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Viviana Barreiro

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MOTIVATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A STUDY OF TEACHER
PERCEPTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN AN
URBAN SCHOOL

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

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Motivating English Language Learners: A Study of Teacher Perceptions and Implications
for Student Achievement in an Urban School

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Abstract

Background: Due to numerous factors, the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolling in public schools in the United States rapidly increased since 2014. For this reason, many educators have found themselves unprepared to serve the various academic, social, and emotional needs of ELLs. **Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to explore teacher perceptions and their behavioral and motivational expectations of ELLs. In this study, the following research questions was posed: What are teacher perceptions regarding the behavior and motivation of ELLs in an urban school?

Methods: A qualitative case study was used to analyze common perceptions found in three English teachers of ELLs in an urban high school with a large ELL population in Southeast Texas. Two rounds of individual interviews were conducted with teachers. The resulting categories and themes from the individual interviews were used to develop and refine questions for a mini focus group involving the same study participants. **Results:**

The results showed that a lack of administrative support and efforts for inclusion impacted the behavior and motivation of ELLs. Other influences on the behavior and motivation of ELLs were: Student home environments, codependency of students, and teacher connections. Even though the three participants had valuable information to offer, they all agreed that motivation, behavior, and academic success are tied. **Conclusion:**

The themes discovered are important in seeing students motivated to learn and be academically successful; however, districts and school administrators are highly encouraged to explore ways ELLs can be included in school activities and decisions. The themes found in this study may give insight to school district leaders and to school administrators concerning the behavioral, academic, and motivational concerns they may

have about long-term and newcomer ELLs. It is encouraged that researchers conduct further studies regarding factors that can increase motivation and behavioral success in ELLs.

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Chapter I

Introduction and Background of the Study

Introduction

Most Houston, Texas residents or connoisseurs know the city is one of the most diverse cities in the nation. As a matter of fact, when world-renowned chef Anthony Bourdain visited Houston for his CNN show *Parts Unknown* in 2016, he strictly mentioned he did not want to showcase any white people. As Katharine Shilcutt for *Houstonia* described, Bourdain wanted to show how diverse Houston had become in the last few years. For this reason, Bourdain opted to provide viewers with a look of Houston as a Vietnamese, Central American, African, and Indian city (Shilcutt, 2017). While these statements by Bourdain quickly became the object of criticism by magazines such as *Paper City*, how far was Bourdain from depicting the reality of Houston's identity?

To answer this question, Shilcutt beautifully described the many rich components that make up what we now know as Houston:

But Houston is more than white men, after all. The city was built by Chinese rail workers and Japanese rice farmers, Lebanese grocers and Vietnamese shrimp boat captains, Mexican prisoners of war who drained the downtown swampland so that buildings could be erected, and black inmates compelled to harvest sugar cane and cotton in the fields of what is now Sugar Land. Though it's just recently been recognized as such on a national level, Houston has been a melting pot from day one. (Shilcutt, 2017, para. 7)

While Shilcutt's purpose for writing her article was to vehemently oppose *Paper City's* race-baiting headline and its notion of immigrants taking over the city to make

whites the new marginalized and oppressed class, she ultimately refers to Houston as “Mutt City” in terms of both cuisine and culture. It is precisely this diversity, mixture of cultures, and the economic opportunities that make visitors feel welcome and convince many individuals and families to start a new life in Houston and ultimately stay.

This research project takes place in Harris County, where according to the Migration Policy Institute (Capps, Fix, & Nwosu, 2015), most immigrants in Houston, Texas are concentrated. Houston has the third largest Mexican-origin population in the nation, dating back to the Texas Revolution, yet Houston’s Honduran population also ranks third in the nation. Immigrants from Central America are relatively recent arrivals, with most undocumented childhood arrivals arriving from Honduras, El Salvador, or Guatemala through the McAllen-Reynosa border in South Texas and Northern Tamaulipas, Mexico (Capps et al., 2015). Sarah Pierce for the Migration Policy Institute (2016) attributed this phenomenon to certain immigration policies, saying that “While most of the Mexican children are quickly returned to Mexico, U.S. law provides for different treatment for unaccompanied minors from noncontiguous countries” (Pierce, 2016, p. 1).

Pierce further suggests that while children and their families are trying to deal with the court system and their future either as asylees or refugees, they also must adapt to their new communities and schools. There is no specific information available regarding enrollment, but each school district has a choice in program implementation for newcomers. While some school districts may decide to create programs specifically for newcomers, others may choose to push back against their enrollment (Pierce, 2016). Pushing back against enrollment may be attributed to a lack of resources, including a

deficiency in certified ESL teachers, and even structural obstacles, such as limited space in classrooms.

The key to understanding this research study is first understanding the specific type of ELLs the researcher and the participants focused on. Many schools, such as the school in this research study, combine both newcomers and long-term ELLs in the same English classes. Long-term ELLs are students who have been in the country for more than three years, but they have not been able to master the academic language or pass the required assessments needed to exit the ELL program. Newcomers are ELLs who are new to the country, and for purposes of this study, they are students who have been in the country less than three years. The participants in this study either taught solely newcomers or both newcomers and long-term ELLs. This mixture of students makes differentiation crucial for teachers and it increases the pressure for all students, regardless of years in the country, to learn and perform equally well. It is imperative that all stakeholders work together to try leading ELLs to the path of success, regardless of their time spent in the United States.

Researcher Perspective

As the researcher, I have solely served ELLs for five of the almost nine years that I have been formally teaching. Naturally, organizing this qualitative study and analyzing its findings is extremely significant to me due to the experience and dedication I have for teaching, particularly the ELL population. However, it is important to mention that the topic of ELLs also affects me on a personal level considering my own upbringing.

Even though I was born and raised in Houston, Texas, my parents raised me speaking, writing, and reading Spanish, knowing I would eventually learn the English

language in school. I grew up as an ELL and exited the program by fourth grade. To this day, I believe it was one of the best decisions my parents made, since I have a perfect grasp of both English and Spanish, but I remember the panic I felt in elementary school when a teacher spoke to me in English and I did not understand. I carry that sentiment with me, and I can empathize with ELLs. Even though more than a decade has passed since I graduated high school, I clearly remember being a student in the high school in which I currently teach. For some strange reason, I remember the ELL classes; I remember their exact location, how small those classes were back then, and how isolated they were from the rest of us at the high school. It is incredible to say that even though the number of ELLs has significantly increased over the years, ELL isolation and exclusion seems to remain the same.

As a high school ELL teacher, I have dealt with the struggles of having a mixed population of ELLs in my classes: Long-term ELLs, which are those students who have been in the United States for more than three years but have not been able to exit the program due to exam scores, and relatively recent arrivals, all in one classroom. Under these circumstances, differentiation can be a challenge for a teacher. While many long-term ELLs struggle mostly with academic vocabulary, newcomers are in the process of learning the pronunciation and meaning of basic sight words. A common misconception is that all ELLs are newcomers, and this study emphasizes this is not the case. As a matter of fact, most ELLs enrolled in U.S. schools are born in the United States (Breiseth, 2015). Teacher perceptions of both long-term ELLs and newcomers were considered in this study and specifically mentioned and differentiated, when necessary.

As previously mentioned, my ELL classes have always been heterogenous, with a

few students who have perfect understanding of the English language but fail their exams, mixed with others who, even almost a year after being in class still ask their friends “¿*Qué dijo?*” (Spanish for “What did she say?”) after I explain directions. I have also taught students in their early twenties and students who are mothers and fathers of multiple children.

One of my previous students for instance, who I will call Damian for privacy purposes, had excessive absences in my class. When he missed two consecutive days, I was not surprised and assumed he was handling legal paperwork to remain in this country, as he had previously shown me court documents which stated he was seeking asylum. All these years of teaching eventually taught me that the worst thing an educator can do in this career is simply *assume*. When Damian came back to school, I was informed by the crisis counselor he had just suffered the death of his son, only a toddler, in Honduras. His two-year-old had died electrocuted due to an accident. Damian’s excessive absences caused him to fail the school year, so I taught Damian for a few weeks in 2017 until he decided to drop out of school. After his child’s death, Damian found no motivation to continue enrolled in school and decided to work and help his family back home instead. Sadly, not all ELLs have an academic success story as portrayed in the national news, and this is the reality of teaching high school ELLs; it is a reality that must remain in the minds of readers as the research study unfolds.

As a teacher and a researcher, my goal is to positively contribute to the education and advocacy of all ELLs. Considering this population is still increasing, there is a desperate need for educators to know exactly who their ELL students are and where they come from to better serve their academic needs. In the school studied, nearly half of the

population is considered ELL, yet there is a strong need for their inclusion. Even though outside factors, such as Damian's, are impossible for educators to control, schools still need culturally responsive teachers, campus administrators, and district personnel to see student behavior improve and motivation increase.

Statement of the Problem

ELLs represent a fast-growing sub-group, yet the overall achievement of this group in high schools is lacking, both in long-term and newcomers. Many school districts have created programs specifically for newcomer immersion into U.S. schools, but Courtney LeClair, Beth Doll, Allison Osborn, and Kristin Jones (2009) pointed out many newcomer students are not ready to learn in the English-language classroom. As they mentioned, the learning environments of ELLs are important to analyze, yet they are frequently overlooked. A crucial part of any learning environment is the teacher and the school's administration. In looking at teachers specifically, it is important for teachers to help ELLs by making a classroom environment safe and welcoming to the diversity ELLs bring with them. Thi Diem Hang Khong and Eisuke Saito pointed out that, "To work effectively with ELLs, a need exists to reform educational policies, curriculum, materials, and management, as well as teacher training" (Hang Khong & Saito, 2013, p. 212).

The great dilemma perhaps rests in that even with the increasing numbers of new arrivals in the United States each day, some school districts seem unprepared for the influx of ELLs in schools. When you take the number of long-term ELLs already in the school system and add those who are newcomers, teachers have an added diversity in their classrooms that they must cater to. Many times, administrators are also oblivious to the fact that both groups of students, often with very different needs and with very

different educational experiences, are placed in the hands of only one teacher; a teacher who is expected to bring all students to glory in terms of cognitive level and high-stakes testing scores. In the words of Rosann Tung for *Vue Magazine*, “We need to create district and school cultures that celebrate and value linguistic and cultural diversity” (Tung, 2013, para. 4). However, districts and school cultures cannot celebrate and value diversity if they are not well-informed of the issues ELLs come to classrooms with, often involving family problems, low motivation, and a desperate need to feel comfort and understanding from an adult.

Khong and Saito (2013) explained that teacher preparation is a problem when it comes to ELLs. Sixty percent of colleges agree their coursework lacks the focus of educating teachers to work with this population. For teachers already established in a school, the factors of time, communication with families, personal views, and the pressure of high performance in state exams expected from ELLs are just some of the factors that make teaching this sub-group a complicated task (Khong & Saito, 2013). Societal, personal, and educational factors in both teachers and ELLs impact the achievement of these students in the education system. However, teachers are faced with finding ways to improve the quality of instruction while also helping newcomers assimilate to their new environment.

In their study, Stuart A. Karabenick and Phyllis A. Clemens Noda (2004) noticed that teachers exposed to ELLs were more accepting of this sub-population. However, many others did not feel confident in teaching them, suggesting a need for professional development focus in this area. As the number of ELLs in U.S. schools continues to increase, there should be a sense of urgency to reform schools in cities such as Houston

that receive the greatest number of childhood arrivals. Professional development should not only focus in teaching ELLs, but it should also focus on training principals on being culturally responsive and culturally sensitive. An example of professional development offered in various school districts is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). This framework is used as a means of preparing ELL teachers in eight areas:

- 1) Preparation
- 2) Building background
- 3) Comprehensible input
- 4) Strategies
- 5) Interaction
- 6) Practice and application
- 7) Lesson delivery
- 8) Review and assessment.

The belief is that students grow in their academic content knowledge and English ability, leaving the classroom feeling successful and excited about what they are learning in school (Goldenberg, 2008). In most school districts in Houston, this intense, three-day training is highly recommended for teachers of ELLs but not for school administrators. There are also district and in-campus trainings available for many teachers in various school districts that focus on understanding the ELPS and knowing how to incorporate these language objectives into lesson plans and classroom instruction. While districts may be taking the steps to ensure ELLs are taught by highly-qualified teachers who are compliant to district and state mandates, they are not specifically addressing the need to

have educators that are motivated and truly cognizant of the many challenges there are present in teaching, advocating for, and leading the ELL population toward achievement.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore teacher perceptions and their behavioral and motivational expectations of both newcomers and long-term ELLs, particularly those in grades 9-12. Moreover, the researcher seeks to enhance educator training and preparation to support ELLs by determining factors that may influence behavior and attitudes in the classrooms.

Educators are responsible for the growth and success of ELLs, regardless of their backgrounds. In Texas for instance, any ELL can receive a waiver or special provision on their English I State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) if they have been in the country less than three years, yet they are accountable for passing their other STAAR exams, including the rigorous English II STAAR (“Texas Education Agency,” 2016). Dennis Van Roekel (2008) suggested ELL students are given reading and math tests in English before they are truly proficient in the language, raising concerns for teachers, students, parents, and leaders in schools and districts.

Upon the conclusion of this research study, my wish is that these findings can contribute to the field of education, specifically in understanding motivation factors in ELLs and learning how to assist this population of students in high schools in the United States. In addition, I hope the findings of this study can help both educator preparation programs and school districts analyze the methods they are using to prepare educators for the instruction and guidance of all ELLs.

Research Design

Three teachers were interviewed individually using a set of 7 questions as a guide (Appendix B). After the transcriptions of the interviews were openly coded, the researcher looked for common concepts and issues in each interview to follow up with a second individual interview with each teacher. Once again, the interviews were transcribed to form new interview questions with the goal of conducting a focus group interview (Appendix C).

This research study was based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) created by Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci. In agreement with the three innate psychological needs the meta-theory is based on, my belief is that all ELLs need to feel 1) Competent and masters of their educational environment, 2) a sense of relatedness to others and belonging in their learning environment, and 3) autonomy and the right to control their outcome in the classroom (as cited in Van Lange, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2011). Teachers and administrators have the power to encourage and even provide students with the tools to fulfill these three needs, but not without analyzing and evaluating their own ideas and perceptions.

With the rapid influx of ELLs, it is vital for school districts to begin taking steps to prepare teachers emotionally and cognitively for these students. How prepared are school districts for the continuous growth of ELLs? Are there enough teachers certified, capable and willing to teach all levels of ELLs? How prepared do educators feel when it comes to teaching and leading this population?

Definition of Terms

Accelerated English Academy (AEA) - A newcomer program in the district studied, catered for students entering grades 7-12. This program is for first-year students who do not speak English. They are taught in a sheltered instruction setting in all content area courses using the Accelerated Learning methodology. Newcomer programs use different names and methodologies, which vary from district to district, but consist of similar ideas.

Asylum- A form of protection that allows foreign nationals who fear persecution in their home countries to stay in the United States legally. Individuals seeking asylum must meet the definition of refugee, are already in the United States, and are seeking admission at a port of entry. In addition, there is no fee to apply for asylum, but Form I-589 (Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal) must be filed within one year of arrival to the United States (“U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services,” 2015).

ELLs (ELLs) - A student whose primary language is not English and whose English language skills hinder them from performing classwork in English. The terms LEP (Limited English Proficiency) and ELL are used interchangeably (“Texas English Language Learner Portal,” n.d.).

English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) - These standards are required by the Texas Administrative Code and outline English language proficiency descriptors and expectations for students that are ELLs. All school districts in Texas are required to implement ELPS as part of each subject in the required curriculum (“Education Service Center Region 20,” n.d.).

Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) - Each school in Texas must have a committee that includes a campus administrator, a parent of a LEP student, and an ESL teacher. Some responsibilities of LPAC members include identifying LEP students, placing them in appropriate programs, and making assessment decisions for them (“Edcouch-Elsa ISD,” 2004).

Long-term ELL- An ELL is considered long-term when they have not exited the program after four years. Most ELLs in the country are U.S.-born students. Factors that hinder these students from exiting the ELL program are a lack of academic vocabulary and not passing the required exams for exiting.

Refugee- Refugee status is a form of protection given to individuals who are of special humanitarian concern to the United States. Refugees are not firmly resettled in another country, they are located outside of the United States, and they must demonstrate that they were persecuted or that they fear persecution in their country. A refugee does not include anyone who persecuted or participated in the persecution of any person. To be considered a refugee, individuals must receive a referral to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) (“U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services,” 2015).

Senate Bill 149 (SB 149) - Senate Bill 149 was signed by Texas Governor Greg Abbott on May 11, 2015. This Bill was designed to provide alternative high school graduation requirements, including the use of individual graduation committees, to determine if a student was eligible to graduate. The greatest impact of SB 149 was lowering the required number of End-of-Course (EOC) assessments had to pass from five to two. If ELLs failed one of the English EOCs for instance, they were expected to

produce a written piece and show a basic grasp of the English language. The bill was set to expire September 1, 2017 (Education Service Center Region 20, 2015).

Senate Bill 463 (SB 463) - Senate Bill 463 is a revision to SB 149 signed May 2017. This revision extended the end date of the individual graduation committees as an alternate route to the path of graduation from September 1, 2017 to September 1, 2019 (Education Service Center Region 12, 2017).

Special Provision- Under Chapter 101, Subchapter AA of the Texas Education Code, a high school student who has been enrolled in U.S. schools for three school years or less or who qualifies as an unschooled asylee or refugee can receive a special provision for their English I EOC with approval of the LPAC committee (“Texas Administrative Code,” n.d.).

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) - These annual assessments were implemented in the spring of 2012. Students begin testing in third grade. At the high school level, students take End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in English I, English II, Algebra 1, biology, and U.S. History. Students are expected to pass these five assessments as a high school graduation requirement.

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) - This system is designed to assess the progress LEP students make in learning the English language. The TELPAS tests students in four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS results are used to meet state and federal reporting and accountability requirements (“Port Neches-Groves ISD,” 2010).

Research Question

Considering the high number of ELLs in many urban schools in Houston, this study is centered on one question concerning ELLs in grades 9-12: What are teacher perceptions regarding the behavior and motivation of ELLs in an urban school?

All students benefit from educators who motivate them. For ELLs, especially those enrolled in school at the secondary level, this motivation is vital. Teachers are entering the field of education with new and innovative theories but not enough experience in the field. Similarly, school administrators are often leading without knowing some of the specific challenges ELLs carry with them.

With this research study, I strive make teachers aware of their own thoughts and perceptions, but I also aim to prepare administrators, school districts, and communities for a continuous growth in ELLs. Most importantly however, is the focus of the research study to create positive changes in schools and the educational system. In the process, my goal was to make ELL teachers aware of their perceptions and aware of their capacity to help make productive, successful citizens of students, despite their individual circumstances.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Overview of Study

The influx of ELLs in our schools has prompted an increased interest from educators and school leaders in second language acquisition and cultural awareness. Even though such matters are crucial in seeing our ELLs reach academic achievement, there are many other components that ultimately determine the success of an ELL in life in both behavioral and academic terms.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the factors that help motivate all ELLs, especially those enrolled in high school. This chapter will delve deeper into the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci to determine its effect on ELLs. Moreover, it will examine how ELLs are represented and supported in schools, how educators are being trained to help and differentiate among newcomers and long-term ELLs, and the steps educators can take to increase their motivation and promote social justice.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

In 1985, psychologists Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci developed the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which deals with intrinsic motivation and well-being. According to this theory, humans have intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective and healthy ways. The primary focus of SDT is on the importance of setting goals that satisfy humans internally rather than externally. When humans are exposed to conditions in which they can experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness, they are more likely to experience and exhibit the sincerest form of intrinsic motivation. This results in enhanced

performance, creativity, and persistence. SDT argues that these tendencies need constant nurturing and support for healthy personal development. When these tendencies are not nurtured or if they are thwarted in any way, people experience negative psychological effects. SDT can benefit educators in numerous ways since it enables them to discover the different tendencies of students to learn and maintain intrinsic motivation for academic and behavioral achievement.

Application of Framework to ELLs

Autonomy. According to Ryan and Deci's findings, choice fosters intrinsic motivation. When humans have opportunities to direct themselves and simply make their own decisions, they develop a greater feeling of autonomy, which leads to pride. Students also show autonomy when they are willing to dedicate time outside the classroom to learn. Research has shown that teachers who support autonomy in students instill their curiosity and a desire to be continuously challenged. Students who are controlled lose their creativity and are not able to learn concepts that require conceptual, creative processing (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Competence. Along with autonomy, Ryan and Deci explained that humans need to feel competence to motivate themselves. Teachers need to challenge students, but they must also provide positive feedback and refrain from using evaluations that are demeaning to students. As a matter of fact, negative performance feedback has been shown to diminish intrinsic motivation. Students need parents and mentors to perceive them as competent to see themselves as such (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For many ELLs, having a difficult time acquiring the English language may hinder them from feeling accomplished. Others, particularly newcomers, may struggle with simply getting

accustomed to a new way of life. Teachers should help students feel valuable and respected as they continue to provide positive feedback, and they should encourage them to use this feedback to succeed. ELLs, especially at the secondary level, need to constantly see the many doors education can open for them as well. Feelings of competence in ELLs are likely to be fostered by adults who show the students support and encouragement rather than harsh criticism. With ELLs, setting goals and celebrating even the smallest victories is encouraged in order to continuously motivate students to succeed.

Relatedness. Along with autonomy and competence, humans must also feel a sense of security and relatedness. To do this, educators must analyze their own classroom and overall school climate. Students must feel they belong and connect with others, including the educators in the classroom. Ryan, Stiller, and Lynch (as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000), found that students who behaved positively in school felt their parents and teachers cared for them and they felt a secure connection to them as well. This relatedness can be tied to the curriculum as well. Students are more likely to be engaged if they can relate to the curriculum being taught and if they can find a purpose and a meaning to the lessons teachers are planning. All in all, students are likely to experience intrinsic motivation when they find caring adults they can relate to and lessons that are relevant to their lives.

Factors Hindering Student Motivation

Poverty and native language literacy. Both long-term and newcomer ELLs can see a surge in motivation when experiencing autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, poverty and native language acquisition are variables that cannot be controlled

by educators, and research has proven these affect the motivation and behavior of students as well. In secondary classrooms, there is a mixture of ELLs who were born, raised, and have been educated in the United States and there are those who are recent arrivals to the country. While students in either group may have always lived an economically stable lifestyle, many others came to the United States lacking a formal education, be it months or years of it. According to Ali Akbar Khansir, Naeimeh Jafarizadegan & Fatemeh Karampoor's (2016) study of children in Iran, there is a positive relation between social class and motivation; if social class is increased, motivation is increased as well. In many cases, students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds do not have a parent available at home on a frequent basis to guide and care for them. It can be assumed that not having an adult look after students affects the levels of motivation they feel, ultimately leaving much of the responsibility to motivate to the educators.

Adam Winsler, Yoon Kyong Kim, and Erin R. Richard (2014) also studied the socio-emotional skills, behavior problems, and language acquisition in ELLs, but they focused on those entering elementary school. They concluded that for economically disadvantaged ELLs coming from Spanish-Speaking homes, their knowledge of Spanish predicted their attainment of the English language. The same pattern can be seen at the secondary levels, where teachers are the first to discover that many ELLs, including long-terms, are non-literate in their native language, making it extremely difficult for them to learn academic or even social English. The good news is that teacher and parent support, especially for those shy children who may be socially withdrawn, may help them acquire the English language. Having support from parents and teachers and providing students

with a variety of learning opportunities has been proven to aid them in acquiring a second language (Winsler et al., 2014). Communication between parents and educators is key in figuring out the kind of first language education children have and the interventions that should take place, so students can achieve the level of success appropriate for their age.

Eliane Rubinstein-Avila (2003) focused on ELLs in our schools before many began to pay attention to this group in literacy research. The subject of her case study, teenager Miguel Munoz, came from a small ranch town in Jalisco, Mexico, and reluctantly learned to read thanks to his mother. It was a negative experience for both, as Miguel's mother forced him to learn and Miguel was frustrated, not seeing how literacy could play an important role in his life. Eventually, after the separation of his parents, Miguel had to take over the role of provider in his household. His mother however, still pressured him to read; sometimes ads, other times the bible. When Miguel arrived in the United States and enrolled in school, he was a struggling reader and deemed "*at-risk*." At home however, he was his mother's savior and guiding light, translating for her and helping whenever he could, even with his limited English skills (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003).

Throughout this study, it is important to keep in mind that ELLs are not just newcomers. ELLs include those born in foreign countries who have either been raised in the United States or have lived in the U.S. for more than three years, and they also include those students who were born in the United States and simply have not exited the program officially due to failing state exams, like the TELPAS. Miguel's story, which will be continued with the progression of this chapter, is the prime example of the lives of many ELLs who come to our schools, not only newcomers. While some students enroll in school not knowing how to read or write in their native language, Rubinstein-Avila's

story of Miguel can help educators see that all students have potential. Many ELL students that come to us not knowing how to read or write in their native language can eventually gain basic knowledge of English in school. Surprisingly enough, that basic knowledge, even if it is just gaining oral proficiency, enables them to fend for themselves outside of school and even be used as the family's source for English, just like Miguel's knowledge was used by his mother for help. Non-literacy may discourage and even prevent many students from dominating a second language, but it is important to keep in mind that there is always hope. Miguel's case will later show that thanks to the motivation of teachers, or them enabling the feeling of competence, ELL students can continue with their secondary education despite obstacles.

Underrepresentation of special populations. We often emphasize the importance of ELLs fully acquiring the English language, but we forget how underrepresented gifted ELLs are in most public schools. Even though gifted ELLs are not a focus in this study, it is important to consider and briefly talk about this special population, which falls within the special population of ELLs, for future studies.

Aranzazu M. Blackburn, Linley Cornish, and Susen Smith (2016) described gifted ELLs as students who exhibit the characteristics of giftedness but whose native language is not English. The problem many people fail to understand is that "both their full abilities and true potential may be hidden behind the language barrier" (Blackburn et al., 2016, p. 339). Because of this problem, many gifted ELLs are not identified, and some may even be placed in remedial classes by mistake. Relying on standardized tests can pose a problem due to the language of the test. However, in many school districts, teacher observations and work portfolios are excellent sources used to evaluate a potentially

gifted ELL. As a matter of fact, many newcomers at the secondary level have been placed in Advanced Placement (AP) classes thanks to student writing samples submitted by teachers and recommendations brought up in Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) meetings. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has also taken steps to helping ELLs in taking their assessments by giving them additional supports, such as vocabulary assistance, allowing teachers to give students written English and Spanish grammar rules during all tests, and texts being read aloud in computer-based administrations. These support systems can help special populations in ways a regular paper examination cannot.

This underrepresentation of Gifted and Talented ELLs in schools may be attributed to teacher and even parent attitudes. Many leaders, educators, and parents see economically disadvantaged ELLs as not having the possibility to be gifted students. As Blackburn et al. (2016) mentioned, there is “discrimination, misunderstanding, disinterest, poor teacher attitudes, inappropriate identification procedures, and other social and economic disadvantages” (Blackburn et al., p. 352) that affect the development of gifted ELLs. Even with the recent influx of ELLs, there is still little to no scholarly research on this topic, which leads to nonexistent professional development opportunities for teachers to learn to identify any ELL students they may have in their classrooms that may be gifted. Winsler et al. (2014) cautioned educators to pay attention to those shy ELLs who may need additional assistance in learning the language, and the same attention should be applied to the unidentified gifted ELLs who may be too shy or insecure to express their thoughts in English.

Kristin Liu and Manuel Barrera (2013) also brought attention to the growing number of Special Education ELL students and how important it is for leaders and teachers to understand how to differentiate between a child with cognitive needs and one who is having trouble acquiring proper academic or social English language. Leaders should provide teachers with appropriate training on identifying and reporting any suspicions of ELLs who may suffer from any kind of disability.

When it comes to behavioral issues, teachers should also receive more training in identifying a student who is defiant from one who may have an emotional disorder. As Winsler et al. added, “ELL children who are shy, take little initiative, are less outgoing, and who have behavioral difficulties are at risk for slow development of English proficiency and could benefit from additional support” (Winsler et al., 2014, p. 2252). Even though these characteristics in personality are not necessarily related to students being part of a special population, they are characteristics teachers cannot fully control that also hinder student motivation and behavioral patterns. In such cases, both students and parents should feel they are supported and welcome to participate in their child’s education. Educators have the responsibility of making sure they provide a safe and productive learning environment as they continue to grow professionally to better serve all ELLs. Culturally responsive leaders also understand behavioral issues, even at the secondary level, can rise due to students not having any formal schooling in the past, particularly newcomers. As Kristina Robertson and Susan Lanford explained, those students with interrupted educations or lack thereof are likely to feel stress, frustration, and are at a high risk of dropping out due to such factors in their lives (Robertson & Lafond, 2008).

Lack of academic and behavioral support. Alyson McGee, Penny Haworth, and Lesieli MacIntyre (2014) noted that teachers and administrative leaders should support first language use in the classroom, embrace students' different cultures, and understand the various needs of ELLs. When educators show interest in learning about their students' language, translations, and customs, students feel valued. Many school leaders with mostly Spanish-speaking ELLs advise against native-language use in the classroom and encourage English, especially when their ELL teacher can understand them and communicate with them in Spanish as well. However, asking students about their countries and cultures is a great way to practice speaking and listening skills with students while showing interest in their backgrounds.

Barbara Gottschalk's (2016) article summed up the ten most common misconceptions about ELLs. As she mentioned in her tenth misconception, ELLs have a right to misbehave as everyone else, and many often do. Teachers need to set limits and establish the tone the first day of class, and all ELLs need to be held to high standards. Both leaders and teachers must keep in mind that each student comes from a different background, and while one student may have had both strict discipline from parents and their school, another may not have been enrolled in school at all and is perhaps not used to rules and limits.

Anny Fritzen Case (2016) found that additional support for ELLs consists in letting them socially interact, regardless of age or grade level. For older students, social awkwardness is inevitable, yet Case made it a point to publicly recognize the issue and mention such situations would prepare students for potential struggles. Interactions between all ELLs and native English speakers are often avoided by the students

themselves, but leaders and educators have the task of helping students see each other as individuals with common interests, not simply as classmates who may not share a common language. As Case (2016) explained, “Educators can’t compel friendships among students, but they can help teenagers navigate the terrain” (Case, 2016, p. 53). Case also mentioned giving students group tasks to enable interaction. These group tasks should “invite multicultural perspectives that frame ELLs’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds as assets, rather than obstacles, [and] enhance students’ chances to interact” (Case, 2016, p. 54). In classrooms with both newcomers and long-term ELLs, giving all students opportunities to interact and help each other also builds a positive classroom climate while enabling students to feel they can relate to each other.

Christo Moskovsky, Fakieh Alrabai, Stefania Paolini, and Silvia Ratcheva (2012) brought attention to the fact that in a field where there is often little to no agreement, “There is essentially a consensus that SL [second language] motivation is related to achievement and that SL motivation is the driving force that enables learners to expend the continuous sustained effort language learning requires” (Moskovsky et al., 2012, p. 35). Students in general are expected to be more successful if they are motivated, but the levels of motivation for students learning a second language have been found to vary among individuals and groups of learners (Moskovsky et al., 2012). Even though teachers cannot control the changing levels of student motivation when it comes to personal factors, it can be easily assumed that teachers do have the power to contribute to these levels of motivation considering the amount of time children spend in school. If teachers believe in the competence of students, students are more likely to see themselves the same way. Teachers who have high teaching efficacy believe in themselves as well, and

they transmit these beliefs to their students. It is important for teachers to reconsider blaming student failure to external factors for them to expend extra effort in working individually with students. For this to occur, administrators must also recognize the effort of teachers in individualizing their teaching strategies (Tollefson, 2000). Research on the specific subject of motivation in ELLs and teacher impact in their achievement is limited, but the numbers of ELLs in schools are dramatically increasing each day, further indicating the importance and urgency of research projects as this.

Cultural competence. Tasha Riley (2014) researched teachers and found that students are often denied educational opportunities because of discriminatory practices. In fact, of the twenty-one teachers in Riley's research study, only one teacher proved to be the exception by differentiating fictional student cards by grade level, not by group affiliation (Riley, 2014). The exception also happened to be a teacher who was bilingual and whose first language was not English. As noted by Riley, the teacher was not surprised when she was informed of being the exception. This teacher even remarked hearing colleagues talk about ESL students and their low expectations. This teacher credited her experience of teaching abroad in Mexico, a course in ESL methodology, and being an ESL speaker herself as factors that enabled her to value the academic achievement of ESL students, proving how important it is for educators to be culturally responsive (Riley, 2014). Teachers' cultural competence could easily form part of the relatedness factor in Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, motivating ELLs to perform at higher levels and behave in ways that exhibit mutual respect.

Kolano, Davila, Coffey, and LaChance (2014) noted the lack of emphasis given to teacher-education programs in preparing teachers to work with students from other

countries. Evidence suggests teachers who have been engaged in multicultural education programs are more likely to be open to teaching diverse students and more responsive to any issues that may require them to give additional academic support (as cited in Kolano et al., 2014). Kolano et al. reported that respondents in their study working with ELLs felt more effective and comfortable teaching them when they could understand more about their individual needs, cultures, and customs. Their responses also suggested that teachers who have had more experience and more time to get to know students are often the most confident in teaching culturally diverse populations in general (Kolano et al., 2014).

Rosenbloom and Way (2004) noticed African American and Latino students in an urban school studied experienced discrimination from authority figures, whereas Asian American students were more likely to experience discrimination from their peers. This in turn created a hostile environment and school climate, and the lack of interference of adults seemed to condone this behavior. Rosenbloom and Way also noted that in the urban school they studied, school programs that segregated students such as ELLs and honors reinforced student segregation. They observed that extracurricular activities intended to encourage multicultural education, such as the African American Club or the Asian club contributed to hostility among students (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). When students and teachers have few opportunities to interact with other students from different backgrounds yet have clubs that promote the isolation of groups, problems can rise. For this reason, having school environments that promote the inclusion of all students is crucial. In the case of ELLs, misunderstanding the English language can mistakenly be thought of as a barrier for inclusion. Educators should find ways to interpret school news

or information about school clubs and activities all ELLs can form part of. This in turn helps all students interact with each other and work towards a positive school climate.

Terrill and Mark (2000) also focused on teacher preparation in multicultural settings. They argued that having both cultural and linguistic mismatching between teachers and students was a critical issue for educators. 89 percent of the student teachers in their study were mostly European American, and these teachers indicated feeling lower levels of comfort with African American and ELL students. Terrill and Mark studied teachers in Wisconsin and stated that most of them were coming into the profession from rural or suburban communities. They mentioned available teaching jobs in Wisconsin were in urban schools, where teachers did not want to work. Student teachers in their study had the preconceived notion that the number of children of color would be fewer in gifted and talented classes; they anticipated lower levels of motivation, lower levels of parental support, higher levels of child abuse, and higher levels of discipline problems. The results from the study indicated that preservice teachers have lower expectations for students whose racial and linguistic backgrounds do not match their own, indicating the importance of preservice teachers to examine their cultural beliefs before attempting to work with children in urban settings. As Terrill and Mark (2000) noted, “Teacher educators must find effective strategies to prepare future teachers to work in urban schools, with children of color and second language learners” (Terrill & Mark, 2000, p. 150).

Low expectations. Researchers have noticed teachers are able to better serve students when they can understand their backgrounds and cultures, and it has been shown that teachers hold higher expectations for students who share backgrounds like their own.

As stated by Terrill and Mark (2000), teachers generally hold negative attitudes toward urban schools. There is a disproportion seen in most schools across the United States, where teacher ethnicity is not representative of student population, and this can jeopardize student achievement when teachers are not prepared to teach in multicultural, urban settings.

In her study, Riley (2014) noted that when placing students into higher tracked classes, European American students were almost always at an advantage compared to African American and Latino students. When it came to teacher perceptions on ELL placement, teachers blamed language issues for students' struggle in classes, and never specific issues with the content being taught. Teachers did not stereotype students who were non-Aboriginal, non-ESL. Riley also noted that when students who are perceived as belonging to a high-achieving group struggle, such as Asians, their teachers are more likely to be concerned. As mentioned by Riley, educational theorist Sherry Marx described this behavior as *passive racism*. With this type of racism, perpetrators are usually unaware of the impact of their actions and are simply guided by society's pervasive behaviors. In Riley's study, teachers were encouraged to make their placement decisions based on performance, yet they consciously or subconsciously used irrelevant data to place the fictional students in certain classes. It is for this reason that teacher education programs should be open to giving teachers an opportunity to learning about their dispositions and biases towards certain student groups. Addressing personal biases may even help teachers reflect on and address behavior problems in students (Riley, 2014).

According to Kolano et al. (2014), teachers are coming into the field of education without the proper knowledge to teach ELLs. In Rosenbloom and Way's (2004) study, the fact that many of the teachers had consistently low expectations of African American and Latino students suggested these actions were a form of discrimination or perceptual bias. As noted by Rosenbloom and Way (2004), perceptual bias can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy in which minority students fail because their teachers expect them to. Students in this study also expressed their own emotions concerning their teachers' beliefs, and they felt stereotyped by their teachers, regardless of their actual behavior in the classroom. They also mentioned that caring teachers should help with content material, control behavior in the classroom, and maintain high expectations of students. On the other hand, the teachers' perspective of Black and Latino students was of them being distant students who were not committed to getting an education. These opposing viewpoints of what a caring teacher should do and the teacher's negative opinion about students are indicative of the biases and misunderstandings present in many urban schools across the nation.

It is important to note that low teacher expectations can also be manifested in homogeneous classrooms, where all students are ELLs. In fact, expectations do not have to be explicitly stated, and teachers often convey what they expect without realizing it. Tsiplakides and Keramida (2010) argued that teacher expectations can be influenced by several factors, from socio-economic status and sibling performance to gender and ethnicity. Teacher expectations can be higher for some ELLs than others, even in the same classroom setting, and the way teachers communicate expectations can help some students while hindering the achievement of others.

When teachers consider some students as more able than others, they use differential practices and behavior that students easily detect (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2010). Even praising a student for completing a simple task can give a message of having low expectations to that student. Students who teachers perceive as high-achievers are usually given more attention to, they are given more opportunities to display their talents publicly, and they are shown more respect by teachers. Teachers also create warmer climates for these students with more frequent smiles. Students can indeed detect such differences in the classroom, and they often act in accordance to what they think is already expected of them. As Tsiplakides and Keramida (2010) stated, these students live up to their expectations, which brings up the issue of self-fulfilling prophecies once again.

According to Tsiplakides and Keramida (2010), the self-fulfilling prophecy is an important variable in second and foreign language learning. While many teachers have acknowledged they form high expectations for their students, few are willing to admit they treat students differently according to those expectations. Tsiplakides and Keramida (2010) argue that teachers should focus on work quality and effort rather than grades so students can gradually work toward self-improvement. Marginalizing those who are considered low-achievers, rarely calling on them to answer questions, and displaying little to no interest about these students' personal lives negatively affects the motivation for achievement and the effort given by the student in class.

A Call to Action for ELL Success

Teacher implementation of motivational strategies. As Felice Russell (2012) mentioned in her study, ELL teachers are often seen as the experts in their field within a

school. With the ever-increasing ELL population in our schools across all grade levels, ELL teachers are often the leaders in charge of guiding fellow educators struggling to meet the needs of ELLs in their classrooms. Effective instructional leaders support such roles and openly recognize the expertise of these teachers (Russell, 2012).

Every school requires a culture of collaboration to see students grow and succeed, but educator communication with parents is essential to the school's culture as well. When teachers care enough about students to establish relationships and communication with their families, they are collaborating with families in helping their children succeed. Families are the most valuable source of information teachers and school leaders have and giving them the space and liberty to discuss personal issues that may affect their children's learning is exactly what we should strive for (Breiseth, 2016).

Teachers will never be able to fully support ELLs if they do not understand them. In Gottschalk's (2016) fourth misconception, she mentioned how many teachers use a lower-level curriculum to teach their ELLs with the justification of students not being able to speak English. This however, is neither a proper way to differentiate nor a way to modify the curriculum for these students. Since ELLs reading ability cannot be compared to the reading ability of English speakers, Gottschalk advised against determining their reading ability in terms of grade level. She also suggested educators modify age-appropriate curriculum rather than simplify it. In Texas, with the elimination of the linguistically accommodated State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR-L) in December of 2016, all ELLs ultimately take the test with designated support systems, such as online dictionaries and even a guide of teacher-chosen mnemonic devices. However, the test continues to have the same material and answer

choices as the general exam administered. For this reason, SB 463, formerly known as SB 149, has been crucial in allowing senior ELLs to graduate, despite not passing state exams. For ELL educators, the task of having students grasp the academic content and vocabulary of a class while having students learn basic English is an everyday problem they must face. However, simply giving all students a lower-grade curriculum and having low expectations hinders them from learning and understanding complex concepts and learning more difficult vocabulary (Gottschalk, 2016).

Another way of helping ELLs understand grade-appropriate curriculum is by building schema, or background knowledge. ELLs benefit from visuals and handy dictionaries they can use at their convenience. As Gottschalk (2016) implied in her eight misconceptions, building schema is an integral part of teaching ELLs. For those ELLs Students enrolling in public schools from foreign countries, it is extremely beneficial for teachers to deviate from the curriculum when opportunities arise to clarify content specific to American or community-based culture. Long-term ELLs also benefit from schema-building, considering their problems are centered on academic vocabulary and even test-taking.

Robertson and Lafond (2008) gave educators ten ideas on how to specifically help students with interrupted formal education, but their advice should help any struggling English Language Learner. First and foremost, teachers should build environments that respond to social, cultural, and linguistic needs of adolescents. One of the most important aspects of this is having teachers who are bilingual and/or bicultural. Another very important piece is to provide sheltered, intensive literacy and language instruction. Giving students autonomy when learning may help with the instructional component.

This autonomy is especially important for those students who are non-literate in their native language. These students need an opportunity to reflect on their work and self-analyze their progress. They also need teachers to use non-traditional methods to check their understanding of concepts. Also important is gathering support from the community. As Robertson and Lafond (2008) explained, “A connection with a local business may also boost students’ confidence and provide opportunities that might not have been available” (Build partnerships section, para. 1). Keeping in mind that students can enroll in high school until they are twenty-one years old, those ELLs with interrupted educations age out before completing their high school requirements. For this reason, it is important to establish relationships with local colleges to make the students feel that their work in high school is relevant to the possibilities that await them once they graduate high school (Robertson & Lafond, 2008).

Miguel Munoz, the ELL who was the focus of Rubinstein-Avila’s study (2003), felt that it was his rapport with his two teachers that enabled him to continue in school. Even though Miguel was only in eighth grade, the motivation his teachers gave him was enough for him to get back on track after the many distractions he encountered. Miguel also appreciated the group work his teachers assigned and being encouraged to discuss assignments with his classmates was something he learned from and appreciated. As Rubinstein-Avila pointed out, Miguel was like many ELLs we encounter day to day, even fourteen years after her case study was published. Effective teachers have an impact on students and do not simply let them go through the cracks of the educational system without learning anything. Placing students in small groups, enabling them to collaborate with one another, teachers collaborating with each other, and monitoring progress are all

factors that enabled Miguel to succeed. In his case, feeling cared for and respected were also valuable tools he needed to move forward with his education and success in the United States (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003).

Implementing motivational strategies has been proven by researchers as playing a significant role in student motivation in school. Moskovsky et al. (2012) also noticed a positive correlation in motivational practices and learners' motivation. Their study specifically focused on the role of teacher behavior in enhancing motivation of ELLs and proves that teacher motivation and behavior enhances student motivation. Teachers can motivate students by showing respect, sharing their interests and life experiences with students, getting to know them and learning their names quickly, and showing warmth to them, such as greeting them with a smile (Moskovsky, et al., 2012).

Even though the measures of motivation vary, previous studies have found a relationship between student motivational variables and student achievement in second language acquisition. However, such studies have been criticized because they overlook the importance of the teacher in learning process of students. In fact, most research done in this area has focused on student perceptions rather than teacher behavior (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008). Even with the vast selection of motivational strategies available for teachers to apply in their classrooms, Bernaus & Gardner (2008) suggested that for any of them to be valuable, students had to perceive them as such. For this reason, it is important for educators to constantly assess how students value and relate to content and teaching strategies.

Educator preparation focused on ELLs. When we think of effective instructional leaders, we think of administrators and teachers prepared for any challenges

they may face in the field of education. The influx of ELLs however, has made many leaders reevaluate their usual practices. Preparing leaders to serve the various needs of ELLs has also become the focus in many universities and leadership preparation programs. It is evident that these programs have significantly under-prepared candidates for this specific population (as cited in Baecher, Knoll, & Patti, 2013).

According to Baecher, Knoll, and Patti (2013), Universities and professors preparing future leaders for ELL instruction is no longer an option, given the likelihood of these individuals working for schools and organizations where they are likely to serve this population. In their study, Baecher et al. (2013) found that in the areas of sociocultural and historical foundations of bilingual education, school leaders should be cognizant of landmark cases, such as *Lau v. Nichols*. Issues such as knowing the legal and financial impact of ELLs in schools and how to advocate for those students who may fall under the ELL and Special Education umbrella is also crucial. Administrative and instructional leaders are also encouraged to attend conference sessions, read professional journal articles, and collaborate with other professionals to eliminate barriers in focusing on ELLs.

As stated by Baecher et al. (2013), the education of ELLs has been left up to a few, select individuals that can provide these students with the knowledge and skills to prepare them. Julie Meltzer & Edmund T. Hamann (as cited in Gándara, 2016) found that motivation is a major challenge for ELLs, especially at the secondary level. Unfortunately, many teachers feel unprepared for the challenges that come with teaching ELLs, blaming teacher preparation programs for their lack of preparation. Many teachers in previous studies have suggested an increase in professional development opportunities

relevant to their classroom settings, and others have simply asked for guidance, chances to see other exemplary teachers in action, and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and mentors (Gándara, 2016). To see ELLs thrive, administrative leaders must ensure teachers have the knowledge of content, culture, and language needed to help students (McGee et al., 2014).

Even though teachers deal directly with ELLs, school leaders influence many of the factors that may either contribute or hinder the learning experience outcomes for the students (Baecher et al., 2013). ELLs are not only the fastest growing population in our schools, but they are also the most vulnerable population. These are students that may either struggle academically or drop out (as cited in Baecher et al., 2013).

Proactive school leadership. There is no doubt that instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in the assimilation and growth of ELLs in the public education system. Educational leaders are also responsible for ensuring all students are treated equally and fairly. In their case study of two schools, George Theoharis and Joanne O'Toole (2011) discovered that "[Instructional leaders] understood that serving ELLs well would necessitate moving beyond comfortable, routine practices and, therefore, secured necessary resources and support to be able to make and sustain change" (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011, p. 677). According to Baecher et al. (2013), programs with successful outcomes for ELLs were led by leaders with key skills and attitudes regarding decision-making, supervision, and policy design, and "Being able to serve as an instructional leader depends on recognition of content-area expertise sufficient for conduction meaningful teacher supervision" (Baecher et al., 2013, pp. 295-296). These successful

ELL leaders are also educated in terms of second-language acquisition and know the success of ELLs lays in the hands of the entire school team, not just the teachers.

Successful leaders understand the importance of collaborative planning, professional development, and the implementation of innovative ideas that may help the ELLs and their families in their schools. In this sense, social justice revolves around the idea of giving ELLs an outstanding education, which often means giving them inclusive educational services that eliminate the risk of segregation (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). According to Theoharis and O'Toole, inclusive services are defined as actions that position ELLs, their families, and their cultures as integral parts of the school community. Viewing ELLs with the lens of inclusiveness, connecting with students, families, teachers, and community members, enables leaders to advocate for their students and social justice.

With an ever-increasing ELL population in our public schools, it is expected for instructional leaders to educate themselves and their staff on issues that may be affecting their students and their communities. These issues are not limited to poverty and assimilation. As previously mentioned, there are many students coming to our schools who are gifted and talented and simply go undetected, which results in unused educational opportunities such as enrolling in Gifted and Talented classes, Advanced Placement courses, and Dual Credit courses in high school.

Theoharis and O'Toole noticed that fair practices can be accomplished with ELLs when instructional leaders “are willing to actively engage in the struggles and often difficult processes that lead to inclusive practices and mind-sets” (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011, p. 681). This is where empathy is crucial. However, many educators have a

deficiency in empathy because of a lack of exposure to diverse groups of students in both pre-service and in-service trainings. Many instructional leaders leave their jobs as teachers not knowing how to serve all types of students. A key element noticed in Theoharis and O'Toole's study was that both principals in their research had a sense of responsibility and agency; neither of them abdicated the responsibility of ELL success to special programs or specifically to ELL teachers. However, this was not enough. Both principals had confidence in thinking, speaking, and ultimately leading the ELL population. They both cited their knowledge and experience as key in their credibility with teachers and fellow administrators (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Elizabeth Smolcic and John Katunich (2017) also described the importance of cultural immersion and intercultural competence, specifically in teachers. Their own research review indicated that cultural immersion programs include leaders intentionally placing teachers in classrooms to gain classroom experience, getting them involved in community affairs, and structured reflection and dialogue with different student groups (Smolcic & Katunich, 2017).

To create socially just schools for ELLs, leaders must be willing to take risks. Most importantly, they must lead by example. Demonstrating respect toward ELLs and an appreciation for cultural differences shows students, families, and community members that school is a haven for all stakeholders, not a political or cultural battleground. Instructional leaders must try to understand the different classifications of ELLs, where they come from, and the immigration fears that may hinder some ELL families from stepping inside schools. Leaders should strive to make their school a safe place for all stakeholders, free of judgment and discriminatory practices. They must also

help teachers get rid of existing biases regarding ELL families and be willing to have conversations with teachers that help them grow professionally. As aforementioned, effective school leaders must always be willing to lead by example, yet very few are willing to go the extra mile. When school leaders reject the values, they instill into students and staff members, they lose credibility and respect in the eyes of stakeholders.

ELL advocacy is highly encouraged from school leaders. In specific reference to Latino ELLs, Tamara Lucas, Ana Maria Villegas, and Margaret Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) stated that when leaders advocate for them, they are giving the community voice, self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and self-empowerment. A leader who is apathetic to the problems of the community wrongfully holds this title, and it is equally absurd to expect teachers to advocate for their students and foster positive relationships when they lack the support of school and district leaders to do so. Lucas et al. (2008) addressed district leadership by mentioning the need for leaders at this level to be familiarized with the demographics of each school and to prepare to act and provide students with the resources they need to be successful. Some schools, for instance, have higher ELL numbers than others. District leaders, from program specialists to the superintendent, must prepare to address class sizes and teacher availability to meet the needs of students. However, we must remember the primary advocates for such changes are school leaders; it is unlikely for teachers to make a difference when it comes to curriculum and staffing needs without leaders' support.

Ana Elfers and Tom Stritikus (2013) further explained that for leaders to support teachers, they must create support systems specific for ELLs. These exemplary leaders set the direction and attempt to leverage the resources that are necessary to support teachers in

meeting the needs of students. Elfers and Stritikus identified top-level administrators as those who had significant training, background, and experience in working with ELLs. Another integral finding of this case study was the integration of support services for ELLs across the school instead of separating services by student population. To do such tasks, leaders must be closely involved in the process. These leaders also view ELL programs as integral parts of overall instruction. Depending on the number of ELLs in their schools, leaders may have to make decisions related to teacher placement and student placement. In the case of student placement, district and campus administrators must decide whether they should separate long-term ELLs from newcomers, which is something many schools have done for core subjects to ease the differentiation process for teachers. Leaders also recognize that initiatives for ELLs require engagement at multiple levels, and this engagement was seen in the case study done by Elfers and Stritikus. In this study, school districts provided support for teachers while also having a system in place when it came to hiring practices, such as additional screening mechanisms (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013).

In a recent study, principals with longevity in schools with large ELL populations suggested not only professional stability, but also a possession of significant characteristics, backgrounds, and leadership qualities that enabled their success (Sarabia, 2014). Successful educational leaders understand basic language acquisition strategies, classroom accommodations, testing modifications, students' backgrounds, and they also feel confident entering a classroom to provide the teacher with constructive feedback and support.

Having exemplary instructional leaders can determine whether a school can thrive in the face of all the challenges constantly present in the public education system.

Throughout the literary study of ELLs and their success, it has clearly been established that instructional leaders have the power to affect student success at all levels, teacher retention, and school climate and morale. Effective instructional leaders are those that lead schools by example, establish a positive environment, and motivate all stakeholders to reach their maximum potential. Even though instructional leaders are thought of as school administrators, teachers may also take on this role in helping students reach success.

Baecher et al. (2013) suggested further research about parental involvement and ELLs, but other findings demonstrated that effective leaders can always communicate with ELL families and enlist their support and engagement. Preparing leaders for communication with parents and teaching them how to encourage parental involvement is key in family outreach. Considering the presidential elections of 2016 and the political turmoil that followed, it is also crucial for instructional leaders to address current event issues as such by promoting a peaceful, accepting environment for all staff, students, and parents. Even though school leaders are discouraged from engaging in political conversations with stakeholders, it is easy to promote a positive environment for all by simply exposing students to different cultures with events such as cultural fairs, special programs that celebrate diversity, and by talking to fellow educators regarding how the school can handle walk-outs or days of massive absences of students in protest of political policies.

Those leaders who are school administrators can help teachers and students by simply being a good source of expertise. As previously learned, administrator preparation programs lack the aspects required for leaders to strive with these students, so it is strictly

up to these leaders to learn on their own how second language acquisition occurs and what decisions they should make to benefit ELL programs. Serving as an instructional leader to these students requires expertise in the area and expertise in conducting meaningful teacher supervision (Baecher et al., 2013). Teachers need constructive criticism from leaders to polish and shape the way they teach their ELLs.

Sharing responsibility for ELL achievement. In her study, Judith Rance-Roney (2009) recognized how challenging teaching adolescent ELLs can be and the many reasons why school districts may feel discouraged from enrolling ELLs, particularly newcomers. *No Child Left Behind* requires ELLs to take state exams after one year in the country, and schools are held accountable for these grades, resulting in schools fearing not making the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) required. ELLs are increasingly seen as students who drain resources; they are an unwelcome presence to many districts. Many students entering secondary schools often come with very limited proficiency in native, English, or both languages, and schools are forced to be proactive (Rance-Roney, 2009).

Rance-Roney (2009) agreed with the data many other researchers have shared thus far: To see ELLs succeed, educators in schools must assume shared responsibility. For starters, ELLs must always have resources and various services available to them, and this requires the help and support of school administrators. It is also ideal for school districts to create a language-development curriculum in which a team of educators, university linguistic specialists, and content area teachers have input on. The goal of such curriculum is to facilitate the social interaction of students and enable them to reach academic achievement. Even though further research is needed on cluster models, Rance-Roney saw such classroom structures as promising for ELLs. In such classrooms, ELLs

are not segregated from the rest of the students and their collaboration with others is a resource, not a liability. She also touched on the necessity of giving ELLs extra time and tracking progress, but perhaps her most valuable point comes from suggesting that leaders think outside the box; outside the traditional thoughts and methods that restrict the achievement of these students (Rance-Roney, 2009). Educational leaders must support students and teachers by stepping out of their comfort zone and sharing responsibility for the growth of ELLs. This final step is not always comfortable for leaders who are accustomed to assigning responsibilities to assistant principals or teachers, for instance, but it will determine how united a school is in terms of welcoming all ELLs and helping them reach success at all levels.

Supportive school culture and climate. Maria Luisa González & Ana Huerta-Macías (as cited in González, 2010) mentioned the importance of having school administrators constantly help teachers in motivating students of all backgrounds. Simply relying on ELL programs to serve the needs of this population will not suffice. Even though providing professional development opportunities for teachers is crucial in helping them, González (2010) stated that integrating language, culture, and experiences into the classroom curriculum brings the most benefits for the development and growth of ELLs. Elfers and Stritikus (2013) also focused on leadership programs and how emerging leaders can focus on this growing population. They argued that high-quality instruction for ELLs can take place “when school and district leaders intentionally, purposefully, and knowledgeably create environments that support the work and learning of teachers” (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013, p. 338).

Most districts studied by Elfers & Stritikus (2013) demonstrated that top-level administrators had significant background, training, and experience in working with ELLs. These leaders also understood the tensions caused by those teachers who were not committed to serving ELLs, and they mentioned that hindering their ability to further create changes. However, Elfers & Stritikus focused on the belief that to achieve high-quality instruction for ELLs, leaders intentionally, purposefully, and knowledgeably create environments that support teachers in meeting the needs of these students. Providing staff development sessions by school leaders to address the needs of all ELLs is a promising step in supporting teachers. Welcoming district leaders such as multilingual directors into your campus to provide all staff members with training and positive guidance is also a stride toward effective teacher support.

School wide efforts are needed to support ELLs and teachers, but this cannot happen without inspired leaders willing to engage parents and give teachers support (Gándara, 2016). Principals are accustomed to going to classrooms as observers, almost always with the purpose of conducting a teacher evaluation. However, administrators must also be willing to step outside their comfort zone, talk to students, and visit classrooms to get to know these students on a more personal level. Keeping in mind that many ELLs struggle the most when it comes to motivation, an exemplary educational leader steps in and communicates with students and parents. Empathic practices, such as being cognizant of the fact that many newcomer ELLs escaped their countries for a better life, should be engrained in the mind of educational leaders. It is highly probable that when students see educators take an interest in their well-being, they will realize that

obtaining an education can pave their way to success and that being an ELL is not an obstacle.

Supporting ELL academic needs. Having mentioned the high need of ELL teachers in the Houston, Texas area, it is vital for leaders to understand how to help those who devote their days to teaching this population. Contrary to the preparation of instructional leaders, a significant amount of attention has been given to the preparation of ELL teachers. Educational leadership training can often focus on equity and social justice, yet it ignores learning and other leadership challenges (as cited in Elfers & Stritikus, 2013).

Elfers & Stritikus also mentioned the achievement gap between math and reading. Before the fifth grade, most ELLs show a closing of the achievement gap in these two subjects. However, research has shown that second language learning becomes a longer process as students get older. When a student comes to the United States at the middle or high school level, the student may take from three to seven years to develop academic proficiency (as cited in Elfers & Stritikus, 2013). This is where all educators must understand the struggle for many students in becoming academically proficient in the English language.

Elfers and Stritikus (2013) further explained that leaders can support teachers by creating systems that are specific for ELLs. Leaders should set the direction and attempt to leverage the resources that are necessary to support teachers in meeting specific needs of students. An integral finding in this case study was the integration of support services for ELLs across the school instead of separating services by student population. To do such

tasks, leaders must be closely involved in such tasks. These leaders also view bilingual and ELL programs as integral parts of overall instruction.

Summary

In this literature review, several aspects affecting ELL achievement were examined including factors that hinder their behavioral and academic success, teacher motivational strategies, educator preparation focused on ELLs, school leadership, sharing responsibility for student achievement, school culture and climate, and supporting student academic needs. Chapter III will focus on the research design and methodology used, along with details regarding the groups of teachers and students interviewed.

Chapter III

Methods

This chapter intends to describe the methods used to conduct the study, including its design, the research questions, and how data was collected. Furthermore, the researcher describes the means necessary to ensure the study is trustworthy and reliable.

Research Question

This study was centered on one question concerning ELLs in grades 9-12: What are teacher perceptions regarding behavior and motivation of ELLs in an urban school?

Research Design

Qualitative data was collected through three sets of interviews. The participants were three English teachers serving significantly large ELL populations in the school. All three participants were given the option to participate, and they all decided to contribute their expert opinion, their experiences, and their time to this research study. Participants did not have to answer questions they did not feel comfortable answering, and they could elaborate as much as they desired on any given question.

Participant Selection

According to Robert K. Yin, case study research should not include more than four or five case studies (as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2017). With help from the school's ELL school counselor, approximately three teachers were identified as having a significantly large population of ELLs. All three teachers selected currently teach English Language Arts and Reading courses. These teachers have students in all grade levels, from freshmen to seniors. The three teachers selected teach both long-term and

newcomer ELLs. The study focused on both groups of students as being part of the ELL spectrum.

When recruiting participants, the researcher approached them individually and in person to ask if they would be interested in being part of the study. Once they verbally agreed, a letter of consent was personally handed to them. The participants had as much time as they needed to read the letter of consent and ask any questions before signing it. Once the letters were signed, the researcher retrieved the letters personally, once again.

Site Selection

The three participants of this study and the high school and school district they work for were given pseudonyms to protect participant confidentiality. The researcher spent approximately three months interviewing participants and gathering necessary data.

According to the 2016-2017 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) generated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Independent School District had a total of 69, 671 students enrolled. Of those students, 60, 074 students were labeled as being Economically Disadvantaged. Approximately 24, 052 were labeled as ELLs. Southeast High School is just one of the many high schools in the district with a significantly large ELL population. Even though this information is not available in the TAPR, due to the knowledge and experience of the researcher, it is known that most ELLs in the school are Spanish-speaking. To confirm this statement, the researcher asked the ELL Counselor, and they agreed that for approximately 100% of ELLs, Spanish is their first language.

Table 1 displays a breakdown of student enrollment in Southeast High School:

Table 1

Student Enrollment Information

Southeast High School Student Information	Enrollment	Percent
	2, 569	100%
Economically disadvantaged	2, 148	83.6%
English language learners	650	25.3%
Grade 9	163	6.3%
Grade 10	894	34.8%
Grade 11	766	29.8%
Grade 12	746	29%

Note: Data was retrieved from the 2016-2017 TAPR Report on the TEA website.

Apart from examining student enrollment information in Southeast High School, Table 2 represents the breakdown of teachers employed in the school during the 2016-2017 school year. All information

Table 2

Teacher Employment Breakdown

Southeast High School	Total	Percent
Total staff	197.6	100%
Teachers	159.1	80.5%
African American	62	38.9%
Hispanic	25.6	16.1%
White	66.7	41.9%

Teachers	Total	Percent
American Indian	0.0	0.0%
Asian	.9	.5%
Pacific Islander	0.0	0.0%
Two or more races	4.0	2.5%
Male	65.8	41.4%
Female	93.3	58.6%

Note: Data was retrieved from the 2016-2017 TAPR Report on the TEA website.

Data Collection

Teacher Interviews. One-on-one interviews were conducted off-site to protect the confidentiality of participants. The researcher interviewed a sample of three teachers using the 7 pre-arranged questions on Appendix B as an interview guide. The researcher used Jackson (2016) and Garnett's (1999) questions of teacher perceptions of ELL students to inspire the set of questions for this study. Carolyn Boyce and Palena Neale (2006) stated that in-depth interviews should be conducted if the interest of the researcher is to distinguish opinions between participants, include all participants in the process, and to establish trust, ease, and comfort. Considering these factors, the researcher decided individual, in-depth interviews were the most appropriate to initiate the study. The researcher then analyzed and openly coded the transcripts of the first set of individual interviews paragraph by paragraph, seeking new categories and questions that may have emerged. A second round consisting of 9 guiding questions was created focusing on the categories from the first interview (Appendix C). Individual interviews were then

conducted a second time, transcribed, and categories were identified once again, paragraph by paragraph.

Focus Group. Using the categories and emerging topics from the second one-on-one interviews, the researcher created a third set of 10 guiding questions to use with the participants, now as a focus group (Appendix D). While one-on-one interviews aim to focus on each participant as an individual educator, giving the participants a chance to self-reflect in the process without having anyone else influence their opinion, the focus group may be appropriate to generate new ideas, specifically about the instruction and the role of teachers in the motivation of ELLs (Breen, 2006). When conducting focus group interviews, Geoffrey E. Mills (2014) strongly suggested the researcher to take the role of moderator and to nurture an agreement in the focus group to take turns. He also advised against having one or two people dominate focus groups to give all participants an opportunity to respond.

Procedures

Based on the list of teachers provided to the researcher by the ELL counselor, the researcher focused on time-constraints and scheduling conflicts to find the best time to interview all participants. After teachers informally agreed in person to participate in the study, the researcher personally delivered a letter of consent for participants to read, sign, and return to the researcher. Additional questions were answered by the researcher, and it was made clear that interviews would be audio-recorded.

The two initial interviews with participants were done individually, based on each teachers' schedules and availability. After all initial one-on-one interviews were analyzed and coded, a second round of one-on-one interviews was conducted. This second round

of interviews focused on emerging themes and new questions that came from the first set of interviews. After the second set of interviews was transcribed and coded, the researcher once again found common or emerging themes. A third and last round of interviews was conducted with all participants as a focus group. This focus group interview was also recorded, transcribed and coded. The researcher used topics and categories that emerged from the focus group interview to determine common themes about the teacher perceptions regarding ELLs on their motivation and behavior.

Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data requires creativity; there is no single, best way to analyze qualitative findings in a research study. However, there are five techniques researchers should keep in mind to guide them through this process (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003):

- 1) Understand your data
- 2) Focus your analysis on specific questions or topics
- 3) Categorize your information
- 4) Identify patterns and connections
- 5) Attach meaning to your data

Johnny Saldaña (2016) mentioned that qualitative inquiry requires attention to language, images, and a deep reflection of emergent patterns and human experiences. Coding and categorizing data has a crucial role in analysis. According to Tehmina Basit, even though innovative researchers have opted to use qualitative data analysis software for text analysis, disciplinary knowledge and creativity are necessary to produce new theoretical insights (as cited in Saldaña, 2016). According to John W. Creswell and

Cheryl N. Poth, using a computer program tends to create distance and hinder creativity in the research process (2017). For this reason, the researcher approached all interviews using open coding at the initial stage. After the open coding stage, focused coding was used to categorize coded data based on similar themes and concepts. The researcher searched for the most frequent codes to develop major categories and themes (Saldaña, 2016).

Creswell and Poth mentioned that in their view, “A computer program simply provides the researcher the means for storing the data and easily accessing the coded segments of data” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 208). To organize all codes, themes, and concepts gathered, the researcher used QDA Miner Lite, a free qualitative data analysis program. The use of a qualitative data analysis program during the second stage of coding enabled the researcher to sort through data and easily sort and find codes in all interviews, not just the focus group interview. The program also enabled the researcher to organize the common categories and subcategories in order of frequency and see which themes emerged from the data collected.

Taylor-Powell & Renner (2003) noted the importance of not generalizing or attributing relationships seen in research results as being cases of simple cause and effect; human relationships seldom work that way. Instead, special attention should be given to answers that do not necessarily fit into a category. These answers are often the gateway to discovering additional phenomena and relationships in research. Similarly, Saldaña (2016) stated that assigning symbolic meanings to data is important for the researcher, as it may be considered an act of personal signature. Similarly, throughout the process, the

researcher analyzed each response from the participants and carefully assigned codes to those responses that may not have fit an obvious category.

Once the researcher had the final coding, the next step was to categorize these codes and collapse them into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Saldaña (2009) further explained that “A theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 13). The goal was to compare these themes with previous research and to give special attention to new information that may have been discovered upon the conclusion of the study. In the words of Lincoln and Guba (1985), interpretations are lessons learned from the research study. Many of the themes found were easily tied back to the theoretical framework but the application of these findings to the field of education, particularly urban schools with large ELL populations, are aimed to serve as lessons for all educators.

Trustworthiness

The researcher chose a qualitative case study as the methodological approach. According to Robert K. Yin, case study research “involves the study of a case (or cases) within a real-life, contemporary context or setting” (as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2017). Creswell and Poth (2017) also stated that a good qualitative case study presents an in-depth understanding of the case and integrates many forms of qualitative data, rather than relying on one source.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed a set of criteria that distance itself from the positivist paradigm yet addresses similar issues in determining trustworthiness, crucial to

this qualitative case study. The set of criteria consist of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. To ensure credibility, the researcher has prolonged engagement in the field as a teacher with eight years of experience in the classroom and as a mentor for students. Because of these experiences, the researcher is also a persistent observer, often observing phenomena and identifying situations that are relevant to any problems seen.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described member checking as one of the most crucial techniques for establishing credibility. The researcher continuously asked the three participants if the transcriptions were accurate representations of their own thoughts and emotions. Subjects were given opportunities to correct errors and identify misinterpretations, as doing so also lessens the chances for any claims of investigator errors. Peer debriefing is the second of the techniques used to establish credibility, and it was used throughout the research process by the researcher as well. Two peers and approximately three university professors were used by the researcher to ensure all questions were being answered, that honest perspectives were being exposed, and that all interpretations were clarified. Finally, the researcher made use of triangulation, since the study involved the use of two sets of individual interviews and one as a focus group. Conducting three sets of interviews enabled the researcher to gather distinct characteristics from each and mention observations from individual interviews and the focus group interview to strengthen the credibility of the research study.

Transferability. A study can be deemed as trustworthy if its conclusions can be applied to other settings, situations, and people. The researcher provided a detailed description of the research setting and process to help readers visualize the scene and

recreate it. It is through this visualization that readers will be able to form their own conclusions and determine to what extent they can apply the study and research findings to their desired branch of study.

Dependability. The researcher took detailed notes of any changes and constantly ensured that the research project could be simulated by others in the future. When conducting a focus group interview and to ensure it is a reliable source for deeper understanding of the topic, Breen suggested treating disagreements with caution and paying close attention to a high frequency of shifting opinions in participants throughout the interview (2006). Keeping track of preliminary codes was vital in noticing any of these changes.

Confirmability. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, determining confirmability ultimately depends on the findings being grounded on raw data and logic rather than inquirer bias. To establish confirmability, the researcher made sure to have raw data, such as recordings, transcriptions, and the coding to all interviews to corroborate results. Materials such as the study proposal and instrumentation materials, such as the guiding survey questions, can also be used for confirmability. Once again, triangulation and member checking were used in this stage to ensure all ideas and findings belonged solely to the participants studied, not the researcher.

Summary

The qualitative case study that was conducted was used to examine teacher perceptions regarding behavior and motivation of ELLs in an urban school. The participants were purposefully selected with the help of the school's ELL counselor. The three participants were English teachers serving a significantly large population of ELLs

in the school. Using a set of pre-arranged questions, the researcher interviewed each teacher individually off-site. After the interviews were transcribed, new categories and questions emerged, and a second set of pre-arranged questions was created. Using these new questions, the researcher interviewed the three participants individually once again. The researcher then transcribed the second interviews and once again, looked for new categories and emerging questions to create a third and final set of pre-arranged questions. The last set of pre-arranged questions guided the focus group. All interviews were openly coded at the initial stage, and focused coding was used to categorize data based on similar and frequent themes and concepts. Throughout the study, the researcher used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of trustworthiness to ensure true value in the field of research.

Chapter IV

Research Findings

Introduction

This qualitative investigation was done with the purpose of examining the perceptions of teachers regarding the behavior and motivation of both long-term and newcomer ELLs in Southeast High School. The three participants selected were currently employed by the school district, which we will identify as North Houston ISD. These three participants selected taught the same subject at different grade levels, which is English Language Arts and Reading, to ensure consistency in terms of curriculum expectations and workload. All three participants taught at either the ninth or tenth grade level, and they only served ELLs. The participants were interviewed three times throughout the course of the study; twice individually and once as a focus group. During the first one-on-one interview with each participant, the researcher used seven questions as a guide (Appendix B). Interviews were recorded and transcribed through an automated program. To ensure the validity of the findings, the transcripts were then member checked. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), member checking consists on the researcher having a lens focused on the participants. Once gathered, the data is taken back to the participants to confirm the credibility of the information. After member checking, the researcher openly coded the interviews to look for emerging themes.

Using these initial emerging themes, the researcher created a second set of guiding questions (Appendix C). The same interview process was repeated once again. Once the second one-on-one interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed, they were checked by each participant for accuracy. The researcher then coded each interview

for additional emerging themes and possible questions that may have needed clarification.

A third set of guiding questions was then created based on these themes, and the focus group interview was later conducted. The focus group interview was recorded and transcribed as well. After member checking, the researcher used a qualitative data analysis program to identify emerging themes as a group to answer the following research question: What are teacher perceptions regarding the behavior and motivation of ELLs in an urban school?

Table 3 displays the themes and sub-themes found based on analysis of all interview responses:

Table 3

Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: Importance of family support	Parent involvement effects
	Understanding families/backgrounds
	Teacher and administrator roles
Theme 2: Student codependency	Isolation
	Reluctance to learn English
	Personal motivation
	Struggle with cultural values/assimilation
Theme 3: A need for administrative support	Responsible for ELL isolation
	Targeting social and academic inclusion
	Hiring committed teachers and leaders

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 4: Impact of teaching and motivational strategies	Benefits of bilingualism
	Findings ways to relate to students
	Implementing various motivational strategies

Individual Interviews

The use of triangulation enabled the researcher to look at all the sources of data and corroborate findings. The two initial individual interviews with each participant served as a gateway to new discoveries concerning their individual perceptions of ELLs. These perceptions were based solely on their classroom experiences with this population. It was these individual responses that helped craft the questions that came along for the focus group interview. To better understand the common themes discovered in interviews and the focus group, it is important to also discuss the individuals, their backgrounds, and their personal stories in the classroom.

Table 4 displays basic demographic data about the three participants in the research study:

Table 4

Participant demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	Race/Ethnicity	Years Teaching	Years Teaching ELLs
Angela	Female	25-30 years old	Hispanic/Latino	0-5 Years	0-5 Years

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	Race/Ethnicity	Years Teaching	Years Teaching ELLs
Vanessa	Female	20-25 years old	Hispanic/Latino	0-5 Years	0-5 Years
Emily	Female	45-50 years old	White	10-15 Years	0-5 Years

Angela

Background. Angela is a bilingual, Hispanic female educator who has taught ELLs for two years; one year was spent with new arrivals, and the other was spent with English II ELLs. English II ELL students are usually those who are in their second year in the country. On this campus, these second-year students are also mixed in with long-term ELLs.

The researcher is aware that Angela's parents were born in another country, and she was born in Texas. Her parents do not have a college education. Angela attended high school in North Houston ISD, but according to the initial interview, she is not deeply familiarized with the area where she works now. During one of the interviews, Angela expressed she was unsure about her happiness in teaching ELLs, stating behavior and motivation as a concern.

Angela describes herself as soft-spoken, but with a firm discipline style. She does not frequently attend student functions and is not. Students greet Angela with hugs and smiles, and they openly and frequently express their happiness in seeing her and attending her class. Angela is observant; she compliments students on haircuts and new

shirts for instance, but she asks about their families and other personal matters.

Sometimes when students approach Angela and speak Spanish to her, she casually eases students into speaking English instead, and she helps them with their pronunciation.

Angela has a background in retail and has worked as a computer technician, but her formal career is in education.

Interview 1

Bilingualism and relationships. During the first individual interview, which occurred April 3, 2018, Angela mentioned the SIOP and Cultural Awareness professional development sessions required of all teachers to teach ELLs. When asked about her point of view regarding professional development Angela said, “A few of the tips I’ve learned were helpful, but overall it’s actually what I’ve gained from working with the kids and what I’ve developed as my own way of teaching them.” Apparently, classroom experiences proved to be more beneficial than training sessions attended.

Behavior and academic challenges. When asked about the challenges found among ELLs, Angela described seeing a pattern of reluctance to speak English. Angela described students as spending the day with their friends and not seeing a need to practice English, both inside and outside of the classroom. As a bilingual teacher, she said students constantly approach her speaking Spanish as well. When asked about behavior, Angela specifically gave the example of a student in her class who also expressed reluctance to learn the language:

One kid was upset stating that he didn’t see the point of learning the language. I’m coming here to this country. He thought, you know, why should I

learn a language? It's my culture. I should be able to speak it, you know, wherever I want, and I shouldn't have to learn English.

Angela attributed many discipline problems to language barriers, but she also mentioned having students who she felt simply did not want to work and considered school was not important. She expressed frustration and disappointment with students who did not come to her class with a purpose of learning. Angela described her teaching style as strict, saying:

When I first started, I was kind of too nice to the kids and it did kind of affect it [teaching style]. I realized that working with these kids, you have to be a little bit more strict because of their, um, culture from the country they are coming from, especially these kids coming from Central and South America.

Subjects often mentioned students' countries of origin to reflect their personal perceptions of discipline and structure there versus in American schools. Due to these perceptions, subjects felt they had to take additional steps to ensure newcomer students could embrace and adapt to their new country.

Interview 2

Behavior linked to motivation. During the second individual interview with Angela, which occurred April 16, 2018, she expressed teaching ELLs as something she chose to do yet being conflicted in terms of enjoyment in teaching them. She said, "I do like teaching them because a handful of them do come because they want to learn," but she also mentioned others who attended school with "other things in mind":

The other percentage that aren't eager to learn, aren't hungry for knowledge, and aren't trying to better the lives are the ones that I don't actually want to teach

because of the negativity that I get back from them. And that kind of gets me in the middle of where I do enjoy teaching them. But at the same time, I don't like teaching them.

Angela also mentioned behavior and motivation going hand in hand, saying that “A lot of times, when you see someone that’s motivated to learn, their behavior is much better.” Campus-wide perceptions were also mentioned in the second individual interviews. When asked how the campus perceived ELLs in terms of both behavior and motivation, she said:

Negative feedback all the time. They always say that "who wants to teach those kids?" or "those kids are bad" or "those kids, you know, they're not learning enough." Or um, "they're not very goal oriented." It's just a lot of negative stuff that I hear from them all the time.

Even though Angela did not agree with all the misconceptions on campus about the ELL population, she also realizes some ELLs “come to actually try to better themselves” while others “do act up” in classes, making it easy for others who do not personally know the students to label them all.

Efficiency of campus initiatives. Angela expressed dissatisfaction with the ELL programs implemented in the school, particularly the AEA program, saying it does not help students because it is “fixated on growing them socially” rather than getting them ready for the next school year in which they must pass the STAAR test. She also mentioned students were around the same people all day, most who speak Spanish, which does not increase their knowledge and language skills.

Bilingualism and relationships. When asked about being bilingual harming or helping ELLs, Angela stated that as a teacher, “being bilingual is a big plus” because they need “translation to understand what they’re trying to learn.” Angela also considers herself a role model for her students and thinks this helps students in terms of fostering relationships. According to Angela, when students see their teacher sharing a similar background and that she was able to earn a degree, it helps in some ways build a connection between the adult and the students. Angela clarified that sharing a similar background with students is not always the key to success, but it is a step closer to positive relationships in the classroom.

Learning and motivational strategies. Angela mentioned using various methods to assist ELLs in their academic challenges. She specifically mentioned using engaging YouTube channels to present information to students, ranging from homophone lessons to everyday use of vocabulary words. Angela also emphasized that many of these channels demonstrate that having an accent is nothing to be ashamed of, which is a preoccupation for many ELLs.

During the interview, Angela mentioned verbally praising students as her way of celebrating successes in the classroom. She also gives students stickers, which work well even at the high school level, and she lets them listen to music. Angela said that students often ask her, “If I get this right, can I listen [to music]?” and she plays an appropriate song for them that they want to listen to.

Vanessa

Background. Vanessa is a Hispanic teacher who has been teaching ELLs for one year as an English teacher. Her focus has been mostly newcomers, but she has also worked with English 2 students in the past. Like Angela, Vanessa also worked in retail before becoming an educator.

Vanessa's parents are both college educated, and she attended North Houston ISD schools, even though she did not live in the area. The researcher's casual observations of Vanessa are limited, but through casual conversations and her own words during these interviews, she expressed passion and enthusiasm in working with ELLs, even though she admitted some days were challenging. Vanessa is not deeply familiarized with the neighborhood in which her students live, she did mention attending student events and having conversations with students about family life and goals for their future.

Interview 1

Professional development. Vanessa's first individual interview occurred April 11, 2018. When asked about the professional development received, Vanessa included the Cultural Awareness and SIOP training sessions. On her own time, she attended a webinar called *ELLs in Texas* recently that was very helpful. Additionally, she said that professional development is "a good tool to help people grow and understand the trends that are not only just in education, but the kids themselves." Vanessa explained that students "come with trends too. They want to wear hip things, they want to say the words and we have to be in the know." Even though education is important, Vanessa emphasized that ELLs are processing through events the same way teachers are but see the world differently. Professional development sessions that target these areas are especially important for ELL educators.

Behavior and academic challenges. Vanessa expressed her challenges revolving around the academic levels of each student arriving in her class. She said, “Not everyone is at the same place...I think the biggest issue would probably be the variants of the students in one classroom” and mentioned having a new arrival student who is close to illiterate who “writes the same three letters over and over and over again.”

Like Angela, Vanessa also expressed her students wanting to speak Spanish all the time, but she also mentioned a lack of independence, with many of her students wanting to “copy most of the time.” She mentioned dealing with these issues with patience and students being able to recognize when a teacher possessed this virtue. Angela also mentioned students’ culture partly impacting behavior, saying “Some men don’t respect women as much as they should...it’s the environment they’re raised in.” However, she also mentioned situations in which students could strive despite negative circumstances and said, “I think right now with children they understand that they can use how they were raised in order to give excuses how as how they are behaving.”

Vanessa also mentioned some of her students lacked academic motivation, partly due to cultural expectations:

Some are just motivated to go out and work, just make money without learning English. There's some kids who I have that have told me, I'm about to turn 18, I'm not going to come back to school after I turned 18, and I think that's also a cultural thing because I was raised in my household...I'm Latina and I was raised to go to school. There was no other option. I had to go to school if I wanted to make money. And then where I see these kids, they, they see that they can make money without schooling.

Learning and motivational strategies. To encourage students to continue learning English, Vanessa celebrates even the smallest milestones, and she says that in her relationship with students, “I’m stern before I’m friendly.” She also mentioned the importance of being an accountable adult in the lives of students. Due to the individual circumstances of many families, Vanessa mentioned that many students have expressed they cannot hold their own parents accountable for their success in school:

I think that we as teachers need to be that person here at school for them, within a limit. Like, we have to show that we respect them, but we also have to demand respect.

Vanessa addressed being bilingual in the first interview, stating:

It does help when ELLs are being taught by Spanish speaker. I know that's probably a controversial thing to say, but I think it does help because how are you going to understand the concept if you don't understand it in your language and especially with English when we have such weird concepts?

Like Angela, Vanessa is a bilingual, Hispanic female. In both interviews, both participants expressed being familiarized to some extent with the area, either growing up around the area or attending schools around there.

Interview 2

Behavior linked to motivation. In the second individual interview, which occurred April 17, 2018, Vanessa expressed teaching ELLs was something she chose to do and that she loved it. She said:

I love coming to work every day. I love seeing them. I call him my "pollitos" [chicks]. Like, they're my children. I don't have kids on my own, so I feel like I

take ownership of them as far as what they're learning and how they're learning to see the world because that's part of our job, getting them acclimated.

When asked about behavior being tied to motivation, Vanessa said they were closely tied, and that many times students' goals depend on what they see at home and the patterns seen in parents. She mentioned that in most cases, if students do not have parents who are educated or hold degrees, they are less likely to do more and be motivated to hold a degree. With behavior, Vanessa expressed negative campus perceptions as well and agreeing to some extent: "Most teachers think they're very misbehaved." Vanessa clarified that ELLs should not be lumped together. In terms of motivation, she attributed low motivation as a campus-wide problem, not solely tied to the ELL population.

Efficiency of campus initiatives. Vanessa mentioned a lack of adults wanting to take ELLs out of their comfort zone in terms of language and experiences:

Some of these kids, they just live right next to the school. They don't go anywhere outside their bubble. For them to even go to the zoo would be an experience for them, and I feel like there's not a lot of push for these ELLs to get outside of their bubble and I feel like that if they get, if they got outside of their bubble, they would have more motivation.

Vanessa expressed the AEA program was helpful in getting students acclimated, but she also mentioned a need for changes to the program, saying it does not give room for scaffolding or reteaching. She also opposed placing new arrivals in mainstream classrooms and said it would not be helpful.

Bilingualism and relationships. Like Angela, Vanessa agreed in the importance of being a role model for students, and she talked about this in the first interview. She said that parents go straight into the workforce, and that this is the example most students see. Vanessa mentioned that her behavior came from her degree and that there was certainly a difference in the way she may carry herself from students' parents and how they see the world.

Vanessa also explained she allowed students to use translators to understand concepts, and she used her Spanish-speaking skills to explain directions and vocabulary as well. She said:

For these kids, if they're starting to understand English, they're more than likely gonna get the concept. But the concept...if they're still lost, it's more harmful not to explain it to them in Spanish. They're just going to stay lost. You can't expect them to just wake up and be like, oh, I completely understood that concept that was taught to me in English.

Emily

Background. Emily is a White educator with more than a decade of experience in the classroom; however, she has only spent three of these years as an ELL English teacher. Like Vanessa's parents, Emily's parents are also college graduates. Even though she was not born or raised in Houston, Emily and her immediate family have made the city their home. Emily has a background in both education and law and has worked in both fields.

During one of the interviews, Emily openly expressed she did not enjoy teaching ELLs on most days, attributing these feelings to her mandatory placement in that position

and issues with behavior and motivation. Like Angela's case, the researcher knows Emily well and has had many opportunities to talk and casually observe her relationship with students. Emily can often be heard speaking a few words in Spanish to students, which always brings smiles to their faces, and she also takes great pride in attending student activities. As she mentions later in the chapter, finding ways to connect to students proves to be extremely beneficial, particularly when neither race, background, nor age are factors students can relate to.

Interview 1

Professional development. Emily's first individual interview took place April 16, 2018. She mentioned attending the same professional development sessions as the other participants, the SIOP and Cultural Awareness training. She said the professional development offered is "adequate but not outstanding, and only a little of it is ever directed specifically at working with ESL students."

Behavior and academic challenges. One of the academic challenges Emily found was a reluctance to speak English "because it's not required of them in so many situations. They can live and work in their neighborhoods without ever using it. Um, and they talk with their friends in class in Spanish ninety-nine percent of the time."

She also saw challenges in their general knowledge and mentioned there were far too many gaps: "They're not very well educated in their native language, so there's not a lot of transfer. You're kind of starting from scratch with a lot of the concepts that we teach."

In terms of ELL behavior, Emily mentioned:

Behaviorally it just kind of depends on individual students. I have a lot that get better as they figure out my personality and the rules and like how to do school, but I have some that just kind of get tired. It almost seems like that everything is new and hard, and they know by April or so in the year they're just kind of done and it's actually harder to get them to behave. And the fact of the matter is that's almost always boys.

Learning and motivational strategies. Emily mentioned relationships with students as being important. She said:

I think the relationship with the teacher always affects how students perform in their class. I mean, usually if they like you and think you like them, they're going to work a little harder. It's not one hundred percent true, but generally I think my relationship with them is pretty good.

Emily continued describing her relationship with students as good, but lacking depth due to the language barrier. She said:

Sometimes it's just very difficult for me to communicate with them in a way that they understand. Um, my sense of humor does not translate very well because it's a lot of word play and sarcasm and that's just difficult when you're dealing with, um, second language. So, as I said, I don't think they dislike me, but it's not what I wish it was.

Emily also expressed that overall, she knew which country her students came from, but not the area they lived in, only that most lived in nearby apartments. When

asked if she wanted to add anything, Emily expressed a frustration in teaching ELLs due to the language barriers that exist between her and the students. She said:

I think one of the hardest things about doing this is the language gap for me, and I know that they put English speakers in this position because they think the kids are going to be speaking English anyway, but that's not necessarily how it always plays out in practice. It's very difficult for me to contact parents and, um, interact with them because the parents are obviously all Spanish speakers.

Emily also mentioned students were expected too much, too quick, and that students were not prepared. She suggested that giving students another year of AEA rather than giving them an English 2 class would be beneficial due to the language gaps students arrive with, but she also expressed the concern in doing that given that many students were older and that it would put them behind schedule.

Interview 2

Behavior linked to motivation. Emily's second individual interview occurred April 18, 2018. When asked how she started teaching ELLs, Emily said it was completely chance:

I was hired to teach regular track English students, but I happened to have an ESL certification and they could not find anyone else who was ESL all certified, so they asked me to switch assignments and I did.

Emily said she did not enjoy teaching ELLs. Even though there are many students she likes individually, she expressed her frustrations particularly over the expectations of her role as an English 2 teacher:

There's a disconnect between what they need to know and what they actually know, and expectations are sometimes unclear. Am I supposed to be teaching them English as in to speak English or am I supposed to be teaching them English as in Sophomore English curriculum? And um, I never get a very clear answer about what I'm supposed to be doing.

Like the other participants in the study, Emily also mentioned motivation and behavior as being completely connected. According to Emily, the kids who are motivated usually participate and make gains, while those who do not care show no improvement from August to May and are “virtually on the same level when they finish as they were when they started because they see no reason to do things differently.” Emily also said that usually those who are motivated and participating behave better, and the ones who do not care are “bored with the whole process and are the ones that are generally the behavior issues.”

When asked about campus perceptions of ELLs, she began by saying that many staff members do not know who she is or what she does on campus “because the ESL world exists as completely separate from the rest of the campus.” She went on to mention that there are many teachers who receive ELLs with concern: “Disgust is too strong a word, but there is a negative reaction because there’s a perception that there are both behavioral and academic issues with our ESL population.” When asked what she thought about these perceptions, she said:

I kind of resent having them treated like lepers basically by some of the other staff, but there are enough that draw attention to their own bad behavior that I can understand why people have that perception.

Efficiency of campus initiatives. When asked if there was anything she would like to add, Emily spoke about the ELL programs on campus. Earlier in the interview, Emily mentioned students enrolled in her English class “have not acquired enough English to function completely in English.” Emily now voiced her concerns with students staying together as a cohort and not building relationships with other students on campus:

They develop kind of a strange, almost codependent relationship with the other students in their group. And then with teachers too...I know we see things like tutoring being a prime example, in that they will not go to another teacher for tutoring because they're so used to that insular environment where they exist in this world where they know that can get people to speak Spanish to them.

Emily also mentioned students preferring to stay within their comfort zones rather than push themselves into the larger school body. She said these actions, “keep them from having the typical high school experience and growing, both as people and as English language speakers and students and all of that, because they keep to themselves so much.” When asked if getting rid of the new arrival program would help, she said it would be worth looking at other possibilities and modifying the model. She mentioned putting students out into the general population at this point creates issues, especially with the large numbers the campus has. Emily mentioned having worked in other districts in which ELLs had a resource class where they would get help with concepts they did not understand. She also mentioned that “for the most part, they [ELLs] were out in the general population fairly early.” She continued, “In my experience, at least those kids were making faster progress than what I see with the kids here because of that isolation and co-dependence that's created here.”

Bilingualism and relationships. Angela and Vanessa were asked whether they felt like they had to be a role model for students, and they both agreed it was important in teaching ELLs. Emily mentioned students were always watching the behavior of their teachers, and that they made decisions about who they wanted to be like based on the adults they saw. However, she said:

I feel like my kids don't really see their own future in me though, um like as a specific projection that because I'm middle class and middle age and white, that when they see me they don't just automatically go, yeah, I could do that, but I think in a more general way, politeness and kindness and that kind of thing, I try to model that.

Emily expressed her concerns that being bilingual slows students down, but that there was not really anything to alleviate the problem; that students simply need more time.

Analysis of Individual Interviews

The most frequent findings in the individual interviews were closely related to the sub-themes listed in Table 3. The three participants come from generally different backgrounds, yet they shared many of the same perceptions concerning factors that affect the motivation and behavior of ELLs. Through their use of various learning and motivational strategies, participants were fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness: the three components of the Self-Determination Theory.

Parent involvement in improving motivation was a recurring theme in all interviews, and teachers perceived many parents as being absent on campus, with some participants detailing their own negative experiences in communicating with parents.

Given the individual circumstances of families, which all participants later agreed impacted their involvement with the school, the focus became the school itself rather than the parents. Are schools taking the initiative to involve families? How can administrators aid in the inclusion of parents and families in the school setting as partners?

According to participants, some of the challenges encountered with ELLs in the classroom came from their codependence and academic gaps. While some students depend on others for academic and language support, others may struggle and even refuse to assimilate to a new culture and new expectations. For new arrivals, codependence becomes inevitable because students see the same group all day. How can educators and administrators help students feel autonomous and academically and socially competent despite such close relationships and the presence of cultural barriers?

All teachers considered behavior and motivation as being tied to one another, and they mentioned the importance of being a positive role model and having positive relationships with students. According to the SDT, students feel higher intrinsic motivation when they feel they can relate to others. In this case, relatedness to adults was perceived as being important. In her second interview, Vanessa also emphasized the need for initiatives that take students out of their comfort zones and explore the city. An experience outside of their neighborhood, such as visiting a museum, has the potential of making an ELL feel autonomous from the daily routine, competent in terms of adding to his or her prior knowledge base, and it can make a student feel a sense of relatedness to others who shared the experience, including the educator. Once again, the focus is on administrators and the attention they are willing to give such matters. Far from allowing a culture in which ELLs, their families, and as Emily said, teachers in some cases, are

perceived as outsiders, these individual interviews demonstrated there is a desperate need for school and district-wide efforts that truly embrace ELLs and guide them toward the intrinsic motivation needed to succeed.

Analysis of Focus Group Data

After the second and last individual interviews with the three participants, the researcher read through the transcription and member checked each for accuracy and reliability. Using a qualitative data analysis program, the researcher kept track of information as she checked for recurring themes and additional information pertinent to the study to create a new set of research questions to ask the group. On April 25, 2018, the group met with the researcher, and the focus group interview was conducted. After reading the focus group interview's transcription and member checking once again, the researcher used the same qualitative data analysis program to track and find the following common themes that came up as a group.

Importance of family support. One of the most common themes in the focus group interview was the importance of family support in seeing positive behavior and motivation in ELLs. All three participants agreed that parents and families are an integral part in the behavioral success and motivation of ELLs. However, they also mentioned that in their campus, they saw the absence of parent involvement in the lives of the ELLs they taught.

Angela mentioned, "I just feel like they [parents] don't care," and she gave the anecdote of a mother she called. The teacher informed the mother her daughter was failing the class. To her surprise, the mom replied that she did not know anything about her daughter because she did not go to school. She then proceeded to end the

conversation with, “That’s not my problem. She’s sixteen. She knows better.” Angela mentioned that the conversation gave her a clear message that parent involvement was not present, and she added, “I feel like that’s a huge issue as well for these kids.”

The researcher also asked the three participants if school efforts to encourage and improve parent involvement could possibly work. Emily said she was not sure if any school efforts to include parents would benefit students or even work out:

I think the parents are pretty reluctant a lot of times to be involved, and obviously if they were involved it would be better for the kids...I don't know how you make that happen for parents who have, in some cases, fear and in other cases just apathy already pretty firmly entrenched. I don't know what it would take to get them involved.

When speaking of any differences participants saw in long-term ELLs and newcomers, Emily mentioned many of her long-terms had gaps as big as newcomers, meaning that ELLs on campus are not showing significant differences in terms of academic knowledge, only spoken language acquisition. She attributed these gaps to a lack of importance that was placed on education in many students’ homes.

Vanessa added that a major barrier in getting parents involved is their individual circumstances, such as having more than one job and not being able to be with their children or attend school activities with them. She mentioned that the school could take on initiatives, like creating English classes for parents, but she also questioned how such initiatives could fit with the schedules of parents who must attend work during those hours. She said, “I feel like it's not always that they don't care, it's that sometimes they can't go.” Emily agreed with this statement and said, “Their [Parents’] plates are full.”

When participants were asked if and how educators had the power to motivate ELLs and guide them toward academic success, which was a change from the focus of the interview on motivation and behavior, Angela mentioned that it all depended on their home environment. She said, “In the end it's nurture. The kids are being raised to think one way, and I strongly believe in nurture versus nature...everything just starts at home...at school, we can only do so much. So it's just up to the child to decide that.” Angela implied that in the end, students have the option to choose if their home environments are going to negatively affect them. Emily agreed that student motivation and success is influenced from their home environment, but she said motivation and behavior can be influenced at school by the administrators as well.

Emily then mentioned feeling like she was losing ground with students once they were out of her classroom. She said, “I think we have to keep that in mind that we may not feel like we're always gaining ground, but at least they're not losing ground when they're with us either.” When asked about the kind of support ELLs should receive, Angela mentioned parents should get more involved in the education of their children. Emily gave a specific anecdote of a student's success story. She said the student frequently mentioned she had her parent's support, and that it motivated her to be better. According to Emily, this student had more support at home than a lot of students have, once again emphasizing on the importance of family support and engagement in fostering positive ELL behavior and academic growth and success.

ELL codependency. A common theme found during the focus group interview was student codependence. According to all teachers, students depend too much on each

other's company and support, which results in them missing out on opportunities to engage with other students who are not part of their ELL group. Emily specifically stated:

Lazy is a word that has such negative connotations, but I can't think of a better one right now. And it is almost like, it promotes a kind of laziness because they [students] know they can always fall back on Spanish.

Angela expressed that students tend to get comfortable around individuals who speak their language, and Vanessa also explained that in her classes, students travel together almost everywhere, making it very difficult for them to assimilate to the school. Emily said she noticed students are “very reluctant to assimilate and to get along and to make connections outside of their own little circle.” Angela also mentioned that “it's just sometimes hard to kind of push them away from that comfort zone so that they can speak English and not be afraid to.” When talking about long-term ELLs, Emily explained that many of those students often performed lower on exams than newcomers. She attributes this to other academic factors, not language ability, and the way students apply themselves in terms of their own personal motivation.

A need for campus and district administrative support. According to the teachers interviewed, a large part of the problem with student codependence comes from the curriculum and the administration. With ELL students, their isolation is a concern, and all participants agreed.

Emily gave ideas to improve student schedules and provide additional support for students without isolating them:

I wish there were a sort of hybrid way to give these kids the support that they need but also create situations where they are out with the other

populations...kind of force them to use their English more to interact with those other kids and all of that. And I think also ultimately make them feel a little more connected with the school at large because with them being so isolated.

Vanessa said her students are enrolled in classes in which they travel together all day, and that very few of them have different classes that allow them to socialize with other students who are not ELLs. She also shared that her students are placed in the same elective classes, such as gym, impeding a potential opportunity for possible engagement with other students through games and physical activity. Vanessa said that due to these factors, students form their own cliques and separate from all other students on campus. According to Vanessa, in a perfect world her ELLs would be together for her class but separate for the rest of their courses for them to be with English speaking students.

Even though scheduling factors are important in getting students to assimilate to an English-speaking environment, administrative efforts in including ELLs are also lacking, according to all participants. In their eyes, the problem begins with the school administration and the message they are sending ELLs with their actions.

Vanessa, for instance, expressed her interest in taking students out on trips to local parks and museums. She mentioned this in one of her individual interviews and shared this once again with the group. However, she mentioned that money issues were temporarily halting her plans. She had to take on the task of finding her own resources and doing research to see how she could make a class trip possible, even if it was fundraising. To make these trips possible in the future, she said she was getting the help of instructional coaches in terms of tying the trips to their curriculum and helping her advocate for this to occur. Vanessa said that if the school did not take the initiative in

taking students, students would probably not go by themselves because they are not accustomed to traveling far outside their area. The places she is interested in taking students are at least 30 minutes away and require the district to provide resources, such as transportation. Angela agreed with this idea and thought it would be wonderful to have students explore new surroundings:

Just getting involvement with the ELLs would make a huge difference for them because they will feel accepted and they won't feel that shyness and that, you know, that negative feeling of "Oh, I don't want to go to school."

Vanessa mentioned that her newcomers were interested in joining the Hispanic Heritage Program when the school year started, and she shared their excitement about having a program that included topics, dances, and material they could relate to. She mentioned that including them in school activities and trips would be ideal. She said, "I feel like they would be more motivated to come to school, more motivated to learn, if they knew that they could actually experience those things."

When asked about administrative efforts to include ELLs, Angela mentioned she did not see any efforts to motivate ELLs from the school's administration. She said, "the only thing that I see is them benefiting with discipline, sometimes, that is all, like flat out. That's the truth." Angela refers to the strict control of the school's administration in terms of discipline. All in all, the campus administrators deal with behavioral problems, and most students receive consequences for misbehaving.

Vanessa however, fondly mentioned one specific administrator who spoke to her ELLs and approached them daily to talk to them:

She'll talk to them all the time and she'll check in on them. But as far as any other administrators, I feel like they don't really come into the classroom like [she] does. She talks to them, "Hi, how are you?" I mean she knows that they don't speak English, but she talks to them.

According to Vanessa, it is efforts as such that eventually make ELLs feel like they belong in the school and matter.

Emily explained the campus tried an initiative specifically for newcomers, and she said that even though she is sure the initiative had the best intentions, it was not well implemented. This initiative was to be done after school. Several ELL teachers would meet and have students rotate for tutorials for approximately two hours. Emily gave the administrator who created the initiative credit for trying to do something better for the ELLs, but she said, "it definitely needed some work before it was launched, and I think it almost ended up hurting instead of helping because there wasn't the consistency and the structure that maybe that program needed."

Another weakness Emily saw was having ELLs be an afterthought in all decisions made, despite the large population on campus: "And that's how it always feels to me, that they're the afterthought after everything else has already been kind of tended to and taken care of." Vanessa mentioned that motivation starts at home, but that it all trickled down to the administrators taking ELLs seriously. All participants agreed with this statement.

Schools need committed teachers who are knowledgeable and passionate about their role in the lives of ELLs, and Southeast High School teachers demonstrated their commitment to ELLs, despite any obstacles they may face. However, without committed leaders for teachers to depend on, the success of ELLs is at stake. In their own study of

leadership support for ELL teachers, Elfers and Stritikus raise the question of leadership programs for school and district administrators properly training individuals to address issues concerning ELLs (2013). According to the findings in this study, North Houston ISD and other area districts need to specifically focus on preparing educational and administrative leaders to support ELL teachers and students.

Impact of teaching and motivational strategies. A very important aspect of intrinsic motivation that John M. Froiland and Frank C. Worrell (2016) brought up in their study of intrinsic motivation and achievement in high schools is that teachers absolutely have the power to alter the intrinsic motivation of their students. According to Froiland and Worrell, “Researchers and school psychologists may benefit from greater consideration of intrinsic motivation to learn as an intervention target to promote academic engagement and achievement, while promoting mental health” (Froiland & Worrell, 2016, p. 332). Educators can help students increase their intrinsic motivation in both academic and non-academic areas.

As a focus group, teachers agreed that being a bilingual educator helped ELL students understand difficult classroom concepts. Emily said:

I also think I'm at a disadvantage because I think I'm one of the few people that's working with these kids that is not fluent in Spanish, and I think there are some barriers there because of that. I think in a lot of other classes they're getting more native language support from native speakers, which I'm not, and I think that that makes my class harder for them.

Vanessa explained that being bilingual helped a lot, particularly in getting students comfortable and relaxed in her classroom. Angela also said she saw a benefit in

being a native Spanish speaker and said, “They [students] do get comfortable, they understand, they feel like there's a relief. They don't have to struggle so much.” Angela added that despite being bilingual, it was hard pushing students away from that comfort zone, so they could speak English and not be afraid to do in other settings.

When it comes to academic success, Kusrkar, Croiset, and Ten Cate (2011) described twelve ways to help students get to the level of intrinsic motivation in the classroom:

- 1) Identify and nurture what students need and want
- 2) Have students' internal states guide their behavior
- 3) Encourage active participation
- 4) Encourage students to accept more responsibility for their learning
- 5) Provide structural guidance
- 6) Provide optimal challenges
- 7) Give positive and constructive feedback
- 8) Give emotional support
- 9) Acknowledge students' expressions of negative effect
- 10) Communicate value in uninteresting activities
- 11) Give choices
- 12) Direct with the 'right words' rather than controlling words

In analyzing all teacher interview responses, it was clear that the three teachers were conscious of such strategies and applied most of them in their classrooms to increase student motivation and good behavior. All strategies relate to SDT, particularly autonomy, and they have the potential to encourage self-determination in any classroom.

The goal of the educator should be to ultimately show students that the classroom material and high behavioral expectations will benefit them in the long run. There must be meaningful rationale behind lessons and activities planned.

All three teachers interviewed use some form of motivational strategies with students, and it helps build language and create a connection between teacher and student. Angela uses personal testimonies and examples to motivate students, such as the story of her mother, who came to the United States in search of a better life. She admitted that because her life was not perfect, very much like the life of the ELLs on campus, she feels comfortable sharing how she found the motivation and strength to achieve her goals through adversity.

Angela stated she used anyone who could serve as motivation because each person has a story. Vanessa uses a reward system, “just like other classrooms.” She mentioned students have trouble seeing how their actions in the present can affect their future. When she uses role models, she makes sure students understand the actions they took to impact their future. Emily mentioned she struggled with personal testimonies and focused on talking to her students on which steps to take to reach their goals. She also alters her curriculum and gives students reading material that is relatable:

You're not reading Shakespeare and Dickens in here with these kids. I'm trying to choose things that I think that they will like, and like I said, just find relatable and connect to in some way.

Emily also mentioned being passionate about attending any extracurricular activities she knows ELLs are part of, even those who are not her students. She gave the

example of the boys' soccer team making it to state playoffs, and how she was present at almost every game, taking pictures of the students:

I'd done some photography at the games and the kids were all very excited and interested in that, and it did give us a little better connection, I think. It kind of opened some of their eyes to the fact that I have a life outside of school too. And I don't know, it just made things a little more real between us, which is always going to be a benefit.

Even though the teachers agreed on family environment having an impact on student success and motivation, a pattern seen in all three is that they still use motivational strategies to have connections with students and enable them to see their potential. Just because there are perceived deficiencies in student family lives and home environments does not mean that educators, both teachers and administrators, cannot take steps in making sure ELLs have a successful high school experience.

Summary

In conclusion, there were four important themes in teacher perceptions that rose from the focus group interview categories and subcategories:

- Teachers perceive family support as an important factor in seeing positive behavior and increased motivation in ELLs.
- ELLs on campus are codependent; many students struggle with set cultural values and others refuse speaking English inside and outside of school.
- Campus and district administrative support is needed to alleviate student codependence and assimilation struggles for newcomers.

- Being a bilingual educator helps students, but educator motivational strategies are crucial in building a strong connection with ELLs.

Although all three participants had valuable information to offer, they all agreed that motivation, behavior, and academic success are tied. The four perception themes discovered are dependent on each other in seeing students motivated to learn and be successful in the classroom. They all agreed to an extent that to see both long-term and newcomer ELLs thrive during their high school experience, they must make individual efforts to succeed. However, parents and educators are responsible for fostering environments that are conducive to intrinsic motivation in students. As educators, what we can do for students outside of school, particularly in their home environment, is very limited, but teachers and administrators play an essential role in ELL success; this is something educators can indeed control.

Chapter V

Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

Discussion about Findings

To understand the impact of our findings and its connection to the study's theoretical framework, we must revisit the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). According to Van Lange, Kruglanski, and Higgins (2011), it is important to understand that SDT is not a theory centered on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, but it is rather a theory that focuses on autonomous versus controlled motivation. SDT is an integrative process energized by intrinsic motivation.

According to research done by Ryan and Deci, enabling students to experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness fosters intrinsic motivation (Van Lange et al., 2011). Contrary to other motivation theories that focus on motivation stemming from rewards, SDT confirms that tangible rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation. If an event supports the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, intrinsic motivation is enhanced. However, things such as monetary rewards, threats, and competition are factors that hinder autonomy, and they undermine intrinsic motivation (Van Lange et al., 2011).

The findings in this study corresponded with the SDT; teachers are more likely to perceive ELLs as being self-motivated and well-behaved when they see that their environment both inside and outside of school makes students feel capable of achieving success.

Educator Implications

Many educators tend to assume ELLs cannot be academically challenged. However, this is not the case. To foster competence, which can ultimately increase students' intrinsic motivation, educators should always try to challenge ELLs rather than give them work below grade level simply due to groundless assumptions. Making students feel comfortable and providing feedback and help throughout the completion of these tasks will ease fears and insecurities they may have. Educators also have the duty of providing students with support and empathy if they want to see students improve socially and academically. Rather than allowing students to use their circumstances, such as upbringing and family life, to discontinue their academic plans, educators must teach students to be responsible for their learning and understand how to support students through the process.

To promote the use of English in the classroom, educators must also use alternate positive reward systems, such as verbal recognition, to celebrate small victories in the classroom as well. Reward systems that are extrinsic are highly discouraged because educators should primarily focus on the sustainability of motivation in students.

SDT also discourages the use of criticism and punishment to foster student determination, and this is something all teachers interviewed seemed to avoid, according to their responses. As a matter of fact, teachers in this study used small tokens of appreciation to show students they appreciated their effort and improvement with the English language, such as granting them privileges like allowing them to listen to music as they worked.

As one teacher mentioned, field trips and exposing students to a world outside of their school community can help students increase their motivation. Exploring various destinations, they may otherwise never visit can help students feel a sense of independence from their daily routines. These destinations can range from parks to museums and universities. Building schema and learning outside the classroom fosters competence. When students see themselves sharing experiences with role models, such as educators, this can also have the potential of making them feel connected to adult figures outside of their home environment.

Although it is important that teachers learn about student culture, there is also a need for them to understand how to better serve students academically. The gaps in student knowledge are a concern all three participants mentioned at one point or another during the study. There are students who are new to the country and those who were born in the country, yet the two groups carry the same ELL label and are in the same English classroom. There are also those newcomers who may not have received formal schooling in their country, and they too find themselves in a classroom with newcomers who may have had a completely different educational experience prior to arriving to the United States. As far as instruction is concerned, teachers of ELLs have the responsibility of seeking collaborative and professional development opportunities which can cater to differentiation. Even though SIOP strategies may help in creating lesson plans and serving students in theory, strategies that are applicable to real-world instruction are necessary to better serve all students. In this study, at least one of the participants explicitly mentioned that lesson plans and reading material were catered toward student interests, further fostering a feeling of competence and relatedness among students. It is

important to have specific student needs in mind when planning for classroom instruction.

State exams were briefly discussed during the interviews and were not the actual focus of the study. However, teachers agreed having ELLs take the same exams as all English-speaking students posed a problem in numerous ways. For this reason, it is imperative for educators and administrators to explain to students that state exams are not indicative of their value or their intelligence. ELLs can demonstrate their growth through speaking, writing, and by monitoring improvement in their reading levels. Measuring student improvement and knowledge against an exam is demeaning for both students and teachers alike, and it does not aid in increasing or even maintaining intrinsic motivation, as it is seen as a form of criticism.

Administrator Implications

With the continuous increase of ELLs in the high school where the study took place, it is important to also mention there is a shortage of English as a Second Language (ESL) certified teachers. Just last year, there was a vacant position teaching the new arrivals that had been temporarily filled by a paraprofessional. This shortage of qualified ELL teachers had also been personally discussed with the district's superintendent in the year 2017. The principal had also been made aware of the situation, but due to budget cuts in the school year of 2018-2019, there are plans to remove one of the English II teachers for ELLs, meaning that there will most likely be a ratio of 1 teacher to 33 ELLs per class period. Just as the three ELL teachers mentioned during the interview, such actions only prove there is a strong detachment from administrators at the campus and district level. Having one teacher for approximately 115-130 ELLs, with the group

consisting of a mix of long-term and newcomers, is ultimately disserving students. Rather than focusing on student preparedness, the goal seems to simply have a teacher to place students with, given that with such a large population, students are more likely to have behavioral problems. The teacher is also less likely to give students the personal attention they desperately need.

With these issues in mind, ELLs are in desperate need for advocacy at the administrative level. The involvement of principals in the lives of ELLs was studied by Theoharis and O'Toole and found to be imperative to ELL success in urban schools located in the Midwest. Through their research, they found that "Socially just practices are possible for ELL students when school leaders are willing to actively engage in the struggles and often difficult processes that lead to inclusive practices and mind-sets" (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011, p. 681). In agreement with the perceptions of the teachers studied in this research project, administrators must actively engage ELLs in activities where they can feel they are part of the student body and the overall success of the school. All in all, ELLs must have the perception of having a voice, and they must feel they are important parts of the student body.

Lucas et al. (2008) addressed the urgency of preparing all educators in dealing with the ELL population, not just teachers. Being aware of the need for more highly-qualified ELL teachers is the first step toward changing the curriculum and seeking to learn how to contribute to the preparation of all teachers to teach ELLs. In the meantime, it is crucial for ELL advocates to become directly or indirectly involved in the hiring process of new ELL educators, such as serving in hiring committees or providing feedback on potential employees ("National Education Association," 2015).

It is essential that ELL teachers are supported and guided by administrators at the school and district level. The concerns of Emily, which specifically mentioned feeling uncertainty over the lessons to cover and her feelings of isolation as a teacher, can be eliminated if administrators take the time to give both ELL students and ELL teachers the attention they need. At the district level, these concerns can be alleviated by having a specific curriculum for English I and English II ESL courses that is tied harmoniously from one year to the next. As Rance-Roney (2009) suggested, a language-development curriculum developed with collaborative effort between educators and linguistic specialists may be worth looking into, particularly in dealing with the discrepancies and disconnect in the English classes ELLs are enrolled in, particularly newcomers going from the new arrival program to an English 2 class.

It is also important to mention the impact of state exam scores on administrators, specifically the STAAR assessment. The focus on high-stakes testing has led many educators and students to believe that their value depends on a grade. In the case of North Houston ISD, teachers are given a stipend and an additional evaluation score based on student end-of-the-year state exam scores. Given the fact that it is unfair to measure the proficiency of ELLs against those students who may be enrolled in Pre-AP, GT, or AP classes, new measures must take place when it comes to teacher evaluation scores. Districts must adopt new evaluation measures to let teachers know their own worth as ELL educators does not depend on student STAAR scores, and it is important for school administrators to advocate for these changes to occur. It is critical to remember that when teachers feel valued and motivated, their students are more likely to feel the same way. Understanding the struggles of both ELL students and teachers will help schools and

school districts retain ELL educators, making them feel the same competence ELLs need to feel to succeed.

Based on the experience and knowledge of the researcher, many schools in different school districts in Houston have teams of educators that work with the same groups of students. For instance, these teams usually consist of the same core teachers, they have a unique group name they share, each classroom has distinct decorations that identify it as being part of a specific team, and students are always informed and reminded of the team they belong to. There is also an administrator assigned to each team, from an assistant principal to a counselor, and the administrator is usually present at every meeting held.

Students in these groups or teams eventually learn to have pride in their team, and they find ways to relate to other students and staff members. However, with all the different courses students must choose from at the high school level, organizing teams is a more difficult task for counselors and the administrative team. Nonetheless, even if the idea of creating a team environment seems far-fetched at the secondary level, it is important to emphasize that students and teachers benefit from positive reinforcement and mutual support. Many secondary ELLs experience various stress factors, both in and out of classrooms (Rubinstein-Avila & Lee, 2014). Niehaus and Adelson suggest implementing school-based intervention strategies for ELLs whose teachers may notice have anxiety or other stressors affecting their performance, before the issues become significant concerns in their lives (2014). Building connections as such has the potential of helping both long-term and newcomer ELLs find motivation in attending school and

engaging in positive behavior. For these initiatives to occur, there must first exist administrator support and buy-in from all stake-holders.

Ideally, all high schools would implement the many strategies talked about in this study to help their students share a common ground, have common teachers, and have these teachers work together and with the designated counselor and administrator to help solve any academic or personal problems students encounter. Based on testimonies in this study, even though teachers and administrators have no direct control of students' home lives, they can still have a positive impact on their lives in school. As Emily implied during the focus interview, not seeing progress from students in their home environment does not mean educators should give up in serving students and fostering the intrinsic motivation that is needed to succeed.

Conclusion

During the study, the researcher found that teacher perceptions of the behavior and motivation of ELLs coincided with the Self-Determination Theory. Based on the focus interview with the three participants, they perceived that ELL students are more likely to behave well in school and demonstrate higher intrinsic motivation if they are given autonomy, if they feel competent, and if they can relate to the teacher in some way. This study has shown that educators play a very important part in improving the success of students, so it is crucial that school districts understand the exact steps needed to ensure that all educators are prepared to take on an important role in the lives of ELLs. Since this research study was focused on English teachers at the secondary level, future research could perhaps focus on other subject areas and grade levels. Conducting

additional research studies could benefit students immensely and guide districts in terms of professional development for teachers and leaders.

Taking all the findings of this study into account, the principal implications of this study rest in the fact that ELL students should have support from all stakeholders to succeed in the classroom. However, educators, including school administrators and teachers, have the power to take increase the intrinsic motivation of students and improve behavior in school during the process. Educators could benefit from professional development from the district to feel more confident in their teaching skills for this population. Schools should also try to foster positive relationships among staff members, preferably through common teams. Using common teams enables educators to feel support from each other as they find ways to foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness in students. If the latter is not possible, teachers should strive to meet at the same time with struggling students to let them know they all care about their well-being, catering to their need to feel care from educators and respect. The latter not only helps the school culture, but it also helps newcomer ELLs feel supported through the entire assimilation process.

Casual conversations with teachers were not considered. However, it can be assumed through the recorded interviews that teachers view intrinsic motivation as a guide toward achievement. The more teachers talk to students and strive to develop positive relationships, the more appreciation students have for teachers. This leads to students having a feeling of relatedness toward educators who they feel care for them. This appreciation leads many students toward that intrinsic motivation for success. Having said that, teachers should know they have the power to affect the intrinsic

motivation of their students. ELL teachers are not directly responsible for their students' success or failure but getting to know students on an individual basis and acknowledging them helps them feel they are a part of the United States education system. Principals and district-level leaders have a duty to respond to their changing schools by hiring more teachers that are dedicated and culturally responsive, and they should provide all teachers with more professional development opportunities to address ELL students and prepare them to teach ELLs. Administrators, specifically school principals, must also immerse in the world of ELLs, attempting to know their students' communities, struggles, and various ways to help them achieve success in their school.

Even though educators are limited in terms of what they can do for students outside of school, taking the steps necessary to include parents, family, and the community in school events can greatly benefit ELL students. According to the teachers who formed part of this study, including students in school events, even those students who are newcomers, can boost their level of intrinsic motivation. Students may feel they are part of something bigger, and this can lead to overall motivation in students to perform well behaviorally and academically.

Students in economically disadvantaged schools, such as the one where the participants of this study teach, can also benefit in providing students with opportunities to build schema. According to the teachers in this study, both long-term and newcomer ELLs need exposure to areas outside of their school and neighborhood. Getting to know a world outside of what they already know can enable students to feel their possibilities are endless, and it can foster their curiosity about the world. Being able to explore new

surroundings caters to their need for autonomy. Learning about the city where they live can make students feel competent and knowledgeable.

Finally, spending time with administrators and teachers has the potential to make students feel like they can relate to successful adults who care for them and who are willing to go the extra mile to see them conquer the world. Even if students are lacking support from their home and family environment, knowing they have other adults in their lives that care and that can hold them accountable for their success can mark a significant difference in the lives of students.

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Appendix A

Approval from IRB



DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

March 14, 2018

Viviana Barreiro

vbarreiro@uh.edu

Dear Viviana Barreiro:

On March 14, 2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Motivating English Language Learners: A Study of Teacher Perceptions and Implications for Student Achievement in an Urban School
Investigator:	Viviana Barreiro
IRB ID:	STUDY00000691
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UH Consent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • ISD Approval.pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Barreiro_Viviana_IRBProtocol.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • Barreiro's Teacher E-Mail.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Teacher Interview Questions, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.);
Review Category:	Expedited
Committee Name:	Not Applicable
IRB Coordinator:	Danielle Griffin

The IRB approved the study from March 14, 2018 to March 13, 2019, inclusive.

To ensure continuous approval for studies with a review category of "Committee Review" in the above table, you must submit a continuing review with required explanations by the deadline for the February 2019 meeting. These deadlines may be

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Institutional Review Boards

found on the compliance website (<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/>). You can submit a continuing review by navigating to the active study and clicking "Create Modification/CR."

For expedited and exempt studies, a continuing review should be submitted no later than 30 days prior to study closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted on or before March 13, 2019, approval of this study expires and all research (including but not limited to recruitment, consent, study procedures, and analysis of identifiable data) must stop. If the study expires and you believe the welfare of the subjects to be at risk if research procedures are discontinued, please contact the IRB office immediately.

Unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB, use the stamped consent form approved by the IRB to document consent. The approved version may be downloaded from the documents tab. Attached are stamped approved consent documents. Use copies of these documents to document consent.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cphs@central.uh.edu
<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/>

Appendix B
Consent Form



Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study

Title of research study: Motivating English Language Learners: A Study of Teacher Perceptions and Implications for Student Achievement in an Urban School

Investigator: Viviana Barreiro

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

We invite you to take part in a research study because you teach a significant population of English Language Learners.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide and can ask questions at any time during the study.

Why is this research being done?

This case study is to investigate teacher perceptions regarding ELL behavior and motivation, particularly those in grades 9-12. Moreover, the researcher seeks to understand what strategies educators can implement to increase motivation and student success.

How long will the research last?

We expect that you will be in this research study for a maximum of 1 hour, which includes one-on-one interviews and a focus group interview.

How many people will be studied?

We expect to enroll about 3 people in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

- The researcher will give you an initial 12-question interview, and you will participate in a focus group interview.
- The interviews should last no longer than 20 minutes.
- You will only interact with the researcher in the one-on-one interview and as part of a small group in the focus interview.
- The research will be done at your earliest convenience.
- As a participant, you will be asked for your consent to have a one-on-one interview and a focus group interview with the rest of the participants
- Procedures will be done two times for the two interviews required

This research study includes the following component(s) where we plan to audio record you as the research subject:

- ☐ I agree to be audio recorded during the research study.

- ☐ I agree that transcripts of the audio recording can be used in publication/presentations.
- ☐ I do not agree that transcripts of the audio recording can be used in publication/presentations.
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio recorded during the research study.

The subject may still participate if they do not agree to be audio recorded.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

You can choose not to take part in the research and it will not be held against you. Choosing not to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time it will not be held against you.

If you decide to leave the research, contact the investigator so that the investigator is aware of your decision. If you stop being in the research, already collected data may not be removed from the study record.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

There are no foreseeable risks related to the procedures conducted as part of this study. If you choose to take part and undergo a negative event you feel is related to the study, please inform your study team.

Will I get anything for being in this study?

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research study.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits to others include improving teaching practices that increase the motivation and success of English Language Learners.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Each subject's name will be paired with a pseudonym, which will appear on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned Pseudonym will be kept separate from these materials. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of this organization, as well as collaborating institutions and federal agencies that oversee human subjects research. We may publish the results of this research. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, you should talk to Viviana Barreiro at (713) 538-5128 or vbarreiro@isd.org.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also talk to them at (713) 743-9204 or cphs@central.uh.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this research.

Signature of subject

Date

Printed name of subject

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Printed name of person obtaining consent

Appendix C

Teacher Interview Guiding Questions, First Interview

Researcher Introduction:

Thank you for allowing yourself to be a part of this process. As you know, I am studying teacher perceptions about ELLs and the implications of these perceptions on student achievement. I will ask you a few guiding questions now, but please feel free to add more information as we move along.

1. Please state the number of years you have been teaching and how many of these years you have spent teaching in an all-ELL classroom.
2. Describe the professional development (PD) you have had to teach ELLs in your subject area and your point of view on PD in general?
3. What are some academic challenges you find among ELLs? Describe the methods you use to assist students in overcoming these challenges.
4. Describe what a successful ELL in your classroom can accomplish. You can talk about both behavior and academics. How do you celebrate academic success in your classroom?
5. Describe your relationship with students. In your opinion, does your relationship with your students affect their achievement?
6. In your opinion, do you know most of your ELLs well enough to know where they are from or the neighborhood they live in?
7. Is there any information you would like to add before we end the interview?

Appendix D

Teacher Interview Guiding Questions, Second Interview

1. This is a very blunt question, but do you generally enjoy teaching ELLs? Was teaching them chance or something you specifically chose?
2. Do you feel that ELL motivation and behavior are closely tied, or are they separate? What has been your experience with this in the classroom?
3. How do educators on this campus perceive ELLs in both terms (behavior, motivation)? Do you agree with the general point of view on ELLs?
4. Do you ever feel like you have to be an example or role model for your kids? Describe your situation.
5. Do you feel that language barriers affect the behavior and motivation of ELLs, or are there other forces that affect behavior and motivation?
6. What are some steps you take into guiding students in improving their behavior and increasing motivation?
7. Are positive teaching relationships always the key to ELL success? How has this played out in your career?
8. Last but not least: Do you feel that being bilingual helps or harms ELLs?
9. Is there any information you would like to add before we end the interview?

Appendix E

Focus Group Interview Guiding Questions

1. How would you describe your confidence as an ELL teacher?
2. Describe students' attitudes towards you and your class. Is this a common sentiment, or do you feel it is specific towards your class or subject area?
3. What are some steps you have taken to increase motivation in your students?
4. Describe the school's involvement in motivating ELLs. You can talk about any school initiatives and the administration's role in this.
 - a. What are some strengths?
 - b. What are some weaknesses?
5. Do you think ELLs would be more motivated if there were more efforts on campus for inclusion?
6. Would ELL motivation and success increase if there were more efforts to include parents? (Resume writing, English classes, movie nights, breakfast with the principal?)
7. Do you think the ELLs you teach are capable of succeeding in high school?
 - a. What about beyond high school?
 - b. Any success stories?
8. Most of the ELLs in this campus are long-term, and many others are new in the country. Talk about similarities and differences in both.
 - a. Do you see one group having more potential than the other? If so, why?
9. What would it take to increase the motivation in all ELLs?
10. What changes would you make if you were an administrator with this power?
11. Is there anything you would like to add?