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DECISION MAKING PROCESSES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS FOR
BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

by
Faviola Cantu

May, 2012

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Since I was little, my parents spoke to me about the necessity of a college education. I remember driving around town with my siblings and looking at beautiful houses. My father would ask which one I wanted when I grew up. After fighting with my sisters over which house was whose, my father would quiet us down and explain why we were playing this game. He'd say, "If you go to school you can have a house just like that one. If not, you will end up cleaning the inside of it." I remember staring at him, disappointed. "Clean it? I don't even like to clean my room!" I would mutter to myself. Every time we went out for a drive, I knew he was taking us to see the houses. Thank you, Dad, for motivating me to dream big.

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This work is dedicated to my son Joaquin Antonio Cantu, mi amorcito.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the decision-making process principals utilize when making instructional decisions for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. This mixed-methods research design will facilitate an in depth look into the sources of data reviewed by principals when making decisions for LEP students. The stakeholders with whom principals collaborate on decisions impacting language program, language of instruction and language of assessment for LEP students. A convenient survey of elementary principals in one school district as well as follow up interviews was conducted. Results from this study demonstrate that principals are much more likely to discuss decisions affecting LEP students with teachers in state tested grades than with the Site Based Decision Making Committee or in Professional Learning Communities. Results, filtered by principal background, show that bilingual principals are more likely to utilize their LPAC when making decisions and are more likely to discuss decisions with the parents of LEP students. Future research into monitoring the implementation of the ESL component of bilingual programs and implementing a formative assessment for holding teachers accountable for the ESL component of the curriculum is discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter.....	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	11
Statement of the Problem	14
Need for the Study.....	15
Significance of the Study.....	28
Research Questions.....	30
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	32
History.....	32
Relevant Studies.....	37
Program Specifics in LISD.....	39
Language Development.....	40
Language Acquisition.....	41
Administrative Decisions.....	47
III. METHODS	52
Research Design.....	52
Participants.....	52
Instrumentation.....	56
Procedures.....	59
Limitations.....	59
IV. RESULTS	61
Research Question One.....	61
Language Program.....	61
Language of Instruction.....	64
Language of Assessment.....	66
Research Question Two.....	68
Student and Teacher Data in Principal Decision Making.....	68
Research Question Three.....	73
Principal Use of the LPAC.....	73
Bilingual and Non-Bilingual Principals.....	75
V. DISCUSSION.....	86
Summary of the Study.....	89
Discussion of the Findings.....	90
Implications.....	93
Conclusions.....	98

REFERENCES.....	98
APPENDIX A Human Subjects IRB Approval Letter.....	102
APPENDIX B <i>Principal Survey</i>	104
APPENDIX C Interview Questions.....	108

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1	Campus Demographics.....55
4.1	Language Program: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel.....62
4.2	Language of Instruction: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel.....65
4.3	Language of Assessment: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel.....68
4.4	Language Program: Review of Student Data.....69
4.5	Language of Instruction: Review of Teacher Data.....71
4.6	Principal Use of the LPAC.....73
4.7	Language Program: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel by Language Background.....75
4.8	Language of Instruction: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel by Language Background.....76
4.9	Language of Assessment: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel by Language Background.....77

Chapter One: Introduction

As a child, my mother never allowed me to be placed in a bilingual classroom. In fact, if some unknowing registrar happened to unfortunately place me with a bilingual teacher, the principal would immediately receive a scathing call demanding I be reassigned to an English-speaking classroom. It wasn't until I became a teacher that I asked Mom why she was so ardently against a bilingual education since we spoke Spanish at home. Her response did not surprise me as it is often the same concerns I hear from the parents of the students with whom I work. She was worried I would not learn English. Mom claimed to know several teachers from my own elementary school who didn't speak English proficiently themselves. She could, of course, count with ease, the children of friends who were still struggling to speak English proficiently despite being enrolled in school since Pre-K. The fact that my siblings and I successfully graduated from college only solidified her belief that denying us a bilingual education played a large part in our academic success. Today, I mention to Mom the benefits of bilingual education and how I feel inadequate in my bilingual abilities. I can speak Spanish, but not as fluently as I would love to. I can write, but not without having someone always edit my handiwork. I can read in Spanish, but I often need help with new vocabulary. My transformation to bilingualism didn't occur until college. She responds unperturbed that as long as I can hold a decent conversation necessary for my career, that is all the Spanish that I need to know. Being such a strong proponent of bilingual education myself, it worries me that someone so dear to me could be so staunchly against it. However, I can hardly say that her sentiment is unique.

As an assistant principal, and chair of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) on my campus, I often speak to parents regarding placement of their child into the bilingual education program. The biggest request I receive is to place a child who has qualified for bilingual education into a regular education classroom, which offers no language services. Despite this, the majority of limited English proficient (LEP) parents with whom I have this conversation choose to waive language services, i.e. bilingual education. The negative stigma that my mom encountered with bilingual education appears to still be prevalent today. What makes this particular situation so interesting is the elementary school my siblings and I attended is the same one I am assistant principal of today. Could this be a school-specific issue or one that is present on other campuses as well?

If the stigma of bilingual education was exclusive to my school, this would be an easy issue to fix. However, I cannot deny there is a small voice in the back of my mind that wonders if perhaps bilingual adversaries are right. Maybe students in bilingual classrooms are not as academically prepared as English-proficient students? As a fourth grade bilingual teacher, I saw firsthand the fears my mother addressed. Students entered my classroom unable to write simple sight words such as the words *my*, *said*, and even *I*. In fact, every year, a handful spelled *it* with Spanish phonemes a-y. Not only could these students not write in English, but they also had difficulty reading and speaking in English as well. I played the role of the transitional bilingual teacher, meaning my classroom was the first time LEP students were presented with all-day English language curriculum and English state assessments. It was a constant struggle to prepare my students to pass an exam in English for which they were linguistically not prepared despite the majority of

them having attended U.S. schools all their academic lives. Mom is right-- bilingual education isn't working, but why not?

There are many avenues to explore improving bilingual education in our schools. We can look at the perceptions parents have regarding the bilingual program, and speak to teachers to find out where they think the holes, if any, are in the language services provided to LEP students. We can look at administrators and their roles in working with limited English proficient students. Even these categories can be further subdivided into more specific issues such as monitoring how English proficiency is taught per grade level, the need, if any, for increased accountability for English content in the curriculum, a review of different language programs, and so forth. For the purposes of this research, we will look at administrator decisions and language services for limited English proficient students.

Statement of the Problem

As we move towards greater accountability and increased budget constraints, the pressure to remove bilingual education from Texas classrooms steadily grows. In the last ten years, legislation in states with large Hispanic populations has passed laws severely limiting the availability of bilingual education. Texas remains the largest state to readily offer bilingual education as a means of instruction for students with a home language other than English. Recent research, such as the study conducted by Christine Rossell for the Texas Public Policy foundation in 2009, questions the need for testing students in Spanish and advocates for the removal of Spanish standardized state tests in Texas. Studies such as this are not a straightforward attack on bilingual education, but the results

of such inquiry can be detrimental. The removal of Spanish state standardized testing can open a plethora of consequences affecting bilingual education including a call for the removal of Spanish instruction. As it is, increased accountability has created urgency in schools to move from true bilingualism to a more English proficiency based system. The state has added AEIS indicators that track Limited English Proficient (LEP) students' proficiency in English. While there is a place for accountability, there is also an ethical obligation to do what is best for students, which is assisting students with mastering their primary language (L1) as well as teaching proficiency in their second language (L2). This study will focus on the stakeholders administrators collaborate with prior to making decisions regarding language services, instruction and assessment for Limited English Proficient students as well as the data they review.

Need for the Study

In March of this year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) announced the state of Texas had enrolled over 2, 480,000 Hispanic students during the 2010-2011 school year (Borunda, 2011). With this news, came what teachers and administrators had expected for many years, the declaration of Hispanic students as the new majority in Texas public schools. There has been a steady increase in the Hispanic student population, gaining 49% more students from 1998 to 2008, (Swinkels & Ramirez, 2009). In fact, in 2001 Hispanic students outnumbered Caucasian students for the first time and continued to do so in subsequent years. Hispanic students today not only out number their Caucasian counterparts but they also hold the majority of enrolled students at 50.2 % over all other sub groups combined (Borunda, 2011). Roughly 2.4 million Texas students are of

Hispanic descent, potentially foreshadowing a possible reclassification of this minority group as the new majority of American citizens. In his 2009 article on bilingual education, David Nieto references the 2002 study of Suarez-Orozco, who predicts Hispanics will, “Make up to twenty-five percent of the total population of the country by 2050,” having already surpassed African Americans as the largest minority in the nation. The U.S. Census Bureau makes a similar prediction, expecting the Hispanic population to be at 23% in 2050 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). As educators, TEA’s proclamation should call to our attention the need to put systems in place that adequately address the language needs of our English Language Learners.

The number of Hispanic students in Texas raises another more pressing question, how many of our Hispanic students are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP)? This question is rooted in federal accountability which requires adequately yearly progress (AYP) be made within the LEP subpopulation. LEP students present a potential accountability problem for campuses where the LEP population is also largely Hispanic as these students are represented on two sub-populations on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). Their progress is monitored under the Hispanic indicator and the LEP indicator. Almost eighty percent of LEP students are Spanish speaking, (Report to Congress, 2006). Students whose first language is not English are classified as LEP students and are provided local services to assist with acquiring the English language as quickly as possible. A LEP designation can be given to any student who is not proficient in English. This study will focus on students whose first language is Spanish, hence the need to look more closely at the breakdown of Hispanic students as not all are LEP designated.

During the 2008-2009 school year, 800,554 students were designated as LEP students with 757,824 receiving instruction in bilingual education (Swinkels & Ramirez, 2009). In 2008, 92% of students in bilingual education were Hispanic (Swinkels & Ramirez, 2009). State wide, about forty-two thousand students were served by other instructional means either English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction or possibly no services as parents have the option to waive their students from language services. The LEP subgroup is a sizeable portion of the student population in the state of Texas and one that must be diligently monitored as required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). When these numbers are broken down by individual campuses, it results in close monitoring of the LEP and Hispanic sub-population as a drop in scores in either category will result in missing federal accountability or Annual Yearly Progress (AYP).

Title III of NCLB mandates states to monitor the English proficiency of an LEP student through Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO). States must demonstrate that all students have reached the proficient level on a state's language arts and mathematics assessments by 2014 (Report to Congress, 2006). The state of Texas has implemented the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) as a response to the federal testing requirement of NCLB (HISD, 2011). TELPAS measures a student's proficiency on reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students receive holistic ratings for Speaking, Writing and Listening throughout testing. In grades kindergarten through first, students are also scored holistically for reading. The reading portion of TELPAS is weighted seventy-five percent of the overall composite score and is taken online by means of a multiple choice assessment for students in grades two through twelve. Starting in 2010, The AMAOs for meeting AYP for English proficiency

require students to demonstrate an improvement by at least one proficiency level a year. Considering the large number of LEP students in the state, and the amount of pressure placed on teachers to deliver one year of language growth, it is necessary for educators to look deeper into the instructional programs through which we develop English proficiency in our students. Specifically, educators must ask if what is being done instructionally is adequately preparing students to be successful in an English classroom.

Patricia Gandara and Frances Contreras, authors of *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies*, feel that Latinos have had to struggle with civil rights revolving around language. They argue that language was the primary rationale used to discriminate and segregate students. Our students today continue to be segregated by their language of instruction. English Language Learners are categorized as either English proficient or non-English proficient (Gandara & Contreras, 2010). These terms are used in Texas to assist with coding students for state funding. Gandara and Contreras believe that such broad categorizations make it difficult to properly diagnose the language issues of students since there are only two categories to which students can belong. Students are more likely have a wide range of proficiency, and services should be provided to them based on where they fall in this language continuum (Gandara & Contreras, 2010). The authors provide an example of a 2006 California study in which 66% of tenth graders scored proficient on the state language assessment, but only 4% were able to pass the English language arts test. Gandara and Contreras strongly suggest the creation of English Language Development standards.

The arguments made by Gandara and Contreras support the rationale for this study. Those against bilingual education often site the number of students not reclassified as English proficient at the end of the school year. There is no significant reason to reclassify students as English proficient because doing so stops students' access to language resources and support (Gandara & Contreras, 2010). A 2006 Report to Congress titled: Assistance from Education Could Help States Better Measure Progress of Students with Limited English Proficiency explains that, "Unlike other student groups targeted in NCLBA-once a state determines that students with limited English proficiency have attained English proficiency, they are no longer included in the group of students with limited English proficiency." Participants in this subpopulation continue to change from year to year, making true comparisons of LEP progress difficult.

In Texas, educators are required to consider the rate of student advancement toward English Proficiency through student results on TELPAS. As mentioned earlier, elementary schools must demonstrate that at least sixty percent of LEP students advance one language proficiency level each school year. With this type of accountability, Texas is requiring administrators to ensure that non-English speakers are learning English. However, in this researcher's opinion, the new standard does not go far enough in holding individual teachers accountable for English language instruction as the sixty percent rule applies to the school LEP population as a whole not in individual classrooms. One teacher doing an exceptional job of providing English instruction can positively skew the results for the entire school and compensate for teachers who are failing to provide the required language instruction or vice versa.

Yet, we must applaud the state of Texas for implementing accountability measures to increase the progress of LEP students instead of outright dissolving the recommendations for bilingual education. California drew public attention in 1998 when the state passed Proposition 227, which required that all public school instruction take place in English (California Voter's Guide 1998). Instead of implementing accountability measures, the state moved to remove the program as its default language service. Proponents of Proposition 227 cited the low number of students reclassified as English proficient as a negative result of bilingual education. With the bill's passage, California became the largest state to drastically decrease bilingual education services to non-English students.

Due to Proposition 227, educators had to rethink their approach to working with LEP students. Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) was brought in to fill the void of bilingual education. The two basic components, according to Kevin Clark, are teachers maximizing instruction in English and teachers utilizing English at a level appropriate to the abilities of ELLs in their classroom (Clark 2009.) The proposition also called for new teacher certifications as bilingual educators were no longer in demand. The law carried a key point that most likely swayed reluctant voters. Fifty million dollars a year for ten years was entrusted to teach the English language to adults who then later were empowered to share their newfound language skills with youth in their community (Voter's Guide 1998). The specifics on how these programs would be carried out or how the adult-youth tutorials would be monitored was not a part of the legislation.

If necessary, the law provides a one-year SEI instructional program before students are moved to an all-English classroom. The research supporting bilingual education was downplayed and fears of economic uncertainty elevated unnecessarily. The 1998 California Voter's Guide clearly states that funding for education would remain the same as in previous years. The implications and current research as a result of this legislation will be discussed later in this paper. Of importance to Texas educators is the real possibility that a similar law could be brought before the Texas legislature. A shift in political clout in Austin and worries over our state economy could bring about changes to our educational system as swiftly as it occurred in California. Not long after the passage of Proposition 227, Arizona, followed suit with similar legislation.

With the current economic instability, legislation could be presented in Texas suggesting that removing bilingual education could save the state budget from defaulting. Proponents against bilingual education site added expenses with the implementation of the program. In Texas, bilingual education costs \$402 more per pupil (Rossell, 2009). Rossell points out that other states have shown an average cost of \$200-\$700 more per pupil for services directed to LEP students. Proposition 203 followed the trail of California and allow each district to determine the default program used to instruct LEP students. Arizona chose adopt Sheltered English Instruction, which was implemented in California after Proposition 227. SEI services would be provided for one year to students not demonstrating adequate English proficiency. The law affected 14% of all students attending public schools in Arizona (Kerper-Mora, 2010).

The passage of Proposition 203 encountered many legal obstacles for Arizona's Department of Education. The state superintendent was sued for electing a program with serious flaws in its approach to working with LEP students (Kerper-Mora, 2010). The case, *Horne v Flores*, reached the United States Supreme Court which remanded the case to the lower courts. It is important to note that Proposition 203 was similarly written to California's Proposition 227 and had the same financial backing. Both motions were supported financially by Ron Unz a California business man who once ran for governor of the state.

The demagoguery continues in Arizona today and has created a situation in which LEP students are required to be instructed in SEI for one year before being moved to an all English classroom. Unlike California's legislation, Arizona does not give parents the option to move their child to a school that offers bilingual education. Students can only receive bilingual education after they have demonstrated English proficiency by passing grade level state standardized tests in English (Kerper-Mora, 2010). It is still unclear to this researcher how LEP students remain on grade level if they are subject to four hours daily of English language skill instruction. It would be interesting to look into how well these students perform once they are transitioned. These two states have lead the way for proponents against bilingual education to site the "success" of SEI and other English-only programs as the means to solving the English proficiency issues in our schools today. However, we must look closely into the standardized test results longitudinally and see if these students demonstrate significant academic achievement over their peers receiving bilingual education in Texas. Equally important, we must consider what laws of this nature do to the bi-cultural atmosphere of Arizona? Hispanics were not the only ethnic

group affected by this law. Arizona's large Native American population was a huge obstacle to the legislation's passage. Laws of this nature lead to a demoralization of bilingualism, which is highly coveted throughout the world.

With the turning of Arizona toward monolingualism, Texas is now only one of four states that still mandates bilingual education. In fact, Texas has the largest number of student participation in bilingual education. New York, New Jersey, and Illinois still advocate the benefits of bilingual education by requiring it as the state's default program for working with LEP students. How long will we continue to remain a state with bilingual education when the majority of the country does not feel the urgency of strongly supporting a child's native language? What educators in this state must do to save our bilingual programs is examine closely how well we are preparing our LEP students for English instruction, and more importantly, how many of our students are reaching the hallmark for reclassification as English proficient. In the Lorenzo Independent School District (LISD), this reclassification occurs when students successfully pass English standardized state assessments along with the state's English proficiency exams therefore; this study will focus on this type of data.

If state standardized assessments will be used for English proficiency reclassification, then we must look at how districts are choosing the language of assessment. Language of assessment is done on individual campus by way of the Language Assessment Proficiency Committee (LPAC). In her review of bilingual education in 2005, Christine Rossell notes that when districts are given a choice between bilingual education and some other form of instructional practice for LEP students, an

overwhelming majority opt not to utilize bilingual education. In fact, California and Arizona are key examples as both states still allow bilingual education; however, it is not the default program and thus the overwhelming majority of districts opted for SEI instead, which required no additional funding.

Perhaps Texas has resisted the popular movement to abandon bilingual education because the state was the site of what came to be a landmark case in favor of the program. In *Castaneda v Pickard*, the Supreme Court created the Castaneda Test, which is utilized to check if programs affecting LEP students are suitable for implementation, (Davis, 2006). First, the educational theory must pursue a program based on sound educational theory. Second, the school must implement the program with instructional practices, resources, and personnel necessary for the theory to transfer into practice. Third, the school must not persist in a program that fails to produce results (TEA ESL Unit, 2004).

Using the Castaneda test and looking at Lorenzo Independent Schools District's 2011-2012 Bilingual Program Guidelines, it is evident that research on language acquisition is the foundation for the services provided to ELLs. The district's guidelines allow the implementation of three types of programs: Traditional Bilingual Program, Two-Way Bilingual Program, and a Developmental Bilingual Program. LISD carries out this mandate by requiring any campus with twenty or more ELL students to provide a bilingual program. The bulk of bilingual education services refer to Spanish-speaking students even though LISD provides bilingual education for Vietnamese and Urdu as well (LISD, 2011).

Last year the district saw 60% of LEP students grow at least one level based on the TELPAS composite score (Texas Report, 2011). The district does not have a chosen bilingual program. Instead, administrators at each campus are able to determine the type of program that is best for students on their campus. When we look at the success of bilingual education through student achievement on standardized tests, we compare students tested in Spanish along with those tested in English. LISD's longitudinal studies of bilingual education show that all three programs are successful at improving student achievement in secondary schools regardless of when they transition (LISD Brief 2008). However, there is a pressing need to break down these studies and look closely at the success of students based on when they transition to an all-English classroom.

This need to look closely at the point of transition is paramount considering the district's adoption of a new appraisal system for teacher evaluations, which will include student performance on state standardized assessments as part of teacher's evaluation. This year the state has released a new standardized test called the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). In order to give teachers an opportunity to adjust to the new appraisal system and the new state assessment, LISD will not be including student performance results in teacher evaluations during the 2011-2012 school year. During the 2012-2013 school year, the appraisal system will include, for some teachers, ratings based on the achievement of their students on the STAAR. This rating will reflect 50% of a teacher's overall appraisal score. This adds pressure not only to teachers but also to administrators to ensure high test results. Important to this study is how increased accountability can affect the decision made by administrators when determining the language of assessment. Given the high stakes and the autonomy given to

principals to make important decision impacting LEP students, collaboration with all stake holders in these types of decisions is essential. While accountability in schools is vital, it is imperative that a fair and equitable system is utilized to evaluate effective teachers.

In regards to LEP students in transitional grades, this system might not be equitable considering a students readiness to perform on English assessments. Using student results on standardized tests as part of a teacher's appraisal can be problematic if students are being transitioned into English instruction before they are ready. In this situation teachers are not being appraised solely on their students' academic achievement as their lack of English proficiency plays a huge factor as well. Teachers are expected to accelerate instruction for struggling students and students not performing on grade level. The task of advancing students who are academically behind is challenging enough without adding the burden of ensuring English proficiency prior to testing.

It is also critical that we look at the other end of the spectrum, students who are ready for transition but still testing in Spanish. Why are students who are ready for transition still testing in Spanish? Can there be a fear of a possible drop in test scores? Focusing on student preparedness for English transition requires us to look deeply at why students are not prepared for English instruction. Why are students who have been in bilingual programs since pre-kindergarten or kindergarten not prepared to transition in third or fourth grade? Is the lack of accountability for ESL instruction resulting in a decrease of overall English minutes utilized in classrooms? Could it be that administrators are not carefully monitoring ESL instructional minutes?

In LISD there are clear guidelines for the amount of ESL instructional minutes for which teachers must be accountable in the classroom. Although the district has clear and specific guidelines for ESL instruction, accountability for English proficiency is limited to state requirements. TELPAS is the only data we have on whether our students are progressing in English proficiency. TELPAS data is updated once a year, near the end of the school year, and thus is used more for informing instruction during the subsequent school year. Implementing the TELPAS state wide meets NCLB criteria for assessing English proficiency, but it is not clear how reliable the results are. A 2006 congressional report found insufficient documentation on the validity and reliability of these assessments, (Report to Congress 2006). A recommendation by the panel was made to study this issue.

Lorenzo Independent School District offers curriculum assessments for subjects like math, science and reading, but there are no district formative assessments to check on the progression of English proficiency. Perhaps, one reasons for this discrepancy is the difficulty in creating an appropriate assessment when district elementary schools operate under different bilingual programs. With such a variety in language programs within LISD, and the wide range of ESL proficiency levels, it is not possible to test students on a single district wide common assessment. However, the standardized results of all students, including students in transitional classrooms, will be compared district-wide and the subsequent findings used in teacher evaluations. Student growth on assessments will be utilized to evaluate teachers and to compare language services provided district wide; thus, a solution for holding all teachers accountable for English proficiency is paramount.

Significance of the Study

If a limited English proficient child begins his or her education in an United States school in pre-k he or she will have had five years of ESL instruction by the time he or she completes third grade. Language acquisition theory suggests five to seven years of a second language is needed in order to gain academic proficiency. Bilingual students in this scenario should be able to meet the criteria to pre-exit by fourth grade if ESL instruction has been implemented with fidelity. Unfortunately, this is not often the case. For this reason, with increased state accountability, Texas educators must demand accountability in bilingual education as well. NCLB calls for growth in English proficiency, and educators must ask for English proficiency accountability in every grade level, not just those tested. Some may say TELPAS is a response to these requirements as it is required in each grade, but TELPAS has its limitations. The greatest limitation in this researcher's opinion is the holistic rating system which is carried out by the classroom teacher. Random state audits check for accuracy, but allowing a teacher to essentially score their own accountability assessment is not a method by which to garner valid results. Texas is the largest state to mandate bilingual education, and as the leader of the few states that continue to do so, we must leave no doubts that bilingual education is working. With decreases in educational funding, and growing resentment against immigrants, the state runs the risk that bilingual education funding could be the next program on the chopping block. Other states have proven that it is possible to remove bilingual education from the school system. Texas must demonstrate these states were misguided in supplanting a program that was in the best interest of our limited English student population. The best method by which to prove the worth of a bilingual education

is to demonstrate increases in English proficiency of our LEP students and their success in English state standardized assessments.

The purpose of this study will be to look in depth at the decision making process administrators employ when making decisions regarding Limited English Proficient students. Principals are in a unique position to impact instruction school wide. Their decision affects the instruction presented in the classroom, the language program under which teachers must operate, and ultimately the language in which students will be tested. This study will examine the sources of information administrators review prior to deciding the bilingual program utilized at their campus.

Those informed on bilingual education will exclaim that the LPAC has influence over the instruction of LEP students, but this researcher feels that impact is minimal considering appointments to the committee are handled by the school principal. Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 101, Subchapter AA, Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Participation of English Language Learners in State Assessments requires language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) to make assessment decisions on an individual student basis (TEA). The LPAC committee has at minimum an LPAC chair person, a teacher and, a parent. This researcher questions the function of an LPAC committee and whether or not the committee is truly the one deciding the language of assessment. The LPAC committee must also contain a campus administrator who can also serve as the LPAC chairperson. The LPAC chair person is often chosen by the campus principal and is many times the principal him or herself. By allowing the appointment of members by the principal, the LPAC is truly at the whim of the

administration. The Texas Education Agency specifically outlines the use of the LPAC committee in determining the language of assessment. Grade based or program based decisions are not allowed (TEA Student Assessment Division, 2012). An LPAC committee must use a teacher's input to determine the most appropriate language of assessment. Decisions regarding language of assessment occur during mid-year LPAC review. However, in this researcher's opinion, decisions on language of assessment were determined by the administrator at the beginning of the school year when the language of instruction was chosen. Administrators determine the campus bilingual program, thus determining when students will transition to English instruction. In doing so, administrators have essentially determined the language of assessment overstepping the function of the LPAC committee.

Bilingual programs today are an endangered instructional method that must be fiercely protected. As educators in Texas, we must demonstrate to the nation that our bilingual programs are serving their intended function. This study strives to determine with whom principals are most likely to collaborate prior to making decisions regarding LEP students and what data is reviewed before these decisions are made.

Research Questions

Quantitative Questions

1. With what stakeholders do principals collaborate with prior to making decisions regarding language program, language of instruction, and language of assessment for limited English proficient students on their campuses?

2. What student or teacher data do administrators consider when making decisions for their campus regarding the language program, language of instruction and language of assessment of limited English proficient students?

Qualitative Question

3. What role does an administrator's knowledge of bilingual education and language acquisition play in regards to decisions affecting limited English proficient students such as the selection of members for the Limited English Proficiency Committee and the transition of students to English-only state standardized assessments?

Chapter Two

History

Parameters through which LEP students receive language services can be traced back through several acts of legislation and court decisions over recent decades. Before the 1960s, federal policy had no provisions for servicing LEP students with the majority receiving no remedial services. During this time, students were often held in the same grade until enough English proficiency was mastered to advance in subject areas (TEA ESL Unit, 2004). The shift toward providing LEP students with what David Nieto calls “linguistic rights” came with the passage of The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (Nieto, 2009). Through this historical legislation came the flexibility for states to begin experimenting with pedagogy that reflected the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). Despite the title of the act, bilingual education was not mandated through this federal law. Instead, states were granted supplemental funding for developing special programs that addressed the needs of students who were not English proficient (Nieto 2009). The act also allowed for funding of planning, development, and operation of programs that transitioned students into English instruction.

The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 had several revisions throughout the years with each one creating much more specific and ultimately narrowing services for LEP students. Six years after its introduction, the law was rewritten in order to alleviate some of the perceived failures of bilingual education (Nieto, 2009). The 1968 act had not included any provision for reporting or providing progress reports of services. The program was thus expanded to include all LEP students as the 1968 version had

erroneously assumed all LEP students were economically disadvantaged, (Nieto 2009). During the time of this revision in, 1974, the Supreme Court ruled on what was to be a landmark case in bilingual education, *Lau v Nichols*. The case involved eight hundred Chinese students in San Francisco who alleged the district placed them in an English immersion educational environment that did not support their language needs (TEA ESL Unit, 2004). The Supreme Court ruled districts had the responsibility to provide programs and services necessary for children's language needs. The responsibility to overcome language barriers falls on the school board, not on the parents, and thus school districts had not provided access to a meaningful education (Nieto, 2009). This decision broadened the mandate to include any district with students who spoke a language other than English, not just those that received Title VII funds (Escamilla, 1989). *Lau v Nichols* ensured that districts would be required to provide access to services; however, it did not stipulate how this could be carried out. Students who did not speak English must now be serviced in a meaningful way, but it did not make bilingual education a requirement (Escamilla, 1989).

In 1978, Title VII specifically called for services to LEP students to be transitory in nature with the ultimate goal being for students to gain English proficiency (TEA ESL Unit, 2004). The goal of bilingual education has been a hotly contested debate in public policy throughout the years. *Lau v. Nichols* and Title VII created multiple goals for bilingual programs. This opened the doorway for different methods of implementation, rationale, and expected outcomes for bilingual education (Escamilla, 1989). The goals of bilingual education vary depending on the outcome the program seeks to have. Should bilingual programs help preserve the culture of students? Is the purpose of the program

for students to be proficient in two languages? Or is the goal of bilingual education to transition students to English as quickly as possible? By following policy and court decisions throughout the years, educators can see how often the goals of bilingual education have changed (Escamilla, 1989). It is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of services provided to LEP students without first determining the intended goal of the language program.

With Title VII began the gradual scaling back of bilingual education. In 1988, amendments to Title VII ushered in a three-year limit on student participation in most Title VII services. This amendment is reflective of current Texas Education policy that allows only three years of standardized assessments in a student's native language (Texas Education Code). There has been an unfortunate movement in the past twenty years that ties immigration issues with education policy affecting LEP students. Anti-immigration sentiment has facilitated the passage of federal and state laws that greatly impact how we teach LEP students (Houvouras, 2001). The group most greatly impacted by these policies has been Hispanic students. The growth of the Latino population has "been met with great opposition by voters and policy makers" (Houvouras, 2001).

Anti-bilingual sentiment at a national level is not new. In 1926, Theodore Roosevelt stated in a speech to American public, "We have but room for one language in this country and that is the English language" (Nieto, 1999). The 1980s Reagan administration took a similar position to Roosevelt when he warned the United States was on the verge of balkanization due primarily to the large number of non-English speaking communities within our borders (Nieto, 1999). In Texas, during that same year, the U.S.

District court for the Eastern District of Texas required the state to implement bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) programs for all LEP students (IDRA, 2004). During this time period unsuccessful legislative attempts were made to establish English as the primary language of the nation. However, by 1996 English had been established as the official language of Colorado, Arizona and Florida (Houvouras, 2001).

In 1994, the Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized, and development of bilingual skills was made the main purpose of the act. The 1994 Bilingual Education Act resulted in an increase in developmental programs in which student master their primary language while acquiring their English proficiency as well as two-way bilingual programs, which advocates the teaching of both languages with half of the class learning English and non LEP students learning Spanish (Houvouras, 2001). During the same year, 1998, California voters passed Proposition 187, making it illegal to educate children of undocumented immigrants. The law was found unconstitutional by a federal court a short time afterwards. This highlights how the political climate of the nation affects legislation impacting bilingual education. Shannon Houvouras postulates the growth of the Latino population creates a paradigm in which Caucasian Americans feel threatened by the minority group. This leads to defensiveness in the form of policies that attempt to control the burgeoning population (Houvouras, 2001). The reality of the situation is the Hispanic population is growing at a tremendous rate, and anti-bilingual education policies severely limit the educational opportunities of this future majority group, which could have huge societal implications.

Anti-bilingual education is not noticeable out right in our current federal education legislation, but it is subtly present in the omission of a national mandate for bilingual education. No Child Left Behind was a rewrite of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It introduced an accountability system by which states would demonstrate student academic achievement, called for instruction to LEP students that lead to English proficiency, and purposefully removed all references to bilingual education. The explicit wording in Title III Part A of NCLB ensures that LEP students will, "...attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic achievement in English, and meet the same challenging state academic content and student achievement standards as all children are expected to meet." NCLB mirrored recent legislation taking place around the country minimalizing bilingual education. With bilingual education no longer advocated by the federal government, states elected to use other pedagogical practices to service LEP students, primarily Sheltered English Instruction (SEI). Prime examples of this are the aforementioned legislation of Arizona and California.

Reviewing our nation's history in regards to bilingual education allows us to see how the educational method has been broadened and narrowed throughout the years. We can expect for bilingual education to be further limited within the next several years. One third of the population opposes bilingual education while only ten percent of Latinos oppose it (Houvouras, 2001). We must continue to educate the public on political matters revolving around bilingual education. Immigration and bilingual education are not necessarily linked as students who are not immigrants of children can be in bilingual programs that are not immigrants or the children of immigrants.

Relevant Studies

LISD sites the research of Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas as the foundation for the bilingual programs offered in the school district, (LISD Research Brief, 2008). The study reviews the long term (4-12 years) academic achievement of LEP students over fourteen years. Five school districts throughout the United States were used in this study, (Thomas & Collier, 2002). One of the primary findings of this research is the success of two way immersion or dual language programs, as they are called in LISD. A dual language program is a mixed classroom of both LEP and non LEP students. Both groups are instructed in English and Spanish. In this arrangement, both groups are learning a second language while mastering their native language. Participants in dual language programs had the highest percentage of students scoring above 50% of other test takes, (Thomas & Collier, 2002). This study reviewed 210, 054 student records and determined the least amount of dropouts were seen from students who received dual language services.

Despite the strong support for dual language programs, LISD offers this program at only a handful of schools. The specific reason for this decision is unknown to this researcher, but perhaps can be traced to the increased funding and personnel required for this type of language services. The research of Thomas and Collier has been monumental in the implementation of bilingual programs across the nation. It demonstrates LEP students are at a greater risk of dropping out of school if they receive no language services at all. This fourteen year study took place between 1982 and 1996 and followed over 700,000 LEP students in bilingual programs (Thomas & Collier, 1997). It has often been referred to as a landmark study in the success of bilingual education.

Unsurprisingly, there has been recent controversy over the collection and analysis of data in the Thomas and Collier studies. This particular research is the most expansive longitudinal study, strongest support for bilingual education and an often cited source of proof of the success of bilingual education. Christine Rossell sites several methodological discrepancies in her 2008 critique of Thomas & Collier's 2002 study. In this critique, Rossell attempts to discredit the findings of the 2002 study, and in the process, lay the foundation to remove bilingual education from education in its entirety. Rossell points out that one of the school districts used in the study, Madawaska School District, has 753 students in the entire district, of which only 12% participate in the program being studied. Another district, Maine School Administrative District, has 489 students in the district (Rossell, 2008). She argues the Madawaska School District does not qualify as a bilingual program as students in this program are learning French but did not enter school with French as their native language. Thus, they were already proficient in English and the language deficiency was in French. Concerning this issue, Ms. Rossell has a point. It is inappropriate to generalize findings from this population to the education of students in English bilingual programs as the program in which this sample of students participated can best be described as a foreign language program.

It is interesting to note that the Lorenzo Independent School District appears in the Thomas & Collier 2002 study and as a result in the 2008 critique by Rossell. In regards to LISD, Rossell's main complaint is in the use of the district's dual-language programs to validate the success of native English speakers in the program. She stresses the methodological flaws in the Thomas and Collier study since the academic success of native English speakers in various programs was not compared and analyzed. Ms. Rossell

concludes that Thomas and Collier research is misleading and should not be used as a support for bilingual education (Rossell, 2008). Instead, she suggests that a study be conducted in which various types of language programs can be compared. In order to do so, only districts that offer all of these language services should be included in the study. Researchers should also be sure to control for extenuating variables such as socioeconomic status (Rossell, 2008).

Program Specifics in Lorenzo Independent School District

LISD offers a variety of language programs for LEP students such as English as a Second language (ESL), traditional bilingual program, dual language program, and developmental bilingual program (LISD, 2011). In this study, the focus will be on traditional and bilingual programs as these programs provide the opportunity for students to transition from Spanish instruction to all-English instruction. In chapter three we will discuss in detail the differences between the two types of programs. It is important to note here that the goal of both of these programs is to provide students basic skills in their native language while acquiring proficiency in the English language. The LISD Bilingual Program Guidelines state that a subsequent goal of these programs is to encourage fluency in two languages and strives for students to retain and improve their non-English language skills. The LISD bilingual program mission statement includes the following, “LEP children also will learn to read, write and speak English as rapidly as individually possible” (LISD, 2011).

Language Development

A discussion on the language of assessment for LEP students should begin with a discussion on language development. In doing so we can better understand the processes involved in learning a second language (L2) such as learning English for non-native speakers, (Wood, 2002). Lev S. Vygotsky suggests that a child is exposed to the communicative form of language through conversation with others, by communicating with others the child is able to decipher speech patterns and errors in their own speech. By speaking with others the child is able to create a cognitive process for language (Wood, 2002). When children are learning their first language (L1), they do so by listening to others speak and creating similar sounds and patterns. Children then babble and recreate the sounds in an attempt to formulate meaningful language. Through conversations, children learn to correct speech sounds and pick up on cues that distinguish if their sounds are being correctly used or pronounced. This interaction with society is what creates meaningful language for a child. Therefore, interaction, with others is necessary for proper formation of language (Wood, 2002).

Vygotsky's theory on language development stems from his belief that language begins with a child's inner speech (Wood, 2002). A child builds inner speech based on symbols, patterns, and associations with items in his or her surroundings. At this early stage, the child has a perception of language that is represented by concepts and ideas in a large scale. This inner speech becomes more formulaic once the child is able to comprehend that sounds are associated with words and that words have meanings. A child takes cues from the environment such as sounds and symbols to create a formula for expressing themselves. First, a child's thought is vague and whole, which a word cannot

express (Wood, 2002). Through the years, a child's understanding of language grows, and a child can express themselves with words, then phrases, and lastly sentences. The structure of speech has now become more specific. When this occurs, language takes two forms, phonetic language and thought. These two occur concurrently and are related but not the same. Language has become more specific and less holistic, while thought becomes increasingly abstract (Wood, 2002).

Language Acquisition

Vygotsky's theory has some connections with a more current and prominent voice in the acquisition of language in second language learners, Jim Cummins. Cummins believes that language acquisition takes two stages. During the first, stage students learn basic vocabulary, sentence structure, and command (Bylund, 2011). Students begin to gain fluency for their L2 language, and some even have excellent pronunciation and grammar when utilizing L2. This type of language however is basic and should not be misinterpreted as full mastery of L2. This type of language is termed BICS or Basic Interpersonal Communication skills (Cummins, 2008). This level coincides with Vygotsky's theory that cognitive development of language requires interaction with society. The student is able to communicate adequately in their second language and can construct meaning in simple phrases. Cummins believes that BICS can be developed in about two years (Cummins, 2008).

Teachers can assist with L2 acquisition by providing students with resources to assist them with understanding vocabulary and sentence structure in their new language. The student would then internalize the use of these tools and refer to them when needed.

An administrator would then expect to see students using their L2 language in the primary grades to communicate with one another. This could manifest itself as peer think chair activities, teacher lead discussions, and eliciting responses from students in their L2 language (Cummins, 2000). In order to boost L2 language acquisition, administrators need to see more “student talk” in the classroom between students as well as between the student and teacher.

BICS requires the use of tasks that are not as cognitively demanding such as naming, matching, and rhyming (Cummins, 2008). When in the BICS level, students need to work on material that is embedded in context. Teachers would provide students hints or clues as to a words meaning, including pictures, mnemonic devices, cognates, and other tools to assist students with new vocabulary. On Bloom’s Taxonomy these activities would be known as Knowledge, Comprehension, Application and Analysis, (Pickard, 2007).

When ESL instruction begins is very important to the acquisition of L2 when you consider that the second stage of Cummings’s language development theory takes five to seven years to fully master. This stage of language acquisition is called CALP or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 2009). In this stage of language a student is able to work with abstract concepts. It includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. CALP requires the student to utilize higher order thinking skills such as synthesis and evaluation. In order to have CALP, a student needs to work on material that is cognitively demanding and not presented with excess amounts of context (Bylund, 2011). This means that teachers provide fewer clues to students on word and sentence meaning. Instead students utilize the language and skills

they already have to decipher new material. The language also becomes more cognitively demanding. New ideas, concepts and language are presented to the students at the same time.

Vygotsky's two-leveled approach to language mirrors Cummins work in that the later form of language development requires several years to acquire. Under Vygotsky's theory, CALP is in fact a qualitatively different use of language form than that represented in BICs. This is because CALP would be what Vygotsky saw as the intersection of thought and language (Bylund, 2011). Under Vygotsky's model, students receiving instruction in their primary language starting in kinder or first grade would not proceed to higher level, abstract thought in their second language until they were eleven or thirteen years old (Bylund, 2011). For Vygotsky, second language thought develops through a similar process as L1 with the student first acquiring a sense of meaning in the sounds and words of the L2. With Cummins, teachers must strive for students to master L2 academic language while Vygotsky directs educators to strive for mastery of L2 thinking (Wood, 2002).

If CALP takes five to seven years to acquire, then the start of ESL instruction is crucial to the success of students in transitional classrooms. If ESL instruction and administrative monitoring occurs from pre-kindergarten, it is possible that a student could acquire BICS by the end of kindergarten and have potentially reached CALP by the end of fifth grade. As educators we must concentrate our energies on ensuring that ESL instruction is carried out in classrooms as early as preschool. If we accept this as a best practice, then students would be prepared to work in their L2 language prior to enrolling in middle school. If we follow the state of Texas guidelines and utilize first grade as the

start of true ESL instruction, then students would not reach CALP until the end of seventh grade, coinciding at this point with the time frame suggested by Vygotsky. Unfortunately for students in LISD, this is not possible since there is no bilingual instruction in middle school. Students would be required to work in their L2 language before completing the five years recommended to grasp CALP. Likewise, there are no Spanish state assessments after fifth grade (TEA, 2011). Allowing students to test in Spanish and to be enrolled in full Spanish classrooms until the end of elementary school is a decision that LISD leaves to each campus principal. A large number of LISD schools choose to transition to English speaking classes in fourth grade despite the disparity with language acquisition research. It is apparent that constant monitoring of ESL instruction beginning in pre-kindergarten is necessary for limited English proficient students to have an opportunity for success in a fourth grade or fifth grade transitional classroom.

Another aspect of Cummins' language acquisition theory is the idea of a common underlying proficiency or CUP between the two languages (Cummins, 2008). Cummins believes that students create a basic understanding of language such as sentence structure, pronunciation of sounds. The student's first language is built upon these concepts. Once the underlying proficiency has been set in a student's first language, it is possible to acquire the second language simply by utilizing some of the language constructs that the student has already created. Cummings requires a minimum threshold of first language cognitive and academic development before the possibility of success in the student's second language (Bylund, 2011). Continual conceptual linguistic development in a student's first language helps with development in the second language. Therefore, it is extremely important that students properly acquire their first language and are able to

break apart language into its basic parts. For example, a student needs to be able to identify sounds, blends, nouns, verbs, sentence structure etc, (Cummins, 2000). In order to move onto CALP, the student would need to understand academic vocabulary in their L1. For example, if a student knows the meaning of justice and can explain the term, then the student would only need to acquire the label for justice in their L2 language. Thus, in order for students to learn a second language, they need to have a firm grasp of their first language.

From the research on language development and language acquisition, we can assess that it takes several years to successfully produce thoughts in a second language and thus be academically successful in this second language as well. As mentioned earlier, it is a goal of bilingual education in LISD to increase the proficiency of LEP students as quickly as possible. It is to this goal that the basis of this study is formulated and not to Thomas and Collier's research that suggests an LEP student's success increases the longer they receive instruction in their L1 (Thomas & Collier, 2005). Operating under the current district policy, which allows individual campuses to select the bilingual program utilized with LEP students on their campus, this study will focus on principal collaboration with stakeholders prior to making decisions such as language program for their campus. Because the language program servicing LEP students will impact their instruction and their assessment, it is an extremely important decision left entirely at the principal's discretion.

In 2009, Christine Rossell released a report for the Texas Public Policy Foundation. This study takes a serious look at how Texas educators prepare students to

transition to English instruction. Testing all English Language Learners in English is the best way to hold schools accountable for the English language acquisition of their students (Rossell, 2009). In her analysis of bilingual education, Rossell states that there is a gap in achievement of thirty-nine percentage points for students who have had five years of bilingual education versus those that have none. She insists that bilingual education is given an unfair advantage in comparison to other programs for ELL students because it tests fewer ELL students in English (Rossell, 2009). When reviewing achievement on the Texas Academic Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test, removing students who tested in Spanish from the results demonstrates ELL achievement is lower than non- ELL students (Rossell, 2009). This researcher argues that, testing students solely on the English state standardized assessment will not truly tell educators if the bilingual program is or is not working since there is no way to determine if the scores are a result of the student's academics or level of language proficiency.

Although I do not agree with her push to dissolve bilingual education, I want to consider her suggestions as a means of reinforcing the system currently in place at LISD. Dr. Rossell argues that Texas does not prepare students for English instruction because the state allows a large number of students to test in Spanish. Would we have greater accountability for English proficiency if students were required to take state assessments in English? Mandating all English instruction would force students who might not be linguistically ready to be assessed incorrectly. Instead of such a drastic move, districts could consider implementing district formative assessments that would be used to monitor English proficiency, but not affect state accountability by forcing English testing.

Student data from these assessments could be used to help administrators make more informed decisions. What sources of input do administrators review prior to making decisions impacting LEP students? What data do principals consider in determining when to transition students to all English instruction? Are administrators placing unprepared students, into all-English instruction or placing teachers in a position where they are teaching students in a language they are not proficient in themselves?

LEP Students and Administrative Decisions

The school principal has several problems to solve in a single school day. Decisions range from the minutia to large scale instructional decisions that directly impact daily instruction. Principals have the option to utilize this power independently or to bring in school stake-holders to gather input or even to arrive at a collective decision. The route a principal takes to choosing a language program can affect whether a school is high performing or not (Seashore, 2010). The Learning from Leadership Project found that high student achievement is directly linked to collective leadership. Collective Leadership is described as principals seeking input from school stakeholders such as teachers, parents and community members. Principals that employ this method of decision making seek input from stakeholders and then use the information to make an informed decision. By bringing in input from others, principals are able to get a better picture of the situation and to create a culture of mutual respect and trust (Seashore 2010). The study stresses principals should use collective leadership as a source of additional information and not as a means to reduce their workload. Principals in high-performing campuses that utilized shared decision making bring in a variety of stake

holders. In fact, results of the Wallace Study demonstrate the more people involved in leadership, the higher performing the campus.

Principals are the second most important influence on student learning, ranking only behind classroom instruction (Seashore, 2010). In the case of LEP students a principal's decision regarding the school's language program directly impacts classroom instruction by means of the language of instruction. It is imperative that principal's make the most appropriate and informed decision possible regarding the language program utilized to address the needs of LEP students. To assist with this decision is the school's LPAC. Utilizing a shared leadership approach in this decision will assist principals in making a more informed decision.

Equally as important is the difficulties that can arise when there is principal turnover on a campus. As the language program used with LEP students is chosen by the campus principal, the type of instruction LEP students receive, either traditional bilingual or developmental bilingual, can change with the arrival of a new principal. Campuses can protect themselves from these back and forth changes, which can negatively impact school culture, by advocating for a shared leadership approach (Seashore, 2010).

Many different types of leadership styles exist including those in the business world as well as in education. Recent research has found that principals who are flexible and can adjust their leadership style based on the situation are more likely to lead high performing schools (Williams, 2006). Presently, the education hierarchy in schools sets up a top down affect in decision making. Unfortunately, this type of decision making process creates a culture of distrust and does not foster the greatest student achievement

(Williams, 2006). Administrators have the ability to utilize conceptual leadership and a collaborative decision making style, but they sometimes feel limited by education policy. This study will look at the collaborative piece of the conceptual style of leadership and determine if principals are being collaborative in their approach to decisions affecting LEP students.

Another source of information that can be utilized by a principal is simply to make a decision regarding the language program on campus by following district policy. Top down policies were very common in the early years of education reform (Marks & Nance, 2007). The federal government passed education reform laws, states implemented as necessary, and districts continued the implementation all the way down to individual schools. While top down policies ensured schools met the necessary requirements, it also impeded a principal's ability to make decisions that were specific to the needs of their individual campuses (Cibulka, 2000). To counter act this trend, districts began to allow individual schools to make more instruction based decisions. Perhaps this could be why LISD allows campus principals to make decisions regarding language of instruction for LEP students. Difficulties can arise in these situations as principals have varying views on the best program for LEP students and can be pressured into making decision based on accountability standards versus the needs of students (Shen, 2010). One study found that the principals utilize student data regularly, but do so primarily to assess their level of accountability (Shen, 2010) instead of to inform instruction.

When it comes to discussing whether or not students are prepared for instruction in English, administrators will have to do more than simply monitor ESL instruction. Much like building a house which will fall down if the foundation is not set correctly to

begin with, students need to learn their first language, in this case Spanish, fairly well if they are to acquire a second language. For transitional students it is essential that they demonstrate mastery in their L1 before being placed in L2 primary instruction. For this reason, LISD requires that students who will be pre-exiting from LEP identification be in the eightieth percentile for reading on the district's standardized assessment, Aprenda, which is administered in Spanish. Administrators need to keep a close eye on the academic success of bilingual students, ensuring that they review district test results like Aprenda, TEJAS Lee, and the High Frequency Word test. Holding teachers accountable for the results of these exams in kindergarten, first and second grades will assist transitional teachers in fourth grade. It is not enough to provide ESL instruction; teachers must also ensure their bilingual students are mastering academic instruction in Spanish as well. A student who is not successful in his or her primary language will not be able to properly transition into L2. The strongest predictor of student achievement in L2 is the amount of schooling a student receives in L1 (Thomas & Collier, 2005).

Knowing how students acquire a second language will help administrators to better monitor ESL instruction and to use this information when making appropriate decisions about which bilingual program to adopt for their campus. Much research has been done on bilingual programs to determine which is more likely to increase student achievement. Knowing if traditional and developmental bilingual programs are successfully transitioning their students is important towards determining if one program should be the standard district wide. As well, the information could help administrators determine if more students are meeting pre-exit criteria in third, fourth and fifth grade. Transitioning students into all English instruction is a hot topic amongst administrators.

Determining the best time for transition is analogous to determining at which grade level can we take the biggest hit in accountability? Is it better to transition in fourth grade so that students have two years in English instruction before they enter middle school and have limited access to bilingual support? Should students transition in fifth grade so that they have three opportunities to pass their state assessments and thus be less likely to negatively impact a schools TEA ranking? If we consider the work of Cummins and Vygotsky should we then throw out the idea of transitioning in elementary school completely and instead focus on completely developing a student's CUP ability in their L1 language? If administrators decide to transition students in elementary school, then how do we best monitor ESL instruction to ensure that students are moving beyond BICS capability? To answer these questions, we must begin by looking to what extent we are successfully or unsuccessfully preparing our students for instruction in their second language and how administrators make decision regarding program of instruction.

Chapter Three

Research Design

This study will be a mixed-methods design, incorporating a survey analysis as well as follow up interviews of select principals. Utilizing a mixed-methods research design will allow the collection of data that can help answer the research questions presented in this study as well as to explore further the possible relationships that exist between variables. A survey will be used in this research as an electronic survey will be the quickest and most cost-effective method to reach all of the chosen participants for this convenient sample. After analyzing the survey data, four elementary principals will be chosen for independent interviews, which will provide a qualitative component of this research and allow for a deeper understanding of an administrator's decision making process regarding LEP students. Principals chosen for the interviews all have similar campus demographics, are within two miles of one another, and all have traditional bilingual programs.

Participants

The Lorenzo Independent School District has one hundred seventy-four elementary schools, all of which provide some type of language program for LEP students either English as a Second Language (ESL), dual language, traditional bilingual, or developmental bilingual education services. Of these schools, one hundred thirty-four provide traditional bilingual or developmental bilingual programs. For the purposes of this study, a convenient sample will be utilized to complete the quantitative portion of

this research. This research was conducted during state testing months in the 2012 school year and as such, LISD would not allow a district-wide survey of school principals. The busy weeks preparing for testing and the hectic days of state test administration are not conducive to a high return of survey instruments. However, a convenient sample of thirty-one LISD elementary principals with either a traditional or developmental program was compiled for the purpose of this study.

Students in ESL programs receive instruction in the English language and are offered language support in the classroom through specific strategies or by means of a pull out language program. Including administrators with ESL programs on their campus would not be beneficial to this study since the language of instruction is already predetermined. In dual-language programs, students identified as LEP are taught in a classroom with students who are not identified as LEP. In the case of a two-way dual-language program, non-LEP students would learn a second language while LEP students continued reinforcing their Spanish language and learning English. The goal of this program is for both groups of students to become fully bilingual in their designated L2. Elementary schools with dual-language programs were not included in this study.

According to the LISD Bilingual/ESL Program Guidelines, traditional bilingual programs teach fifty percent of the day in Spanish and fifty percent of the day in English. In a developmental bilingual program, students are taught in Spanish for forty percent of the day and in English for sixty percent of the day. If the guidelines are being followed and instruction is occurring in both languages, then the language of instruction for the classroom would be both English and Spanish and only the amount of time each language

is utilized for teaching would be varied. In this scenario an administrator would not make a specific choice regarding language of instruction since the guidelines dictate both languages are to be used for instruction. It has been this researcher's experience however, that only one language is primarily used in the classroom regardless of the bilingual program used to serve LEP students. A student's L1 is only utilized for reinforcement of concepts taught in the student's L2. For this reason, elementary schools with traditional bilingual and developmental bilingual programs will be included in this study.

In regards to the qualitative piece of this study specific principals were chosen based on the campus's geographic location within LISD. Prior to the 2010-2011 school year, LISD was divided into geographic regions. Although the district no longer uses regions, this researcher will utilize what comprised as the former East Region for the purposes of this study. The rationale for this decision is that Lorenzo's East End has historically been a majority Hispanic population and thus, has numerous elementary schools with a large LEP population. East End schools are further divided by an executive leader who provides guidance and compliance from schools under this domain. It was my intent to select schools in which the principals are all under one executive leadership. Four specific schools were chosen to participate in this study. The schools participating in the qualitative portion of this study are Fernandez Elementary, Gutierrez Elementary, Delgado Elementary, and Trevino Elementary.

These four elementary schools reside within 1 ½ miles of one another and two are as close as three blocks apart. This close proximity results in similar demographics. Table

1 provides a quick view of the demographic information of the four elementary schools for the 2010-2011 school years.

Table 3.1

Campus Demographics

Elementary School	Student Population	% LEP Population	Accountability Rating	Bilingual Program	Principal Experience
Delgado	612	53	Exemplary	Traditional	1 st year
Gutierrez	541	53	Recognized	Traditional	1 st year
Fernandez	562	67	Acceptable	Traditional	2 nd year
Trevino	624	63	Recognized	Traditional	3 rd year

* All information is from the 2010-2011 school year.

The schools used in this portion of the study have at the lowest a student enrollment of 541 students and at the most an enrollment of 624 students. All schools provide pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The LEP population at these campuses ranges from 53% to 67%. This percentage includes students who are being served in bilingual services as well as those who are not being served due to a parent waiver of language services. The State of Texas rates campuses who meet specific state accountability rates with the following categories, exemplary, recognized, acceptable and unacceptable. As noted in Table 1, there is a variation of accountability in the 2010-2011 accountability rating for these schools. One school is exemplary, two are recognized and one is academically acceptable. It is important to note that Delgado Elementary, the only exemplary campus in this study, is also a LISD vanguard school. All four schools have

female principals with fewer than four years of experience as the lead campus administrator. All principals interviewed were the building principal during the 2010-2011 school year.

Instrumentation

Consistently, collaboration with all stakeholders has been cited as a characteristic of sitting principals in high-performing campuses (Williams, 2006). The decision style inventory developed by Rowe was created to determine a leader's leadership principles. The decision making inventory is broken down into two criteria-- cognitive complexity and values orientation. Four primary leadership styles are derived from this inventory: directive principal, behavioral principal, analytical principal, and conceptual principal. Williams suggests the conceptual principal to be the one most likely to respond positively to today's current leadership demands.

A conceptual principal is one that tends to use data from multiple sources and is willing to share control (Williams, 2006). William Purkey and Betty Siegal interpret this type of leader as one who follows the invitational leadership model. An invitational leader is one that supports the efforts of others. Rowe's conceptual leader utilizes collaboration and shared leadership. Similarly, invitational leadership focuses on connectedness, cooperation, and communication with stakeholders (Burns & Martin, 2010).

Finding an instrument specific to a principal's decision making process and limited English proficient students is challenging. A survey instrument to evaluate

stakeholder collaboration in principal decision making was not found in current research. For the purpose of this research, Rowe's decision-style inventory was consulted and the qualities of the conceptual principal were used as a starting point in preparing the survey instrument. The survey instrument was designed to ask questions about stakeholder collaboration directly. All stakeholders that could reasonably be expected to provide insight into decisions affecting LEP students were included in this instrument.

All principals in this study received an electronic survey which was used to gather more information regarding their decision making process. The survey was sent to principals through the use of the online website surveymoneky.com. The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete. It consists of a Likert scale ranging from 0-5 in which principals list the likelihood of using a particular piece of information in making decisions regarding LEP students. Administrators will also be asked to indicate the likelihood of collaborating with different stake holders. By answering 0, a principal will indicate that they do not use this source of information when making a decision. By answering 5, a principal will inform us that they are very likely to review this information prior to making a decision on services for LEP students. Scores of 1, 2, 3, or 4 will provide insight into the likelihood the principal will utilize such information when making a decision. Using a Likert scale allows much more information than a simple yes or no response. The Likert scale will give this research greater depth of information.

Survey questions can be found in the Appendix. Each question is designed around the primary research questions of this study. The survey is, divided into three sections. The first question deals with information researchers review when determining

the language program to be used on their campus. Below the question are listed possible sources of information a principal could potentially utilize when making a decision whether to have a traditional bilingual program or a developmental bilingual program. The sources of information include student data from assessments such as TAKS, Aprenda, and TELPAS. It is also possible for administrators to utilize input from stakeholders such as teachers, parents, other principals, the LPAC and SDMC; thus this information was included as well.

The second category in the survey revolves around an LEP student's language of instruction. An administrator can seek input from similar stakeholders, so they were included as one of the potential sources of information. For this specific research question, it is important to look into what data pieces the administrator reviewed prior to determining the language of instruction. Did the principal review student data, and if so, what piece of data was he or she most likely to review?

The third category in the survey revolves around an administrator's knowledge of bilingual education. The question is broken down into portions that ask a principal's knowledge on LPAC guidelines, available district language programs, and bilingual education in general.

Individual interviews will be conducted for the qualitative portion of this study. The questions used for interviews will be determined once the survey results have been collected and analyzed; however, a sampling of guiding questions can be found in the Appendix. Trends in survey data will be used to create a short list of questions for further clarification. Interviews will be conducted after school and at a location of the

participant's choosing so as to cause the least detrimental effect on the participant as possible. Interviews will be audio recorded in order to allow ease in transcription. All information provided through surveys and interviews will remain confidential. Each interview is expected to take between fifteen to twenty minutes, depending on the discussion.

Procedures

A survey will be sent out to principals who work in the Lorenzo Independent School District, who have traditional bilingual or developmental bilingual programs on their campus, and who are acquaintances or colleagues of this researcher. The survey will be sent from this researcher's University of Houston email account directly to the principal's LISD email. A two-week window will be given for completion of the survey. During the second week, a follow up email will be sent. This additional email will allow for one more week in which to collect results. After the third week, the survey will be closed and the results analyzed. The results will be tabulated by categories to determine trends. The percentages for each of the five ratings categories will be noted for each response item. Any other important results will also be noted in the results section.

Limitations

Utilizing a convenient sample eliminates the ability to generalize the findings of this research across the school district. Results from this study, however, can be used to demonstrate a need for future research and perhaps indicate a particular question for further investigation. Although the sample is convenient, participants still meet the study

criteria and represent 23% of all district elementary campuses that also meet the criteria and could have been invited to participate.

Chapter Four

This survey reviewed three research questions concerning LEP students, language program, language of instruction, and language of assessment. The convenient survey results consist of thirty one participants all working within the same urban school district. While the results indicate that stakeholder collaboration is a large part of a principal's decision making process, there are still subtle differences on whom the principal seeks input from when determining the language program and language of instruction for LEP students. Important differences can be noted in regards to when the most stakeholder collaboration is likely to occur as well as differences between the responses of bilingual administrators and non-bilingual administrators. The survey revealed that all participants felt knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about bilingual education. Interviews provided more insight into the knowledge base of principals.

Research Question One

Language Program

Current research indicates that a change in leadership style is needed in order to adjust to the many hurdles placed in today's educational reform (Burns & Martin, 2010). Questions involving collaboration with school personnel were embedded in the survey and framed by the topics language program, language of instruction, and language of assessment. Principals are solely responsible for making decisions involving the bilingual program utilized on their respective campuses. According to the results of this survey, this decision is rarely made alone. A principal has the ability to call upon the site-based decision making committee (SDMC) for input. Thirty-two percent of those surveyed said

they would be very likely to discuss the school's language program with the SDMC. In fact, a little over half, 54%, said they would call on the SDMC prior to making decisions regarding the school's language program. The principal of Trevino Elementary explained how she utilizes her SDMC, "I talk to them about my thoughts on transitioning, but it's not something we vote about." However, principals were much more likely to discuss the school's language program with teachers in state tested grades and with the Limited English Proficiency Committee.

Table: 4.1

Language Program: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel

n=31	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Rating Average	Standard Deviation
Discuss with the School Site Based Decision Making Committee	9.7% (3)	6.5% (2)	19.4% (6)	25.8% (8)	38.7% (12)	3.77	1.31
Discuss with the 3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th grade bilingual teachers on your campus	0.0% (0)	3.2% (1)	16.1% (5)	32.3% (10)	48.4% (15)	4.26	.824
Discuss with the (LPAC)	0.0% (0)	3.2 (1)	12.9% (4)	35.5% (11)	48.4% (15)	4.29	.824

Table 4.1 demonstrates how participants felt concerning their collaboration with school personnel and language program. The average rating for discussing the decision with the SDMC was 3.77 with 38.7% very likely, 25.8% likely, 19.4% neutral, 6.5%

unlikely, and 9.7% very unlikely to do so. Principals were highly likely: (48.8%) and likely (32.3%) to discuss the decision of language program with the third, fourth and fifth grade teachers. Perhaps elementary principals are much more likely, 80.7% percent to be exact, to discuss their decision with teachers in third, fourth and fifth grade as this is the population most affected by the choice of language program. For example, if a principal chooses a traditional program, then the fourth grade teachers would be providing instruction in English. If the decision is made to adopt a developmental program, fifth grade teachers would be dealing with transitioning students into all English assessments. The SDMC can be a collective of teachers from various grades, school-based employees, parents, and community members. Principals are 64.5% likely and highly likely to discuss the decision with the SDMC. Determining the language program is a huge decision, and since the language program will specifically affect transitional teachers, the decision is more likely discussed with them than with the SDMC.

Principals are highly likely (48.4%) to discuss the decision of language program with the LPAC. Participants responded similarly to whether or not they would discuss the language program decision with the LPAC. Eighty-three point nine percent of participants said they would collaborate with the LPAC when determining the school's language program. This is a promising result as principals are not required to have committee consensus or approval when determining the language program utilized on their campus. A large number of participants, six for SDMC, five for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teachers, and four for the LPAC, responded neutral to questions involving collaboration with school personnel. These participants chose the neutral choice instead of answer choices for likely or unlikely to collaborate with school personnel. 19.4% of participant's

responded neutral to discussing the school's language program with the SDMC, 16.1% indicated they were neutral about meeting with teachers in third through fifth grade, and 12.9% said they were neutral about discussing the language program with the LPAC. This indicates that a handful of participants are neither strongly in favor nor strongly against collaborating with school personnel regarding the language program serving limited English proficient students on their campus. As no open-ended questions were utilized in this survey instrument, it is unknown if participants who answered neutral collaborated with anyone in regards to the language program serving LEP students on their campus.

Language of Instruction

Table Three demonstrates the frequencies of participant responses for deciding the language of instruction for limited English proficient students. When determining the language of instruction for LEP students, principals were asked to note, on a scale of one to five, the likelihood of collaborating with school personnel prior to making a decision. Nineteen participants responded that they would be very likely to discuss their decision regarding language of instruction with the classroom teacher. Ten participants responded that they would be likely to discuss the decision with the classroom teacher. These results indicate that an overwhelming majority of principals (61.3%) would take into consideration the feedback provided by the classroom teacher who is, after all, the personnel most affected by the language used during instruction.

Table 4.2

Language of Instruction: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel

n=31	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Rating Average	Standard Deviation
Discuss the decision with the classroom teacher	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.5% (2)	32.3% (10)	61.3% (19)	4.55	.62
Discuss with the grade level during Professional Learning Communities (PLC)	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	22.6% (7)	35.5% (11)	35.5% (11)	3.97	1.02
Discuss with the Limited Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	19.4% (6)	25.8% (8)	54.8% (17)	4.35	.798

Principals were also asked to respond to the likelihood of discussing their decision with the professional learning community (PLC). Even though principals were keen on speaking to individual classroom teachers, the same number of participants did not agree with discussing the decision of language of instruction with the PLC. Professional Learning Communities often consist of the entire grade level team and administration. These open meetings, for two participants at least, are not the place to seek input from teachers on the language of instruction. Seven participants were neither unlikely nor very likely to discuss the language of instruction within PLC, and 80.6% of participants were

either likely or very likely to discuss the decision regarding language of instruction with the LPAC. This result is surprising considering that the language of instruction drives the language of assessment. One of the responsibilities of the LPAC committee is to determine placement for LEP students. According to LPAC guidelines, the committee should meet at the end of the year to determine appropriate placement. Unfortunately, placement is defined by general terms, meaning bilingual services, ESL or exited from language services. Such broad choices means the committee cannot decide if the child is ready to transition into English instruction with bilingual support or if the child should continue receiving instruction in Spanish. Thus, the LPAC is determining placement, but principals are still determining the language of instruction. While 80.6% of principals are discussing language of instruction with the LPAC, 19.4% are making these decisions without their input.

Language of Assessment

I asked the principal of Delgado Elementary if she felt that the language of assessment was determined by her decision to have a particular language program on her campus. She responded, “Yeah, for the majority of students, yes, because the language of instruction determines the language of assessment.” Such a strong opinion came from each principal interviewed. Ms. Ramirez, principal of Fernandez Elementary, stated, “Students who are new arrivals or possible exemptions are really the only ones we review. Everyone else is going to test in whatever language the class is being taught in.” These responses are alarming since campus principals make language program decisions that ultimately affect the language assessment options of LEP students. One principal mentioned, “Sometimes we transition students and realize, you know what, these kids are

not ready. They need lots of help, but we have to transition them at some point.” I asked if, under these circumstances, the decision is made to then assess in Spanish. She answered, “No. We’d have to change instruction for that. We have to transition. We just have to stop doing this to our kids. They need to be ready when it’s time.”

There are specific state guidelines that govern the decisions made in terms of state assessments for LEP students. For LISD these can be found in the LPAC manual guidelines which are updated annually. Of interest to this study is the requirement that the language of assessment be determined by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee. The committee must consider the language of instruction for LEP students when determining the language of assessment. Basically, if students are learning in English, they need to test in English.

Twenty participants responded that they were very likely to discuss the language of assessment for LEP students with the LPAC. Eight participants said that they were likely to do the same. Such a strong result indicates that the majority of the convenient sample understands that language of assessment must be a collaborative decision. However, three participants responded neutral. They are neither unlikely nor very unlikely to discuss the language of assessment with the LPAC. In this situation the choice of neutral, would imply that these three principals are unaware that the LPAC committee determines the language of assessment despite all respondents indicating they were knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about bilingual education.

Table 4.3

Language of Assessment: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel

n=31	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Rating Average	Standard Deviation
Discuss with the Limited Proficiency Assessment Committee	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.7% (3)	25.8% (8)	64.5% (20)	4.55	.68
Discuss with the classroom teacher	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	25.8% (8)	74.2% (23)	4.74	.44
Discuss with the grade level during Professional Learning Communities	0.0% (0)	3.2% (1)	22.6% (7)	38.7% (12)	35.5% (11)	4.06	.83

No participants responded neutrally when asked if they would discuss the language of assessment with the classroom teacher. All participants answered either likely or very likely to collaborate with teachers in third through fifth grade when deciding the language of assessment for LEP students. However, when asked if they would collaborate with the PLC regarding language of assessment, responses are almost identical. The results for PLC collaboration in decisions of assessment can be viewed in Table Four listed above.

Research Question Two

Student & Teacher Data in Principal Decision Making

With one of the district's missions being a data-driven culture, it is almost unnecessary to ask if principals review data when making decision that affect LEP students. The survey, none the less, questions what particular data a principal uses when determining the language program, language of instruction, and language of assessment for LEP students. A review of individual student data is required in order to officially exit students from LEP designation as well as a good practice when determining language services.

Table 4.4

Language Program: Review of Student Data

n=31	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Rating Average	Standard Deviation
Review students' test results such as Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) or APRENDA from the prior school year	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	19.4% (6)	80.6% (25)	4.81	.40
Review students' Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) results from the prior school year	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	12.9% (4)	87.1% (27)	4.87	.34

With all participants responding that they utilize student data in their decision making process, it becomes helpful to break down the responses by two categories, likely and very likely, to utilize student data. Table 4.4 clearly shows that most (80.6%) of principals in this convenient sample were very likely to review a student's previous state assessment results such as TAKS and 19.4% were likely to review the same data. Twenty-seven participants or 87.1% of principals would review the student's Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) results from the previous school year. Four participants and six participants responded that they would review a student's TELPAS and TAK results respectively. Although all principals indicated they would review student data, it would be important to discern why some principals selected likely to consider the data instead of very likely. The principal of Delgado said the following in regards to data, "There is a lot [to consider] when you have a program like the language program, or the bilingual program, or a magnet program. Whatever the program is it doesn't exist in isolation. So you really have to look at all the data pieces when you look to making a change in program. You know, is what we are doing, the program we are providing, is it beneficial to students?" A review of Table 4.4 demonstrates the similarities for this portion of the survey. Despite the survey results indicating otherwise, follow-up interviews revealed a greater emphasis on individual student data when informing the language of instruction. In fact, none of the principals interviewed mentioned discussing the possible language of instruction with the classroom teacher.

Results were almost identical when principals were asked to consider data for teachers. With the district including teacher data as part of the teacher appraisal system in

the upcoming school year it is no surprise that 67.7% of principals responded they would be very likely to review a teacher's state assessment results on TELPAS or the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) when making any decision affecting LEP students.

Table 4.5

Language of Instruction: Review of Teacher Data

n=31	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Rating Average
The success of a teacher's students on assessments such as TAKS/APRENDIA	6.5% (2)	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	19.4% (6)	67.7% (21)	4.39
The success of that teacher's students on the TELPAs test the previous school year	6.5% (2)	3.2% (1)	3.2% (1)	19.4% (6)	67.7% (21)	4.39

Table 4.5 demonstrates few principals (19.4%) were likely to review the results of students in a specific teacher's classroom on TAKS/Aprenda data. Four participants were neutral, very unlikely, or unlikely to review teacher performance data like TAKS/Aprenda data. Another 67.7% indicated they were very likely to review a teacher's TELPAS and TAKS results as part of their decision-making process. A review of Table 4.5 demonstrates that results for reviewing teacher data were exactly the same. Principals would utilize a teacher's data on TAKS/Aprenda and TELPAS when making decisions about the language of instruction for LEP students.

Two principals responded that they were very unlikely to review teacher data in their decision making process. One principal indicated that they were unlikely to consider TAKS or TELPAS teacher data. One participant responded neutral to these questions. The principal at Fernandez commented the following in regards to teacher data, “I incorporated TELPAS rates in my review of teacher data this year. When we had goal setting conferences (a portion of the district’s appraisal system) I let them know, you had 90% of students advancing a [proficiency] level on TELPAS. Or your kids didn’t advance enough. When they give me push, back I say, ‘Well, to be the best you have to be good at everything. You can get the students to pass the TAKS in Spanish and that’s great, but at what expense? Can you also get them proficient in English too?’ Our teachers have to be able to do everything.” As no open ended option is given in the survey for principals to explain why they would not review the success of a particular teacher’s students on TAKS or TELPAS assessments, it is not possible to know with certainty why they are very unlikely to consider this information.

A teacher’s English proficiency was added to the survey to see if it was considered in a principal’s decision-making process. Like other questions involving the review of teacher data, a teacher’s English proficiency gathered similar responses. Twenty-six participants responded they were either likely or very likely to consider a teacher’s English proficiency when making decisions regarding LEP students. This response is interesting as 83% of principals indicated that a teacher’s own English proficiency is considered. It’s unfortunate that so many principals have to consider a teacher’s proficiency in order to make decisions for their students. Teachers should be proficient in both English and Spanish in order to provide bilingual services. Three

principals were either very unlikely or unlikely to consider this information. The principal at Delgado explained, “You know for the program to be successful you have to have truly bilingual teachers, and most of the time we don’t have that.” The principal at Fernandez Elementary was the only other principal to mention a teacher’s proficiency during her interview. She contributed the following comment, “There are some teachers who just couldn’t teach all day in English. They will stay quiet during PLC and then later let it all out with my AP cause they can talk to her in Spanish.”

Research Question Three

Principal Use of the LPAC

The LPAC is a useful resource put together by the campus principal to discuss and make decision regarding LEP students. When results are filtered by bilingual and non-bilingual principals, a slight distinction between the uses of the LPAC committee could be noted.

Table 4.6

Principal Use of the LPAC

	Non-Bilingual n=11	Bilingual n=20
PROGRAM: Discuss with the LPAC	82% (9)	85% (17)
INSTRUCTION: Discuss with the LPAC	73% (8)	85% (17)
ASSESSMENT: Discuss with the LPAC	73% (8)	100% (20)

*Percent of participants who responded likely or highly likely to collaborate with the LPAC.

Table 4.6 demonstrates 85% of bilingual principals were likely or very likely to discuss decisions regarding the language program on their campus with the LPAC. Eighty-two percent of non-bilingual principals were not likely to utilize their LPAC for this decision. Table Seven presents principal utilization of the LPAC when making decisions about language program, language of instruction and language of assessment for LEP students. Interviews with principals give insight as to how principals create the LPAC committee. At Delgado Elementary, the principal responded, "It depends on how many personnel I have. Part of it would just be the leadership that I have on staff, not just administrative but the teachers as well. Some of the teachers that I would identify as campus leaders already have a lot of other duties." At Fernandez the principal revealed, "I kept the same teachers that were on the committee when I became principal. I don't have a line out the door of people wanting to be on this committee, so I just made my AP chair. The parent on the committee changed this year only because they moved to another school." The principal at Gutierrez chose her committee the following way, "I chose a teacher who has a lot of experience and a teacher who has less than three years because I want to hear both sides. You have a traditional teacher who has been here a long time and knows this is how we've done it, and then you have a new teacher, new eyes that says [sic] yes, but these are our students now. This is what we are doing now. I like to have a good mixture of opinions."

With the LPAC committee chosen, I asked interviewed principals how they determined their LPAC chair. At Fernandez the principal responded, "My AP. She's in charge of everything LEP. I trust her to run things the way I would. She brings questions to me sometimes, but for the most part, she just does things the way I would." At Trevino

and Delgado, the LPAC committee is chaired by the principal. “I tend to put more on myself because I ultimately need them [teachers] to be really good at their main job.”

Like Fernandez, Gutierrez Elementary’s LPAC is also chaired by the assistant principal.

“For the LPAC chair, it is always an administrator. It is easier to access them to have conversations than it is to pull a teacher.”

Bilingual and Non-Bilingual Principals

Bilingual principals show strong indication to collaborate with the LPAC committee regarding language of instruction and language of assessment with 85% and 100% respectively. These results can be seen on Table 4.6. Non-bilingual principals were less likely to utilize the LPAC for language of instruction and language of assessment decisions with only 73% indicating that they would discuss the language of instruction and language of assessment with the LPAC committee.

Table 4.7

Language Program: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel by Language Background

Bilingual n=20 Non-Bilingual n=11	Non-Bilingual Very Unlikely & Unlikely	Bilingual Likely & Very Likely	Non-Bilingual Likely & Very Likely	Bilingual
Discuss with the SDMC	27% (3)	10% (2)	42% (5)	75% (15)
Discuss with the 3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th grade bilingual teachers on your campus	9% (10)	0.0% (0)	55% (6)	95% (19)
Discuss with the Limited Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)	.09% (1)	0.0% (0)	82% (90)	85% (17)

Table 4.7 shows the likelihood bilingual and non bilingual principals of collaborating with school personnel in regards to the language program on campus. Bilingual principals were much more likely than non-bilingual principals to discuss decisions about language program with the SDMC. Twenty-seven percent of non-bilingual principals were not likely to collaborate with the SDMC where only 10% of bilinguals would also not likely to collaborate with the SDMC. Bilingual principals were more likely (75%) than non-bilingual principals (42%) to discuss the language program with the SDMC. Collaborating with 3rd – 5th grade teachers regarding language program was much more likely to occur with a bilingual principal than with a non-bilingual principal with 95% and 55% respectively.

Table 4.8

Language of Instruction: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel by Language Background

Bilingual n=20 Non-Bilingual n=11	Non-Bilingual Very Unlikely & Unlikely	Bilingual Likely & Very Likely	Non-Bilingual Likely & Very Likely	Bilingual
Discuss the decision with the classroom teacher	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	100% (11)	90% (18)
Discuss with the grade level during Professional Learning Communities (PLC)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	64% (7)	75% (15)
Discuss with the Limited Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	73% (8)	85% (17)

Results were much more similar for both bilingual and non-bilingual principals when it referred to the language of instruction for LEP students. Table 4.8 shows the breakdown of the likelihood or lack thereof for principals to collaborate with school personnel regarding language of instruction. Regardless of the principal's own language abilities, they are still very likely to discuss the language of instruction with the classroom teacher than in PLC. Ninety percent of bilingual principals said they would discuss the decision of language program for LEP students with the classroom teacher, and 100% of non-bilingual principals said they would do the same. Seventy-five percent of bilingual principals would discuss the decision in PLC whereas sixty-five percent of non-bilingual principals would do the same. These results indicate that principals within this urban school district have a strong inclination towards collaborating with the classroom teacher when making decisions about limited English proficient students and the language of instruction.

Table 4.9

Language of Assessment: Principal Collaboration with School Personnel by Language Background

Bilingual n=20 Non-Bilingual n=11	Non-Bilingual	Bilingual	Non-Bilingual	Bilingual
	Very Unlikely & Unlikely		Likely & Very Likely	
Discuss the decision with the classroom teacher	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	100% (11)	100% (20)
Discuss with the grade level during (PLC)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	55% (6)	85% (17)
Discuss with the (LPAC)	0.0% (0)	5% (1)	73% (8)	100% (20)
Discuss with parents	.09% (1)	10% (2)	27% (3)	70% (14)

Table 4.9 contains information regarding the likelihood of bilingual and non-bilingual principals to collaborate with school personnel and parents prior to making decisions regarding language of assessment. Every bilingual principal participating in this convenient survey responded that they would discuss the decision with the LPAC. Results this decisive can be a result of principal's knowledge of the bilingual program. Bilingual principals perhaps served a role in their career involving bilingual education such as bilingual teacher, LPAC member, or LPAC chair. In these roles, an educator would have been informed of the LPAC role in determining the language of assessment. Since only 73% of non-bilingual principals indicated they would collaborate with their LPAC regarding language of assessment, it is pertinent to look into why the percentage is not one hundred percent. It is unclear if the three non-bilingual principals that chose neutral for this question did so because they are not aware of the requirements for determining the language of assessment for LEP students. If so, it could indicate a need for further training. Bilingual principals were also much more likely to discuss the language of assessment with parents than non-bilingual principals with 50% and 27% respectively.

It is important to this research to determine how principals make the decision to maintain or change the bilingual program that was implemented on their campus when they became the instructional leader. A clear pattern could not be determined from the results as two participants responded very unlikely, three unlikely, ten neutral, seven likely and seven very likely. This question could have been confusing and since there was no open ended questions for participants to explain their thinking, it is difficult to say with certainty what the results imply. Interviews, however, go further in explaining why

the responses are all across the board. The question was clarified to principals who participated in the follow up interview. Their responses indicate a desire to continue a language program if it is either producing good results or supports their position on bilingual education. The principals are more likely to maintain the current bilingual program on their campus if it falls in with their beliefs on how the bilingual program should be run. The principal at Gutierrez Elementary kept the existing language program on her campus when she became principal. She reflected, "I don't really believe in the developmental program. I think it is too late." The principal of Delgado Elementary also inherited a campus with a traditional bilingual program. When asked her feelings of the developmental bilingual program she referenced her experience. "Based on my previous experience, we did developmental. So, you know, having lived that as a teacher and knowing..um..I really think that transitioning earlier is a good idea." The principal at Fernandez Elementary had similar comments, "There was an odd program when I arrived. Mainly it was developmental and some transitioned in fourth, and there was even ½ a class that transitioned in third. The program was all over the place. I made sure that we implemented a traditional program and that we worked on supporting our transitioning teachers in fourth." A Trevino Elementary the principal maintains a traditional bilingual program as well. "I looked at the results when I got here. The results weren't the best, but it wasn't necessarily because of the type of bilingual program. We need to prepare our students to be successful, and that means transitioning them earlier. So, we just needed to put systems in place to make sure that the students were learning enough English."

Putting systems in place and providing program monitoring were common recurrences in these four principal interviews. At Gutierrez, the principal had this to say, “The changes I made were more system wide. It wasn’t the curriculum. It was just the systems we had in place to monitor the education of the ESL (English as a Second Language) component that we have on campus.” All four principals had strong beliefs that the language program required extensive monitoring and clear expectations. “The monitoring piece is crucial,” said the principal at Fernandez. “We had to make sure that our lower grade teachers were putting in their ESL block every day.” At Delgado, monitoring the bilingual program was also discussed in the interview. “I’m a firm believer in making sure the bilingual component is happening early and that we transition for kids that are ready.” At Trevino Elementary the principal goes further in explaining her expectations for the program, “The point is our kids need to be ready when it’s their time to transition. Every teacher should be providing an ESL block. That’s why we discuss what ESL looks like in first grade, second grade, and so forth. What is it we want them to be able to do this year in English? If we don’t decide these things before we start the school year, none of us will know what we want the kids to be able to do when they move on.” The principal of Gutierrez Elementary added, “Bilingual teachers have a designated bilingual portion in their ESL lesson time and in their schedule. So, I made focused walkthroughs and really focused on ESL methodology during that time. So [I was] checking to make sure that teachers were being consistent with their ESL block and making sure that they were doing a good job during that time.”

The research cited by many advocates of bilingual education, including the bilingual policy manual of the Lorenzo Independent School District, is the work of Dr.

Virginia Collier. Her longitudinal research indicates that students who transition earlier do not fare as well as students who have ample time to develop their primary language skills while mastering their second language proficiency. In other words, late exited students did better than early exited students. This paper has reviewed language acquisition theory and Cummins findings that it takes a second language learner five to seven years in order to acquire mastery of academic language in their second language. Survey data indicates that all principals participating feel they are knowledgeable about bilingual education. The interview portion of this study reveals that the principals were aware of current research on late exit, but continued to advocate early exit based on their own beliefs for student success. “My thinking is that when you transition a kid in fourth that gives them an extra year to be prepared in middle school because if you transition them in fifth grade and you do the developmental program, it doesn’t give them enough support when they go into middle school because they have very few ESL classes...there is just not enough support,” said the principal of Gutierrez Elementary. It appeared in discussions with principals that they felt an early transition was necessary because LEP students would not have as much language support in middle school as was being offered in elementary. At Delgado, the principal drew from personal experience when asked about transitioning. “It’s just that in my experience, with different campuses that I’ve been at where they had developmental, the kids ultimately struggle and start failing classes. I only worked in high school for one year, but following the ESL kids you know their track record is not great in math and science content areas and certainly in English. ...The lack of academic vocabulary and experiences while learning the language at the same time kind of hits them really hard when they get to high school.” At Fernandez the

principal had this to say, “I know that the longer they stay in Spanish, the better for them. That’s what’s best for kids, but I’ve seen these kids in middle school. They struggle in all their classes because they don’t know enough English to be successful. Then it becomes a motivation issue because they think they can’t learn.” The principal at Gutierrez defended her program choice by stating, “You have all these research papers...projects...that tell you students develop their writing, academics, in five to seven years. Students of a second language develop their writing skills in five to seven years and academic in five to seven years, so we should transition later. So writing [in English] is delayed in a student of a different language, but you can prepare them so that it is not traumatic for them.”

Despite being aware of the benefits of late exit, all four principals expressed a desire to transition students as early as possible before moving into middle school where access to language support is limited. The principal at Fernandez Elementary expressed this desire during our interview, “Our transitional teachers have such a difficult time getting the kids ready to test in English. It’s a rough year, but then in fifth they are doing so much better because they’ve already had a year of English. We have some kids that are ready to transition in third. If they’re ready then why not?” At Trevino the principal responded, “We transition at fourth but seriously considering adding a third grade group next year. It will help the fourth grade team to not have to struggle so much transitioning all the students. Of course, only for students who are ready.” The same thoughts were echoed at Delgado, “I really think that even transitioning in third grade for kids who are ready is a good idea as well.” When asked if she would consider late exit if students had greater access to Spanish services in middle school, the principal at Delgado responded,

“Yes. [Students] do not have access on the level that they need it to continue to grow and be truly bilingual.” At Gutierrez Elementary, the principal is already moving towards transitioning students even earlier. “I have one third grade transitional class, and we did that on purpose last year because the push was to get these kids to transition in third grade. So we had 20 students who were able to transition into English. Is it successful? Yeah, it is. We see that they are doing just as well as their counterparts in the regular class.” She continued to remark the success of students in this early exit class and expressed the desire of teachers to transition as early as second grade. “I can tell you my second grade team is pushing really hard to have a full third grade transitional team so that there are no bilingual third grade students. Is it going to happen? Probably no, but that is the big focus to get these kids to transition to English by third grade.” Early transition was being contemplated at Fernandez Elementary as well. “I’m talking to my second grade team and telling them that I’m planning on transitioning a class this next school year. I want them preparing kids as if they are going to be in an English class next year. I haven’t decided if that’s going to happen yet, but I would really like to see the kids that are ready moving into a third grade transitional classroom.”

I questioned principals if they felt there were any limitations placed on how they would like the bilingual program to be run. The principal at Delgado said the following, “I don’t believe that most of our campuses, especially in the inner city, are truly bilingual programs. Maybe the two way program is, but...um...our students in the long run because there isn’t a bilingual system through middle school and high school they lose the academic vocabulary in their new language which is English.” She continued later on by saying, “I just know what our kids need because they don’t have that opportunity later

on and because every test they have to pass, every hurdle they have to jump, will be in English. We need to prepare them for that.” She expressed a love of bilingual education saying, “If I could rule the world, there would be both [languages], and it would be for all kids.” At Gutierrez elementary the principal had these final thoughts on bilingual education, “I think eventually, [the district] are going to have to go to one uniform way. Our bilingual program is broken in this district.” She cited an example of a second grader who came from a school down the street that didn’t have an ESL program as strong as the one on her campus. The child struggled during the ESL portion to the point of crying every day. She also mentioned another student who was at a developmental campus where she was taught primarily in Spanish and transferred to Gutierrez which has a traditional program and instruction is primarily in English. “To me, there needs to be consistency. I mean having a traditional and developmental program breaks kids up. You have my campus that’s traditional, and then two blocks down you have one that’s developmental. They switch [schools] mid-year, so how beneficial is that to them? I think we need to go to something more centralized, more consistent. That’s my dream. That one day we will have one program, and it doesn’t matter if they go to school A or school B or school F. They are going to get the same type of curriculum.”

An ESL curriculum was also a final thought of the principal at Trevino Elementary. “We need to know exactly what our kids need to know in each grade level. I need to be able to hold my teachers accountable for English. All I have to work with is TELPAS. That’s not enough. We have to make our own ESL assessments and make sure that our students are growing in English. If we had something concrete from the district, we’d know how well our students are doing, and we could compare them to other

traditional campuses. Well, as far as proficiency goes.” At Fernandez, the principal added further support for a district-wide curriculum in her final thoughts. “I can ride my teachers on their reading and math scores, but the only way I know they’re teaching English is by monitoring their ESL block. I want to say, ‘hey, your kids aren’t performing on their ESL test. Let’s step it up.’ To do that, we have to create tests and to get on the same page as to what we want to assess.” When asked if she could use further support in this area, she replied, “It’s tough because I want to say yes. It’s so easy to do if the district just sends me the assessments, but then again, we already assess for everything. When we did Interims last year, it felt like we were constantly testing, so we’d have to find a way to strike a balance.”

Chapter Five

Bilingual education is under attack in the United States. In recent years, this type of language program has been slowly edged out of our education system. There are only four states in the nation that provide bilingual education as the main language program for limited English proficient students. Texas, Illinois, Florida, and New York still offer bilingual education as their default language program. As the largest provider of Bilingual education, the state of Texas has an obligation to demonstrate how the program successfully bridges the gap in achievement scores between limited English speaking students and their English-proficient peers. Texas educators and legislators must become well versed in the benefits of Bilingual education and pledge their support towards its longevity. To do so, we must clearly demonstrate, with state assessment data, that the bilingual program produces academically successful students who can perform in English on similar levels as students who never participated in a bilingual program. This issue can be examined through many facets such reviewing bilingual education curriculum throughout the state, bilingual instruction in the classroom, English proficiency accountability, teacher training and development, implementation of bilingual programs, and many other factors that weigh into the success of the program. For the purposes of this study, an examination of administrator decision making in regards to limited English proficient students was utilized.

One large urban school district in Texas with a sizeable LEP student population served as the base population for this research. Current research indicates that principal leadership style plays a large role in changing school culture and moving schools towards greater student achievement. The leadership style most strongly noted on successful

campuses is the conceptual style. Principals who adhere to the conceptual style are more oriented towards the success of people within the organization. This tendency to create “social” decisions, or decisions that are best for the people in the organization, leads principals to include as many stake-holders as possible when making decisions. This finding lead to a greater push in utilizing professional learning communities and involving more stake holders in instructional decisions once done primarily by principals. Building on the collaborative qualities of the conceptual leadership style, this study provided participants the opportunity to give input on which stakeholders they are most likely to discuss decisions that affect limited English proficient students.

It is important to learn first if principals make collaborative decisions in regards to LEP students because current state policy requires that campuses maintain a LPAC. The LPAC reviews placement of LEP students and the language of assessment. The committee must also monitor students after they have exited from language services in order to ensure that they are being academically successful. Principal collaboration is ideal, but not a state requirement except in the case of language of assessment. Therefore, collaboration with the LPAC was included as a stakeholder in the principal survey.

Lorenzo ISD is phasing in an appraisal system that will take into account the test scores of classroom teachers. Having worked as a bilingual teacher I can attest to the difficulty of preparing students for the state assessment while also attempting to fill in the language gaps that hinder LEP students from accurately demonstrating their knowledge on state assessments. As the classroom teacher is the most impacted by the decision to transition students to instruction primarily done in English, it was necessary to determine if principals are likely to collaborate with these individuals. It is vital that classroom

teachers be included in decisions regarding LEP students as the assessment data of these students will strongly impact their appraisals. The district is doing their part to limit the adverse effects of the dip in scores when students transition from Spanish to English assessments. The district's decision to include a provision in the teacher appraisal for transitional students' data implies that they are aware of the potential for a drop in student scores in transitional grade due to language issues. The drop in scores during the transitional year is a real factor and one that needs to be addressed by continued research. This survey included collaboration with classroom teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades which are the most affected by a particular language program as program type most often determines the grade level for transition.

All elementary campuses maintain a site based decision making committee (SDMC) through which campus concerns, school based policy changes and budgetary issues are discussed. The SDMC is made up of members nominated and voted on by the school's staff. With the support of the SDMC, principals can make large scale decisions that are can be incorporated as school policy. Collaborating with the SDMC means that a representative group of stakeholders has vetted the decision impacting the school's LEP population. An option for SDMC collaboration prior to making decisions that affect LEP students was included in this survey.

Often overlooked is the opportunity to include input from parents. Parent input is built into the LPAC guidelines as a parent of an LEP student must be included in the committee. A parent must also be a member of the SDMC so that they may be an advocate for all campus students. These two committees ensure that input from parents is included in the decision making process. Of importance to this research is whether or not

principals discuss decisions affecting LEP students such as language program, language of instruction and language of assessment with the SDMC. A question was included in this survey to collect data on the principal's use of this collaboration. However, discussion with parents was not limited to SDMC parents only. This survey also included questions involving a principal's willingness to collaborate with individual parents in regards decisions impacting their LEP identified child.

These main sources of collaboration, PLC, SDMC, individual teachers, LPAC and individual parents, can all factor into a principal's decision-making process regarding language program, language of instruction and language of assessment. Therefore, these sources of input were included in this researcher's survey adapted from Rowe's leadership style inventory specifically focused on the conceptual leadership style of increased collaboration.

Summary of the Study

A convenient sample of thirty-one principals within the Lorenzo Independent School District was conducted along with four follow-up interviews of elementary campus principals. Elementary schools included in the study had to provide either a traditional or developmental bilingual program as the language service given to limited English proficient students. While Lorenzo ISD has 174 elementary schools, only 134 provide either one of these bilingual programs. A convenient sample does not allow the results of this study to be generalized to the entire district however; it does provide insight into areas requiring further investigation. Interviewed principals demonstrate a particular geographic area within the district and thus are not entirely representative of

the district as a whole, but they do provide valuable information as to issues important to decision making and LEP students.

Discussion of the Findings

This study found that principals are not likely to utilize the LPAC when making decisions involving instruction for LEP students. This result is not surprising considering LPAC guidelines do not require the committee to be included in instructional decisions. The LPAC committee must be consulted for placement and assessment decisions only. Although collaboration with the LPAC is not required for instructional decisions it would be wise for administrators to discuss the language of instruction with the committee as the language of instruction will ultimately determine the language of assessment. The survey revealed strong collaboration with the LPAC in regards to assessment, but since this is required by the state, it was expected that the majority of principals would indicate that they are likely to collaborate with the committee on this type of decision. Bilingual principals were also more likely to utilize the LPAC committee prior to making decisions on language program, language of instruction, and language of assessment for LEP students.

The LPAC committee determines placement, which means the committee decides if the student will continue to be identified as limited English proficient and require placement in a classroom where bilingual services can be provided. Since a transitional classroom is taught by a certified bilingual teacher, the requirement for bilingual services is being met even if instruction is taking place in English. When a child exits LEP identification, they are placed in a regular classroom because they no longer require

language support. A transitional classroom is similar except for the fact that a bilingual teacher, who can offer bilingual support, is in the classroom, so students who have not exited LEP status can still receive all English instruction as long as it is being done by a certified bilingual teacher. This distinction creates a loop-hole by which LEP students who are not ready for official exit are essentially pre-exited. The district has specific criteria for pre-exiting students which should be utilized for all students placed in transitional classrooms.

As mentioned above, this study revealed that the majority of principals discussed assessment decisions with the LPAC; however, not all of those surveyed said they were highly likely to discuss with the committee. Further study is required to determine why some participants did not feel as strongly about utilizing the LPAC for this decision. Perhaps, principals who were not highly likely to discuss with the committee communicated their assessment decisions through other means. In some schools the principal is not part of the LPAC committee, and thus the decision for assessment is made by the committee members only. Interviews revealed that principals who are not on the LPAC still give insight into assessment decisions either by sitting in and participating in LPAC meetings or by communicating their assessment choices through the LPAC chair.

While collaboration with the PLC is highly emphasized in literature as a means to address student achievement gaps, principals surveyed are not as likely to discuss decisions affecting LEPs students through this channel. Decisions affecting the language of instruction and language of assessment are more likely to be discussed with the individual classroom teacher. PLC discussions center on instructional choices in lesson delivery and assessments that can be beneficial to all teachers on the grade level.

Discussing language of instruction is perhaps best done with individual teachers in reference to individual students. Eighty three percent of principals indicated that they were likely or highly likely to consider a teacher's language proficiency when determining language of instruction. Perhaps discussing language of instruction is considered sensitive in nature and thus only to be discussed privately with individual teachers. It is unfortunate that despite language proficiency requirements of bilingual teachers, it is still necessary for principals to consider teacher proficiency when making decisions about language of instruction.

Strong collaboration with all stake holders is important for a conceptual leader prior to making decisions that affect their campus. This survey indicated that neither bilingual nor non-bilingual principals were likely to collaborate with parents in regards to decisions affecting LEP students. As educators we strive to include parents in the educational process; however, these results indicate that parents are not a stakeholder with which principals are likely to consider the language program, language of instruction, or language of assessment. In defense of these negative results, it is necessary to remember that principals are not required to consult with anyone, not even parents, when making a decision about language program. The same can be said about LEP students and the language of instruction and the language of assessment. In fact, the only time it is required that a conversation be held with parents regarding LEP students and language services is when a parent waives his or her right for the child to participate in bilingual education. Parents are required to sit with an administrator and review the benefits of their child being placed in a bilingual education classroom before they can sign a waiver from the bilingual program. While it was unlikely that principals would

meet with parents to discuss these specific questions, it is not known whether principals make an effort to include parents in other ways specific to LEP students. For example, is assistance provided to parents of transitional students who cannot help their child with homework assignments because they do not know the language? Is written communications to parents with students in a transitional classroom still conducted in Spanish or English and Spanish? The extent to which principals seek out and include the input of parents of LEP students is a relevant issue for further research.

In regards to student data, the survey indicates that principals are strongly inclined towards reviewing student data when making decision for language program, language of assessment, and language of instruction for LEP students. They responded equally to reviewing such data as TAKS, TELPAS, and Stanford/Aprenda. The movement district-wide is for greater utilization of student data to drive instruction. It is promising that principals are reviewing the results before making important instructional decisions affecting LEP students. It is important to note that a review of student data is required in order to exit LEP students from language services.

Implications

While the results of the survey reveal the majority of principals are likely to collaborate with educational stakeholders, interviews on the other hand, brought to light several issues that need to be addressed by further research. A frequent theme during interviews was the need for monitoring of the ESL program school wide, particularly in the lower grades. All principals commented on the difficulty of working with students on meeting state assessment requirements during the transitional grade level. Further

research will inform educators as to administrative monitoring measures that are working well on other campuses.

Interviews with principals revealed that administrators tend to make decisions regarding the language program on their campus depending on what they feel is best for students. As interviewed principals believe that early transition is what limited English proficient students need in order to be successful on state assessments, they were more likely to continue the traditional bilingual program already in place at their campus. All principals interviewed stressed the need to include a transitional group as early as third grade. Transitioning to all-English instruction early in the education of limited English proficient students is not supported by research on second language acquisition. Principals interviewed were aware that their support for early transition went against recent research; however, they continued to lean towards transition because they felt it gave students greater opportunity to be successful in middle and high school. As bilingual instruction is capped within the district at fifth grade and bilingual services are not provided in middle school, elementary principals felt it was their obligation to ensure that LEP students had the opportunity to work in a primarily English classroom while they were still able to access first language support. Learning why principals make language program decisions is important as it will ultimately determine the language of instruction and assessment. Even though principals surveyed indicated that they would be collaborative and review student data prior to making assessment decisions, interview data suggests that principals are inclined to make a decision based on their beliefs regarding transition.

Interviewed principal explained their viewpoint on the ideal bilingual education situation. The common theme for all principals was the need to monitor the ESL component in the lower grades, to share one uniform bilingual program for all district campuses, and to have a better understanding of what ESL curriculum bilingual teachers are accountable for at each grade level. Implications of these finds cannot be generalized as only a small portion of the district population was included in the interview portion of this research. Nonetheless, further exploration into these suggestions is warranted. They present challenges that the district will have to take into account such as implementing a common bilingual program district wide. The ideal program by these principals and with bilingual education research is a dual-language program. Principals interviewed idealized the design of a program in which LEP and non-LEP students could become proficient in two languages, yet, they opted for the implementation of a traditional program district wide. Such decisions lead me back to my primary reasons for choosing to conduct research into the bilingual program and advocate for its continuation. We have research that strongly supports an extended period of second language acquisition. This research study indicates that principals are knowledgeable about the bilingual program, yet there is a strong desire to transition students to English instruction earlier in their elementary school years. Testing in Spanish is limited to only three years by the state and only until fifth grade by Lorenzo ISD. Principals feel a strong obligation to prepare students for English instruction and assessment earlier because of these limitations.

The question then becomes whether we push towards a bilingual program that is much more rooted in language acquisition research or make attempts to alleviate the issues that arise from the current system being utilized? Principals in this study felt that a

program such as dual language would be best for all students regardless of English proficiency, but spoke towards the difficulty of finding teachers proficient in both languages. Likewise, it would be almost impossible to change a school from transitional or developmental to dual-language because the process for dual language begins when students first enter pre-kindergarten. Transforming a school into a dual language program would take years to accomplish.

This leaves the traditional or the developmental program as the only other option for providing a common district wide program. Implementing a district-wide bilingual program would incur large scale discussions with all stake-holders and could lead to unnecessary program changes. The arduous task of formulating a district wide bilingual program, however, might not be necessary. A better option would be to implement a bilingual curriculum district wide that had common expectations and accountability. While the district provides bilingual resources and bilingual curriculum, the ESL component would be an area for closer examination. The district already provides assessments for other curriculum subjects that are given district wide so that comparisons between campuses can be made on student progress. An assessment of this type needs to be created for ESL student expectations so that principals can utilize this piece of information to more closely monitor the implementation of the ESL component of the bilingual program. It is often argued that students vary in English proficiency and thus an assessment can-not be created that would be reflective of the students true English ability. Assessments can be created by grade level based on grade level expectations and then be modified for each ESL level such as beginner, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. This would create a plethora of assessments as each grade level would require four

versions differentiated by ability level. Despite this arduous task, if the district prides itself on being data driven and principals continue to seek out data to inform their instructional decisions, data on student growth in ESL needs to be an essential part of weekly PLC conversations.

An implication derived from this study is the need to require all principals to collaborate with the LPAC regarding the language program utilized on their campus. The language program will determine the academic course for all limited English proficient students on their campus, and, therefore, principals must seek the input of the LPAC, whose main function is to ensure that LEP students are receiving the appropriate language services. All campuses are different and thus multiple programs are needed to meet the needs of LEP students. Campus principals should still be able to make the language program decision that is best for their campus; however, it should not be a singular decision as too much is at stake for our LEP students.

The district should also strongly consider the implementation of formative assessments as interviewed principals discussed a need to carefully monitor the implementation of the ESL component of the bilingual program. With district-wide non-negotiables all administrators would have the same common ground when monitoring the program and could hold district-wide discussions on best practices for monitoring the ESL component. District-wide formative assessments would also provide another data set on the progress of an LEP student's English proficiency. This data could prove more helpful to administrators when determining services for LEP students.

Conclusion

Bilingual Education is the best language service we can provide for limited English proficient students. As educators we must ensure that we are doing everything possible to demonstrate to the public the benefits of a bilingual education. We can not allow a gap in student achievement for LEP students. Providing a bilingual education is multifaceted, and there are many directions that can be researched for further improvement. In the area of administrator decision making, this study demonstrates that principals seek input from various stakeholders when making decisions that affect LEP students; however, their most likely to collaborate with individual teachers in assessment grade and the LPAC committee. The bilingual program affects the entire school, and therefore, in this researcher's opinion, should be discussed with as many stake-holders as possible, including bilingual teachers in all grade levels and especially parents. Parents are a key component to educating an LEP student. Administrators must do more to involve parents in the education of their limited English proficient child. Interviews and survey data support the district mission in becoming a culture of data-driven instruction as all principals participating expressed a likelihood towards utilizing student data when making decisions regarding language program, language of instruction, and language of assessment. More research on the implementation of the bilingual program, specifically the monitoring of the ESL component, is needed to determine if there are best practices that most align with greater student achievement. While interviewed principals suggested a common bilingual program district wide, a good starting place might instead be to provide common ESL assessments by ESL level that can be used to compare LEP student growth in English proficiency across campuses and program type.

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APPENDIX A
HUMAN SUBJECTS IRB APPROVAL LETTER

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HUMAN SUBJECTS IRB APPROVAL LETTER
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UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**
DIVISION OF RESEARCH

April 20, 2012

Faviola Cantu
c/o Dr. Cameron White
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Faviola Cantu,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "Administrator Decision Making Process Regarding Bilingual Program, Language of Instruction and Language of Assessment" on March 23, 2012, according to institutional guidelines.

At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your proposal protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately respond to those contingencies made by the Committee, and your project has been approved. However reapplication will be required:

1. Annually
2. Prior to any change in the approved protocol
3. Upon development of the unexpected problems or unusual complications

Thus, if you will be still collecting data under this project on **March 1, 2013**, you must reapply to this Committee for approval before this date if you wish to prevent an interruption of your data collection procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,



for

Dr. Scott B. Stevenson, Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: (1) All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document. If you are using a consent document that requires subject signatures, remember that signed copies must be retained for a minimum of 3 years, or 5 years for externally supported projects. Signed consents from student projects will be retained by the faculty sponsor. Faculty is responsible for retaining signed consents for their own projects; however, if the faculty leaves the university, access must be possible for UH in the event of an agency audit. (2) Research investigators will promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects and others.

Protocol Number: 12315-01

Full Review ☒ X

Expedited Review ☐

316 E. Cullen Building Houston, TX 77204-2015 (713) 743-9204 Fax: (713) 743-9577
COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

APPENDIX B
PRINCIPAL SURVEY

APPENDIX B PRINCIPAL SURVEY

Language Program

Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely, How likely are you to consider the following information when making a decision regarding the LANGUAGE PROGRAM on your campus, such as traditional bilingual or developmental bilingual?

- 1) Review students' test results such as Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) or APRENDIA from the prior school year
- 2) Review students' Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) results from the prior school year
- 3) Discuss with the school Site Based Decision Making Committee (SDMC)
- 4) Continue the language program that was already present on the campus when you became principal
- 5) Discuss with the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade bilingual teachers on your campus
- 6) Discuss with the Limited Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)

Language of Instruction

Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely, how likely are you to consider the following information when making a decision regarding the LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION for bilingual students in an individual 3rd, 4th or 5th grade classroom? For example: In Mr. John Doe's class, students will be instructed in Spanish. How likely were you to review the following information before deciding the LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION in Mr. Doe's classroom?

- 1) The success of that teacher's students on assessments such as TAKS/APRENDAS
- 2) The success of that teacher's students on the TELPAS test the previous year
- 3) Review individual student scores on assessments such as TAKS/TELPAS
- 4) Discuss the decision with the classroom teacher
- 5) Discuss with the grade level during Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
- 6) Discuss with the Limited Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)
- 7) Consider a teacher's English proficiency

Language of Assessment

Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely, how likely are you to consider the following information when making a decision regarding the LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT for bilingual students?

- 1) Discuss with the LPAC
- 2) Discuss with the classroom teacher
- 3) Discuss with the grade level during PLC
- 4) Discuss with individual student's parents

Personal Background

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all knowledgeable and 5 being very knowledgeable, how knowledgeable are you regarding the items listed below?

- 1) The various bilingual programs offered by the district
- 2) Limited English Proficiency Committee guidelines
- 3) State accountability measures for Limited Proficient (LEP) students
- 4) Recommended time frame for second language acquisition
- 5) Bilingual Education

Demographics

Age Range

20-30

31-40

41-50

51 and over

Race and Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latino

Asian/Pacific Islander

African American

White

Other

Are you bilingual?

Yes

No

Sex

Male

Female

Years of Experience as Principal

less than 5 years

5-10 years

11-15 years

more than 15 years

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) When you became principal of this campus, did you make any changes to the existing bilingual program?
- 2) What made you change or not change the existing bilingual program?
- 3) From your personal experience, which type of bilingual program is more beneficial to students, a traditional or a developmental program?
- 4) How did you determine the chair for your Limited Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)?
- 5) In your opinion, what is the role of the LPAC chair?
- 6) How does state accountability factor into your decisions regarding Limited English Proficient (LEP) students?
- 7) Do you feel any pressure from district leadership in determining language services for LEP students on your campus?