents two questions about their ability to teach ELs. Over 90% of respondents agreed with both statements after the QTEL program: I have the professional preparation necessary to meet the needs of ELs" and "I can design effective instruction for ELs." First, the participants who agreed or strongly agreed that they have the professional preparation necessary to meet the needs of ELs increased from 64% to 94% from the beginning to the end of the QTEL program (Figure 19). Similarly, the participants who agreed or strongly agreed that they can design effective instruction for ELs increased from 71% to 93% from the beginning to the end of the QTEL program (Figure 20).

Figure 19. Respondents' agreement with statement "I have the professional preparation necessary to meet the needs of ELs" (n=147)
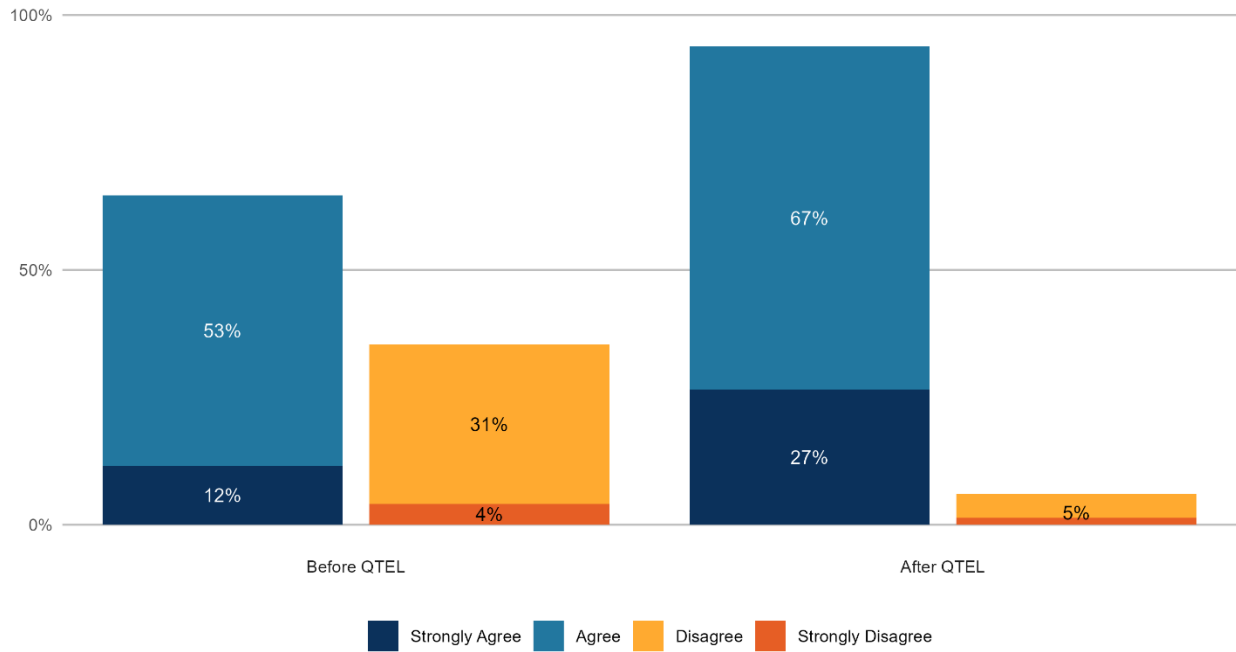
Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 20. Respondents' agreement with statements "I can design effective instruction for ELs" (n=147).
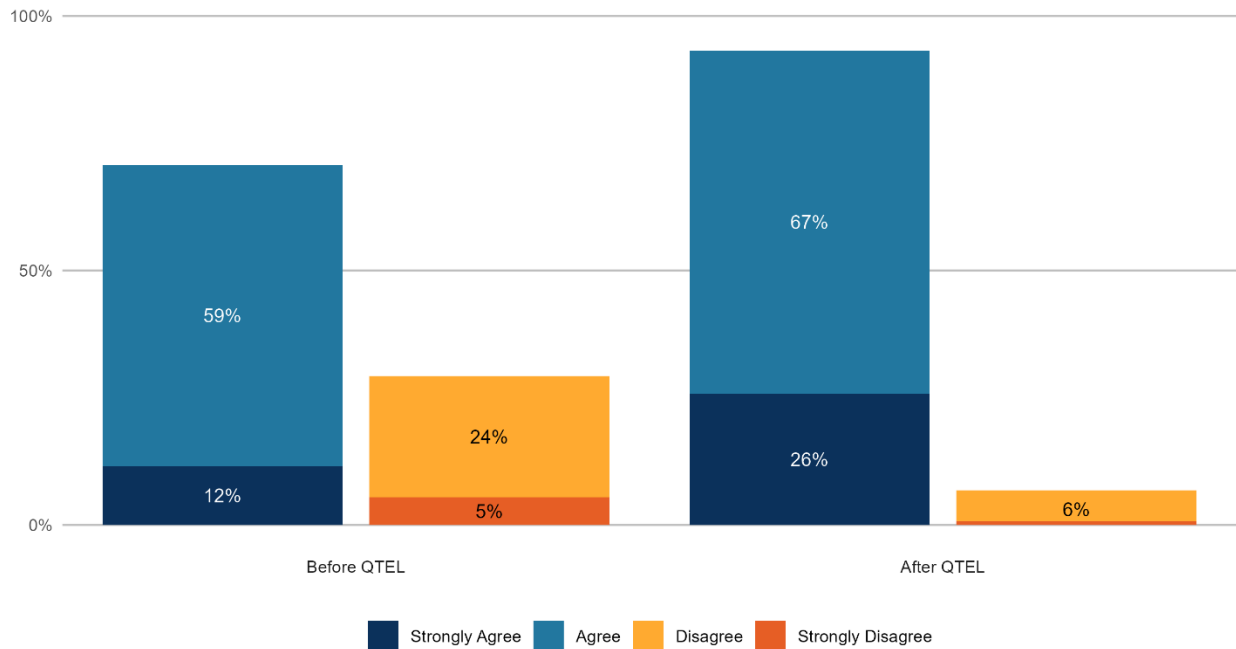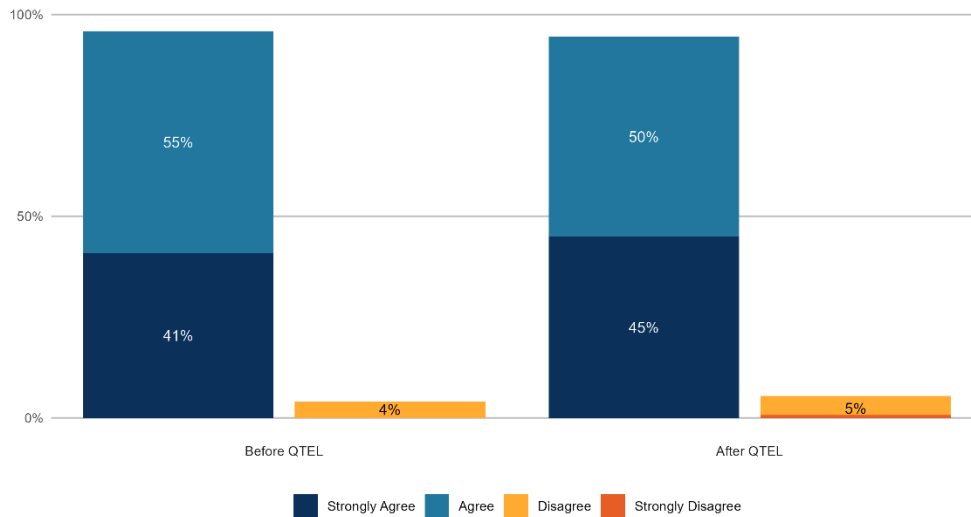

Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

## Respondents were positive about the capabilities of ELs before and after QTEL.

Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following four statements before and after participation in QTEL: (1) ELs are capable of tackling complex, grade-appropriate subject matter in all disciplines; (2) ELs can interact with peers around content; (3) ELs can learn English and content language simultaneously; and (4) agreement with the statement that EL home language in classroom supports English learning (Figures 21-24).

Figure 21. Respondents' agreement with statement "ELs are capable of tackling complex, grade-appropriate subject matter in all disciplines." (n=147)
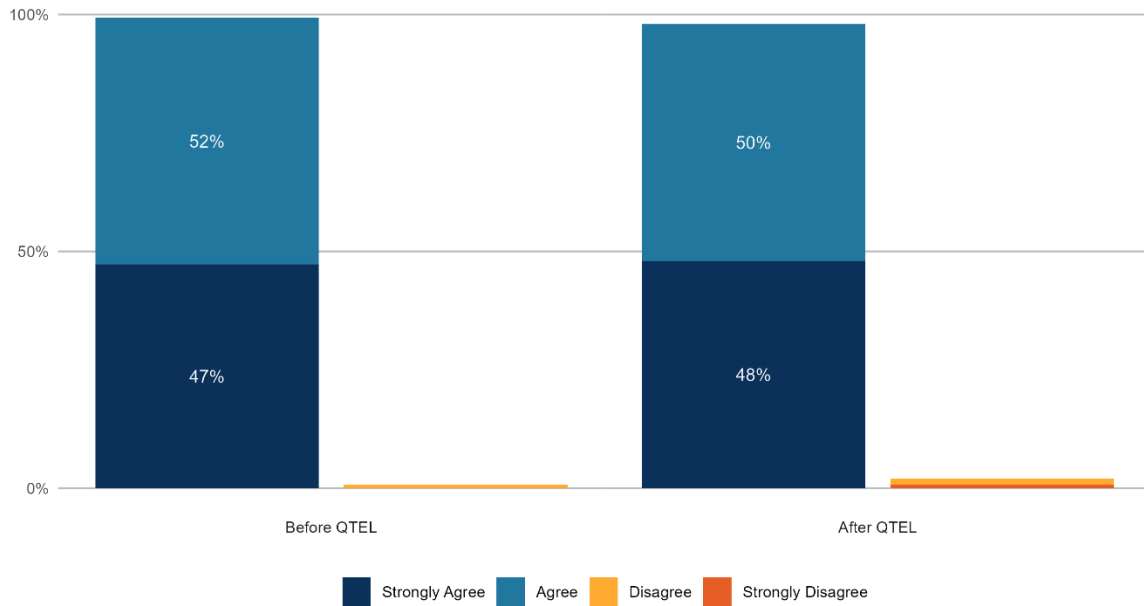

Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 22. Respondents' agreement with statement "ELs can interact with peers around content." (n=147)
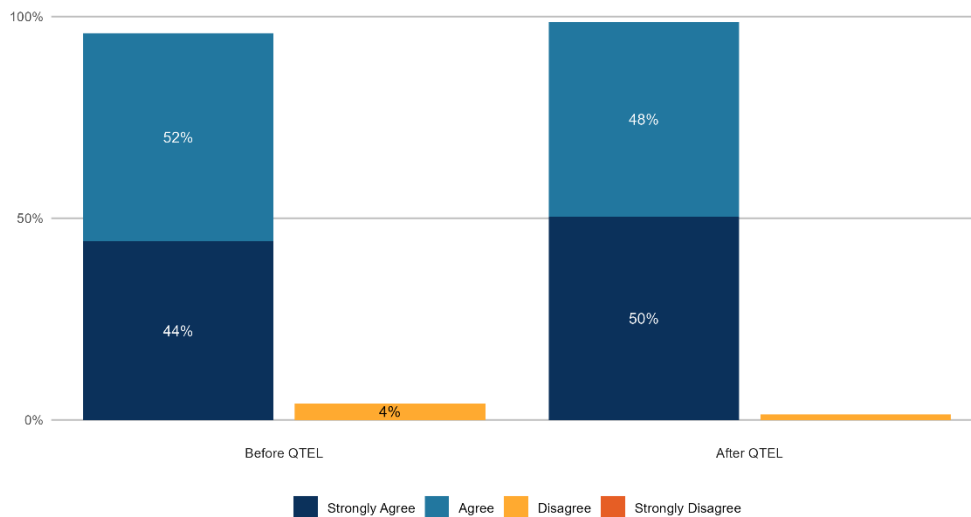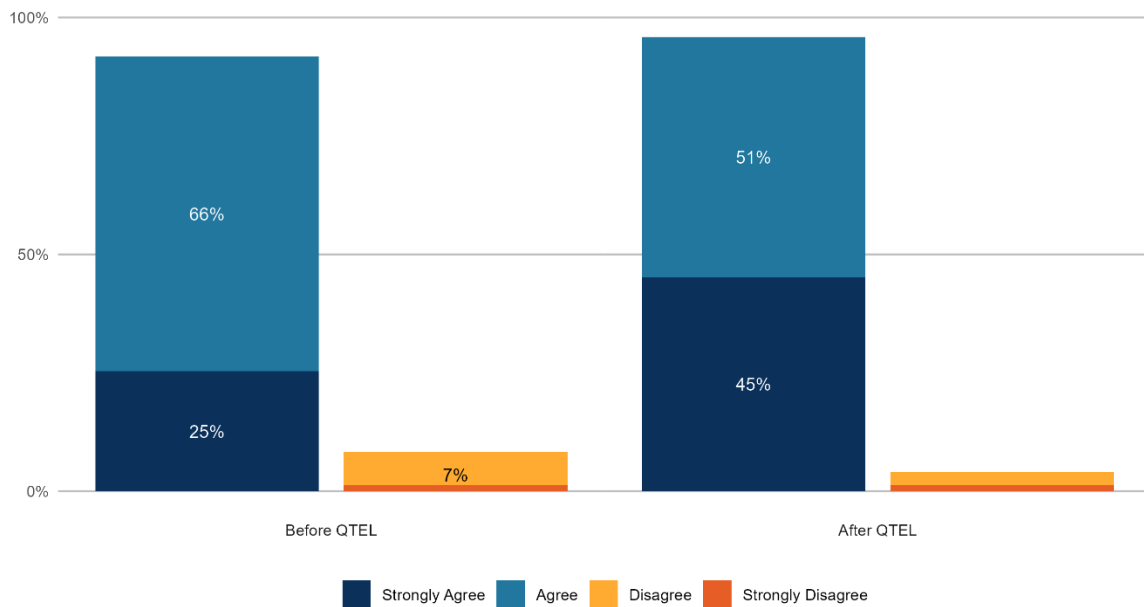

Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 23. Respondents' agreement with statement "ELs can learn English and content language simultaneously." (n=147)

Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 24. Respondents' agreement with the statement that EL home language in classroom supports English learning (n=146)
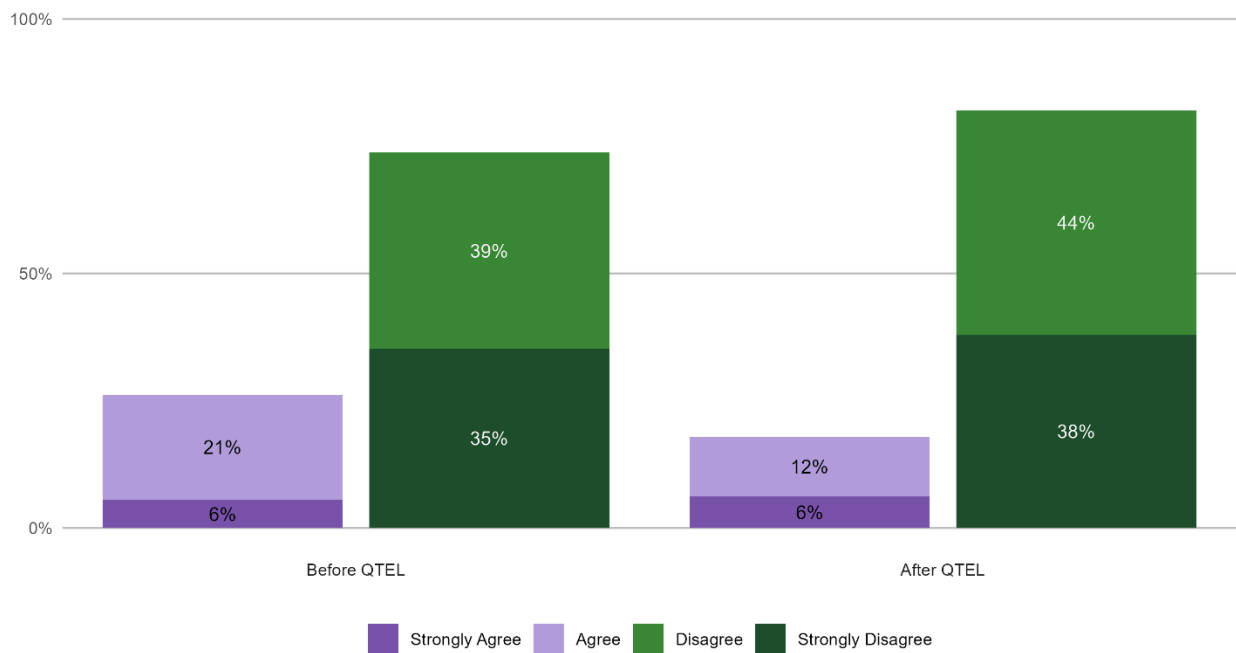

Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

After participating in QTEL, respondents reported positive attitudes and beliefs related to teaching EL students.

Participants were asked about their attitudes and beliefs related to teaching EL students. Note that in the following questions, disagreement indicates positive attitudes and beliefs related to teaching EL students. The number of participants that disagreed that EL support was mostly the responsibility of the EL teacher at their school increased from 74% to 82% after QTEL participation, indicating that more QTEL participants saw teaching ELs as a shared responsibility after program participation (Figure 25). Similarly, more participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that EL students needed to improve their language skills before learning class content after their participation in the program (74%) than before (60%), which indicates that QTEL participants learned to scaffold ELs access to class content (Figure 26). Almost all respondents (90%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that EL students had a negative impact on other students in the class both before and after participation in QTEL (Figure 27).

Figure 25. Respondents' agreement with the statement that EL support is mostly the responsibility of the EL teacher at their school (n=145)
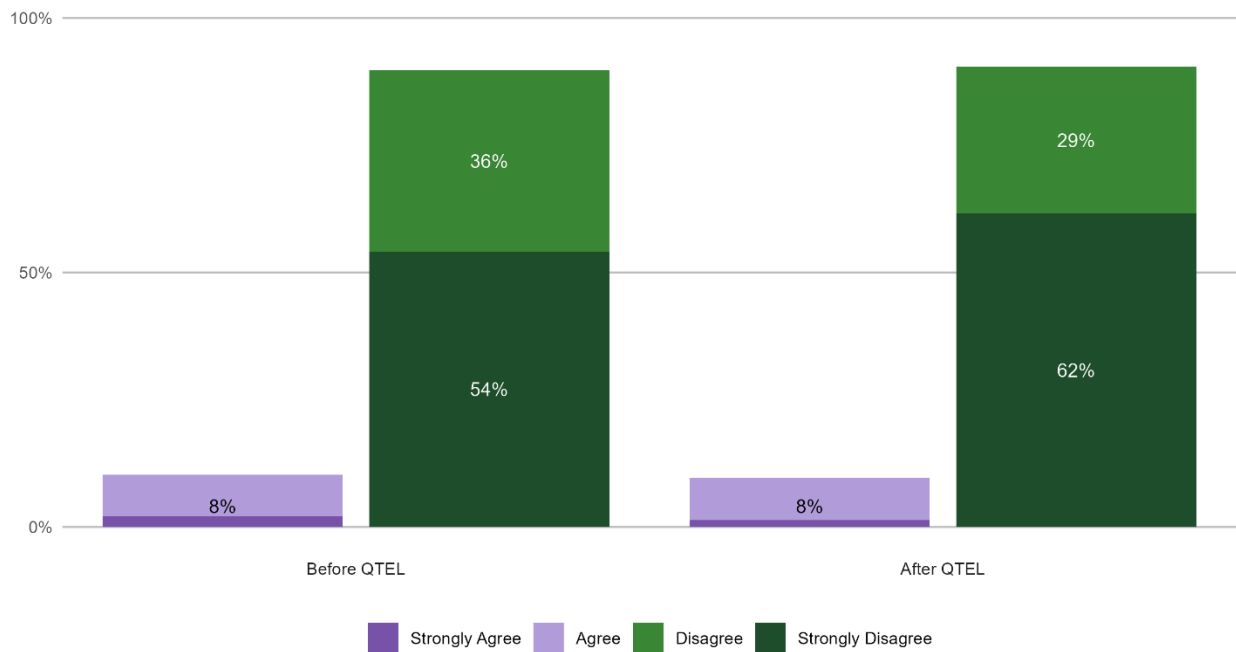

Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 26. Respondents' agreement with the statement that EL students need to improve language skills before learning class content (n=145)
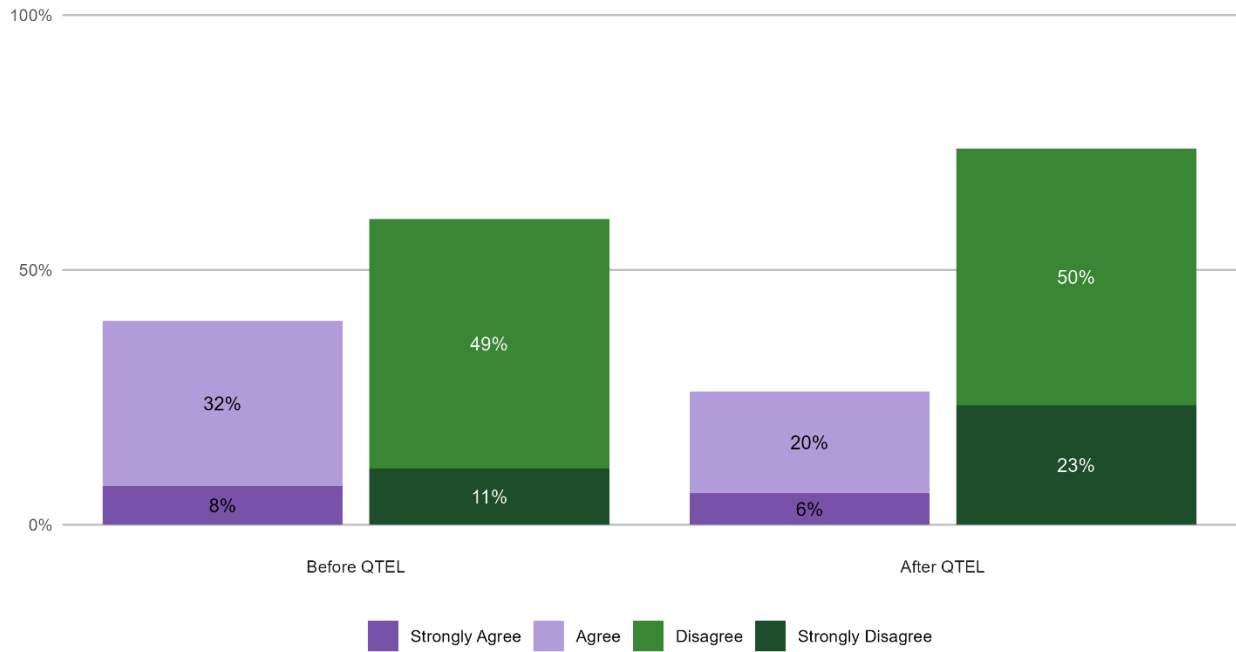
Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

Figure 27. Respondents' agreement with the statement that EL students have a negative impact on other students in class (n=146)

Source: QTEL Pre- and Post-Implementation Survey

Conclusions

QTEL Professional Development

QTEL training benefited teachers at 42 SDP schools. QTEL training began with 215 teachers and staff attending a Summer Institute. Two additional training sessions were held during the 2023-24 school year. ORE conducted three surveys to better understand the satisfaction, implementation, and associated benefits of the QTEL model: (1) a survey at the beginning of the QTEL summer Institute before participants received any QTEL training (Pre-Implementation survey); (2) a survey at the end of the QTEL Institute (Post-Institute survey); and (3) a survey at the end of the program year (Post-Implementation survey). Survey responses indicate that QTEL greatly improved teachers' focus on rigorous, grade-level academic content and their setting of expectations for all students. Moreover, a majority of respondents indicated that QTEL greatly improved their understanding of quality instruction for ELs, specifically their knowledge of scaffolding and ability to design useful scaffolds for ELs. Results indicate that participating in the QTEL left participants feeling better prepared to effectively teach ELs.

QTEL Implementation

Results indicate that QTEL participants used what they learned during the school year. A large majority of respondents reported using QTEL practices themselves at least once per week and that their EL students were engaged in QTEL practices in the classroom at least weekly. Survey responses indicated that a primary challenge to implementing QTEL was not having enough Professional Learning Community (PLC) time devoted to QTEL. The fact that their teacher colleagues and school leaders were not familiar with QTEL practices was also noted as a challenge, pointing to the fact that QTEL participants might want more chances to collaborate on implementing what they learned in their daily practice. Conversely, "QTEL practices are not a good fit for my subject area" was not seen as a challenge to implementation for the majority of respondents, which indicates that QTEL is beneficial for teachers across subject areas. In open-ended comments about challenges, participants indicated that in addition to more collaboration time, they needed more time to prepare materials and lessons. Additionally, respondents emphasized a need for administrators to be trained in QTEL best practices.

What is next?

The School District of Philadelphia has been participating in the WestEd Apprentice Professional Developers (APDs) program that develops SDP staff to provide QTEL training (historically provided by an external partnership with WestEd). Over the course of two years, APDs participated in four phases of activities (lesson planning, observing classrooms and providing teacher feedback, co-leading Institute with support) and completed benchmark tasks (e.g., design and present an original professional development workshop during Institute) to reach four goals:

1. Participate in foundational experiences and develop understanding of instructional design grounded in sociocultural theory.
2. Observe, notice, and assess teacher understanding in institutes to improve their learning.
3. Effectively lead institutes that connect theory and practice for teachers to develop expertise.
4. Design professional learning opportunities that respond to teacher needs and discern and critique underlying theories.

Cohort 1 of the APDs includes 8 SDP teachers and staff who were certified as facilitators of QTEL Building the Base Institutes and certified to design tailored professional learning opportunities for current and future School District of Philadelphia staff at the end of the 2023-24 school year. They will conduct QTEL professional development during the 2024-25 school year. Cohort 2, comprising seven APDs, will be certified at the end of the 2024-25 school year. The APDs will allow SDP to continue QTEL training independently in subsequent years.

After completing the apprenticeship, APDs will be equipped to deliver continuous professional development to district teachers using both WestEd and District developed principles, processes, and tools. This will enable the district to offer professional learning sessions to a broader range of teachers and create learning opportunities that respond to the evolving needs and context of SDP.

Appendix A: Changes in the percentages of respondents who both correctly and incorrectly answered questions related to best practices in teaching ELs before and after QTEL

Figure A1. Changes in the percentages of respondents who answered questions related to best practices in teaching ELs before and after QTEL (n=170)