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by

Rosalind Mouton Burroughs

May 2013

UNDERSTANDING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT  
IN READING AS A PREDICTOR OF AYP REPORTING STATUS AND THE  
IMPLICATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education  
in Professional Leadership

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May 2013

## **Dedication**

My life is truly a testimony of how God takes little and makes much. The work of this study is dedicated to children who, like me, started off in life with many challenges, but found many heroes in the schools they attend.

My career in the Alief Independent School District has afforded me many opportunities to work with every-day heroes. I have learned so much as a principal striving to support the instructional leadership team, teachers and staff. Thank you for caring, sharing, giving, and teaching as if our lives depend on it.

Great leaders mentor, coach and pave the way for the next generation of leaders with much guidance and care. Thanks to my current and past leaders and supervisors in the Alief Independent School District (Linda Shubert, Paula Conley, Jim Keel, Sharman Potter, Colleen Sanders, Allen Ecker, Althea Cooper, Dr. Sue Page and Superintendent, H.D. Chambers) for helping me to become a professional life-long learner. I am especially grateful for the support and resources of the Special Populations (Bilingual/ESL) Department along with the Testing & Accountability Department. Your assistance validated the findings in this study and has given credence to implications for further studies.

In 1984, I became the first in my immediate family to attend a university and became a lifetime “Cougar”. I’ve now accomplished the unthinkable by earning a third degree from the University of Houston! Thanks to my Cougar family (Cohort 3-Sugarland and my dissertation committee: Dr. Emerson, Dr. McNeil, Dr. Fernandez, Dr. Busch and Dr. Garcia. You all continuously challenged my thinking and encouraged me to finish what I started. Jessica Zorolla you rock! Thank you for ALWAYS helping out.

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Finally, to the mosaic of Godly women that I am blessed to call my friends and my “S-heroes”, thanks for walking with me through this journey for the past two years.

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### **Abstract**

The 2010-2011 Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reported 16.9% of all students tested on Texas' state accountability test were identified as Limited English Proficient (AEIS, 2011). According to this study's findings, LEP students made up 28.9% of the sample population's test takers on the 2011 TAKS Reading test(in English) ; slightly lower than the district's percentage (36%) of LEP students tested.

For schools and districts with large LEP populations, understanding their unique needs is essential for progress towards federal expectations for Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP). This study reviewed LEP students' (ESL and Bilingual) academic performance (passing rates) and described its findings. Data reports such as TELPAS, AEIS, and AYP were used to draw conclusions regarding LEP students' progress in their Language Proficiencies. . If leaders' at the district level do not look at the results for every grade level, they will not likely identify trends that lead to individual campuses failing to meet AYP requirements. As unsuccessful students transition from one grade level to the next, achievement gaps will widen resulting in an increase in LEP drop-outs.

The study concluded with recommendations and provided implications for further studies. First, there was no significant difference between the passing rate of ESL students and the Bilingual students tested. Second, differences exist among the number of years of schooling a student had and their passing rate on the state achievement test in reading. As students' experiences in U.S. schools increases, success on achievement test



increased. The final conclusion of this study noted found that the most successful LEP students were those whose language proficiencies were significantly advanced.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Eugene Garcia's article "The Demographic Imperative" vividly creates a picture of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States (Garcia, Jensen, & Scribner, 2009). In 2009, more than 14 million children whose native language is other than English attended K-12 schools. Likewise, "...data from the 2000 Census reported that one in five children (approximately 10.8 million children) ages 5-17 are from immigrant families..."(Garcia et al., 2009). Citing the work of Hernandez et al. (2008), Garcia et al. (2009) reveal that immigrant families are growing faster than any other group of children, and most of the ELLs (79%) in schools today were born in the United States and speak English "exclusively" or "very well".

In 2006, the U.S. Department of Education indicated that more than 5 million school-age children in the United States (more than 10%) are ELLs. The largest concentration of ELLs are found in the primary grades comprising "...7.4 percent of all students from prekindergarten to grade 5 and 5.5 percent of all students in grades 6-12, according to the 2000 Census, which tends to underestimate the total number of ELLs" (Garcia et al., 2009). Most of the ELLs and their families live in areas where labor demands are high. However, California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey continue to be the states with the heaviest concentration of immigrant students (Garcia et al., 2009). The percentage of growth among states with the largest percentage of increases in grades Pre-K-8 includes: "Nevada (354 percent), South Dakota (364 percent), Georgia (255 percent), Arkansas (243 percent); and Oregon (214 percent)" (Garcia et al., 2009). While these states have experienced significant growth in their ELL and immigrant populations, they do not necessarily have the large numbers of

bilingual and ESL teachers and other resources as states with a long history of serving large LEP populations. “By 2015, researchers predict that nearly one out of three students will be second generation, mostly Hispanic” (Flannery, 2009).

According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), in the spring of 2010, English Language Learners (ELLs) represented 817,165 students in public schools across the state of Texas. Nearly half (456,051) of the ELL students were provided services in a Bilingual Program while their Limited English Proficient (LEP) peers (310,812) received ESL services predominately in general education classrooms. Representing 17% of the total student population and over 120 languages, the following table depicts the “other” prominent languages spoken by students in Texas schools as well as nationally reported in 2000-2001 (Texas Education Agency-LEP Initiatives, 2013).

Table 1-1

*Prominent Languages Spoken in Texas Public Schools*

Language	Number of Students In Texas	Percentage of ELL Population in Texas	Nationwide Percentage of Languages Reported
Spanish			79%
Vietnamese	15,493	1.9%	2.0%
Arabic	4,791	.59%	
Urdu	3,985	.49%	
Korean	2,906	.36%	1.0%
Hmong			1.6%
Chinese, Cantonese			1.0%

This data is supported by The National Education Association’s “Research Talking Points on English Language Learners,” where it is noted that Spanish and Asian

languages are reportedly the most common languages among ELL groups (McKeon, 2005). Nationwide, it was estimated that 4,999,4481 ELL students were enrolled in public schools for the 2003-2004 school year “...representing 10.3 percent of the total public school enrollment, and a 40.7 percent increase over the reported 1993-94 public school ELL enrollment” (McKeon, 2005). States also reported 400 languages spoken by ELLs nationwide.

In Texas, the LEP Student Success Initiatives created expectations for instructional programs for students with limited English proficiency and through state and federal resources it provides for professional training for teachers and materials to enable LEP students to meet state performance standards (Texas Education Agency-LEP Initiatives, 2013). The following table represents Student Performance Highlights noted on the TEA’s website as indicators of how ELLs TAKS performance has narrowed when comparing student performance in 2003 and 2010.

Table 1-2

*ELL TAKS Performance Highlights*

TAKS Subject	2003	2010	% Difference/Gain
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science	10%	72%	+62%
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Writing	26%	80%	+54%
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA	15%	50%	+36%

While significant gains have been made, these results also highlight a significant issue facing 50% of ELL students in Texas. Texas continues to display a LEP disparity

in achievement where half of the tenth graders continue to struggle in the area English Language Arts (TEA, 2013).

Two key responsibilities of the Texas Education Agency are assessing public school students on what they have learned and determining district and school accountability ratings. Student performance is synonymous with school success as it relates to state and federal accountability ratings. In the state of Texas, campuses are rated as Exemplary, Recognized, Acceptable and Unacceptable depending upon the passing rate of students in core subject areas. Passing rates are computed based on the overall campus performance as well as the ethnic subgroups of each school's population (TEA, 2010). Federal requirements differ from state accountability standards. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all public school campuses, school districts, and the state are evaluated for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP criteria are measured in three areas: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate or Attendance Rate. Effective campus leaders must be able to understand the needs of the learners in each subgroup as well as be skilled analyzing student achievement data under both the state and federal accountability systems. In this study, data suggested that the district's ELL students have a greater challenge than any other subpopulation in meeting state and federal standards in Reading/English Language Arts.

As students are enrolled in schools, parents are required to complete a Home Language Survey identifying the student's first language and the language spoken in the home. If English is not the first language and not the primary language spoken at home, students are tested to determine their proficiencies in English. The results of the test help the campus personnel to determine the type of program/service the English as a Second



Language (ESL) student may receive. Parents do have the right to opt out of the program by signing a waiver once they are counseled by the school personnel. Once a student is identified as LEP, the student's English language development is tested annually until they exit the ESL program. Exit criteria requires each student to achieve English proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as well as pass state accountability tests in core content area.

This study explored a LEP student subgroup and their performance on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading 2011 TAKS at an intermediate (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade) campus whose student population represents various LEP programs. Prior to 2010-2011, student achievement at this campus remained relatively stable as reported on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAKS) test. From a district perspective, the campus ranked second or third among the district's six intermediate campuses, achieving and maintaining the Texas Education Agency (TEA) rating of "Recognized". Eighty percent of the students at this campus were successful in each area tested for two consecutive school years (2008-09 and 2009-10). Unexpectedly, the campus failed to meet federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements in LEP Reading, and its state rating as reported by the Texas Education Agency fell to "Acceptable" for 2010-2011. While this campus met the state accountability measure as an "Acceptable" campus, federal requirements for AYP were not achieved due to the focus on the "improvement" of students as a campus cohort and as individual subgroups. Understanding who the students are precludes an educator's ability to meet the students' needs.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Legislation: Public Law 107-110th Congress)) mandates states using federal funds be accountable for student

achievement, requiring them to develop a set of assessments in reading, Language Arts (writing), mathematics, and science. The percentage of students scoring at the “proficient” level or higher is reported as the percentage of students making AYP. Each state’s education agency must set goals to ensure that 100% of all students will master the state accountability test by 2014. In Texas, campuses receive a federal Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report based on the state assessment. “Districts, campuses, and the state are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools” (TEA-AYP, 2013). In the era of high-stakes testing, the focus on student achievement at the campus, district, and state level provides for an intensive analysis of the effectiveness of instructional programs. In Texas, a state known for serving larger populations of LEP students, failure to make federal AYP requirements due to LEP students’ performance on the state mandated test can be overwhelming for even the most veteran school leaders:

If a campus, district, or state that is receiving Title I funds, part A funds fails to meet AYP for two consecutive years, that campus, district or state is subject to certain requirements such as offering supplemental education services, offering school choice, and/or taking corrective actions. (TEA-AYP, 2013)

The principal’s challenge in moving out of such status with limited knowledge and resources can result in futile attempts that are unlikely to sustain any improvements. By 2005, it was projected one in every four U.S. students would be an English Language Learner (ELL), and “...currently in Texas alone one out of six students in public schools is an ELL” (Garcia, 2010). Campuses with larger LEP student populations may find

themselves unintentionally at risk due to NCLB's mandates (Abedi, 2004). For the purpose of this study, research involved the analysis of various groups of identified LEP students who failed the 2011 5th grade Reading TAKS test.

### **Need of the Study**

Despite considerable state and federal funding (\$9,700,000 in FY2011) and the best intentions, ELLs continue to lag behind their English peers in Reading achievement (TEA-AYP, 2012). According to McKeon:

Of the states that tested Ells in reading comprehension, only 18.7% of ELLs were assessed as being at or above the norm. In the same year, almost 10 percent of ELLs in grades 7-10 were retained... In February 2001, it was reported that ELLs had dropout rates up to four times that of their native English-speaking peers. (McKeon, 2005)

This alarming statistic holds true for the school district used in this study, where the district's 2010 dropout rate was 37.3% for LEP students compared to 8.3% for all students. The need for this study was based on the understanding that most of the elementary and middle-school campuses within the same school zone also failed to meet AYP requirement due to LEP students' performance in Reading on the 2011 TAKS test. District-wide, 2010-11 Reading TAKS LEP student scores at the fifth grade level and higher in the school district decreased significantly. Despite students' English language development, as reported on Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System - TELPAS test, most LEP students in the 5th grade took the 2011 TAKS Reading in English for the first time (TELPAS, 2011).

Table 1-3

*2011 Final AYP Summary*

AYP Status	Title 1	Non-Title 1	Total	Percent of All Districts
Meets AYP	583	34	617	50.2%
Missed AYP	591	6	603	49.1%
Not Evaluated: New Charter District	3	0	3	0.2%
Not Evaluated: Other	5	0	5	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1,228</b>	

Table 1-3 paints an alarming trend in Texas public schools today. The purpose of this study was to conduct a descriptive analysis of 5th grade LEP students who took the 2011 Reading TAKS (in English) by disaggregating test results data based on students enrollment in one of two LEP programs: Bilingual and ESL. This study also reviewed longitudinal data to identify trends in student achievement rates at the campus and district level. The quantitative data was reported in terms of the passing rates of students in various categories; most notably AEIS subgroups. By arranging the data in in the form of frequency tables, the study showed the frequency with which each type or category occurred (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Specifically, the study reviewed each student's language service program (Bilingual or ESL), language proficiencies-TELPAS level, and years in U.S. schools. Identifying the characteristics of successful LEP students may enable school leaders in creating effective intervention programs. If more LEP students are successful on state accountability tests, these efforts could potentially decrease the overrepresentation of LEP students who drop-out in this school district due to their inability to meet the graduation requirement of passing state tests. According to the

district's AEIS 2010-11 report, the 4-year completion rate for 9th -12th graders was 46.2% for all LEP students compared to 80.8% of all students in the district (TEA- AEIS, 2011). From the class of 2011, only 37.8 % of all LEP students graduated; 72.8% of all students in the same graduating class completed requirements for graduation. Surprisingly, 38.3% of the LEP students in this cohort dropped out compared to 12 7% of all student (TEA, 2010).

ELL student enrollment continues to increase in the state of Texas. Statewide enrollment in Texas public schools continues to increase, growing from 3,224,916 in 1987-88 to 4, 847,844 in 2009-10. Along with the overall increase in student enrollment, the number of students identified as LEP grew by 47.1% between 1999-00 and 2009-10. During that same period, the number of students receiving bilingual or ESL instructional services increased by 56.5% (TEA, 2011). The campus used in the study experienced an unexpected increase in student enrollment when refugees were relocated into an already crowded school zone in the spring of 2009. With a burgeoning enrollment of over 1,100 students, the campus enrolled 70 or more students who had little if any formal educational experiences and no exposure to a language other than their own. Many of these students were allowed linguistic accommodations on the spring 2011 TAKS test; however, the results were catastrophic. LEP students' performance decreased significantly, and the campus failed to meet AYP requirements. Initial reaction caused the school leaders to assume the decline among LEP students' scores was the result of the influx of refugee students, but that was a mistake.

Recommendations for elementary instructional strategies and refinement of the district's Bilingual/ESL framework may also be necessary if the findings indicate that a

significant number of LEP student failures exist among long-term students in the Bilingual or ESL programs.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The National Education Association recently published the article “A New Look at America’s English Language Learners” which reports that “...since 1995, ELL enrollment in the United States has grown by 57 percent, compared with less than 4 percent for all students, reaching a staggering 5.1 million ELL students (more than 10 percent of the total student population...” (Flannery, 2009). In another publication, “Research Talking Points on English Language Learners”, a succinct researched-based description of ELLs revealed that a growing number of ELLs were born in the United States (McKeon, 2005).

Within this school district, the LEP student population was the fastest growing sub-group of students as recognized by federal AYP requirements. Traditionally, LEP students’ success or failure had little impact on federal campus ratings because of their relatively small size. Further, the district had experienced an influx of Burmese refugee students (over 500 in the last two years), along with the continued increased enrollment of other LEP student subgroups.

Recognizing the factors that contribute to LEP students’ success on state accountability tests provided a framework for school leaders in identifying LEP students who were at-risk of failing to transition as proficient ELLs. Additionally, analyzing existing data of LEP students who dropped out compared to those who graduated provided a greater understanding of the academic paths of LEP students in the district.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences exist between ESL and Bilingual student achievement as measured on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade 2011 Reading TAKS test. A second purpose of this study was to determine if the number of years a student participated in the LEP program effect the passing rate on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade 2011 Reading TAKS test. The demographic composition of the district's ELL student population has changed and increased significantly. To meet the ever-growing needs of the diverse LEP population, this study reviewed existing data of the 5th grade LEP students' performance on the Reading TAKS 2011 test by analyzing a single campus that is representative of the district's overall LEP population. The over-representation of LEP students in one school presented a unique set of needs and challenges. Out of these great needs came the opportunity to study a challenge impacting the district and, most likely, many other districts in the state of Texas.

The researcher also studied the type of ELL programs (ESL and Bilingual) students received services from in relation to each program's passing rates. Students' years of U.S. schooling was also reviewed to determine what impact it played in ELL students' passing rates on the English 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS test. Conclusions reached in this study could help campus and district leaders of ELL learners make more informed decisions.

## **Research Questions**

1. Did differences exist between ESL and Bilingual student achievement as measured on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS Reading Test?

2. Did the number of years a student participated in a LEP program effect the passing rate on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS?

### **Summary and Significance of the Study**

Not meeting federal AYP targets can result in significant consequences for a school campus. In the state of Texas, when a campus fails to meet AYP targets for the first time, the district is required to provide additional support to ensure that the campus does not fail to meet the target a second year. The campus can avoid becoming a Stage I AYP campus (missing AYP targets for two consecutive years) by meeting the required improvement or meeting the AYP target. Required improvement (RI) is achieved when a campus makes significant gains towards reaching the AYP target as prescribed, but may fail to meet federal goal for all schools. Meeting required improvement results in a campus being given credit for its progress and the campus is not subject to further improvement requirements by the state (TEA-AYP, 2012).

The role of the school principal has evolved considerably with the advent of high stakes testing. As effective school leaders seek to ensure the success of all students and meet state and federal requirements, principals must possess a strong skillset in the disaggregation of data as well as the ability to respond to such data with great precision in providing effective instructional leadership for the campuses they serve (Cotton, 2003). Reading proficiency is the greatest predictor of students' academic success. In the state of Texas, LEP students represent the fastest growing sub-group of students whose performance can determine the fate of schools and districts meeting AYP targets. The purpose of the study was to review the literature that will enable school leaders to understand the nature and needs of LEP students in relation to various data sources. The



analyses of various data sources exposed ways to identify LEP students who are at risk of failing state-mandated Reading (accountability) tests. Specifically, the researcher analyzed the subgroups of LEP students' acquisition of English (TELPAS) in relation to their English reading success as indicated on a state assessment (TAKS). The results of the study identified which students were benefiting as they migrate through the district's LEP programs. Likewise, the data yielded a deeper understanding of the amount of time that is needed for students to become successful readers in English. Finally, the data yielded implications for how the district may better support and accommodate various groups who are not succeeding. By understanding the nature and needs among the LEP subgroups, intervention efforts will lead to greater success of LEP students.

Understanding an expansive framework for best practices for educating diverse learners, particularly among LEP students, is the cornerstone of effective school leadership. The researcher provided a literature review exploring the work of various doctoral studies, a seminal thinker, and noted educational reform leaders who have shaped the education profession in the last decade.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Accountability Subset:** refers to the group of non-mobile students whose performance on the TAKS, Commended Performance and the ELL Progress indicator (this includes the TELPAS reading assessment) is used in determining a school's and district's accountability rating (TEA-AEIS, 2010).

**Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP):** the state's reporting of student progress in terms of percentage of students scoring at the "proficient" level or higher to the federal

government. The calculation is used to measure a campus' overall performance as well as the subgroup participation and achievement (Gallegos, 2011).

**Bilingual Education:** The use of two languages, both English and the native language, as mediums of instruction in order to cover the same curriculum as students in a monolingual setting with a goal of maintaining a student's sense of pride in both cultures (Garcia, 2010).

**English Language Learners (ELL):** Students who are not yet proficient in English and require instructional support in order to fully access academic content in their classes (Garcia, 2010).

**English as a Second Language (ESL):** refers to the educational approach in which ELL students are instructed. In this setting little or no use of the native language is used as it focuses on language and content (Garcia, 2010).

**Home Language Survey:** The form parents complete upon first enrollment of a student in a new school. The information provided helps examiners determine if a language proficiency test is needed (Gallegos, 2011).

**Limited English Proficient (LEP):** a student whose native language is other than English and the dominant language in the home environment and/or previous school experience has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency (Garcia, 2010).

**Sub-groups:** categories that classify a campus/district student population based on all groups and include at-risk indicators as well as race (ex. LEP, Economically Disadvantaged, African American, Hispanic, etc.)

**Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS):** a comprehensive testing program for public school students in grades 3-11 that is designed to measure students' learning of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives

**Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):** the state mandated curriculum for public school students in the state of Texas.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review was to create an understanding of the characteristics of ELLs, the LEP program/services they receive, and the instructional implications for school leaders with large LEP population. This literature review begins by reviewing common myths about ELLs and proceeds with a review of how a second language is acquired. It also analyzes the ways educational settings support students in their transition to English language proficiency. Surveying the work of Benjamin Bloom's contribution to education as a seminal thinker is included to provide a connection to past and recent studies that have shaped educational practices. Bloom's work paved the way towards gaining a simplistic understanding of how cognitively driven expectations increase students' levels of thinking throughout the teaching and learning process (Anderson, 2002).

Researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted a study of instructional practices, and their findings became one of the most regarded studies found in the book *Classroom Instruction that Works* by Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, and Jane Pollock (2001). The book is briefly reviewed and later supported extensively in *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners* written by Jane Hill and Cynthia L. Bjork (2008).

This literature review also includes an overview of current assessment practices of LEP students and the significant ramifications of state and federal accountability measures. The work of noted researcher Jamal Abedi (2004) is introduced to highlight the struggles that school leaders and state agencies face under current assessment

guidelines. The effects that state and federal accountability reporting have on campuses can be quite significant for campuses and districts with larger LEP student populations. Another source reviewed in looking at the assessment practices for LEP students is found in the dissertation summary of Jesus Montes (2005).

Finally, principal leadership and the professional development of ELL teachers are explored. When a campus fails to meet AYP requirements, the principal is held accountable as the instructional leader of the campus. Current literature and professional studies in effective school leadership share common set precepts. Common characteristics of best practices in school leadership emerge in the works of Marzano, McNulty, and Walters' (2005) *School Leadership that Works*, Rick DuFour's article on Professional Learning Communities, and Kathleen Cotton's (2003) *Principals and Student Achievement What the Research Says*. Today's principals must not only be adept at identifying problems through data analysis. They must also be capable of leading the charge in creating a cadre of teachers who are trained and skilled in providing engaging learning experiences that are rigorous and result in the success of all learners.

### **English Language Learners**

ELLs are often misunderstood by the very institution responsible for providing the greatest support – schools. In an attempt to dispel many long-held myths, the National Education Association (NEA) recently published “A New Look at America's English Language Learners” (Flannery, 2009). beginning with a startling statistic, the author reported, “...ELL student enrollment in the United States has grown 57 percent, compared with less than 4 percent of all students, reaching a staggering 5.1 ELL students

(more than 10 percent of the total student population)” (Flannery, 2009). Flannery addressed several myths and used research findings to report the facts.

The first myth: ELLs are so called “border-crossers”. This myth was refuted with the finding that more than half of all ELLs were born in the United States (Flannery, 2009). In fact 23% of the nation’s children and 75% of elementary ELLs were reported to be second generation students. “By 2015, researchers predict that nearly one out of three students will be second-generation, mostly Hispanic” (Flannery, 2009). While these students are predicted to assimilate and learn English, caution must be taken in assuming that these students will do better than their parents. Necessary supports cited include high-quality early education, appropriate language programs (bilingual and dual language), and assessments.

The second myth: Pre-K is not worth the money. This myth was strongly disputed according to research (Flannery, 2009). Achievement gaps are formed in Kindergarten. Elle Frede, the co-director of the National Institute for Early Education, is cited as writing Pre-K is “...a great investment for all children” (Flannery, 2009). Unfortunately, it was also reported only 16% of immigrant’s children attend preschool, compared to 22% of all children. According to a Center for Law and Social Policies (CLASP) study, “...the very lowest rates are found among families from Mexico” (Flannery, 2009).

Flannery (2009) quickly dismisses the third myth: Immigrants do not want to learn English. By pointing out that there are often long waiting lists of parents who want to attend free adult education classes to learn English, Flannery declares that myth is false. While researchers agree that “...family literacy and parental education are critical

to a student's academic success,...fewer than 3 percent of Mexican immigrants to the United States have a college degree, and most work in low-paying jobs" (Flannery, 2009). Parental education and socioeconomic status were reported to be reliable predictors of students' academic futures.

Fourth myth: Parents of immigrants do not want to get involved. Flannery (2009) emphatically disagreed with this fourth myth. Instead, Flannery suggests that a language barrier is the "...number one reason immigrant parents don't show up for conferences...along with a lack of familiarity with the system and some cultural differences..." (Flannery, 2009). Flannery also asserts that studies show that parents say and believe that it is very important to be involved in the education of their child.

The final myth: Newcomers want to recreate the culture of their homelands. Flannery (2009) states, "...they fit in just as fast as previous generations...". The research shows that many believe that acquisition of English (speaking) is synonymous with success and economic promise. Research does support the widely held belief "...that Spanish spoken at will make it harder for kids to learn English" (Flannery, 2009). According to the research, by 8<sup>th</sup> grade there appears to be a "near universal" preference for English among second generation students (Flannery, 2009).

The conclusion of the article provides another piece of research seemingly in support of bilingual programs. When foundational skills are taught in students' native language, the students maintain bilingualism, become more proficient in English, and reportedly have higher IQ's. Similar findings hold true for students in dual language programs where instruction is given both languages.

## **Second Language Acquisition**

Dr. Katherine Garcia currently holds the position of district LEP coordinator for secondary grades in the district for which this study was conducted. Using a mixed-method approach, Garcia obtained data through a Likert-scale survey along with descriptive statistics. The results of Garcia's study showed that teachers held overall positive attitudes towards second language learners, yet "...revealed that teacher participants had little, if any, professional development related to ELL's" (Garcia, 2010). Garcia's conclusions highlight the importance of teacher training to aid in the understanding LEP student characteristics, their unique needs, and how leadership efforts positively impact academic achievement.

Garcia's (2010) literature review summarizes research related to second language acquisition, particularly the work of Jim Cummins (1981). Cummins' hypothesis of language transfer asserts that learning that is acquired in one language (L1) and then transfers to a second language (L2). This is based on the premise that the development of the native language is a precursor to the development of a second one. Cummins' linguistic theory is explained as being two types of language: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS is the language skills needed for everyday communication that takes between six months to two years to develop. These skills include the linguistic abilities that are necessary for the everyday, face-to face social exchanges in which the language context is embedded (Garcia, 2010). Cummins, as cited in Garcia (2010), describes this language "... as being meaningful, yet cognitively undemanding because it can be supported by environmental contextual clues such as objects, props, manipulatives, pictures, graphs



and charts”. CALP is the academic language that is “...needed to succeed in school subject content areas and can take five to seven years to fully develop...” (Garcia, 2010). It is characterized as abstract, specialized, and context-reduced. Because there are fewer clues to present support, Garcia asserts that CALP language is highly decontextualized and implicit in nature. Therefore, it is necessary to routinely examine LEP students’ progress towards second language acquisition. Cummins recognized the recurring issue for many as being “...the extent and nature of support that second language learners require to succeed academically...” (Communis, 2000). Cummins further asserts that in order to adequately address the issue, a distinction between BICS and CALP should be made because a great deal of policy and practice has influenced the assessment and instruction of ELL students (Communis, 2000).

Garcia (2010) further shapes the definition of language transfer by citing the work of noted researchers Krashen and Biber (1988) and their principles of additive bilingualism along with Hakuta’s (1986) theory of language transfer. Using a variety of studies, Garcia (2010) suggests that teachers’ lack of knowledge about bilingual education and second language acquisition negatively affects ELL's progress. Referencing the work of Royer and Carlo (1991), Garcia (2010) summarized comprehension and listening skills from L1 to L2 as examined among 49 sixth-grade students in a transitional bilingual program. An analysis of the study described how the authors tested students reading and listening comprehension skills resulting in a high correlation with the students’ English reading performance in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and their previous reading skills in Spanish. Garcia asserted that “...these findings were consistent with Cummins’ hypothesis that Cognitive Academic Language Proficient (CALP) in L1

transfers readily to other languages” (Garcia, 2010). For LEP subgroups, the transfer of languages is dependent upon students’ academic history and exposure to English. Students participating in a bilingual program (where the native language is also the language of instruction) are expected to transition into L2 at a quicker pace than LEP students who do not receive the same degree of language support. Initiatives to help LEP students achieve comparably as well as their majority counterparts has been the goal of various education reform efforts over the past twenty five years (Montes, 2005). NCLB identifies English learners as a single subgroup. Students are usually served in one of the following three types of programs: Bilingual, ESL, or Waiver. To address the unique needs of each group, students are tested and placed in either a bilingual or ESL program. In some instances, parents decline services altogether.

The aim of bilingual education programs is to teach academic subjects to LEP students using their native language and also to teach them English. In the state of Texas, the native language of most bilingual programs is Spanish. Jesus Montes’ (2005) dissertation study looked at students’ academic performance and language development based on two bilingual participation in two different bilingual programs: maintenance and transitional. In most school districts, the philosophical perspective and governing laws shape the type of program that bilingual LEP students are usually placed. Montes (2005) cites the work of Roberts (1995) to review the three classifications of a bilingual education program model; transitional (early-exit or late exit programs), maintenance, and enrichment.

In the transitional program, students follow the same scope and sequence in various content areas as their peers, but the content is taught in their native language. As

language proficiencies increase, students transition to classes where the content is taught increasingly more in English with language supports provided by skilled teachers. This philosophy of this approach asserts, "...students who develop a strong foundation in their first language are able to transfer concepts, skills and knowledge learned in their first language into the second language" (Montes, 2005). As the name implies, the primary focus for LEP students in "transitional" programs is to develop English proficiencies as quickly as possible while placing academic success as a lesser priority.

Another bilingual setting is the maintenance programs usually found in elementary schools. There, LEP students receive "...content-area instruction in both languages equally throughout their schooling or for as many grades as the school system can provide the service" (Montes, 2005). Montes explains that maintenance bilingual classrooms expose students to both languages using multicultural curriculum. Family involvement is emphasized and supported to ensure that students have stronger language supports at home. Montes does note that one concern for the "maintenance" approach is the mobility of students as well as the difficulty in maintaining the model school-wide (Montes, 2005).

A third bilingual program gaining momentum in Texas is the "enrichment" program commonly referred to as Two Way Bilingual or Dual Language. The goal is for both native English speakers and second language learners (of a common language) to receive "...integrated language and academic instruction..." (Montes, 2005). Some researchers would argue that all students benefit at higher levels of achievement in this setting. Proponents of Dual Language programs believe that as native English speakers are being taught English alongside their bilingual peers, both groups benefit. While

native English speakers may have a proficient command of the English language, students' socio-economic backgrounds may also play a role due to a lack of academic language proficiencies. A lack of stimulation, exposure, and use of non-standard English (ex. Ebonics) is often characterized by children whose parents are less educated, as is often the case for children living in poverty. In Montes' (2005) study, he found that successful two-way programs had several common characteristics, while noting that much of what has been written about Dual Language programs has been negative:

Studies comparing the different models of bilingual education have failed to demonstrate the superiority of one program over the other. The strongest bilingual education proponents have admitted that the current transitional bilingual education model which is the most popular across the United States public schools is failing many of our students... (Montes, 2005)

Montes' methods of analyzing Transitional Bilingual Education and the Dual Language programs involved a quantitative comparative study. Seeking to analyze the language development and academic achievement between students participating in either program, a variety of assessments were used. The subjects for the "...study were 44 students who had been enrolled since Kindergarten in either a Transitional Bilingual Model program or in a Dual Language Program" (Montes, 2005). Students who remained in the program for four years were included and most of the subjects were identified as LEP. Data was collected using archival data from the Language Assessment Scales (LAS), the TELPAS, Tejas Lee or the Texas Primary Reading Inventory, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade TAKS Reading scores. Montes'(2005) study was framed by the following six questions:

1. Are there similarities and differences between the administrative organization and implementation of the Dual Language Program and the Transitional Bilingual Program?
2. Is there a difference between the professional preparation provided to teachers in both program? If so, what are the similarities and differences?
3. Is there a difference between the language assessment scores of each group as measured by the Pre and Post LAS in both English and in Spanish for K-2? If so, what is the difference?
4. Is there a difference in the TELPAS scores between the two groups?
5. Is there a difference in the scores on the reading portion of the state mandated TAKS test for students of both programs?
6. Is there a difference in the achievement scores on the reading portion of the state mandated TAKS test for students of both programs?

As Montes (2005) analyzed data, he found that students were heterogeneously grouped and that the pairing of the students appeared to benefit both groups. Montes also found all teachers participating in the program held bilingual certifications or endorsements. Teachers in both the Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual Programs received specific professional development throughout the year. For both programs, teachers used a variety of teacher-made, curriculum prescribed, and research-based materials and strategies. Specific materials cited included a family reading program and publications by Scholastic, McGraw Hill (in English and Spanish), and Harcourt. While the results show some differences between the two programs, Montes (2005) found “both groups showed progress in their English language proficiency”. When comparing the

results of the TELPAS, Montes (2005) found students in the "...Transitional Bilingual program appeared to do better than the students in the Dual Language program". Montes (2005) cited that because there were no specific rubrics or benchmarks to guide teachers observations, ratings of students may have been skewed, varying from one person to the other.

Montes concluded that the scores on TELPAS may not be correlated with the reading comprehension level of students because the results are not correlated with the student's English proficiency. However, it was determined "...there is an overall correlation between the level of proficiency a child has in either language and the score obtained either in English or Spanish on the reading assessment instruments" (Montes, 2005).

ESL programs are usually populated with students who either have some English proficiency as well as those students who have limited English, but a bilingual program does not exist in the district for them. Laws mandate that if a district has a population of 1,000 students who speak the same language, the district must provide a bilingual program in that language. Traditional ESL programs consist of LEP students who are mainstreamed with native English speakers and are taught by ESL certified teachers. As Garcia (2010) discovered in her study, many ESL teachers may meet initial certification requirements, yet lack continued training in second language acquisition. Hence, "...elementary students initially appear to perform better when instructed in English, begin to struggle by high school no doubt due to the academic language and literacy demands of the grade level span" (Gallegos, 2011). Even more significant, Montes (2005) noted the work of Thomas and Collier (1998) and their fourteen year study of LEP

student achievement that led to major findings where the fewest dropouts came from the bilingual programs. ELLs “...who attended the English mainstream programs because their parents refused language support services, showed a large decrease in reading and math achievement by grade 5 when compared to students who participated in the language support programs” (Montes, 2005).

Garcia’s work reviews other studies that looked at students’ competence in their native language (L1) and the relationship to English language literacy development. Analyzing the work of Burial and Cardoza (1988), Garcia (2010) explained how Spanish usage and proficiency affected academic achievement in three key areas: mathematics, reading, and vocabulary. Third generation students had higher Spanish literacy skills and scored higher on the reading test. Second generation students’ increase in literacy skills in Spanish “...revealed an increase in their performance on the vocabulary test...There was no relation(ship) between language variables and achievement in first generation students; and third generation students with Spanish literacy showed higher reading scores” (Garcia, 2010). Interestingly, Garcia (2010) found in a similar study, conducted by Fernandez and Nielsen (1986), Hispanic bilinguals performed significantly better than English monolinguals except in Reading. “Bilingualism was associated with superior performance on both verbal and non-verbal tests, and Spanish proficiency had a positive effect on achievement with its strongest positive effect on vocabulary” (Garcia, 2010). Likewise, Garcia et al. (2009) noted that when researchers (Hernandez et al., 2008) looked at the data of immigrant children:

The U.S. Census data showed that three-fifths of children in immigrant families have at least one parent at home who speaks English exclusively or very well.

However, about one-fourth of immigrant children live in households where no one over the age of 13 speaks English exclusively or very well. (Garcia et al., 2009)

In examining “home language” as a predictor of academic achievement, Garcia (2010) examined the work of Kennedy and Park (1994). Using a national sample of 3,083 Mexican Americans and Asian American middle school students, three variables were observed: grades and standardized scores in mathematics, reading, and science. Interestingly, “...speaking English at home related positively to achievement in each area for Mexican American; however, it did not relate for Asian Americans, even though grades in mathematics were higher for non-English speaking Asian Americans” (Garcia, 2010). Garcia summarized that the research demonstrated the false perception that L1 has negative effects on the development of a second language. Citing Nguyen, et al., (2001), Kennedy and Park (1994), Fernandez and Nielsen (1986), Buriel and Cardoza (1988), and Royer and Carlo (1991), Garcia (2010) argues that such research “...illustrate competence in a native language either has a positive effect on achievement, especially in language variables, or it does not negatively impact achievement”. “If LEP students do not rapidly acquire English, they may fall behind their English-speaking peers and not fully participate in society” (Montes, 2005). Much caution should be taken to ensure that the level of cognitive thinking is not decreased as language supports increase.

In the article “A New Look at America’s English Language Learners” (Flannery, 2009), the author reviews five common myths that are reviewed in light of current research. Following the analysis of each myth, a real-life ELL student is given that adds



a personal anecdote to illustrate the research's findings. The basic premise of the article is to dispel one of the biggest myths of all.

Many educators believe that ELLs are immigrants (border-crossers), yet the reality is that “more than half were born right here” in the United States (Flannery, 2009). As the number of ELLs continue to grow nation-wide, “second-generation students- defined as children born in the United States to at least one immigrant parent – constitute 23 percent of the nation's children and 75 percent of elementary ELLs” (Flannery, 2009).

### **Instructional Framework: How Learning Is Acquired**

Hundreds of research studies corroborate the assertion that “effective principals are at the center of curricular and instructional improvement within their schools” (Cotton, 2003).

NCLB created accountability for student achievement as a priority as it related to school funding. This shifted the focus on accountability for student learning and whether schools provided adequate resources for students to have the opportunity to master the content of the standards rather than simply to be exposed to the content...”. (Gallegos, 2011)

Understanding how learning is acquired is equally as important to understanding how language is acquired. The work of seminal thinkers, such as Benjamin Bloom, has created a foundation for instructional practices for several decades. In short, Bloom's lasting impact on the field of education provides the reader with a framework for understanding the need for students to be engaged in learning experiences that are challenging and engaging.

Benjamin Samuel Bloom was born February 21, 1913 in Lansford, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Russian immigrant parents. He received a B. A. and M.S. degree from Pennsylvania State University in 1935, both in psychology. After graduation, Bloom worked as a researcher with the Pennsylvania State Relief Organization and later the American Youth Commission in Washington, D.C. As a student there, Bloom met Ralph Tyler and subsequently chose to pursue a doctoral degree under Tyler's supervision. Tyler's work significantly influenced Bloom's doctoral studies at the University of Chicago (Anderson, 2002). After receiving his doctorate in 1942, Bloom continued to work at the University of Chicago for nearly 20 years. Bloom's work led to the development of taxonomy of educational objectives for the cognitive domain. Following his death, the University of Chicago Chronicle quoted a professor in education as saying, "The theme throughout his research was that educational settings and home environments can foster human potential – a message that encouraged education experiments and reform" (Eisner, 2000).

Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning Domains* represents a hierarchy of cognitive-driven behavior purported to be important to learning and to measurable capability. Led by Bloom in 1948, a committee of colleges work resulted in the identification of three domains of educational activities: Cognitive: mental skills (Knowledge), Affective: growth in feelings or emotional areas (Attitude), and Psychomotor: manual or physical skills (Skills). The learning behaviors are often thought of as goals of the learning process. The premise is that following a learning experience, learners should be able to present a new set of skills (knowledge, attitude and/or skills). Much of Bloom's research focused on the study of educational objectives based on the idea that any given task

favors one of three psychological domains: cognitive, affective, or psychomotor (Bloom, 1984). Extensive descriptions of Bloom's work can be found in a book that he authored, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* (1956). The cognitive domain examines knowledge and the development of intellectual skills. Bloom created a practical structure to categorize instructional objectives and assessments in order to help teachers and instructional designers to classify their instructional objectives and goals. This includes the recall or recognition of specific facts, procedural patterns, and concepts that serve in the development of intellectual skills. The six major categories can be thought of as degrees of difficulties where each one requires mastery before the next one can take place (Bloom, 1984). Anderson (2002) revisited the cognitive domain in the learning taxonomy in the mid-nineties, changing the names from nouns to verbs and rearranging the top two levels which represent the highest levels of thinking. It is thought that the new taxonomy (Anderson's) reflected more active forms of thinking.

In 1964, Bloom co-authored *Taxonomy of Education Objections, Volume II: The Affective Domain* to help educators understand the importance of attitudes in the learning development (Clark, 2011). This book stressed the importance of educators understanding how students handle things emotionally (feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasm, motivation, and attitudes). Similar to the cognitive domain, a ranking of the simplest behavior to the most complex is described in five categories (Receiving Phenomena, Responding to Phenomena, Valuing, Organization, and Internalizing Values) (Clark, 2011).

Bloom believed in the power of the environment to influence the performance of the individual, and his work led to establishing the Head Start Program in the United States (Eisner, 2000). Eventually, Bloom was invited to appear before the U.S. Congress to speak about the importance of the work that could be done to promote cognitive development of children during the first four years of life. Similarly, for LEP students trying to establish cognitive structures while being taught to a second language, learning can be quite a challenge if providing ELL students with enough time to acquire a second language. According to Eisner (2000) in 1964 Bloom also published *Stability and Change in Human Characteristic*. The book was based on longitudinal studies which led to interest in early childhood education, including the creation of the Head Start program. Eisner described another of Bloom's books; *All Our Children Learning* was as a summary of his work that includes evidence that ALL children can learn at a high level when appropriate practices are undertaken in the home and school (Eisner, 2000). When LEP students "...attend high performing schools with rigorous curriculum and expectations, achievement is significantly improved. Yet standards alone are not adequate unless they are part of a rigorous curriculum with additional supports for students who need assistance to meet the expectations" (Gallegos, 2011).

Bloom's work continues to impact educational pedagogy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the four pillars of NCLB is doing what has been proven to work. Most federally funded programs require that expenditures be made for materials and training that is research based. *Classroom Instruction That Works* by Robert Marzano et al. (2001) introduced educators to a meta-analysis of instructional strategies, each of their average effect size and the average percentile gains each strategy potentially held. The premise is

that if students are presented with specific instructional strategies, student achievement would be positively affected.

Co-authors Jane D. Hill and Cynthia L. Bjork (2008) collaborated to develop *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners Participant's Workbook*. This venture was centered on the foundational work of Bloom's regarding learning and cognition and noted researcher Robert Marzano (Hill & Bjork, 2008). Hill and Bjork work as consultants for Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). McREL studied 100 research reports that reflected thousands of studies on instruction and identified the strategies "...as suited to all students, grade levels, and content areas" (Hill & Bjork, 2008). At a recent two-day Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) national conference, Hill and Bjork (2008) conducted a two-day training for school leaders using the research based manual.

Chapter 1 of the study begins with the following chart that summarizes the results of Marzano's original meta-analysis (Hill & Bjork, 2008).

Table 2-1

*Nine Categories of Instructional Strategies*

<b>Category</b>		<b>Average Effect Size</b>	<b>Average Percentile Gain</b>	<b>Number of Studies</b>
1.	Similarities & Differences	1.61	45	31
2.	Summarizing	1.00	34	179
3.	Reinforcing Effort & Providing Recognition	.80	29	21
4.	Practice & Homework	.77	28	134
5.	Nonlinguistic Representation	.75	27	246
6.	Cooperative Learning	.73	27	122
7.	Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback	.61	23	408
8.	Generating & Testing Hypotheses	.61	23	63
9.	Cues & Questions & Advance Organizers	.59	22	1251

Using a meta-analysis to combine the results of many studies, the effects of each study were expressed as an effect size. As the name implies, the effect size measured increases or decreases in student achievement based on student exposure to each of the strategies. An effect size of .20 represents a small gain, and an effect size gain of .80 represents a large gain. The strategies reviewed by McREL's research each have an effect size of .59 to 1.61 representing "...medium to large achievement gains" (Hill & Bjork, 2008). These categories reflect the work of Marzano et al. (2001) who created the nine categories. McREL's research extends the study by analyzing the use of the strategies with ELLs when they are implemented "...purposefully, intentionally, and explicitly (P.I.E.)" (Hill & Bjork, 2008).

NCLB mandates that children must become proficient in language proficiencies as well as content. There are five distinct stages that ELLs go through when acquiring a second language. In Chapter 2, the Stages of Second Language Acquisition are reviewed.

Hill noted researchers (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) who explained that, “students learning a second language move through five predictable stages: Preproduction, Early Production, Speech Emergence, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced Fluency” (Hill & Bjork, 2008). Each stage is defined along with specific teacher prompts that represent increasingly more challenging levels of comprehension.

The Pre-Production stage is characterized by students who have the fewest language abilities as they having minimal comprehension, no verbalization, and responds by nodding yes or no or by drawing and pointing. The time frame for this stage lasts zero to six months. Early Production represents the stage where evidence of language development is seen in students’ abilities to have limited comprehension, producing one or two word responses, use of key words and familiar phrases, and uses present-tense verbs”. This stage lasts for six months to one year. In the third stage, Speech Emergence, the student has good comprehension, can produce simple sentences, makes grammar and pronunciation errors, and frequently misunderstands jokes (Hill & Bjork, 2008). This phase of language development lasts one to three years. Students in the Intermediate Fluency stage are characterized as having excellent comprehension and make few grammatical errors. Students usually remain in this stage for three to five years. The final stage, Advanced Fluency, takes five to seven years to develop. In this stage, students have a near native level of speech.

Hill and Bjork (2008) assert that everyone, teachers, principals and district leaders, should be aware of these five stages. Teachers must understand where students are with their initial baseline so they are able to impact language development using a variety of strategies and teacher prompts. In Texas, TELPAS proficiencies are taken

each year, but rarely do teachers or administrators look at this data to guide decision making. The professional development of teachers and data analysis is necessary to help students acquire skills that will aid in the advancement of students in the language proficiencies. In each stage, students are supported using “tiered” questions that increase their language development and learner engagement. This questioning strategy “...lets ELLs practice their new language and helps teachers assess how much of the content the ELLs understand” as questions are tailored to their level of second language acquisition” (Hill & Bjork, 2008).

Citing the Ramirez (1992) study of bilingual educational programs where in all of the language programs studied, teachers are more likely to ask low-level questions and in most instances “...in more than half of their interactions, students did not produce any oral language; when they did, they engage in simple recall” (Hill & Bjork, 2008). A matrix using the Levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy and the Stages Second Language Acquisition illustrates how ELLs should be questioned. Each of the chapters in the workbook offers a summary of a specific strategy, detailed examples, and activities that will help teachers to comprehend the strategy fully. A few of the strategies are reviewed in this literature review as examples.

Cues and questions enhance students’ abilities to retrieve and use what they already know about a topic. With an average effect size of .59 and an average percentile gained of 22, this strategy was reviewed in 1,251 studies and is reviewed in Chapter 3. Following generalizations about the strategy, recommendations for classroom practices are listed. The first two recommendations reflect the work of Marzano (2001) and include using explicit cues and asking questions that that elicit inferences and use analytic



questions. The last recommendation is more reflective of Benjamin Bloom in that it stresses the importance of asking higher level questions to all ELLs.

Chapter 4 defines the strategy of “Setting Objectives” to determine the function and structure of how language is used. Four hundred and eight studies resulted in an average effect size of .61 and an average percentile gain of 23. The purpose of determining language functions is to help students understand why language is occurring. The purpose of the discourse should drive the mode of language. A list of language functions is provided that is very similar to understanding the author’s purpose of a reading selection. Teachers must understand the functions of language they use to drive the instructional strategies they employ. In using language, students must be able to describe, explain, or persuade. Hill and Bjork (2008) explain, “...language functions allows us to participate fully in the conversations. In school, we teach students to write for specific purposes in reports and in both procedural and persuasive manners”. Setting objectives helps students narrow their focus and teachers should encourage students to “personalize” the identified learning objective which should not be too descriptive. The recommendations for classroom practice involve setting content and language objectives that are specific yet flexible and contracting with students to obtain specific objectives that reflect the level of standards of the state (ex. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills - TEKS).

Determining Language Structures is the second component of setting objectives for ELLs. Language objectives refer to what students say: the phrasing, key words, and grammatical usage that ELLs will need in order to participate in a lesson” (Hill & Bjork, 2008). Teachers can identify the language structure to be used in a lesson by using

sentences starters, key words (or vocabulary), and mini-lessons that show how grammar is used to communicate meaning (Hill & Bjork, 2008). A list of Language Functions is provided to examine how signal words can be used to teach students how to write for a variety of purposes. One study cited (Gibbons, 1991) found that when teachers use different genres to teach, a multitude of language functions can occur each day (Hill & Bjork, 2008). A list of language functions that the Gibbons study identified were also listed.

Chapter 4 concludes with a description of The Language Goals Planning Matrix. The matrix can be used to help teachers "...think through the steps of planning language objectives" (Hill & Bjork, 2008). The matrix includes notes and examples along with a matrix that is completed. From this understanding, teachers can begin to create content language objectives that clearly designate the language function and language structures. When teachers use this information, they are consciously determining the language function and structures that will drive the instruction for the lesson.

In Chapter 5, providing feedback is the strategy that, along with setting objectives, had an average size effect of .61 based on 408 studies. The average percentile gain for these strategies is 23. Timely and realistic feedback should be given so that students are aware of their progress (Hill & Bjork, 2008). The "Word-MES" strategy can provide reinforcements and feedback for ELLs and feedback should be appropriate to the language level of the ELL student.

According to Hill and Bjork (2008), "When you provide students with feedback, you are giving students information about how well they are doing relative to a particular learning goal so that they can improve their performance". Feedback should be corrective

in nature as teachers carefully listen to what students say. Not only should teachers provide timely feedback based on criterion-referenced feedback (rather than norm-referenced) such as rubrics, but students should also be responsible for providing some of their own feedback. Classroom practice recommendations include: criterion-referenced feedback, feedback of specific types of knowledge, student-led feedback and use of the Word-MES (M-Model, E-Expanding, S-Sound) formula. The Word-MES Formula includes providing feedback on word selection with preproduction students, modeling for Early Production students, expanding what Speech Emergence students have said or written, and helping Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students to “sound like a book” (Hill & Bjork, 2008).

Based on 179 studies, Summarizing is a strategy that was found to have the average effect size is 1.00 and an average percentile gain of 34. Summarizing works best when ELLs have appropriate visuals and questioning strategies. Summarizing helps students learn how to analyze information at a fairly deep level. Reciprocal teaching helps ELL student understand text, but ELLs need to see the four components modeled and be given sentence starters (Hill & Bjork, 2008)

Summarizing is defined as a strategy that will help students to be able to synthesize information which is something good readers do naturally by reading, seeing, or hearing. Citing the work of Short (1994), the authors report that “...when ELLs are taught to understand text patterns and recognize the signal words accompanying them, reading and writing skills improve” (Hill & Bjork, 2008). The generalizations from the research reveal that when students summarize, they must delete some information substitute some information and keep some information. They must also analyze the

information at a deep level and learn to become aware of text patterns that aide in summarizing.

Two recommendations for the classroom encourage the use reciprocal teaching with ELLs. The work of Plainscar and Brown (1984) is used to explain ways to incorporate strategies that will engage students in summarizing and other thinking strategies (Hill & Bjork, 2008). Text patterns and graphic organizers are other methods suggested to teach summarizing. Hill & Bjork (2008) described the following six common patterns to informational texts which have a specific graphic organizer that aide in teaching: 1. Chronological Sequence, 2. Compare/Contrast, 3. Concept/Definition, 4. Description, 5. Episode, and 6. Generalizations. It is recommended that text patterns be taught one at a time through a series of min-lessons which allow students to comprehend texts as well as begin to see the connections to becoming skilled writers.

Two hundred and forty six studies were reviewed to determine the effectiveness of the strategy of using nonlinguistic representations. With a large effect size (.73) and an average percentile gain of 27, this strategy can be useful in teaching ELLs. Words alone cannot convey meaning to ELLs, so nonlinguistic representations (pictures and symbols) help ELLs make sense of what is being taught by creating new academic language through mental and sensory images. Helping students to create mental images to represent and elaborate on knowledge is the primary goal of using this strategy. One generalization from the research that emerged is that nonlinguistic representations should elaborate on knowledge using five main types of nonlinguistic representations (graphic organizers, physical models, metal models, pictures and pictographs, and kinesthetic activities). When using graphic organizers to represent knowledge, ELLs should talk

about them as well as create physical models. Students should use mental images including pictures and pictographs to represent knowledge and engage in kinesthetic activities to represent knowledge as they discuss it. The act of talking is repeatedly stressed in this chapter (Hill & Bjork, 2008).

Chapter 8 addresses the effectiveness of using of homework and practice. Looking at homework from an ELL perspective, Hill and Bjork (2008) encourage instructors to look at the idea of “tiered” practice. When using tiered practice, the teachers takes into consideration the language proficiencies of the ELL students and varies the learner expectations accordingly. An example of this strategy is the concept of “flipped classroom”. Teachers record the classroom lesson so that students take the recorded lesson home for homework to ensure that students have an opportunity to preview concepts that will be covered in class (Hill & Bjork, 2008).

Many studies (134) support the use of independent practice and homework when teaching ELLs. The large (.77) average effect size and an average percentile gain of 28 can be expected “...when the strategy is done purposefully, intentionally, and explicitly... The purpose of this strategy is to enhance students’ abilities to reach the expected level of proficiency for a skill or process” (Hill & Bjork, 2008). The function of homework is to have learning experiences beyond the classroom where they practice, review, and apply knowledge. Mastering a skill or a process entails focused practice during which students should have many opportunities (20-24) to practice a skill or process and make mistakes so that common errors can be corrected. The amount of homework assigned to students should differ depending on the grade levels and students should be able to complete the assignment unassisted. If homework is given, students

should anticipate that feedback will be given. There were five recommendations given for effective homework and practice along with recommendations for classroom practice.

In Chapter 9, cooperative learning is explored. Over 122 studies support the use of this strategy. The average percentile gain for cooperative learning is 27 and the average effect size is .73 (Hill & Bjork, 2008). Teachers must learn to plan and use this strategy to get the greatest benefit for students. Students benefit from the interactions and modeling because, for many students from outside the U.S., cooperative learning may be an unfamiliar experience.

When students are provided with structured activities, cooperative learning is one of the most engaging instructional activities teachers can use. The examples of cooperative learning activities given are one's teachers can use with great ease. Generalization from the research include: organize groups based on ability levels, create small groups consisting of teams of three or four members, and avoid overuse of the strategy (Hill & Bjork, 2008).

The remainder of the book reviews strategies that are summarized along with examples modification of each to use with ELLs at different levels of language development. Some look at the strategies superficially and attempt to use one strategy exclusively that they feel will give them the biggest achievement gain. Hill and Bjork (2008) caution against this practice as each strategy should be used interchangeably in authentic ways that make learning meaningful. The question remains is whether or not educators implement the strategies and how the strategies specifically address the needs of ELLs.

### **Assessment and Accountability of English Language Learners**

Jamal Abedi (2004), a faculty member at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and a senior researcher at the National Center for Research on Evaluations, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST), recently wrote an article in the *Educational Researcher*. In the article, Abedi (2004) addresses issues with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in terms adequately yearly progress (AYP) reporting of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Abedi's (2004) work highlights the research of assessment and accountability of English Language Learners and concluded that NCLB's mandates may unintentionally place undue pressure on schools with high numbers of LEP students. The hope is that "...policymakers, lawmakers, and decision makers will be urged to take appropriate actions to correct the inequities resulting from the NCLB in regard to the subgroups targeted by the legislation, particularly the LEP student subgroup" (Abedi, 2004)

As mandated by NCLB, each state must report AYP of student progress in terms of percentage of students scoring at the "proficient" level or higher as well as high school graduation rates and an additional indicator for middle and elementary schools. Abedi (2004) explains that each state is responsible for establishing a timeline for the attainment of "proficiency" levels that can be no more than 12 years after the start date of 2001-2002 school year and requires an increase in the first two years. AYP is reported for all schools, districts, and the state. The federal report categorizes students in the following subgroups: (a) economically disadvantaged students, (b) students from major racial and ethnic groups, (c) students with disabilities, and (d) students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Abedi (2004) argues that students in the LEP subgroup represent

concern for critical issues regarding AYP subgroup reporting because educational inequalities continue to exist. Citing the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2002), Abedi (2004) reports the total number of students labeled as LEP in the nation's public schools amounts to be more than 4.5 million students. Abedi (2004) explores the following six LEP assessment issues as they relate to AYP reporting:

1. Inconsistency in LEP classification across and within states.
2. Sparse LEP population.
3. Lack of LEP subgroup stability.
4. Measurement quality of AYP instruments for LEP students.
5. LEP baseline scores.
6. LEP cutoff points.

In one study, Abedi (2004) found that significantly fewer students reported speaking English at home representing discrepancies in what was often noted in the school records on home language surveys. Abedi (2004) cited a 2003 study that found "...a low level of relationship between language proficiency test scores and the LEP classification code". In his research, Abedi (2004) reviewed another concern with the LEP subgroup because of its heterogeneity. Abedi (2004) found that LEP students exhibit differences in their level of performance, language proficiency, and family and cultural background characteristics. Abedi (2004) found the data that labels students as LEP differ in "...many aspects, including family characteristics, cultural and language background, and level of English language proficiency..." causing him to conclude that the LEP subgroup is often not a well-defined homogenous group of students.



Secondly, Abedi (2004) refutes the validity of the AYP reporting because of its subgroup size requirements. When not enough students exist in the LEP subgroup, the school, district, or state is not required to report progress. Concluding that a reasonable minimum group size of 25 students would be large enough to provide reliable results, the study notes that in order to detect a moderate level of change, several hundred subjects would be needed. Abedi (2004) cautions against further categorizing LEP students because it could result in the underreporting of LEP students in smaller communities from AYP reporting which may give more weight to the results from larger LEP communities.

A major problem cited by Abedi (2004) in reporting AYP is the lack of stability of the LEP subgroup. Abedi (2004) argues that because LEP students are often reclassified as fluent English proficient students once they make significant progress, members of the LEP subgroup will almost always be the low-performing group of students. This can be especially troublesome for schools with large numbers of LEP students. Some states have devised plans that include “exited” LEP students in the LEP subgroup by expanding the exit criteria. To exemplify this point, Abedi (2004) reviews a study by Erpenbach, Forte-Fast, and Potts (2003) who researched the effect of LEP subgroup instability on test scores. A cohort of 14,000 LEP students who were reclassified as non-LEP (Former LEP -FEP) was compared with those who remained in LEP. The study revealed “...while both the LEP and FEP students performed well below their native English-speaking peers; the gap between LEP and FEP students remained high” (Abedi, 2004).

In an earlier study, Abedi (2004) explored concerns about the impact of language factors on the assessments of LEP students and found that LEP students may show improvement in content knowledge, such as math, only when the student's level of academic English proficiency increases. The development of language proficiencies takes time; schools with larger numbers of LEP students are more likely to be designated as schools "in need of improvement". State mandated achievement tests that are potentially valid for native-English speakers, may be unreliable for LEP students because of the language complexity of the test (Abedi, 2004). Citing various research studies, Abedi (2004) attempts to further demonstrate how language background affects students' performance on content-based assessments. Linguistic accommodations resulted in LEP students' higher performance on linguistically modified test items. "The results of these analyses suggest that the performance difference between LEP and non-LEP students was the largest in reading (the highest level of language demand) and the smallest in math calculation (the lowest level of language demand)" (Abedi, 2004).

LEP baseline scores are yet another area of concern Abedi (2004) has studied. Differences in students' backgrounds, socio-economic status, education level of parents, educational history, etc., play a role in their baseline scores. Arguing that schools with larger numbers of LEP students will start with lower baseline scores, Abedi (2004) insists that such schools will have to spend more time and resources than schools with higher baseline scores. Abedi (2004) concludes that continuing efforts to remedy these issues should bring more fair assessment and accountability.

Dr. Mary Borba, Ed.D. is a former classroom teacher , principal, and immigrant student herself who wrote an article entitled "Schoolwide Strategies Supporting English

Learners” (2011). The article reviews key steps Borba’s school took in meeting the needs of an increasingly large ELL student population that communicated “...that all are accepted, important, and welcome at school...” (Borba, 2011). Borba begins by noting the achievement gap between English speakers and ELLs and stresses the importance of parental involvement to bridge effective home-school communication. Affirming that when schools support immigrant families, parents will become more comfortable asserting themselves and tap into the resources that schools offer (Borba, 2011). A few studies are mentioned that show how family involvement, in students’ native language, can make a significant difference in the value that students and their families place on education. First, schools must learn about the families so that families are empowered to support schools more. Teachers must learn how to help parents support immigrant families so their well-meaning efforts net the academic gains every school looks for.

Other studies consistently show the “...achievement gap between English speakers and English language learners continues to be a concern for educators, parents and educators...” (Borba, 2011). Noting that states like California have as many as 85% of its ELLs who speak Spanish, the importance of proactive efforts is stressed. Rather than being reactive, Borba (2011) provides a variety of proactive strategies for schools to use to reach out to ELL families.

Borba (2011) cites a study (August & Shannon, 2006) that found that schools often underestimate the contribution of parental involvement as a very powerful tool for ELLs. Families of immigrant students often have a difficult time connecting with the school because schools do not provide the necessary resources to families, namely translators. Citing the research findings of Cummins (1986, 2003), Borba (2011) found

that “parental involvement in school life has a positive impact on children’s academic success”. Like all parents, Cummins suggested that immigrant parents have the same high expectations for their children and may need assistance in knowing how to help their children at home. Cummins’ research found that teachers who successfully involved families reaped the benefits. Parents felt valued when they realized that schools were willing to take extra steps to connect with their families by partnering together for their child’s success (Borba, 2011).

Communicating with parents of ELLs can also be a challenge when schools are not mindful of the many “...avenues to involve limited-English speaking parents in the lives of the school...” (Borba, 2011). By thinking from the perspective of non-English speaking parents, schools can make the school experience easier to navigate. Examples include having bilingual personnel available to help at the front desk when parents visit (or readily available) and having a translator/interpreter at school events/functions. Likewise, when any information goes out, the school should communicate in both English and Spanish. Translating verbal call-outs and written communication such as newsletters and flyers will be seen by parents as extra efforts the principals and schools take to communicate with everyone. These efforts will go a long way in “...building trust and confidence in the school... and encourage their involvement in school activities and committees” (Borba, 2011).

In a 1995 Igoa study, it was reported that schools often overlook the distress and shock that some families experience when relocating to a new country (Borba, 2011). The study found that many of these families face struggles such as accessing financial/social resources, parenting, and accessing educational resources for themselves,

including adult language acquisition classes. Borba (2011) reported that one of the ways that parents at her school were assisted included the creation of a parent education program. This program focused on helping families better navigate the school system, increase parenting skills (discipline), and taught parents ways to help their children to be more academically successful at school. The school also found community resources to support the family by offering evening ESL classes.

Igoa's study (1995) also noted the importance of educators can help children to "...embrace both languages and cultures..." (Borba, 2011). While acknowledging that some schools do not have enough resources or too few students to create instruction in the native language, Borba (2011) insists that should not deter efforts to support immigrant children. Spanish library books and texts were purchased so that parents could share learning experiences with their children. Borba (2011) also quotes Diaz-Rico and Weed (2003) who recommended the use of primary language at home to build a cognitive foundation for instruction in English. Teachers who ask parents to speak only English at home may actually hinder their children's progress at school. ELL parents may not be the best English role models, but they can provide support to students by building background knowledge for what children need to comprehend in content text areas in English (Borba, 2011). According to another researcher cited by Borba (2011), Collier (1995) suggests that "the key to understanding the role of the first language in academic development of second language is to understand the function of uninterrupted cognitive development". Borba (2011) reports that her school also used instructional videos, DVDs, and audio-tapped books as resources that were provided to students and their parents.

Borba's school also provided additional resources to families to increase language competence and cultural awareness as part of an after-school program. Extended day programs were provided to extend the day for students where ESL software provided individualized instruction for students. Likewise, there was an emphasis on students learning about their own homeland and family history using digital resources and students (from a local high school) who served as tutors and mentors in the Language Club. The purpose of the program was to provide opportunities for students to practice expressing themselves orally and in writing.

Borba (2011) refutes the myth held by teachers regarding the difficulty of involving immigrant families when teachers do not speak the language (Samway & McKeon, 1999). Some of the ways that teachers in Borba's school worked to have parents assist with student learning included: assisting with art projects, listening to children read, supervising math games, checking homework, and observing the teacher's instruction and interactions in the school.

Borba (2011) documents the work of additional research (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2009) to emphasize the importance of the professional development of teachers of ELLs. "Family involvement requires schools to examine the skills and knowledge that teachers have to work effectively with immigrant children and their families" (Borba, 2011; McKeon, 2005; Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012; Flannery, 2009). To illustrate this point, Borba (2011) refers to researchers (Cummings, 2003; Gibbons, 2002). Teachers who must have an understanding of language development and strategically plan for learning that scaffolds learner outcomes appropriately. ELLs must have opportunities to engage in talk time where educators strategically plan work to increase the language that

English learners hear along with ensuring that interactions with other speakers frequently occurs in an effort to increase all language proficiencies for ELLs (Borba, 2011).

“...Productive talk does not just happen-it needs to be deliberately and systematically planned, just as we plan literacy events” (Borba, 2011). Borba’s school enlisted volunteers from the community who often came to the school to provide opportunities for students to preview learning. This is similar to the concept of “flipped” classrooms (Hill & Bjork, 2008). By previewing upcoming learning events, ELL’s had a greater opportunity to acquire the concepts as teachers taught them in class. Additional efforts include increasing read-aloud activities and vocabulary development according to the recommendations of noted researcher and author Stephen Krashen (2003). One example of effective professional development cited was the use of a book study; Gibbons’ (2002) *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom*.

Borba (2011) concluded that as teachers became more knowledgeable about the needs of ELLs, they were able to make more connections with families. Without sensitivity to students’ needs, teachers may address learning in ways that have little impact for ELLs. “School leadership and adequately prepared teachers are necessary to promote these efforts with includes expertise in instruction ELLs” (Borba, 2011).

Lau v. Nicholas (1974) is a well-known Supreme Court case that was filed when San Francisco schools failed to provide appropriate accommodations for Chinese ancestry students who did not speak English. The ruling is known for its requirements that mandate to provide a quality education for LEP students by qualified teachers

(Gallegos, 2011). The Texas Education Agency outlines the following list of standards for ESL teachers:

**Standard I.** The ESL teacher understands fundamental language concepts and knows the structure and conventions of the English language.

**Standard II.** The ESL teacher has knowledge of the foundations of ESL education and factors that contribute to an effective multicultural and multilingual learning environment.

**Standard III.** The ESL teacher understands the processes of first- and second-language acquisition and uses this knowledge to promote students' language development in English.

**Standard IV.** The ESL teacher understands ESL teaching methods and uses this knowledge to plan and implement effective, developmentally appropriate ESL instruction.

**Standard V.** The ESL teacher has knowledge of the factors that affect ESL students' learning of academic content, language, and culture.

**Standard VI.** The ESL teacher understands formal and informal assessment procedures and instruments (language proficiency and academic achievement) used in ESL programs and uses assessment results to plan and adapt instruction.

**Standard VII.** The ESL teacher knows how to serve as an advocate for ESL students and facilitate family and community involvement in their education.

TEA's list of standards for ELL teachers specifies expectations for understanding second language acquisition as well effective instructional methods to be used:



The continual increase of English Language Learners (ELL's) in schools, along with the ongoing teacher shortage across all grade levels point to the critical need for investigating variables that influence how well teachers understand and address the needs of ELL's. (Garcia, 2010)

Garcia's interviews found differences in faculty responses as it related to how to address the needs of ELL students: "The mathematics instructor viewed the responsibility of ELLs as a teacher priority, the ELA instructor viewed precise ELL teaching strategies as critical for newcomer teachers, and one reading faculty member addressed issues regarding the range of ELL's literacy background" (Garcia, 2010). Interestingly, only one teacher (reading) stressed the need for a "...teachers' understanding of native language to English language development" (Garcia, 2010). Garcia's literature review highlights the significance of the relationship between professional development and content-area teacher's knowledge as it relates to the teacher's ability to successfully impact student achievement.

The demand for teachers who are certified and trained to serve LEP students continues to increase. "Nationwide, there is an estimated shortage of nearly 145,000 bilingual or ESL teachers" (Montes, 2005). Effective school leaders must provide the support and leadership that result in the professional development of teachers whose efforts positively correlate to student achievement. The research of Marzano et al. (2004) centers on a meta-analysis of research compiled over 35 years. Their findings led to the creation of practical steps for school leaders who want to positively impact student achievement.

Carl Glickman is perhaps one of the most noted educators in the area of developmental leadership. Now in its sixth edition, Glickman's (1985) book, *Supervision of Instruction: A Developmental Approach* reviews five propositions of what supervision can accomplish. Glickman asserts that what makes developmental supervision work is having a leader who knows the teachers, students, and community, and a leader who has the ability to build on strengths. Robert Marzano's (2003) text, "What Works in Schools: Translating Research Into Action", found similar factors that positively impact student achievement. Drawing upon the work of both Glickman (1985) and Marzano (2003), an effective leader is one who is able to link instruction and classroom management with professional development, teacher support, curriculum development, group development and action research.

Glickman's developmental model for supervision purports that effective instructional leaders alternatively "...used supervisory approaches to help teachers improve their instruction and cognitive growth" (Gordon, 1990). The concept of matching the supervisory style to the teacher's developmental level is the basis of Glickman's Developmental Model. Glickman believes that supervisors should be knowledgeable of effective school characteristics, adult, and teacher development, interpersonal skills, and technical skills. Technical skills that Glickman believes are essential to the mentor are those of observing, planning, conferencing, and assessing. Formative feedback to teachers is key to the developmental/clinical model. The five steps as described by Glickman are as follows:

Step 1: Pre-conference

Set reason and purpose for the observation.

Decide on the focus for the observation.

Determine data to be collected.

Schedule the observation and post conference.

### Step 2: Observation

Use an observation technique or instrument to describe what is seen and heard in the classroom.

### Step 3: Analysis, Interpretation, and Strategy

Analysis of the data observed and collected during the observation.

Interpretation of the data and decisions made on what is desirable and undesirable about what was seen and heard during the classroom observation. The supervisory approach to use in the post-conference is decided upon (directive, collaborative, or non-directive). (Glickman, 2004)

Glickman's work was based on the presumption that supervision should reshape norms and beliefs about the work culture schools.

To what extent does leadership play a role in whether a school is effective or ineffective? This is the basic question that Marzano et al. (2005) devote much of their research to studying student achievement as the distinguishing factor between effective and ineffective school leadership. By correlating student achievement to effective leadership, the research of Marzano et al. (2005) concentrated on a meta-analysis of research compiled over 35 years. Their findings lead to the creation of practical steps for school leaders who want to positively impact student achievement. In planning for

effective school leadership, the first step is to develop a strong school leadership team (Marzano et al., 2005).

Richard DuFour's (2004) article "Schools as Learning Communities" gives support for Marzano's conclusions regarding the significance of building a critical mass of leaders with the formation of Professional Learning Communities (P.L.C.'s). DuFour's (2004) article includes narrative accounts of the effects of leaders who spend a great deal of time creating other leaders that critically focus on student achievement and reacting strategically when student achievement is less than anticipated. Both works represent the study of a large body of research (Marzano et al., 2005) as well as the direct study of Professional Learning Communities in a variety of school settings (DuFour, 2004). Together, the work represents practical resources for both novice and experienced school leaders who are willing to work strategically to improve student achievement.

The book *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results* is divided into Part I- The Research Base and Part II- Practical Applications (Marzano et al., 2005). By focusing on how to improve student achievement and schools through effective leadership, the purposeful details of the research unfolds. Reviewing large bodies of research and theorists from the past 35 years, the findings are reported to disprove the belief that school leadership has little if any effect on student achievement. After surveying noted theorists and studies, the authors explain a rationale for using a meta-analysis as the best method to synthesize the vast amount of their research quantitatively. After examining 69 studies representing over 2,802 schools, several strong correlations were found to exist as the leadership ability increases in a school. While briefly examining the work of others, Chapter 2 highlights the impact of the work of James

Burns, founder of Modern Leadership that defines two types of school leaders: transactional and transformational. The conclusion of the meta-analysis revealed 21 leadership responsibilities and their correlations with student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005).

Part II (Chapters 4-7) focuses on the capacity of leaders to focus on important responsibilities, sometimes all 21, depending upon the type of change desired by the school (Marzano et al., 2005). By classifying innovation (change) efforts as First Order Change or Second Order Change, school leaders are given a practical resource for effecting change once leadership teams select the “right” work. The authors note that an effective leader must clearly understand the type of change they wish to effect. First Order changes are described as incremental changes that require the use of all 21 responsibilities, usually very obvious next steps. Conversely, Second Order changes involve “... dramatic departures from the expected... resulting in deep changes that alter the system in fundamental ways, offering a dramatic shift in direction and requiring new ways of thinking and acting” (Marzano et al., 2005). Second Order changes are related to only 7 (vital) responsibilities which may represent calculated risks that effective leaders take when not focusing on the other responsibilities. Chapter 6’s title, “Doing the Right Work”, highlights the importance of the leaders’ ability (and their leadership team) to select work (possible interventions) that is meaningful and worth the efforts that the innovation will take to effect significant change. The two categories of interventions reviewed are the Comprehensive School Reform Model (based on proven/researched track records) and the Site-specific Approach (self-created intervention efforts). Each

provides guidance and possible steps to take for interventions. Finally, the following 5-step plan for effective school leadership is given:

1. Develop a strong leadership team.
2. Distribute some responsibilities throughout the leadership team.
3. Select the right work.
4. Identify the order of magnitude implied by the selected work. (Is the work a First Order or Second Order initiative?)
5. Match the management style to the order of the magnitude of the change initiative. (Marzano et al., 2005)

The Epilogue represents a summary of the research and a challenge to school leaders "...at the building level and district level... to seize the opportunity to make a profound difference in the achievement of their students through strong and thoughtful leadership" (Marzano et al., 2005). Technical notes are also included to further clarify the research conducted in the meta-analysis, charts, and research discussed throughout the book. "Researchers ...have consistently found that high achieving schools (including poor and minority schools) are successful in part because the principals communicate to everyone in the school their expectations of high performance" (Cotton, 2003).

In his article, Richard DuFour (2004) explores the question, "What is a Professional Learning Community?" as he reviews the current educational movement that seeks to develop learning communities that reform what is done in schools. DuFour (2004) begins by critiquing the current state of his reform effort (PLC's) which he describes as experiencing a critical juncture due to confusion about the fundamental concepts driving the initiative. DuFour's (2004) article reviews the pinnacles of

Professional Learning Communities and illustrates specific examples of how “...systematic, timely and directive intervention programs operate”. In effective PLC’s, there is an understanding that:

Every professional in the building must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

(DuFour, 2004)

To avoid the pitfalls of being just “another” group, DuFour (2004) reviews the “big ideas” that represent the core principles of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Each question is explored and further exemplified in the first-hand examples he has worked with. DuFour (2004) describes the challenges of working collaboratively as insightful, purposeful, and far-reaching when the principles remain the focus for intervention/innovation.

Effective leadership seeks to create leadership teams whose efforts are seen in the results of student achievement. The first step recommended by Marzano et al. (2005) is to develop a strong leadership team. DuFour’s work (2004) also provides a look at what that effort should involve, further supporting the earlier efforts of effective schools research. On many school campuses in our surrounding areas, collaboration among teachers and school leaders is evident in varying degrees. Effective leaders must participate in on-going professional development as they work collaboratively to build a

critical mass of leaders. DuFour's (2004) work stresses the importance of maintaining a clear focus of what the purpose should be: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. The professional development of the primary change agents (school leaders) will empower leaders to consistently focus on many of the 21 responsibilities of effective school leaders. As the leadership capacity of schools increase, leadership responsibilities are then shared with the teams as they work to identify the "right" work to be done. In their book *On Common Ground*, the authors questioned why isolation "... prevailed despite the evidence that it serves the interests of neither students nor teachers" (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). Citing a landmark study of successful schools, (Newman & Associates, 1996), the authors (DuFour et al., 2006) stressed the importance of building collective capacity by working together. "The best professional development occurs in the context of the workplace rather than the workshops..." (DuFour et al., 2006)

Dr. Richard Sorenson, an associate professor of Educational Leadership and director of the Principal Preparation Program along with Sylvia Bonscher, an educational consultant who specializes in professional development of English, Spanish and Bilingual Education, collaborated to write the article, "The Principal's Instructional Leadership Role in Defining and Ensuring High Quality Teaching for ELL Students" (2012). Using a quote from a very familiar children's book, *The Lorax* (Dr. Seuss), the authors make a very heartfelt appeal, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not" (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012).

Researchers have found that states with large LEP student populations (such as Texas), are run by principals and teachers who have failed to understand that test results



often reflect the English language proficiency of ELLs and not necessarily their knowledge of the content or skills (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012). Citing previous studies (Armstrong, Henson, & Savage, 2008; Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010; Sorenson, Goldsmith, Mendez, & Maxwell, 2011), the authors began their work of illustrating "...a strong research-based correlation between effective principal leadership, high quality teaching and ELL student academic success" (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012).

Recommendations for effective leadership includes: examining the school/district curriculum for alignment with state assessments, teaching test-taking skills, data review that leads to decision making, and interaction with the faculty through professional development.

The first recommendation is to examine the research literature available on the subject of high quality teaching for ELLs. For each of the following attributes, the authors provide resources/studies are provided:

- The linking of best teaching practices. (Landry, 2010)
- Grounded in the lives, cultures and experiences of ELLs (Rethinking Schools, 2005/2006).
- Supportive of critical, applicable, and academically stimulating learning that is relevant and of interest to the ELL students (Sorenson, Goldsmith, Mendez, & Maxwell, 2011).
- Participatory, hands-on and experiential (Kellough & Jarolimek, 2008); and
- Leader-oriented and directed (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012).

The second recommendation is that high-quality teaching of ELLs is based on the philosophy and expectation for teachers to possess a "... thorough knowledge of the

content areas along with essential pedagogical skill” (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012).

Specific recommendations for best practices to share with the faculty are also provided along with researched based sources for each. Each of the recommended practices are rooted in having teachers who are professionally trained to instruct and engage students using proven strategies that address the nature and needs of ELLs.

High expectations must also be expected to ensure that implementation of trainings and expectations results in the academic achievement of students. Sorenson and Bonscher (2012) provide the following classroom expectations to aide in detecting high quality teaching:

- Balanced instruction (Allen, 2000; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Meier, 2009)
- Reading and writing as instructional priorities (Danielson, 2007)
- Integration of content areas (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 2001; Sorenson, Goldsmith, Mendez, & Maxwell, 2011)
- Emphasis of higher-order thinking skills (Daunis & Iams, 2007; Herrell & Jordan, 2012)
- Various instructional formats and teaching methodologies (Cappellini, 2005; Chen & Mora-Flores, 2006; Freeman & Freeman, 2007)
- Diverse teaching and learning materials (Chen & Mora-Flores, 2006)
- Positive classroom settings (Kearney, 2010)

- Engaging instructional environments (Herrell & Jordan, 2012)

When instructional leadership and high quality education are staples in a school, ELLs achievement is almost guaranteed. Principals must become agents of change, providing teachers with opportunities that facilitate collaboration and reflection upon expected practices along with ensuring that teachers will have opportunities to receive targeted professional development (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012). The authors cite the work of Marzano et al. (2010) and the 21 principal responsibilities that correlate to the academic achievement of ELLs. Five specific responsibilities were listed as essential to effective principals.

Principals are encouraged to begin by conducting a needs assessment of the instructional materials. Second, principals must engage in extended observation of teachers in action and provide feedback to teachers. To be effective, principals must be knowledgeable of "...appropriate instructional techniques, methods, and strategies designed specifically for ELL students" (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012). Third, the teaching of phonics and word study must be addressed. If necessary, the authors suggest that additional training in high quality materials such as *Words Their Way*, by Bear, Ivernizzi, Templeton, and Johnston (2012) should be completed. Fourth, principals must look at the level of engagement among ELL s to ensure that students have the opportunity to practice talking and learning from their peers. Fifth, principals should monitor the level of questions that teachers present to students. Citing the work of Herrell & Jordan (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012), it is recommended that questions be at varying degrees of difficulty that take into account the students' level of language acquisition. The sixth and final recommendation is for principals to evaluate the use of technology by students and

teachers of ELLs. Here, the emphasis is to evaluate teachers' use of technology and media devices in authentic ways to incorporate lesson content and learning (Sorenson & Bonscher, 2012).

The article concludes by stressing the importance of effective leadership for teachers of ELL students. The inspiration begins with the principal who is responsible for setting the vision and initiates collaboration with the faculty. Principals must also guarantee that teachers receive the necessary training to implement proven strategies that increase academic achievement for ELLs. Finally, principals "...must not only set high expectations and facilitate the implementation of sound, research-based instructional programs and initiatives, principals must act in response to the diverse needs of ELL populations" (Sorenson & Banscher, 2012).

The works reviewed illustrate the challenges involved in creating successful change. Much of the work cited in this study illustrates the importance of comprehensive reform efforts that began with early change agents like Benjamin Bloom. "The research attributes much of the principals' success to the professional development opportunities that they provide for their staff members, particularly the teaching staff" (Cotton, 2003). School reform continues to evolve with the work of researchers in support of Professional Learning Communities (DuFour et al., 2006). Everyone has a vested interest in the success of our schools; particularly the success of the largest growing population of students in states that serve significant populations of LEP students.

*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* written by Stephen Covey (1989) was a best seller in the late 1980's and became the subject of required training and reading for school administrators. Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw (Covey, 1989) is reflected

in efforts to facilitate the professional development of adult learners. Sharpen the Saw means that the individual continuously practices the habit of self-renewal by participating in activities that promote balance in four areas of life (physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual). Covey (1989) stresses the importance of creating a balance in the four areas of life so that a person increases his or her ability to handle the challenges that he or she will inevitably face in life (Covey, 1989). Ultimately, the success of the school will depend heavily on the level of on-going support for all members of the school community (students, parents, teachers, and administrators). As noted in “School Leadership that Works”, such “... internal accountability (or responsibility)... is a precondition for any process of improvement...” (Marzano et al., 2005). Perhaps one of the greatest areas of need for professional development among teachers is data analysis.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to determine if differences existed among the ESL and Bilingual student achievement as measured by the passing rate. The findings of this study enabled the researcher substantiate if the ELL's performance affected the campus' overall achievement rate in Reading which resulted in its failure to meet expectations for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Secondly, this student reviewed longitudinal data to determine if the number of years students participated in the LEP program (ESL or Bilingual) effect their achievement rate. LEP student achievement was measured based on the results of the on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS Reading test. Finally, the relationship of achievement (pass/fail) and language development rates (TELPAS) were also examined.

#### **Description of the Research Design**

Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2008) define quantitative research as collecting and analyzing statistical data in order to clarify, forecast, or control issues of interest by controlling contextual factors and using enough participants to produce statistically meaningful data. When a campus fails to meet AYP requirements, it becomes the responsibility of the campus leader and district personnel to determine the exact cause of the issue and determine the best resources and actions to take to increase student achievement. Campus B failed to meet AYP requirements due to LEP students' progress in Reading. It was not known if students participating in a particular LEP program performed better or worse than others. By using a descriptive analysis, the researcher determined passing rates among LEP students who were serviced in two distinct LEP programs: ESL and Bilingual. Based on the data, the researcher determined the passing rates for each LEP student group as it related to their corresponding language proficiency

levels (TELPAS). Another objective of the study was to determine the impact the LEP students' performance had in the overall student performance of the campus population studied.

### **Research Questions**

The quantitative study examined students' reading scores on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS test, as well as their corresponding English Language Development on the 2011 TELPAS report. The following questions guided this study:

1. Did differences exist between ESL and Bilingual student achievement as measured on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS Reading Test?
2. Did the number of years a student participated in a LEP program effect the passing rate on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS?

A descriptive analysis was used to describe the population and the variables that may have affected the achievement of that LEP population.

### **Setting**

Located in the southwest region of the United States in the largest state that borders Mexico, the total student population of Campus B's school district for the 2010-2011 school year was 45,410 with 36.8% of the students identified as LEP. Covering roughly 36.6 square miles, there are 24 elementary campuses, six intermediate (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades), six middle school campuses (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades), and four high schools including two ninth grade centers (Garcia, 2010). An extensive description of the district purports to be one of the most ethnically diverse school districts of comparable size where more than 80 languages and dialects are spoken. Founded in 1911, the district became an official independent school district in 1917.

Between 1970 and 1985, the district's population quadrupled following the annexation of several "chunks" of land along with the expansion of public transportation routes to the predominately suburban area (AISD, 2012). For the purposes of this study, an intermediate school campus, referred to as School B, was used. School B is located in what was once a small suburban school district that separated from a larger school district approximately 30 years ago. Adhering to mandates in the Fair Housing Act, once adult-only apartments in the area began to become single family housing. The result was the increase in student populations that were increasingly led by single, minority parents. The demography of the student population consisted of mostly two-parent family households with most students living in residential homes. As late as 1990, the school district did not participate in the Federal Nutrition Program and assumed the task of feeding students who lived at or below the poverty level.

As of 2010, the school district served approximately 45,657 students with a historically high percentage, 78.8%, of students classified as economically disadvantaged and 36 % labeled as LEP by TEA (TEA-AEIS, 2010). The campus used in this study was built in 2002 and is one of six schools in the district that exclusively serves only 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school has a feeder pattern that is made up of five elementary campuses. All of the campuses that feed into the intermediate school (School B) provided LEP student services using ESL, Bilingual, and/or Waiver models. Not all of the "feeder" campuses provided bilingual services to its students. Of the two non-bilingual campuses, students who qualified for bilingual services were bused to a nearby elementary "bilingual" campus. At the time of the study, Campus B had a total enrollment of 1,190 students with 344 of the students (28.9%) classified as LEP. Today,



the student enrollment has climbed to 1,216 students with 549 students (45%) receiving LEP services.

### **Subjects**

For the purpose of this study, the sample size was dependent upon the total number of LEP 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students at Campus B who took the 2011 Reading TAKS tests in English. Using district ethnic demographic data, LEP students were classified by sub-groups (Campus Group, Economically Disadvantaged, and LEP). The data was derived by using the Texas Education Agency's AEIS report for the 2010-2011 school year. Approximately 270 students were classified as LEP students in the sample group used for this study. The subjects were assessed using the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading TAKS test in English.

### **Procedures**

In the spring of 2011, a request was made to the school district's Assessment and Accountability Department to capture LEP student data for Campus B in preparation for this study. The request was granted and the archival data was held until district approval was granted. On April 5, 2012 a formal request was approved by the school district of Campus B. The researcher requested that highly skilled district personnel assist in the disaggregation of the data to ensure the validity of the data interpreted. The request was approved. Likewise, approval for the research was sought from the University of Houston, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB). The data collected was entered into spreadsheets that aid in the assessment of each research question. An analysis of the campus' 2010 and 2011 ELL Progress Measure was conducted and the researcher reviewed TELPAS data (average rating levels and years in school).

## **Instruments**

The instruments used for this study included the following Campus B reports: the 2011 AEIS (5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS- Reading) Campus/District Report, the 2011 TELPAS Campus Report, and the 2011 AYP Campus Report. The research involving the collection or study of existing data, and documents were publicly available and therefore exempt from approval requirements. The information was recorded by the researcher in a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. A quantitative research approach was used to describe the group of participants (Bilingual and ESL). The descriptive analysis was used to describe the total LEP population at the campus and disaggregate existing data among the passing rates on the 2011 TAKS Reading test in English. Upon completion of the study, the data and consent forms were stored in a secure location at the University of Houston, Room 112 of Farish Hall for a period of three years.

The 2011 AEIS Report was accessed through the Texas Education Agency's website for Campus B. The annual report provided information on the performance of students in the school and district in Texas. The accountability tables used provided information for student performance in Reading and were reported by grade level, as well as the district, region and state passing percentages. Each year TEA provides the overview for the school year and issues a ranking of Unacceptable, Acceptable, Recognized or Exemplary (Texas Education Agency-AEIS, 2010). The TELPAS data was also accessed from the TEA website. The assessment is designed to assess students language proficiencies and their progress towards learning in English. The longitudinal data found in Appendix C & D was accessed using the district's DMAC –dashboard.

Campus administrators and instructional leaders have access to the data system and it allows the user to access students' data on state and local assessments. The 2011 AYP report was accessed from the TEA website. Both the campus and district report was retrieved for this study. The AYP report is produced yearly and provides information about all public school campuses, school districts and the state. Similar to the AEIS report, students are placed in various subgroups and categories and their progress is reported for various content areas.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The purpose of this study was to review LEP student achievement in Reading among fifth grade students. The study examined various data sources to create a statistical analysis of students' rate of progress (pass) by reviewing data to answer the following questions:

1. Did differences exist between ESL and Bilingual student achievement as measured on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS Reading Test?
2. Did the number of years a student participated in a LEP program effect the passing rate on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS?

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis using descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is each subgroup's passing rate and the independent variable (treatment) examined were the two LEP subgroups (Bilingual and ESL). Charts were created to summarize data findings. A longitudinal demographic TAKS report for Campus B was obtained using the school district's DMAC database which includes various subpopulations who took the 5<sup>th</sup> grade TAKS Reading Test for the 2009 through 2011 school years (see Appendix D). Additional data for this study was created using the TEA- AEIS Campus and District reports along with the Federal AYP Campus Report. Using the first administration of the test, all test versions were included and represent the calculated average of each subpopulation. Additional data sources included Campus B's 2010-2011 Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System Report (TELPAS, 2011), the 2011-2012 District Improvement Plan (Manschot, 2012), and the Bilingual/ESL Program Exit Report 2010- 2012 (Manschot, 2012).

### Research Question One

1. Did differences exist between ESL and Bilingual student achievement as measured on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS Reading Test?

In answering question one, the complete TAKS Demographic Longitudinal Data Report (Appendix D) was reviewed. Information found on this reports was accessed using the district's database system that accesses data from the Texas Education Agency's 2010-2011 – Academic Excellence Indicator System.

Table 4-1

#### *5th Grade 2011 Reading TAKS (English)*

English	Grade 05			Grade 05		
Sub Pop	2010			2011		
	Tested#	Met Standard#	Met Standard%	Tested#	Met Standard#	Met Standard%
All Students	499	421	84%	538	451	84%
Afr Am	240	206	86%	239	194	81%
Hispanic	201	162	81%	221	184	83%
White	23	20	87%	28	26	93%
Male	221	183	83%	297	244	82%
Female	278	238	86%	241	207	86%
Sped Ed	16	8	50%	22	13	59%
Eco. Dis.	390	325	83%	408	336	82%
LEP-Cur	107	65	70%	105	72	69%
Bilingual	73	52	71%	77	52	68%
ESL	35	24	69%	26	18	69%

According to this report, a total of 105 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were tested in English. The total LEP population (LEP-Cur) consists of both ESL (non-bilingual) and Bilingual students. This report included information of how Campus B's 5<sup>th</sup> grade students performed based on their subpopulation designations. The overall passing rate for all 538 students on the 2010-2011 Reading test (in English) was 84%.

Twenty-six of the 5th grade ESL students took the English version of the Reading TAKS test and this subpopulation's passing rate was 69%. While there was a total of 221 Hispanic 5<sup>th</sup> grade students (Hispanic and Bilingual subpopulations) who were tested in English, only 77 were designated as "bilingual" students. The bilingual (Hispanic) students tested in English had an overall passing rate of 68%, while the passing rate for the entire 221 Hispanic subpopulation of students was 83%.

Table 4-2

*5th Grade TAKS 2011 Reading (Spanish)*

Spanish	Grade 05		
Sub Pop	2011		
	Tested	Met Standard #	Met Standard %
All Students	19	17	89%
Afr Am			
Hispanic	19	17	89%
Male	7	7	100%
Female	12	10	83%
Sped Ed			
Eco. Dis.	14	12	86%
LEP-Cur	19	17	89%
Bilingual	19	17	89%

Table 4-2 represents the TAKS Demographic data for Campus B's students who took the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading TAKS test in Spanish during the 2010-2011 school year. The complete longitudinal data for the 2009, 2010 and 2011 can be found in Appendix B. This illustration is data that was found in the 2011 TEA- AEIS Report for Campus B. For the 2011 Reading TAKS test, 19 students were tested in Spanish and 17, or 89%, of those students met the standard for passing. All of the 19 students tested in Spanish were

bilingual students participating in the campus' bilingual program. The 2011 results reflect an increase in bilingual test taker's performance from the previous two years. For the 2010 TAKS Reading test, 40 students were tested in Spanish, and 80% (32) of them passed. For the 2009 TAKS Reading test, 31 students were tested in Spanish and 61% (19) of them passed.

Table 4-3

*AYP Performance: Reading (English)*

#Met Standard AYP %	# Tested	ALL/ %	AFR. AMER.	HISPANIC	WHITE	ECO. DIS.	SPEC. ED.	LEP
2010-11	1044	871/ 83%	367/ 86%	384/ 87%	42/ 91%	683/ 81%	60/ 65%	344/ 75%
Student Group %	100%	100%	41%	42%	4%	80%	9%	
2009-2010	992	861/ 87%	367/ 88%	383/ 90%	44/ 96%	685/ 86%	60/ 65%	342/ 81%
Change in Met Standard		-4	-2	-3	-5	-5	0	-6 (2 R.I)

Table 4-3 summarizes data found on the 2010-2011 Texas Education Agency Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Campus Data Table. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Campus B were administered the TAKS Reading Test in English. Of those students tested, 871 (83%) met the standard for passing. While the AYP Report showed a regression in student performance from the previous year in each subgroup on the Reading test, all groups with the exception of LEP met the 80% AYP target for the 2011 test. LEP student achievement decreased from 81% to 75% resulting in a change of -6%. Because the campus failed to meet the 80% target for every sub population, a 2%

increase for LEP student Reading passing rate was required for the 2012 Reading TAKS test.

### **Research Question Two**

2. Did the number of years a student participated in a LEP program effect the passing rate on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS?

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS, 2011) Summary Report documents students' progress in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A campus receives a Composite Rating based on the percentage of students who advanced at least one proficiency level. An individual Composite Rating is also given for each student, and it is the average score obtained in each of these areas. Teachers receive training and are expected to consistently score students based in all areas except Reading. Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, every teacher giving the TELPAS is required to have training and must pass an exam certifying their ability to effectively score the observation portions of the assessment (Montes, 2005). The Reading comprehension is measured using computer-based assessments. According to the 2011 TELPAS report for Campus B (2010-2011 school year), 172 students were identified as LEP. Ninety-seven percent or more of the LEP identified students were rated in each area. From this cohort, 170 students obtained an average of 2.9 on Texas Reading Comprehension score. The average Composite Rating students' level of proficiency was 3.0 (Advanced) for the 166 students who were rated (11-Beginning, 21 Intermediate, 18 Advanced, and 50 Advanced High). This summary also reported 143 students whose ratings were matched from the 2010 TELPAS assessment to track growth among the proficiency levels. While 86 % of the students advanced at least one proficiency level,



77% (110 students) progressed one proficiency level, and 9% (13 students) advanced two proficiency levels. The remaining 16%, 23 students, did not show improvement in their proficiency levels. Students' inability to make anticipated progress in language proficiencies each year could adversely affect their success on achievement tests and negatively impact a campus' overall rating.

Table 4-4

*5th Grade Comparative Performance*

5th Grade Reading TAKS Met Standard (April)	2011 State	% State Commended	2011 District	% District Commended	Non LEP/ % Commended	Campus
LEP Tested in English	65%	12%	72%	10%	89%/32%	69%
LEP Tested in Spanish	76%	24%	73%	19%	n/a	89%
Bilingual Tested in English	64%	11%	70%	8%	n/a	68%
Bilingual Tested in Spanish	76%	24%	73%	19%	n/a	89%
ESL Tested in English	66%	11%	75%	14%	n/a	69%

Data found in Table 4-4 was taken from information submitted in the district's improvement plan (Manschot, 2012). The data was compiled from each campus' data input for LPAC. The results show the state's (Texas) 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading passing rates for LEP (ESL) and Bilingual students tested the school district of Campus B. The reported commended scores indicates the percentage of students whose individual scores were 90% or higher. At the district level, ESL student performance was 72% while Bilingual

students tested in Spanish had a passing rate of 73%. For both the ESL and Bilingual populations, Campus B's district student performance was higher than the state for both groups overall, yet the percentage of students receiving commended performance was lower for both groups. The district's commended performance percentage was less than the state with the exception of ESL students tested in English. The ESL students tested in English had the highest passing rate and the highest percentage of students who received commended performance when tested in English. However, the district's Bilingual students tested in their native language/Spanish performed lower than the state and had fewer students who received commended performance than the state.

Table 4-4 also illustrates students' performance for Campus B's in relation to the district and state's performance. On the 2011 TAKS Reading Test (English and Spanish), 69 % of Campus B' LEP students passed the English version of the Reading test. This passing rate was lower than the district's (72%) but higher than the state's passing rate of 65%. When tested in Spanish, Campus B's LEP and Bilingual students' passing rate was 89%, which was higher than both the district (73%) and the state (76%). For Bilingual students tested in English, the passing rate for Campus B was 68%, which was higher than the state (64%), but lower than the district (70%). For ESL students tested in English, the districts' scores were the highest at 75%, and Campus B performed slightly better at 69% than the state's passing rate of 66%.

Table 4-5

*5th Grade 2011 TALPAS & TAKS*

Years In US School	Reading /ELA		
	#Tested	#Met Standard	%Met Standard
F	9	4	44%
S	7	2	29%
2	33	9	27%
3	17	6	27%
4	5	4	80%
5	80	53	66%
6	19	10	53%

Campus B's TELPAS data was also reviewed by disaggregating data that indicated passing rates among proficiency levels and years in schooling. In reviewing data in relation to the population sample, Table 4-5 shows the LEP (Bilingual and ESL) students' percentage passing rates based on the years of schooling in the United States. "F" represents students who were tested the first year following their first semester of enrollment in an U.S. school. There were 10 "F" students who were tested with a 44% passing rate. Seven students (S) who were tested during their second semester of enrollment had a passing rate of 29%. Thirty-three students who had been enrolled at least two years had a passing rate of 27%, while 17 students who were enrolled at least three years had a 35% passing rate. Students enrolled for four years had the highest passing rate at 80%. This group was made up of five students. The largest number of students fell into the group who had five years of schooling. Eighty students were tested during their fifth year of school and had a passing rate 66%, while 20 students who had six years of schooling had a 53% passing rate.

Table 4-6

*Passing & TELPAS Proficiency Levels*

PROFICIENCY LEVEL	#TESTED	# MET STANDARD	% MET STANDARD
Beginners	23	4	17%
Intermediates	35	11	31%
Advanced	36	21	58%
Advanced-High	176	162	92%
Sum of All	270	198	73%

When Proficiency Levels are studied, a total of 270 students were designated as LEP or former LEP (Monitor 1 or Monitor 2). Former LEP students are not required to take the TELPAS once they have exited the LEP program. Students who have exited the bilingual program have received an overall Composite Rating of Advanced High and successfully passed the most recent state accountability test in English. This data indicates that a total of 97 former LEP students were tested along with 173 current LEP students on the 20115<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS Reading test in English. Students who were rated as Advanced High were the most successful (92%). Of all students tested, 73% met the standard for passing.

Table 4-7

*TELPAS Demographics (Proficiency by Language Area)*

	Tested	Beg	Beg	Inter	Inter	Adv	Adv	AdvH	AdvH
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Reading	173	24	14%	32	18%	24	14%	93	54%
Listening		59	34%	12	7%	40	23%	61	35%
Speaking		60	35%	17	10%	40	23%	55	32%
Writing		61	35%	25	15%	46	27%	36	21%

A closer look at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade LEP students provided a detailed accounting of the demographic proficiency language areas (Reading, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). In the area of Reading, 14% of the students were rated as Beginners, 18% Intermediate, 14% Advanced, and 55% scored at the Advanced High Level. Of all of the language areas assessed, the Reading portion of the test is computer-based. Student ratings on the Listening and Speaking proficiencies appeared to show consistent abilities among the ratings of students. In Listening, 35% of the students were rated as Beginners, 7% of students were rated as Intermediate, 23% of students were rated as Advanced and 35% were rated as Advanced High. Speaking abilities were almost identical where the majority of the students (95) received a rating of Advanced or Advanced High; representing 55% of the LEP students tested. Nearly half of all of the other students (45%) were rated as Beginner or Intermediate Speakers. In Writing, 21% of the students were rated as Advanced High, whereas, the greatest percentage of students were rated as Beginners (35%). The remaining students were rated as either Intermediate (15%) or

Advanced (27%). Even though the TELPAS results from the fifth graders were not matched to their TAKS performance, it is interesting to note that the 68% passing rate for LEP students is identical to the 68% percentage passing rate of students who passed the TAKS test and had a Reading proficiency rating of Advanced or Advanced High. Similar to the findings of Montes (2005), the results of this data indicate that TELPAS scores may not be correlated with the reading comprehension level of students, but "...it can be seen that there is an overall correlation between the level of proficiency a child has in either language and the score obtained in English or Spanish on the reading assessment instruments".

Table 4-8

*6th Grade TAKS 2011 Reading (English)*

English	Grade 06			Grade 06		
Sub Pop	2010			2011		
	Tested#	Met Standard#	Met Standard%	Tested#	Met Standard#	Met Standard%
All Students	481	441	92%	446	406	91%
Afr Am	220	195	89%	190	177	93%
Hispanic	194	182	94%	199	176	88%
White	30	29	97%	17	15	88%
Male	247	224	91%	218	200	92%
Female	234	217	93%	228	206	90%
Sped Ed	13	10	77%	18	12	67%
Eco. Dis.	382	347	91%	368	330	90%
LEP-Cur	72	60	83%	111	93	84%
Bilingual	45	39	87%	72	59	82%
ESL	27	21	78%	38	33	88%

While the purpose of this study was to review student performance in the Bilingual and ESL program at Campus B primarily at 5<sup>th</sup> grade, it is necessary to review LEP

student performance on the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade 2011 TAKS Reading Test because the federal AYP report is made up of the passing rates of students' data for the entire campus. Campus B is an intermediate campus serving both 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Table 4-8 illustrates the cumulative results for all sixth graders at Campus B for the 2011 Reading TAKS test. In the state of Texas, bilingual Spanish students may test in Spanish depending upon their years of U.S. schooling for up to two years. For most bilingual students at this Intermediate Campus, students took the test in English beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade (with the exception of F and S students). All sixth graders took the 2011 TAKS Reading test in English. Of the 446 students tested, 91% met the standard for passing. Special Education students (18) had the lowest percentage of students to pass (67%). Of the total LEP population (111), ESL and Bilingual combined had a passing rate of 84% . Independently, the Bilingual students (72) had a passing rate of 82% and the ESL sixth graders (38) had a passing rate of 87%.

Table 4-9

*2011 District - TAKS Reading Passing Rates*

Grade Level TAKS Reading Test Met Standard	Language of Testing : English Passing Rate	LEP Passing Rate	Language of Testing: Spanish Passing Rate	LEP Passing Rate
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	90%	94%	86%	86%
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	85%	84%	84%	84%
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	82%	62%	93%	93%
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	89%	79%	-	-
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	85%	63%	-	-
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	88%	57%	-	-
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	88%	56%	-	-
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA	90%	54%	-	-
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA	94%	48%	-	-

Utilizing the 2011 District AEIS Report, students' passing rates can be tracked for the Reading TAKS test for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> graders for both the English and Spanish versions. For both 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade, there was not a significant difference in students' passing rates across the district regardless of the language of testing. Non –LEP students tested in English and Spanish scored comparable to their LEP peers with little, if any, difference in each group's passing rates. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the district passing rate for was 82% for students tested in English, but 62% for LEP students tested in English. Conversely, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who took the test in Spanish had a 93% passing rate. Beginning at 6<sup>th</sup> grade, all students were tested in English, therefore there are no scores reported for Spanish test takers in grades 6-12. The district passing rate for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students was 89% and the passing rate for LEP -6<sup>th</sup> graders was 79%. For 7<sup>th</sup> graders, the district passing rate was 85%, but the LEP – 7<sup>th</sup> grade passing rate was 63%. At the eighth grade level, the district passing rate was 88% and the LEP 7<sup>th</sup> grade passing rate dropped to 57%. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the district passing rate remained constant at 88%, yet the LEP passing rate dropped to 56%. District-wide 10<sup>th</sup> graders passed at 90%, while their LEP counterparts had a passing rate of 54%. By 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 94% of all students passed, while LEP students' passing rates dropped to 48%.

The district's AEIS report for 2011 also includes the attendance and completion rates for students in grades 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. While the attendance rate for LEP students is 96% compared to 94% for all students, the drop-out rate for students in grades 9-12 was 3.1% for all students and 2.8% for LEP students. The 4-Year Completion Rate (grades 9-12), reports that the class of 2010 had 80.8% of all students graduate, yet only 46.3% of LEP students graduated. From the graduating class of 2010, 37.3% of LEP students



dropped out, while 8.3% of all students in the district dropped out. When looking at the 5-Year Extended Completion Rate (9-12 for the class of 2009), 79.7% of all of the district's students graduated, while 49.0% of LEP students graduated. For the class of 2009, the drop-out rate for all students was 17.4%, and 47.4% among the district's LEP students. The class of 2008, 22.2% of the district's students dropped out, and 60.9% of the LEP students dropped-out (AEIS, 2011).

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions**

The major findings in this study confirmed research the literature review (Gallegos, 2011 and Montes, 2005) and supports the need for futures studies for developing language proficiencies for ELLs. It also represents a discussion of “...factors influencing the academic performance, and some reflections on the collaboration needed among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to improve the education of English learners in the coming years” (Garcia et al., 2009). By adding to the body of knowledge, school leaders may glean from this literature additional resources and understandings that enable them to assess critical issues that impede the learning and educational achievement LEP students. The achievement gap for at-risk students has remained unchanged for the past few decades (Garcia et al., 2009). The relationship between 5<sup>th</sup> grade LEP students’ performance in Reading on a state assessment revealed an on-going trend in LEP students’ progress in subsequent grades through graduation. Because schools and districts are charged with meeting both state and federal requirements for student achievement, achievement data for Federal AYP results was also reviewed extensively. The data revealed answers for each of the research questions and generated more information regarding the plight of LEP learners as potential drop-outs.

#### **Overview of Study**

This study began with a review of literature and concluded with a review of various data sets. In answering each of the study’s questions, correlations to the literature reviewed became evident.

## Discussion of Results

### Research Question 1:

1. Did differences exist between ESL and Bilingual student achievement as measured on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> Grade TAKS Reading Test?

The short answer to question one is no. There was no significant difference between the passing rate of ESL students and the Bilingual students tested. According to the longitudinal data of fifth graders (2009-2011), LEP student achievement has remained relatively unchanged at this campus. As concluded by previous researchers "...while a growing overall score often indicates a growing English learner subgroup score, the gap that persists indicates that schools have a long way to go" (Gallegos, 2011). The success for 84% of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Campus B on the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading TAKS test did not result in the success of LEP students. LEP students taking the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS test in English had a 69% passing rate. Bilingual student tested in English had a 68% passing rate which was almost equal to non-bilingual ESL students whose passing rate was 69%. Among the 221 Hispanic 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, Hispanic and Bilingual subpopulations tested in English (only 77) were designated as "bilingual" students. This means that the remaining 144 students in the Hispanic subpopulation had a significantly higher passing rate than the combined Hispanic passing rate of 83%. The major implication from this data set supports the findings of Garcia et al. (2009) where most of the ELLs (79%) in schools today were born in the United States and speak English "exclusively" or "very well".

Language appears to be a factor in the success of Bilingual students tested in Spanish that resulted in a passing rate of 89%. This suggests that Bilingual students who

took the English version of the Reading TAKS test may have been more successful had they taken the Spanish version. TELPAS data suggests that exposure to English is more likely to be a factor for Bilingual students because of their years of schooling in a classroom setting where students are heterogeneously grouped by their language of instruction. Abedi's (2004) research concluded that there is consistently a "...larger gap between LEP and non-LEP students in reading than in Math. Therefore LEP students are more likely to stay in the "fail" category for a substantial period of time owing to their low scores in reading...".

According to information on the TEA – AYP website, "Districts, campuses, and the state are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures: Reading/Language Arts, mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools)" (TEA, 2013). For the 2010-2011 school year, the AYP criteria for Reading was 80%. Campus B met the criteria for all subpopulations except LEP. While Campus B had an overall passing rate of 84% for all students, the campus failed to meet the federal target among the LEP students (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grades) whose passing rate was 75%. The rate also represented a decline from the previous year's LEP passing rate of 81%.

Table 4-6 shows that a Reading achievement gap exists district-wide among each grade level beginning at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade where the gap between English and LEP students was 13%. This downward trend marks the beginning of a downward spiral in which the gap was 46% in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Beginning at 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students who have not exited the Bilingual program are transferred to the ESL program. It appears that as language

supports (Spanish speaking teachers, Bilingual Program oversight) diminish, the Reading achievement among LEP students decrease.

**Research Question 2:**

2. Did the number of years a student participated in a LEP program effect the passing rate on the 2011 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS?

Differences exist among the number of years of schooling a student had and their passing rate on the 2010-2011 5<sup>th</sup> grade Reading TAKS test. Gallegos' study (2011) found that "...a student's level of schooling in the primary language was a strong predictor of academic achievement in the target language". As students' experiences in U.S. schools increases, success on achievement test would presumably increase. Students enrolled for at least four years had the highest passing rate at 80%. The largest group consisted of 80 students who were tested during their fifth year of U.S. schooling whose passing rate was 66%. Twenty students who had experienced schooling in the United States for six years had a 53% passing rate.

When looking at students' TELPAS ratings in relationship to their passing percentages, the finding in this study concluded that students who reached the Advanced level of language proficiencies had a greater likelihood of passing (58%) compared to Beginners (34%) and Intermediates (7%). The most successful students were those who were rated as Advanced High who had a 92% passing rate. This conclusion is consistent in the research findings of Abedi (2004) and Garcia (2010) who concluded that students must have enough time (5-7years) to "...develop the necessary cognitive academic language proficiency needed to be successful in school successfully transition into a second language" (Garcia, 2010). The average Composite Rating of the 166 students'

level of proficiency among the LEP 5<sup>th</sup> graders tested was 3.0 (Advanced). Eleven students were rated as Beginners, and 21 were rated as Intermediate. Looking at the make-up of the students who were rated the highest at Advanced (18) and Advanced High (50), one might reasonably conclude that the passing rate among this group of students would be high.

While LEP scores declined for students who had four or more years of U.S. schooling, consideration for students taking the test in English for the first time (at year 5) may account for the decreasing numbers (Table 4-5). This premise is supported by the data in Table 4-9 where 4<sup>th</sup> Grade LEP students who were tested in Spanish (84%) performed as well as students who were tested in English(84%). This study found that of the 88 LEP students who met the standard for passing, 73 of them had three or more years of U.S. schooling resulting in a passing rate of 60%. The majority of the students tested had five or six years of U.S. schooling and had a rate of passing of 64%. Students who had the fewest years of schooling also had the lowest passing rates of all test takers. There were a total of 71 students (42% of LEP testers) who had four or less years of U. S. schooling, and the passing rate for this group was 35%. Because this type of English learner has been educated in the primary language, basic cognitive abilities can be expected. Students with some education have knowledge of academic concepts and academic vocabulary in their native language making transfer of ideas and concepts in a second language easier. Gallegos concluded that students with adequate schooling may be more successful with class assignments, but they may still struggle with standardized test (Gallegos, 2011).

As Bilingual students are required to show achievement on the English version of the state's accountability test (beginning at 5<sup>th</sup> grade), significant gaps in achievement emerge. By 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Bilingual support (Spanish speaking teachers) is no longer provided, and the achievement gap in reading was 21%. The TELPAS data also correlates to the findings of Montes (2005) in that "...there is an overall correlation between the level of proficiency a child has in either language and the score obtained either in English or Spanish on the reading assessment instruments".

While a single campus may be affected by the initial effects of not meeting AYP expectations, an entire district can be impacted if one of the subpopulations is significantly large. At the campus level, 84% of all students tested passed, but only 64% of the LEP students passed. District level results almost mirror Campus B's and possibly reveal an alarming trend. Among all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in the district, 82% of the students met the standard, while only 62% of the district's LEP students were successful on the same test. Likewise, when all students are compared to their corresponding grade level (LEP) peers, the achievement gap increases at each grade level. For 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grades, the district's LEP students' passing rates were at least 20 percentage points lower than the overall passing rate for ALL students tested. Eleventh graders' overall passing rate was 94% in Reading /ELA, but the LEP students' passing rate was a staggering 48%. A glimpse at the district's 2011 AYP Report shows that as a district LEP students made up 32% (6,931) of all 21,394 students tested in Reading in the Spring of 2011. District-wide LEP student achievement in Reading was 81%. An initial look at this data may not cause alarm for school leaders. Because LEP students make up the majority of students who drop out, the district must take a closer look at this population of students. "During

the 2007-08 school year, only 11 states met their accountability goals for ELLs, according to an analysis of federal data by the Washington-based American Institutes for Research” (*Education Week*, 2011).

LEP students who had the greatest percentage of passers were those who had greater Language Proficiencies (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) and those who had the greater number of years of U.S. schooling. There is little that a campus or district can do to address student mobility, but research-based instructional strategies provide classroom teachers with tools to address the needs of ELLs. Teachers must be trained to meet the needs of students based on their Language Proficiencies. As noted in the Literature Review, the work of Hill and Bjork (2008) specify strategies for classroom teachers to work more effectively. “The development of language proficiencies takes time and schools with larger numbers of LEP students are more likely to be designated as schools “in need of improvement” (Abedi, 2004).

### **Implications for Leadership**

As instructional leaders serving large populations of LEP students, the implications for this study are great. A campus and district’s failure to successfully educate LEP students as evidenced by state accountability measures may have significant ramifications including additional oversight by the state (Abedi, 2004). The 2011 Final AYP State Summary revealed that 49% of all districts in the state of Texas failed to meet District AYP requirements. Looking at the district’s AYP report for Campus B, Reading achievement was 82% for the 2011 school year; indicating no cause for concern. A closer look reveals that the AYP data reflects the sum of all students tested beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. If leaders’ at the district level do not look at the results for every grade level,



they will not likely identify trends that lead to individual campuses failing to meet AYP requirements. As unsuccessful students transition from one grade level to the next, achievement gaps will widen without appropriate action at the campus and district level.

The drop-out rate among LEP students is the highest of all subgroups in the school district and the state of Texas. In Campus B's district, the class of 2010 (4-year completion rate) 81% of all students graduated. Conversely, only 46% of LEP students graduated. The annual drop-out rate (4-year completion rate 9-12 graders) at the state level that same year was 7.3%. For the Region IV area (all of the surrounding school districts), the drop-out rate was 8.5%. For the district, the overall drop-out rate was 8.3%, but the LEP student drop-out rate was 37.3%. District-wide, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade passing rate on the Reading TAKS test (2010-2011) was 82%. For LEP students, the passing rate among all 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the district was 62%.

School leaders must be adept at disaggregating data, responding to data, and inspecting instructional programs to ensure a rigorous and viable curriculum for all students. The work of Dr. Jesus Montes (2005) provided viable resources for understanding the data sources that exist for school leaders. At minimum, a yearly review of LEP students' progress (TELPAS) towards language proficiencies should occur. The campus' ELL Measure gives a snapshot of the percentage of students progressing at least one level, but it is not a conclusive indicator of specific needs. "In 2009-2010 Texas created an all-level certificate for bilingual teachers so that high schools who needed bilingual educators could have highly qualified bilingual teachers in high school rather than just in elementary and middle school" (Texas Education Agency-LEP Initiatives, 2013). Funding for the professional development of ESL and Bilingual certified teachers

is available through federal and state Title funds. In the summer of 2010, English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Academies were conducted and over 14,000 teachers attended the training (Texas Education Agency-LEP Initiatives, 2013). Most school districts have a dashboard (such as DMAC) which allows leaders and teachers to create detail reports that contain state-wide test results including TELPAS, TAKS, and campus/district common assessments. Federal funding has provided for many technological advances that facilitate ease in accessing various database systems that can be manipulated to track the progress of students groups including the subpopulations identified in federal AYP standards.

The information found in TELPAS can show campus trends that will prove useful in determining professional development needs of teachers. Likewise, TELPAS data may empower the campus principal to make more informed (data-based) predictions for students' academic potential as well as their need for interventions. According to Garcia et al. (2009), researchers have identified many evidence-based practices that enhance the academic engagement and learning of ELLs. Examples of those practices include: "culturally knowledgeable teachers who are proficient in English and the student's native language, screening for and closely monitoring learning problems, intensive small-group interventions, extensive and varied vocabulary instruction, and regular peer-assisted learning opportunities ..." (Garcia et al., 2009). While many teachers may speak the native language of many of the bilingual (Spanish) students, Garcia's (2010) study showed that teacher participants had little, if any, professional development related to ELL's" (Garcia, 2010). Effective school leaders of ELL's must be skilled at identifying

training to aid in the understanding of LEP student characteristics, their unique needs, and how leadership efforts positively impact academic achievement.

Finally, "...elementary students who initially appear to perform better when instructed in English, begin to struggle by high school no doubt due to the academic language and literacy demands of the grade level span" (Gallegos, 2011). The study revealed an alarming statistic regarding drop-outs. The data supports the need for further study of LEP student drop-outs. It is not known if the students in this group represent a significant number of students who were previously served in a Bilingual program. No one strategy works in all situations and the effectiveness of the strategies is dependent upon the teacher's abilities/skills (Hill & Bjork, 2008). Effective school principals are creative at securing resources including financial, human, time, material, and facilities- for all kinds of instruction-related needs (Cotton, 2003).

### **Implications for Further Research**

As the LEP population continues to rise, district leaders must monitor the success of this subpopulation and provide professional development for teachers of ELL students. The findings of this study revealed that of the 176 students who were rated as Advanced High, 92% of them met the standard while only 58% passed among the students (36) who were rated as Advanced. Further research is needed to help teachers best develop language proficiencies for ELLs.

As a district, additional research is needed to explore how many campuses failed to meet AYP due to LEP student achievement in Reading. The completion rate referenced earlier reveals an alarming trend among LEP students in this school district. A logical question would be how educators can accelerate students' acquisition of

language proficiencies at a pace that puts them on track to be successful when they are required to test in English. The findings also suggest a need to investigate the district's Bilingual/ESL Framework to for alignment with an Early Exit model. Because students with fewer years of experience outperformed those with an additional year of U.S. schooling, identification of who those LEP students were and the programs that produced them is necessary. If the students with six years of schooling were in the bilingual program and did not made anticipated progress, then leaders will know that issues may lie in the implementation of the framework's expectations or the professional expertise and practices of the teachers.

Additionally, the availability of research lends itself to the exploration of more bilingual programs. Currently, the school district used in this study has a Dual Language Program at a few of its elementary campuses. While the students participating in this original cohort have yet to take a state assessment, a district review of available data (TELPAS) may yield useful information to determine the program's effectiveness and possible areas in need of improvement. Finally, a review of the available data may also provide concrete evidence to support the expansion of the Dual Language Program to other campuses.

As noted by both Garcia (2010) and Montes (2005), effective school leaders respond to data by evaluating professional development needs of those responsible for education ELLs. Because Garica (2010) studied the same district used in this study, it may be worth exploring how the findings of her study might be used to impact the professional development of teachers in the district. By reviewing the professional development opportunities offered or recommended by the school district, it will be

possible to determine the degree of professional preparation teachers may receive beyond initial certification requirements in the area of developing language proficiencies.

The over-riding conclusion of this study points to the importance of helping LEP students obtain language proficiencies that result in their successful exit of the ESL program by 7<sup>th</sup> grade. At the start of this study, I wanted to know which students caused the campus to miss requirements of AYP. The data journey found an alarming trend among the sample population where long-term LEP students (five to six years) had not reached anticipated language proficiencies (Advanced/Advanced High) by the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Of the 99 students who had five or six years of schooling, only 63, or 64%, were rated as Advanced or Advanced High.

As a district, LEP students appear to be achieving slightly behind other student populations. When looking at the AYP data for the district, this conclusion may cause the district to underestimate the LEP crisis facing several campuses in the district. The significantly large LEP drop-out rate in the district may be related to Reading achievement in elementary grades. Hispanics (10,906) make up the district's largest student group representing 51% of all students tested (21,394). LEP students (9,678) represent 45% of the entire district's population and are the fastest growing group of students.

Finally, elementary campuses must do their part to educate long-term ELLs effectively, or they will ultimately find themselves subject to federal requirements. The support of the district in creating a comprehensive and viable Bilingual/ESL framework where ELLs progress is monitored to create baselines for students. In Texas:

The goals of the LEP SSI, Cycle 5 are to:

- Increase the academic achievement of LEP student as demonstrated through improved TAKS scores; growth in English reading proficiency as measured by the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) scores; promotion to the next grade; and increased rates of credit accrual that lead toward high school completion.
- Increase the number of teachers prepared to enable LEAP students to meet performance expectations as demonstrated through the number/percentage of teachers participating in training focused on competencies specific to the instruction of LEP students and reduction in number/percentage of teachers of LEP students teaching under English as a Second Language (ESL) waiver.  
(TEA-LEP, 2013)

Based on these state requirements, Campus B should evaluate the current practices towards increasing growth in English reading proficiencies by providing training for teachers in developing Language Proficiencies. Perhaps the real issue is an “implementation” gap as noted by Garcia et al. (2009) who concluded, “in spite of the research pointing to effective practices, however, ELLs continue to underperform, and evidence-based strategies are not implemented or are poorly implemented in many schools”.

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## **Appendix A**

Approval from the University of Houston Human Subject Research Committee

Approval from the University of Houston Subject Research Committee

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## DIVISION OF RESEARCH

March 6, 2013

Rosalind Burroughs  
c/o Dr. Michael Emerson  
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Rosalind Burroughs,

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "Understanding Limited English Proficient Student Achievement in Reading as a Predictor of AYP Reporting Status and the Implications for Effective School Leadership" was conducted on December 12, 2012.

At that time, your request for exemption under Category 4 was approved pending modification of your proposed procedures/documents.

The changes you have made adequately respond to the identified contingencies. As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review. \* Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and further approval. Please contact me to ascertain the appropriate mechanism.

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

Sincerely yours,



Kirstin Rochford, MPH, CIP, CPIA  
Director, Research Compliance

\*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **December 1, 2017**. If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 13162-EX

**Appendix B**  
District Approval of Study Letter

## District Approval of Study Letter

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR TOMORROW — CARING FOR THEM TODAY

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April 5, 2012

Rosalind Burroughs  
8814 Diamond Lake Lane  
Houston, TX 77083

Dear Ms. Burroughs,

Your request to conduct a research project titled *Understanding LEP Student Achievement In Reading and the Implications for AYP* has been approved. The agreement is attached.

Please sign the attached agreement and return the original to us.

We appreciate your interest in doing research in Alief.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Key".

Jennifer Key  
Director of Special Populations

## **Appendix C**

### **Diagrams**

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading TAKS (English) Longitudinal



## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading TAKS (English) Longitudinal

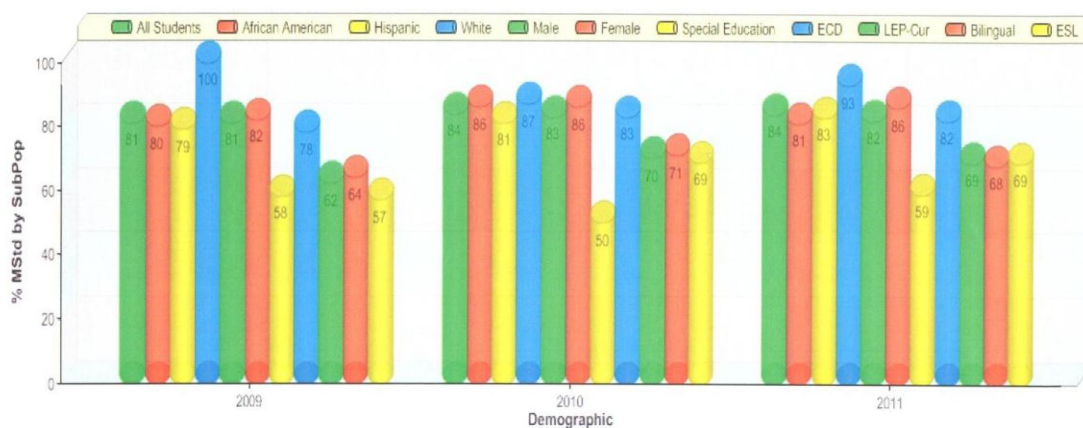


### TAKS Demographic Longitudinal for BUDEWIG INTERMEDIATE

Subject: Reading/ELA Language(s): English

Calculation Option: Calculated average Retests: First Administrations Test Version(s): TAKS, TAKS-Acc, TAKS-M, TAKS-Alt

SubPopulation	Grade 05 2009			Grade 05 2010			Grade 05 2011		
	Tstd #	MStd #	MStd %	Tstd #	MStd #	MStd %	Tstd #	MStd #	MStd %
All Students	535	436	81%	499	421	84%	538	451	84%
African American	261	208	80%	240	206	86%	239	194	81%
Hispanic	198	156	79%	201	162	81%	221	184	83%
White	27	27	100%	23	20	87%	28	26	93%
Male	266	216	81%	221	183	83%	297	244	82%
Female	269	220	82%	278	238	86%	241	207	86%
Special Education	12	7	58%	16	8	50%	22	13	59%
ECD	393	305	78%	390	325	83%	408	336	82%
LEP-Cur	94	58	62%	107	75	70%	105	72	69%
Bilingual	59	38	64%	73	52	71%	77	52	68%
ESL	35	20	57%	35	24	69%	26	18	69%



## **Appendix D**

### **Diagrams**

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading TAKS (Spanish) Longitudinal

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading TAKS (Spanish) Longitudinal

## TAKS Demographic Longitudinal for BUDEWIG INTERMEDIATE

Subject: Reading/ELA Language(s): Spanish

Calculation Option: Calculated average Retests: First Administrations Test Version(s): TAKS, TAKS-Acc, TAKS-M, TAKS-Alt

SubPopulation	Grade 05			Grade 05			Grade 05		
	2009			2010			2011		
	Tstd #	MStd #	MStd %	Tstd #	MStd #	MStd %	Tstd #	MStd #	MStd %
All Students	31	19	61%	40	32	80%	19	17	89%
African American	1	1	100%						
Hispanic	30	18	60%	39	31	79%	19	17	89%
Male	17	12	71%	18	12	67%	7	7	100%
Female	14	7	50%	22	20	91%	12	10	83%
Special Education				2	1	50%			
ECD	26	16	62%	37	30	81%	14	12	86%
LEP-Cur	31	19	61%	40	32	80%	19	17	89%
Bilingual	31	19	61%	40	32	80%	19	17	89%

