

CREATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY YEARS
TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNERS
WITH DYSLEXIA

BY

VICTORIA SALAS PANDO

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for the degree
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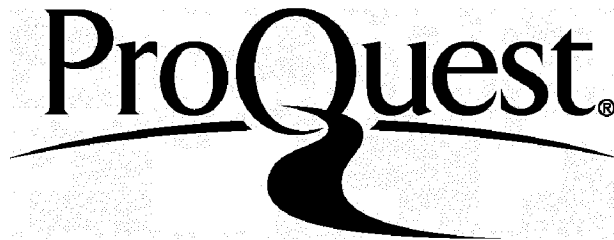
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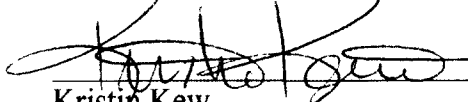
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APPROVAL

“Creating Culturally Responsive Learning Environments in the Elementary Years to Support the Needs of English Language Learners with Dyslexia”, a dissertation prepared by Victoria Salas Pando in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, has been approved and accepted by the following:



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this important work to my beautiful family. A special dedication to my husband, Sergio, for staying by my side and being my faithful companion, and always encouraging and believing I could accomplish something so big in my life. To my three children, Mikey, Vanessa and Valerie, who define my life, make me so proud, and are the inspiration of all my accomplishments. I thank my parents, Roberto and Estela for being the best parents one could ever have and providing me with guidance, unconditional love and endless support since the day I came into their lives.

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Dissertation Committee

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Colleagues of 2011 NMSU ELDP Cohort

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ABSTRACT

CREATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY YEARS
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BY

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The face of U.S. schools is rapidly changing and Hispanics are the largest minority group in the public schools. By 2050, there will be more school age Hispanic children than non-Hispanic white children. Unfortunately, schools continue to operate under assumptions that what works for white students will work for

students of color. Solutions and public policies continue to be color-blind and are not culturally responsive.

Historically, differences in academic reading outcomes and graduation rates for minority students compared to white students continue to demonstrate vast discrepancies. How much a person can achieve in his or her personal and professional life is significantly related to how proficiently that person can read. Reading is key to success in society and important for social and economic advancement. English language learners who have limited reading skills will continue to be excluded and marginalized even more due to their limited literacy skills. Educational leaders must be willing to renovate and replace current practices through social, cultural and linguistic agendas. In addition, they must be mindful that dyslexia is the most common type of reading difficulty affecting 10% to 17% of the population.

In order to continue the political discourse that campaigns for equality in education for English Language Learners with dyslexia, this research focused on the current pedagogical practices existing in elementary schools to support how educational leaders can foster a culturally responsive learning environment. Through the context of Cultural Race Theory and Dyslexia Framework, the use of in-depth interviews, observations and artifacts, highlighted the experiences of ten participants from Blue and Golden Elementary Schools who have an inter-connection with an English Language Learner with dyslexia.

The results of this study identify factors that impede and promote the educational learning outcomes of English Language Learners with dyslexia.

Recommendations for practice, policy, and future research that encourage equitable practices that support all learners are shared.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

In today's rapidly changing and diverse society, educational leaders must recognize the need to renovate current educational practices with models that will address academic, cultural, and socioeconomic gaps separating learning at all levels of the educational system (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Educators will continue to face reforms that alter the focus in instruction and compromise leadership (Allington, 2012; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). School administrators are faced with political pressure and unrealistic demands of students' reading proficiency expectations (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Adequate reading levels and expectations can only be described in terms of shifting civil, socio-cultural, and job-credential demands that any particular culture places on its members in their demands with literacy to determine any final criteria for "adequate" or "functional" literacy levels (Resnick & Resnick, 1977) Educators must be willing to analyze critically these issues needing resolutions and translate them into effective strategies to ensure academic success for everyone.

Principals and teachers alike have an important duty and are responsible for addressing these complex issues facing education of all time (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Educators must recognize reading as a fundamental skill taught in elementary schools and they must also make distinctions about theories of literacy and literacy pedagogy attempting to describe the conditions that are both necessary and sufficient for successful literacy performance (Lundbert, Tønnessen & Austad,

1999; Luke, 2012). Change agents in schools must confront traditional notions of how to conduct practices and engage in educational politics and leadership to alleviate disparities in reading achievement (Aleman, 2009).

Collaboration among stakeholders and the need to engage in effective processes that examine cultural, social and linguistic differences in order to close academic gaps under educational contexts that have led to unintended negative effects must be examined. School leaders will continue to come across school reforms that advocate the “fix” of more testing, standardization, and market competition that now sits silent in the face that of hundreds of published studies that demonstrate that their social policy experiments have not “closed the gap” between rich and poor communities, between mainstream and cultural and linguistic minorities (Luke, 2012). Educators must construct adequate literacy skills in students if they are to graduate from high school and become employable. They must examine status quo practices that go unsaid and result in compounding educational inequities (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Snow et al., 1998).

Change agents in times of crises must often look to the academy, research, and professional organizations for empirical or research-based solutions to inform policy, pedagogy and practices (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). In terms of reading acquisition, educators must examine the past 25 years of reading research supporting the importance of providing high quality reading instruction in the elementary years as the first line of defense against preventing reading difficulties (Snow et al., 1998). Although research supports that children who are given opportunities about the nature

of print, have access to learn letters, and recognize the sublexical structure of spoken words, and attend schools that provide coherent reading instruction and opportunities to practice reading, are on their way to becoming proficient readers (Luke, 1992; Snow et al., 1998) challenges this ideology and confronts that literacy is tied up with knowledge and power in a society which outline a “selective tradition” of texts, genres and practices. Freebody and Luke (1990) urge educators to rethink how instruction shapes “reading practices” an equally key element of this selective tradition. Freebody and Luke ask educators to shift away from the question of whether current programs produce better or worse readers, but instead to focus on four key elements of proficient, critical reading components of literacy that are necessary for success and can never be pre-specified in any given program. Freebody and Luke (1990) argue that based on cultural expectations there are four necessary components that should be given particular attention as crucial in the reading process: code breaker (“how do I crack this?”), meaning maker (“what does this mean?”), text user (“what do I do within this, here and then now?”), and text analyst (“what does all this do to me?”). Administrators and teachers must conceptualize research and practices in education that will generate changes in educational inequities and ineffective status quo that is evidenced by continued reading achievement gaps (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012).

Educators must quickly respond to the demographic changes indicating that the number of learners of color has quadrupled and comprises the extent of academic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic gaps separating historically educationally

disadvantaged learners from middle class and often white learners at every level (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). In addition, school instructors must focus and devote understanding to address reading problems early and prevent reading deficiencies from metastasizing in all areas of student learning. Leaders in today's schools must be mindful about dyslexia, the most common type of reading problem affecting 10% to 17% of children and adults. Dyslexia is associated with learning differences in acquiring and mastering basic reading skills and can also manifest in speakers of different languages (Lyon, Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2003). Leaders in education must be prepared to address challenges of promoting biliteracy in elementary schools and at the same time establishing preventive measures where students with dyslexia can learn to read in two languages (Birsh, 2011). How can educators close these gaps, serve the needs of what is quickly becoming the majority of learners in our nation and thus "equalize education?" (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). School leaders must conceptualize that English Language Learners (ELLs)¹ face many social issues contributing to the disproportion of their attainment of proficient literacy skills. Administrators will encounter internal and external pressures as they move forward to improve learning outcomes for English Language Learners. For example, educators are forced upon narrow definitions of English proficiency: one is either proficient or not; one is either an English learner or a fluent English speaker and failing to understanding that English skills fall on a continuum between

¹ For the purpose of this paper, the term English Language Learners refers to Hispanic, Latino, and Mexican-American, terms which are used interchangeably and refer to a population that differs from the dominant culture in the U.S.

the two extremes have lead to the acquisition of literacy in a weak language and where the language of schooling is not the same as the language from the home (Gandára & Contreras, 2009). When school principals engage in critical conversations that foster school climates rich in trust and mutual respect where bilingualism is highly valued, bilingual instruction *can* make significant contributions, especially with programs that aim to develop bilingualism and biliteracy and not the predominant model of bilingual education in the United States such as quick-exit transitional programs that are inferior (Cummins, 2000).

Problem Statement

Leaders in education who do not attend to support the acquisition of proficient reading skills in individuals will put them in great jeopardy. Individuals with limited literacy skills are greatly over-represented among unemployed and among prison inmates (Lundberg et al., 1999). Individuals with limited literacy skills who engage in jobs have wages that are far below the average level and they do not actively participate in the democratic process. Persons with limited reading skills are at risk for being marginalized and excluded from participating in society, and going unrecognized by their strengths. English Language Learners who have limited reading skills will continue to be excluded and marginalized even more due to their limited literacy skills (Lundberg et al., 1999).

When change agents analyze these issues through cultural, social and linguistic terms, they create change in the educational oppressive experiences of English Language Learners; teaching English Language Learners to read and write in

English is an urgent challenge facing leaders in today's K-12 schools (August & Shanahan, 2006). School administrators must emphasize that English literacy is fundamental for academic success in U.S. schools, as well as for opportunities beyond schooling. In examining the state of literacy skills in English Language Learners, Valencia (2008) provides some historical and social perspectives on the struggles that Mexican Americans have experienced in order to access equal education. Although the judicial system has been filled with many accomplishments leading to many educational gains through the means of litigation, the struggle for educational equality continues (Valencia, 2008).

Educators must be mindful about the number of inequalities that continue to characterize the current experiences of many Mexican American students, especially school-age individuals: increasing segregation, soaring dropout rates, inequities in school financing, unfavorable teacher-student interactions, disproportionately high rates of students being taught by noncertified teachers, unfavorable curriculum differentiation, underrepresentation in gifted and talented education, adverse impact of high stakes testing and disproportionately low rates of college enrollment (Valencia, 2008). Valencia resonates that improving the reading skills of English Language will require school leaders to understand this crisis as a social issue. He urges that failure to pay attention to the linkages of schooling with a number of social issues, macro-leveled policies, and features of democratic education will very likely result in the continuation of American school problems for English Language Learners.

School principals and teachers alike can resolve and remedy ongoing inequities in elementary schools through cultural responsiveness, systemic and evidence-based interventions (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Inequitable outcomes are not the result of deficiencies in the students, nor the communities from where they come. These outcomes are the result of systematic organizational practices and policies that have failed to analyze and recognize new possibilities that can impact positive outcomes for English Language Learners with dyslexia (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007). This research will examine how educational leaders in elementary schools can foster culturally responsive learning environments to improve educational opportunities for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the borderlands.

Educational leaders who do not foster and create culturally responsive learning environments in elementary schools for ELLs with dyslexia will continue to put them at risk for not acquiring literacy skills and for their continued marginalization in the U.S. culture (McCardle & Leung, 2006). English Language Learners who cannot read and write proficiently are faced with challenges in participating fully in American schools, workplaces, and society (August & Shanahan, 2006). English Language Learners who attain limited levels of English, whether oral or written, are five times likely to fail to complete high school, will be pushed to the sidelines, and their contributions to our nation's potential will be restricted (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Background to the Study

How can the reading achievement gap between middle-class and poor children and between white children and children of color be reduced? This question continues to be a pressing concern among educational leaders in today's elementary schools requiring them to be ready to make decisions with a compromise that will supplant the experiences every learner needs to become successful readers. Educators will need to keep reading and writing at the heart of the educational process because they are fundamental for success in society and essential for social and economic advancement (Snow et al., 1998). Leaders in today's elementary schools are charged with the demands of developing adequate literacy skills in students because these skills are intrinsically linked to an individual's educational success, high school graduation rates, and employment status (Lunderbert et al., 1999). Despite the political context driving decision at the school levels, educational leaders must embrace the notion that barriers to reducing the gaps are large, have root causes that are complex, and are intertwined with many socio-cultural factors. Research by Snow et al. (1998) concluded that the first line of defense against reading failure is quality reading instruction in the primary grades and educational leaders must make certain that elementary schools remain places that promote respect and value cultural and linguistic differences. When school leaders understand the interplay between these factors as crucial, they ensure that all individuals learn to read and systemic transformation can begin to occur (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). By recognizing the notion that the face of U.S. schools is changing and by examining the historical,

economic, and social struggles that have characterized inequalities that continue to exist among minority students, like English Language Learners, educational leaders can become prepared to meet the academic needs of English Language Learners (Fry & Gonzalez, 2008; Valencia, 2008). Administrators in elementary schools must implement changes that promote a deep sense of responsibility through cultural responsiveness in order to create systematic changes that will create positive impacts (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). In addition to these implications, school leaders in elementary schools can examine research to expand their knowledge about dyslexia, the most common type of reading problems occurring in 10% to 17% of the population and occurring across any language (Lyon, et al., 2003). The need for a more direct emphasis on understanding how to meet the educational needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia can bring promising contributions for this population and for all diverse learners.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was tri-fold. First, this study examined how school leaders in elementary schools can create potential positive effects in reading and writing proficiency of English Language Learners with dyslexia and consequently in all diverse learners. Second, this study examined how educational leaders can culturally foster responsive learning environments in the elementary years to improve the educational experiences of English Language Learners with dyslexia. Third, this study highlighted the importance for educators to create and build learning

environments that maximize the learning outcomes of English Language Learners with dyslexia.

Significance of the Study

This study examined how elementary schools can foster a learning environment that is culturally responsive and supports the needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia. The significance of this study is significant because: (a) it could potentially assist school leaders to improve educational outcomes for English Language Learners with dyslexia by preventing reading failure; (b) it could potentially raise awareness in school administrators by providing a wealth of knowledge so that they can become change agents for these students; (c) it may aid educators in eradicating, static, and unitary perceptions of individuals with dyslexia with hope and possibilities to create positive educational changes in a sociopolitical climate.

Overview of Methods

A qualitative method approach was used to systematically reflect and shape this study. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011) qualitative research is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena. It can help link research questions to a large theoretical construct that can serve to illuminate larger issues that can hold potential significance in the field of education for English Language Learners with dyslexia.

Marshall and Rossman (2011) explain that a qualitative approach can help uncover the unexpected and explore new avenues. In-depth interviews with school

administrators, school staff, and students' parents or guardians guided this study in order to collect and analyze data. Interviews helped capture and examine individual's understandings, personal feelings, views and perspectives about dyslexia. Artifacts such as school reading program materials, sample lessons, assessments, and sample writing and reading activities were collected. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), an analysis of artifacts is a potentially rich source of data that can help in developing an understanding of an organization, setting, or group being studied.

Research Questions

This research was empowered by one overarching research question which asked: How can educational leaders in elementary schools foster a learning environment that is culturally responsive in supporting the needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia?

In order to examine and compare research participants' experiences and their perceptions about how they navigate and negotiate their cultural identities as ELLs with dyslexia in American schools in the borderlands, there were two sub-questions that illuminated the overarching research question. These sub-questions are listed below as follows:

- 1) What experiences contribute to a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the elementary years?

- 2) What experiences impede a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the elementary years?

Borderlands

In order to understand the context of where this research took place it is important to understand the region of the borderlands and its residents, the borderlanders. According to Martinez (1994) a border is a line that separates one nation from another and the borderlands is a region that lies adjacent to a border. To place greater context for this research the borderlands refers to any of the locations within the U.S.-Mexico border that sprawls a transnational urban space swelling with over two million people. This tri-state region includes Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua, Mexico), El Paso (Texas, U.S.), and their peripheries, Sunland Park and Las Cruces (New Mexico, U.S). El Paso, Texas leads the U.S. border cities with population of 503,325 borderlanders (Staudt, Fuentes, & Fragoso Monárrez, 2010). Anglo Americans comprised 50% of the population concentrated along the border with Mexican Americans 41%, and other groups (African Americans, Native Americans, etc.) nine percent. Mexican American predominate in New Mexico and Texas Borderlands and 18% of the twenty-four border counties have Hispanic majorities, with Hispanics exceeding 70% of the population in this border cities (Staudt et al., 2010).

Overview of Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) was the theoretical perspective used in this research to assist the researcher in exploring how educational leaders in elementary schools can foster learning environments that are culturally responsive to the needs of ELLs with dyslexia. According to Valencia (2008), CRT can be used to inform the premise that race and racism have been entrenched in U.S. society and in schools. This perspective helped demonstrate that oppressed opportunity structures continue to promulgate oppressed academic performance. According to Yosso (2005), the most common type of racism that continues to be fused in society is the mindset of deficit thinking. Deficit thinking blames the student for the problem and views differences as deficits. Critical race theory is firm to the duty of social justice. Public education and schools are transmitters of cultural knowledge; therefore, it is the purpose of this research to continue to provide a voice for the knowledge that continues to be excluded from traditional methods of knowledge production (Valencia, 2010). According to Valencia (2008), change is slow but should not prevent any efforts that continue to provide hope to those who continue to struggle to find equality in their education. Yosso (2005) affirms that CRT can help shift the research lens away from deficit view of Communities of Color as places full of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged.

The British Dyslexia Association Friendly Quality Mark

In addition to using critical race theory as a theoretical lens through which to view the research, this study also utilized a framework specific to dyslexia. The

British Dyslexia Association Friendly Quality Mark, developed by the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) in 2012 was utilized as a guide for educational leaders outlining the supports and understanding that educational leaders in schools can develop within which individuals with dyslexia can build on existing skills and talents as well as develop new skills. This framework is referred to as the *Dyslexia Framework* for the purpose of this study. It aids educational leaders in ensuring that everyone within the school has a good knowledge of the needs of children with dyslexia and that resources are available to meet such needs. This framework aims to assist educational leaders to lead with greater levels of achievement and retention for all learners. It is the philosophy of the BDA Quality Mark that educational leaders can bring changing practices to accommodate individuals with dyslexia that will often result in good practice for all learners (Cochrane, Gregory, & Saunder, 2012). The dyslexia framework can direct educational leaders, all learners, parents, staff and stakeholders toward developing a positive and responsive school environment where individuals with dyslexia and all diverse learners find a safe place that fosters their learning and their strengths.

Researcher Positionality

As I researcher, I bring my own unique experiences and my own biases that shape how I view the world. This information must be made known to the reader. A member from a minority population, I transitioned into the dominant culture at the age of 10 and am the mother of a daughter with dyslexia. I know that my parents were wise to expect me to obtain an education that would provide opportunities

beyond the ones they had. Education can be obtained through many forms including: academic and formal, technical and semi-formal, and informal, which is shaped by the richness of cultural experiences. My father obtained a technical education that was sufficient enough to ensure food was always put on our table and to inspire in me dreams to achieve great big things in life. My mother completed school through the second grade and although she did not achieve “adequate” levels of reading and writing skills, her “limitations” had no impact on the rich, cultural knowledge and experiences she passed on to me and to my siblings. She was the provider of wisdom, unconditional love. She was nurturing, and helped me to understand the world. She taught me that small things are the most important things in life. I learned to recognize that big accomplishments are achieved when you help those who are less fortunate. I learned that life is about empowerment and helping others achieve.

I have been an educator for 16 years. During these years, I have focused most of my experiences working and understanding learning disabilities, specifically dyslexia. I completed training through the Scottish Rite Center for Dyslexia in 2006 and then became a Certified Language Therapist (CALT). A CALT is a specialist trained to work with students with dyslexia and/or reading disabilities. This certification requires intensive training in remediating problems in reading, spelling and written language and requires passing an exam. This knowledge has helped me understand the challenges of students with dyslexia and build a sense of obligation toward these students. For this reason I became a Reading Specialist for a local school district and during the subsequent years, I worked closely with administrators,

teachers and district personnel promoting, advancing, and developing district policies to address the needs of students with dyslexia. I was involved with the legislative initiatives at the state level for the resolution of House Bill 231 in 2010. I then became a consultant for the Institute for Multisensory Education (IMSE) and provided consultation and training to school educators and districts across various states in the United States. I am currently working on completing a Qualified Instructor (QI) certification through the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA). This certification will qualify me to provide instruction and consultation to schools and educators to address the needs of students with dyslexia.

Through my personal and professional career, I have met many students and parents who arrived at the school with a common goal in mind— to obtain an education that would inspire the determination to pursue success in their lives. As a teacher, I witnessed diversity and uniqueness in students’ learning. I never understood why certain students in the school could not learn to read. I became an advocate for these students when I saw the injustices they lived day after day when teachers claimed, “They cannot read” or “I do not know how to help this student.” I asked myself many times: “How can students so bright not learn to read?”

I discovered that students who could not learn to read ended up in the special education classes and many of them dropped out from school. I did not know how to help them open the doors that could transport them to successful literacy and educational experiences. I realized that they lived in a world apart from where no one seemed to have the answers. I began doing research to find answers because I could

not let these students continue to live these experiences and fall behind in school. The obligations to find answers for these students become a priority in my life a few years later. One day my daughter's kindergarten teacher informed me that my daughter was not reading at grade level.

My experiences as an educator and parent have helped me understand the social context in which these students become vulnerable and discouraged. What happens to students who learn differently to acquire their literacy skills? There has been much advancement in the field of dyslexia. A wealth of research exists today to inform educators how to prevent reading failure. Extensive research is available about the type of methods and key elements that are essential to prevent reading problems for children with dyslexia. Despite these findings, schools continue to fail to attend to the needs of students that may go beyond providing interventions in specialized programs. Students with dyslexia continue to have educational experiences that are impoverished because dyslexia never goes away even after specialized interventions are provided. This research shares the voice of a population of students and parents whose educational needs are different from those of their peers who have learned to read effortlessly.

Definition of Key Terms

1. Accommodations

Refers to a change in the general classroom that enables students to keep up with the pace of the education program. Changes can include intensity of instruction;

reduced assignments; adapted test procedures; and use of computers, calculators, and tape recorders (Birsh, 2011).

2. Asset-Based Thinking (ABT)

In Asset-Based Thinking one views oneself and the world through the eyes of what is working, what strengths are present, and prospective potential (Cramer, 2013).

3. Bilingualism

Refers to a high level of linguistic proficiency in two languages, the first native language and the acquisition of a second language (Cummins, 2000). Bilinguals can be in different states of activation of their languages and language processing mechanisms. They can be either monolingual or bilingual or anything in between. Depending on the base language used and the speakers involved, a first and second language user will be either (a) monolingual mode in language A, (b) a monolingual mode in language B, or (c) a bilingual mode (Valdes, 2005).

4. Bilingual Denial

Refers to term commonly used by educators to describe a student who first language is Spanish and parents opt out of participating in bilingual program. This term is interchangeably used with Parent Denial.

5. Borderlands

The Mexico-United States region which include the U.S. states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California that border with states in Mexico like Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora and Baja California. At

the center of the 2,000 mile U.S.-Mexico border, a sprawling transnational space swells with over two million people whose region includes Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua), El Paso (Texas) and their peripheries, Sunland Park and Las Cruces (Martinez, 1994).

6. Borderlanders

The term refers to the people who reside in the Mexico-United States region that includes Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua), El Paso (Texas) and their peripheries, Sunland Park and Las Cruces (Martinez, 1994).

7. Case Study

Reports of research on a specific organization, program, or process (or some set of these) are often called case studies (Yin, 2003).

8. Culture

An integrated set of patterns of human behaviors that include communication styles, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions that give a group with a common heritage a sense of “peoplehood” (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007).

9. Culturally Responsive Leadership

Culturally responsive leadership that is defined as a responsive leadership for creating high quality classroom teaching and learning that yields academic success for *all* students (Marshall & Oliva, 2010).

10. Deficit Thinking

The notion that students, particularly language minority students, fail in school because they and their families have internal deficiencies that manifest in limited

cognitive abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack and motivation to learn and immoral behavior (Valencia, 2010).

11. Diverse Learners

A group of learners who are different from the dominant group of learners and include Black, Hispanic (Latinos), Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007).

12. Dyslexia

A learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by the difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (The International Dyslexia Association, 2002).

13. English as a Second Language (ESL)

The term describes a program in some schools where English is taught to nonnative speakers. ESL teaches different language skills, depending on the students' English abilities. All programs teach the following: conversational English, grammar, reading, listening comprehension, writing, and vocabulary.

14. English Language Learners

A diverse group of learners whose experiences differ from dominant culture in some or all of the following: country of origin, length of residence in the United States, extent of ties to country of origin, political and economic situation in the region from which they immigrated, reasons for immigration, experience living in other countries prior to the United States, amount and quality of schooling in native language, languages other than English being different from the dominant culture (Young & Hadaway, 2006). Educators use a number of terms when referring to English-language learners, including English learners (or ELs), limited English proficient (LEP) students, non-native English speakers, language-minority students, and either bilingual students or emerging bilingual students. The proliferation of terms is used interchangeably.

15. Four Resource Model

The Four Resources Model by Luke & Freebody (1990) proposes that effective literacy draws on four “practices” that are necessary but not sufficient on their own. This model provides ways of examining the content of teaching and assessment to ensure all four resources are being addressed and taught explicitly. It encourages that reading and writing always be situated in authentic contexts and purposes and acknowledges that text goes beyond print and paper.

16. Fluency

In reading, is the ability to translate print to speech with rapidity and automaticity allowing the reader the ability to focus on meaning of text (Birsh, 2011).

17. Hispanic

A group of people who trace their roots to Spanish speaking ancestors and are defined by their shared elements of Latin American ancestry and culture (Pew Research, 2005).

18. Hypertext

A data storage system for storing images, text, and other computer files that allows direct links to related text, images, sound, and other data (The National Reading Panel, 1997).

19. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

A document that sets out the child's placement in special education as well as the specific goals, short-term objectives, and benchmarks for measuring progress each year. Creating and implementing the IEP must include the opportunity for meaningful participation by the parents (Birsh, 2011).

20. Inservice Education

Education provided to current teachers who are already in the teaching profession (The National Reading Panel, 1997).

21. Language Minority

A term commonly used to describe individuals whose native language is other than English, regardless of their currently level of English proficiency (Garcia, Jensen & Scribner, 2009).

22. Mexican-American

An individual of Mexican origin who was born in the United States, or who has become a U.S. citizen through naturalization (Valencia, 2008).

23. Minority Group

A subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their lives than members of a dominant or majority group. A group that experiences a narrowing of opportunities (success, education, wealth, etc.) that is disproportionately low compared to their numbers in the society. Interchangeably used with diverse learner (Aldridge & Goldman, 2007).

24. Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE)

Instruction that is delivered by teachers who are trained to instruct language structure at the levels of sounds, syllables, meaningful parts of words, sentence structure, and paragraph and (Birsh, 2011).

25. Literacy

The ability to read and use written information, and to write appropriately for a range of purposes. It also involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing, and includes the knowledge that enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognize and use language appropriate to different social situations (Hartas, 2006).

26. Orthographic

The features of the writing system, particularly letters and their sequences in words.

27. Orton-Gillingham approach

Multisensory of teaching language-related academic skills that focuses on the structure and use of sounds, syllables, words, sentences, and written discourse. Instruction is explicit, systematic, cumulative, direct, and sequential (Birsh, 2011).

28. Preservice education

Education provided to prospective teachers who are still adopting teaching methods during the course of their preparatory education (The National Reading Panel, 1997).

29. Phonemes

An individual sound unit in spoken words; the smallest unit of speech sounds (Birsh, 2011).

30. Phonemic Awareness

Awareness of the smallest units of sounds in the speech stream and the ability to isolate or manipulate individual sounds in words (Birsh, 2011).

31. Pseudowords

Pronounceable combinations of letters that can be read by the application of language rules, but they are by definition, not real words (Birsh, 2011)

32. Reading Comprehension

The understanding of text as the result of the interaction between the reader and the text allowing for the ability to focus on the meaning of the information (Birsh, 2011).

33. Reading Recovery Program

A short-term intervention of one-to-one tutoring for low-achieving first graders that has been found to be highly effective. Students received 30 to 40 minutes of intense intervention for 12 to 20 weeks from a trained teacher. Teachers who receive training in Reading Recovery procedures attend a yearlong course (Clay, 1993).

34. Second Generation

U.S. born children of immigrants (Fry & Gonzalez, 2008).

35. Section 504 Plan

A document under the protection of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This plan prohibits discrimination against public school students with disabilities. A 504 plan can help students with learning and attention issues learn and participate in the general education. It outlines a student's specific needs and how they will be met through accommodations and other services.

36. Systematic Phonics

The teaching of sound-spelling relationships and how to use these relationships to learn to read words. Systematic means that it follows a scope and sequence that allows children to form and read words early on. The skills taught are constantly reviewed and applied to real reading (Block Collins & Israel, 2005).

37. TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Endorsement

An add-on certification or endorsement that teachers can obtain through the course of study over time from an accredited university.

38. Vocabulary

Refers to large storage of words that a person recognizes and/or uses in his or her oral and written language for communication and comprehension (Birsh, 2011).

Delimitations

The delimitations utilized by the researcher in this study were determined by the desire to better understand the relationship that exists between the learning environment and educational outcomes for students with dyslexia. In order to seek the perspectives about dyslexia, only those individuals who had in inter-connection with a student with dyslexia participated in this research. Second, another delimitation is the use of only participants who have an inter-connection with a student with dyslexia. The nature of the closeness of the relationship between participant and student may lead the researcher to analyze only these participants. This may result in the exclusion of other form of knowledge.

Limitation of the Study

Although this research was prepared very cautiously, I am aware of its limitations. First of all, the research was conducted in the two elementary schools with a total of ten participants. One interview may not provide enough opportunity and time for the researcher to gain a deep understanding about the experiences shared by each participant. Second, the population of the experimental group is small and only ten participants represented the majority of the ELLs with dyslexia in the elementary school. Third, since the questionnaire is designed to measure the participants' attitude about identification of classroom, school support and parent

involvement, it may seem not to provide enough evidence from the perspective of each participant.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one outlined critical issues in education facing educational leaders to ensure closing the academic achievement gap in reading among children of color and white children and among poor and middle class children. This chapter presented the problem statement, the purpose and significance of the research, as well as my background as an English Language Learner minority, female researcher, and parent of a child with dyslexia. It presented an overview about the important role that educational leaders play to ensure that effective reading instruction in the elementary years is accessible to all learners, as well as a critical discussion to examine the necessary components through cultural responsiveness and perspectives. The importance of preventive efforts educational leaders need to examine to improve literacy skills in individuals was discussed, as well as historical social, cultural and linguistic inequity factors influencing achievement. A discussion urging change agents in education to recognize the demographic changes in current U.S. public schools and statistics about fastest minority population, English Language Learners (ELLs). An overview of dyslexia, the most common explanation for the reading difficulties was presented and need for educational leaders to examine these issues through socio-cultural factors are discussed. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks, Critical Race Theory and a Dyslexia Framework were presented as the lenses that guided this research.

Chapter 2 discusses the relevant literature that educators must examine. This literature includes legislative initiatives that have been undertaken to improve reading instruction and educational outcomes. It reviews critical issues and consideration in addressing the needs of diverse learners, specifically English Language Learners. It also presents important research and discussion about effective reading instruction, issues for consideration in preschool, elementary and middle school years, and high school and beyond to improve educational outcomes of all students. It outlines supporting research from over the last 30 years by highlighting the importance of preventing reading difficulties and current research and findings on interventions for English and native Spanish speakers. It provides a thorough description of English Language Learners, their demographics and critical issues currently in U.S. schools and a discussion and considerations to address their educational needs. It concludes with current statistical information about dyslexia and the mounted research supporting the learning differences in students with dyslexia in order to meet their unique needs and ensure their academic success. To conclude, this chapter provides detailed information on the theoretical frameworks that were utilized to view this research.

Chapter 3 will describe the methods that were utilized in this research.

Chapter 4 reports the findings from the research. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the research, the analysis of findings, conclusions, implications and recommendations for practice, and considerations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

According to Snow et al. (1998), learning to read with understanding is the foundation that leads to academic achievement and personal success. Currently, there are significant discrepancies that exist in reading proficiency levels between ELLs and native speakers of English, which continues to widen as students progress through the educational pipeline (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Artiles and Ortiz continue to claim that for the majority of English Language Learners, learning to read is a complex issue. They urge educators to work together to ensure that these issues are socially, culturally and linguistically addressed.

This chapter begins by outlining the importance of why learning to read is crucial. It then focuses on reading through a cultural context. Next, an overview of demographical changes will be presented. This will narrow down to understanding the demographics of ELLs. It will discuss the development of current and past federal initiatives that attempts to improve educational outcomes for all students. It will present information about reading instruction and interventions. It will highlight critical issues relating to the educational outcomes of ELLs. Finally, it will provide some considerations for addressing the needs of ELLs, as well as recent research on dyslexia. This chapter will close with a description of the theoretical frameworks that will be guiding this research.

Reading Acquisition

Educational leaders who recognize that the ability to read proficiently is significantly related to how much a person can achieve in his or her personal and professional life will make it a priority to support adequate instruction during the elementary years (Lyon et al., 2003; Shaywitz, 2003). Snow et al. (1998) agree with previous findings and sustain that reading is essential to success in society and the ability to read is highly valued and important for social and economic advancement.

Learning to read and write begins long before the school years, as the biological, cognitive, and social precursors are put into place (Snow et al., 1998). Although there is no agreement on the exact chronological, mental age or a particular developmental level when children are “ready” to learn to read and write, it has been found that it is age-related to developmental time tables. For example, children who have positive experiences with literacy and become successful readers tend to exhibit age-appropriate sensory, perceptual, cognitive, and social skills as they progress through the preschool years (Snow et al., 1998). It is often observed that these children, through interaction of maturation and experience, master physical dexterity and locomotion; they are able to categorize and construct relationship between objects and can remember events over time. They can play imaginatively and start forming social relationships.

According to Snow et al. (1998), children start forming concepts about how reading works very early on as they observe and interact with readers and writers and their own attempts to read and write. In effect, the road to become a reader is a long

process that begins before formal instruction is provided in a formal school setting (Snow et al., 1998).

Freebody and Luke (1990) challenge the ideology of what constitutes the necessary components to become a successful reader and elaborate on the notion that the necessary elements of literacy are based on the cultural demands that are posed by that culture and the expectations that are necessary. Consequently, Freebody and Luke (1990) pose four components based on perceptions of what our culture expects from people in their managing of text and are subsequently described in the next sections.

Critical Literacy

Freebody and Luke (1990) illustrate that there are many theories of literacy and literacy pedagogy that attempt to describe the conditions that are both necessary and sufficient for an individual to demonstrate successful literate performance. Freebody and Luke challenged the notion that everything that a member of a culture can take from or bring to a written text can never be pre-specified. Luke (1992) argued that different cultures construct literacy differently and their practices stress variations in texts, genres, events and even practices. Luke points out that what one learns to do with particular texts, genres and practices are related to the distribution of literate power and work in a society. Freebody and Luke (1990) draw attention away from “which methods afford adequate literacy?” toward the larger and important question of “which aspects of literacy or which ‘literacies’ are offered or emphasized by various programs? Freebody and Luke developed a four resources

model of reading which posits four necessary but not sufficient “roles” for the reading in a postmodern, text-based culture. These categories include: Code breaker (coding competence), Meaning maker (semantic competence), Text User (pragmatic competence), and Text Analyst (critical competence) and should be used to guide educators in analyzing what “literacies” are offered in various instructional programs. At the same time, it can offer educators the ability to recognize that a “critical” approach to literacy is not only the most appropriate or necessary, but rather that each of these general families of approaches displays and emphasizes particular forms of literacy that no single one will, of itself, fully enable students to use texts effectively, in their own individual and collective interest across a range of discourses, texts and tasks (Freebody & Luke, 1990).

Coding Competence: Role as code breaker. Role as Code Breaker requires an individual to engage successfully with the written script of text. Two important aspects to this role are an understanding about the nature of the relationship between spoken sounds and written symbols, and the contents of that relationship. Stanovich’s (1986) research concluded that there is one identifiable source of early reading failure then it is the failure of the individual to acquire proficiency with the structured nature of spoken language and their components and combinations. Freebody and Luke (1990) demonstrate that the ways in which elementary schools are organized, individual’s failure with this role quickly leads to cascades of avoidance strategies and other motivational problems that go beyond the first year or two of schooling and result in illiteracy in adults. Studies by Johnston, Rugg and Scott (1987) support

findings that individuals with limited “basics” phonemic awareness and phonics (Snow et al. 1998) can become the justification for isolated instruction of skill and drill approaches. Freebody and Luke (1990) discuss the importance and necessary role of the code breaker but caution educators that is not a sufficient condition, especially for social functions and actual contexts of literacy. They urge educators to recognize that the role of the code breaker is vital and they should recognize the misunderstanding about role often hinders individuals’ abilities to “crack the code.”

Semantic Competence: Role as text participant. Freebody and Luke (1990) define this role as developing the resources to engage the meaning systems of a discourse in text. This role is the process of comprehension that is called upon the reader to draw inferences and connect textual elements and background knowledge that is required to fill out the unexplicated aspects of text. The “meaning is not the message but a cryptic recipe that guides a person in constructing a representation from the text” that must be recognized by teachers (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Freebody and Luke acknowledge the importance of a reader’s background knowledge and expand on the importance of understanding the cultural knowledge that readers can bring or lack in the discourse. Luke (1992) describes that in effect readers bring a stock of knowledge built from prior readings of texts and everyday community experiences and so forth. These resources are neither universal nor wholly, but tend to take on culture-specific configurations and patterns. For example, the relationship between cultural knowledge and reading comprehension has demonstrated that students may misinterpret text or fill gaps of meaning with their own cultural

knowledge leading to construct an interpretation that was not intended by writer (Freebody & Luke, 1990). It is crucial that educators make considerations that “reading” cannot be enhance independently of knowledge and understandings of the topic/content question but comprehension must be guided and explicit to support students with making meaning. It signals educators that the use of texts about which learners have limited background knowledge can be a hindrance to comprehension (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Luke (1992) describes that the need for explicit instructional introduction to these texts and genres make culture-specific meaning demands on students.

Pragmatic Competence: Role as text user. This term describes the importance in developing resources to engage in the systems that provide meaning and discourse within a text (Freebody & Luke, 1990). A reader may be a fluent decoder and able to construct meaning, however, they might be unfamiliar with how, where, and to what end a text might be used (Luke, 1992). In order to develop comprehension of text in readers, a reader’s attention is drawn upon the importance of calling upon their relation and textual knowledge about the topic so that connections with the unexplicated aspects of text are accomplished. Literacy cannot be viewed as a solitary, individual act or mental process, but rather as a broad range of social context that will allow the reader to make sense of a loan contract, planning a job-related task, or participating in a classroom lesson about a text (Luke, 1992). Therefore, Luke (1992) implies that becoming a successful text user entails developing and practicing social and sociolinguistic resources for participating in

“what this text is for, here and now.” Luke argues that many school programs expose students to very limited, school-like reading events, many of which have limited transfer to out-of-school contexts (Luke, 1992).

Critical Competence: Role as text analyst. Luke (1992) described that a reader may be able to decode a passage of text adequately, and bring relevant knowledge to make sense of a text, and further be able to meet a particular purpose at work, school, or home. Furthermore, Luke insists that all these can remain fundamentally acritical procedures, which means they entail accepting, without question, the validity, force and value of the text in questions. This role describes traditionally texts written by persons with specific dispositions or orientations to the information, regardless of how factual or neutral the products may attempt to be (Freebody & Luke). Freebody and Luke (1990) present the notion that in order to establish the role of the reader and create a more conscious awareness of the language and ideas systems that are brought into play when reading a particular text, it requires the reader to construct or picture a sense in the knowledge of a reader that makes sense of the ideology or position of the reader.

A crucial aspect of analyzing text is a crucial part of learning that entails using one’s life and community experiences with those portrayed in a text (Luke, 1992). According to Luke (1992) this analysis allows the reader to examine that texts may portray fictional worlds or may position the reader to a particular ideology that may lead to a particular interpretation. Through “critical competence,” a reader develops a language system for talking about how texts can code cultural ideologies, how can

restrain and often explode and build up to a particular version of events or social relations. According to Freebody and Luke (1990), a reader must have more than topical knowledge about the text in order to critically analyze text as they encounter it.

Initiatives to Improve Educational Outcomes

National Reading Panel

According to Block Collins and Israel (2005), literacy has become the focal point for educational legislation for the last three decades. Many legislative efforts recognized that reading proficiency is the most fundamental skill critical to academic learning success in schools and policy makers, scholars and practitioners have placed a high interest on how literacy develops (Indrisano & Chall, 1995). In 1997, Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel to assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. A National Reading Panel (NRP) was formed and settled on the following topics for their intensive study: (a) Alphabetics: Phonemic Awareness instruction and Phonics instruction (b) Fluency (c) Comprehension (d) Vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction and teacher preparation and comprehension strategies instruction; (e) Teacher education and reading instruction and (f) Computer technology and reading instruction (The National Reading Panel, 1997). The Panel also reported findings and conclusions on each topic are summarized:

a) **Alphabetics:**

Phonemic Awareness (PA): Phonemic awareness demonstrated that PA is effective in teaching children to attend to and manipulate speech sounds in words. Findings also revealed that PA can be taught and is effective under a variety of teaching conditions with a variety of learners.

Phonics instruction: Findings from this result concluded that systematic phonics instruction produces gains in reading and spelling not only in the early grades (kindergarten and first grades) but also in the later grades (second through sixth grade) and among children having difficulty learning to read. Effect sizes in the early grades were significantly larger and support Chall's (1967) assertion that early instruction in systematic phonics is especially beneficial for growth in reading.

b) **Fluency:** The conclusion of the NRP indicated that fluency is an essential part of reading. In addition, the NRP found that guided oral reading procedures and repeated readings have been widely recommended as appropriate and valuable for increasing reading fluency.

c) **Teacher Preparation and Comprehension Strategies Instruction:** The NRP found that most teachers can be taught to teach comprehension strategies effectively to students which will lead to improved performance on students' comprehension strategies. It was also found that teaching comprehension strategies effectively in the natural setting of the classroom

involves a level of proficiency and flexibility that often requires substantial and intensive teacher preparation.

- d) Vocabulary: The NRP found that vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly; repetitions and multiple exposures to vocabulary are important; learning in rich contexts is valuable to learning; vocabulary tasks should be restricted when necessary; and vocabulary learning should entail active engagement in learning tasks.
- e) Teacher education and reading instruction: The NRP found that appropriate teacher education does produce higher achievement in students. However, the NRP determined that more must be known about the conditions under which this conclusion holds. Some issues that need to be resolved include determining the optimal combination of preservice and inservice experience, effects of pre-service experience on in-service performance, appropriate length of interventions for both preservice and in-service education, and best ways to assess the effectiveness of teacher education and professional development.
- f) Computer technology and reading instruction: The NRP concluded that only a small sample of experimental research was available in this area and must be furthered examined. However, the use of computer technology for reading instruction reported positive effects. The second finding indicated that hypertext might be used in instructional contexts to

some advantages and using computers for word processing has potential for making reading instruction more effective.

According to Orosco (2010), although the notable goal of this panel was to find and identify scientific-based research knowledge (“what works”) that would improve student reading achievement by recommending a balanced reading approach in developing reading skills, the NRP noted that “it did not address issues relevant to second language learning” that were “such reported in experimental or quasi-experimental studies” and these statements were lost in legislation and continue to be overlooked and not given importance by many states and educational leaders who are attempting to close the achievement gap based on this research. This has become problematic because many existing reading initiatives that have been launched under the guise of the NRP have created the assumptions that just by teaching reading basics independent from socio-cultural experiences to English Language Learners; they will become effective readers (Cummins, 2000).

National Academy of Science

In 1998, The National Academy Sciences established a committee to examine the prevention of reading difficulties at the request from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Snow et al., 1998). The committee recognized the importance of providing excellent reading instruction to all children and at the heart of their recommendations was the central position that excellent reading instruction is essential in the primary grades in

elementary school (Snow et al., 1998). The committee took into consideration the historical controversies that have presumed reading instruction in the U.S. and examined the current research on reading to make available clear guidelines for helping children become successful readers. The findings indicated the following:

- a) Adequate initial reading instruction requires a focus on using reading to obtain meaning from print; the sublexical structure of spoken words; the nature of the orthographic system; and frequent opportunities to read and write.
- b) Adequate progress in learning to read English beyond the initial level depends on having established a working understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically; sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts written with different purposes; and control over procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstandings.
- c) Reading is typically acquired by children who have average or above average language skills; have had experiences in early childhood that fostered motivation and provided exposure to literacy in use; are given information about the print via opportunities to learn letters and recognize the sublexical structure of spoken words, as well as written language; and who attend schools that provide coherent reading instruction and opportunities to practice reading.

The committee also analyzed that reading development can be impeded or delayed when the above factors are not accessible, especially in impoverished urban and rural neighborhoods (Snow et al., 1998). There are also a small number of children who will need intensive, preventive methods and may continue to benefit from extra help in learning to read with instructional accommodations throughout their lives. Snow et al. (1998) acknowledge in their research that early literacy development is crucial in the development of reading skills. Children who have limited prior knowledge and skills in certain domains, children from poor neighborhoods, and children with limited English proficiency, and children whose parents had difficulty learning to read, must be supported through preventive measures and are given accessibility to these essential factors. In effect, Snow et al. (1998) recommended that children who are language-minority and have no English proficiency should be taught to read in their native language while extending them with opportunities to become bilingual and biliterate. At last, the committee (Snow et al., 1998) examined reading among children for whom English is the second language. Their findings concluded that there is substantial evidence supporting that initial reading instruction should be in the child's native language. In effect, research supports that reading instruction in the native language contributes to literacy attainment in both the home language and English and prevents reading difficulties. Snow et al. (1998) highlight the importance and the need to sponsor research in the literacy acquisition of children for whom English is not the primary language.

The No Child Left Behind Act

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was an educational reform that President Bush proposed and it is the most current version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The NCLB was built on four principles: accountability for results, more choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research. The NCLB required the following:

- 1) All states assess students' literacy and mathematic abilities in Grades 3-8 and once during Grades 10-12; by the year 2006 states had to start using state-designed tests.
- 2) All states establish by the year 2006 teacher certification to review whether teachers are highly qualified or certified to teach in the core subject areas.
- 3) All states assess students in science once during Grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12 using designed state tests by year 2008.
- 4) All states must attain 100% student literacy and mathematical proficiency for all students by June 2014.

Under the current Obama Administration, Congress was called to fix the law and find solutions for states to help prepare all students for college and career readiness (The White House President Barack Obama, 2011). The Obama Administration concluded that The No Child Left Behind had led to many negative consequences. NCLB has resulted in states lowering their standards. There has been an emphasis on punishing school failure over rewarding success and a focus on only

test scores, rather than recognizing growth and progress. Finally, there has been a prescribed pass-fail, one-size-fits-all series of interventions for schools that miss their goals (President Barack Obama, 2011).

The Obama Administration created a Blue for Reform of the Elementary and Education Act but Congress would not act on this reauthorization. The Obama Administration moved forward to offer states flexibility within the law. The flexibility let states, schools, and teachers develop and implement effective ways to prepare students with the skills necessary to compete for jobs of the future. To receive flexibility from the NCLB Act, states must adopt a strong plan to implement college- and-career ready standards. States must also create systems of teacher and principal evaluation that are comprehensive. States that receive waivers must set new performance goals to improve student achievement. Currently, there are 41 states that have been approved for waivers and flexibility from the NCLB (President Barack Obama, 2011).

The U.S. Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act a decade ago, which directed schools to eliminate the gaps in standardized test scores by the year 2014 (Nisbett, 2010). Whether the act was passed with a naïve belief that little money would suffice to achieve it or with the skeptical knowledge that no such massive change would be accomplished, it has become clear that it did not make deadline. According to Nisbett (2010), the barriers to reducing the academic gaps are large and it is doubtful that the social class gap will ever be brought to zero; the gaps among black, Hispanic, and white children can with no doubt be greatly reduced but the root

causes of gaps are very complex (Nisbett, 2010). Segregation of low-income and ethnic minority students is an example that closing the achievement gap is virtually impossible (Gandára, 2010). Separate is not equal, and it has never been because segregation is harmful to all children who need the skills and experiences to live and work in a multicultural nation. A second factor that supports segregated communities is housing policies that support segregation in neighborhoods; increasing immigration and rising housing costs have created concentration of single ethnic groups in inner cities where they find affordable housing (Gandára, 2010).

Today's leaders will need to recognize that it will be up to them to create the necessary conditions to guarantee that no one gets left behind (Gandára, 2010). Although schools remain a powerful place for opportunity and attaining a thriving, multiracial democratic society, legislative mandates, like NCLB (2001) continue to pose challenging and bewildered conditions on school districts that have spent countless years trying to close the academic achievement gaps among minority students and whites. These mandates have failed to recognize the gaps that exist in opportunities (Gandára, 2010). It will become necessary to engage in efforts that promote school improvement with community resources to alleviate the effects of poverty and racial segregation; providing equitable resources, high-quality education for all, and intensive early literacy programs that integrate students socioeconomically, racially, and linguistically, which is something very crucial to the future.

Early Reading and Reading First Initiatives

The Reading First initiative developed on findings from many years of scientific research that was compiled by the National Reading Panel and from the research synthesis commissioned by the National Academy of Sciences (Snow et al., 1998) and was central part of the federal “No Child Left Behind Act” of 2001. The development and implementation of these programs was also built on the recognition that many of the nation’s children, particularly children from disadvantaged environments, struggle with learning to read and read below grade-level placements. These programs were funded on the need to increase reading instructional programs and professional development courses that are based on scientific research requiring states to set high standards of achievement for students and create systems of accountability to measure results. The Reading First Initiative funded approximately one billion dollars per year for a six-year period to states to provide school districts funds to implement instructional programs based on scientifically based reading research (SBRR). These investments were made to provide high-reading instruction at the preschool (Early Reading First) and kindergarten through grade three (Reading First) in order to reduce the number of children who would need special education services later because of reading problems (Block & Israel, 2005).

Findings from the Reading First Final report (Reading First, 2009) were consistent with previous findings presented in the study’s Interim Report, which found statistically impacts on instructional time spent on the five essential components of reading instruction promoted by the program (phonemic awareness,

phonics, fluency and vocabulary and comprehension) in grades one and two, and found no statistically significant impact on reading comprehension. Analysis of the impact of Reading First on aspects of program implementation, as reported by teachers and reading coaches revealed that the program had statistically significant impact on several domains. Information obtained from a test of Silent Word Reading Fluency indicated that Reading First had a positive and statistically significance impact on first grade students' decoding skills.

According to Antunez (2015), central to the discussion is that Reading First adopted the National Reading Panel's recommendations for reading instruction without considering whether they were valid for ELLs. The National Reading Panel never included research on reading instruction for ELLs, despite the fact that 4.4 million ELLs (nearly one in 10) students were enrolled in U.S. Public schools in the 1999-2000 school years (Antunez, 2015). A major significance on this consequence is the failure to consider differences between reading for native speakers of English and reading for ELLs, including the important role of oral language development in English and the influence of first language literacy for ELLs learning to read in English as a second language.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

On December 3, 2004, President Bush signed into law the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA, 2004). This revised law brought changes to practitioners in how to identify children with learning disabilities. Previously practitioners were encouraged to use discrepancy between children's intelligence

quotient (IQ) and achievement. Response to Intervention (RTI) provided a new alternative method and became a new means of providing early intervention to all children who are at risk for school failure. It allowed school districts the ability to use as much as 15% of their special education monies to fund early intervention activities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2011). According to Fuchs and Fuchs, RTI became central to the development of reading skills because about 80% of children with learning disabilities are described as reading disabled (Lyon, 1995). RTI promoted larger roles for reading specialists and reading teachers (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2011) and brought dramatic implications for culturally and linguistically diverse students who historically have been disproportionately overrepresented in special education programs (Klingner & Edwards, 2006). In addition, RTI model holds a promise for preventing academic failure by providing support for culturally and linguistically diverse students before they underachieve (Klingner & Edwards).

According to Klingner and Edwards (2006), RTI model may be implemented in various ways and differ in the number of levels of support provided. Generally, the first tier is considered quality instruction and ongoing progress monitoring within the general education classroom. The provisions of intensive intervention support characterize the second tier for students who have not met expected benchmarks or made adequate progress. When students do not respond to the second tier of intervention, they qualify either for special education or for an evaluation for possible placement in special education. Klingner and Edwards (2006) describe that the fundamental notion of the RTI model is to provide instructional practices and

interventions at each level based on scientific research about what works. It is essential that these considerations also address the importance to find out what works with whom, by whom, and in what contexts. It is central to ask what the first tier should look like for culturally diverse students. What should it look like for English-Language Learners? And for students living in high poverty areas? What should the second instructional tier look like? Will it be the same for every student? Should it have variations and how are these determined? How can educators ensure that the instruction is responding to the needs of all students (Klingner & Edwards, 2006)?

Response to Intervention continues to hold promises for many students. Educators and schools district need to ensure this process fulfills its purpose to prevent reading difficulties by asking and responding to the questions previously mentioned. More initiatives, like Common State Standards, will continue to emerge in efforts to improve the student learning.

English Language Development Standards

All parents or guardians of newly enrolled students are required to complete a Home Language Identification Survey. This survey lets school staff know what language the student used in the home. If the survey indicates that the child uses a language other than English, he or she is administered an English proficiency test. Performance on this test determines the student's entitlement to English language development support services. If the results from the survey also show that the student is an ELL and Spanish is used in the home, he or she must also take a Spanish proficiency assessment to determine language dominance in his or her first language.

NCLB mandates that all states create English Language Development Proficiency (ELD/P) standards and standards-based assessments to be used in accountability (New Mexico, ELD standards, 2009). The NCLB regulations require each state, or consortium of several states collaborating together to create one set of standards that must be used address students' linguistic competency (NCLB, 2001). Boyd-Batsone (2006) urges educators to recognize diversity among students and not make assumptions that one size "fits" all. He adds that language assessments should always inform their instruction.

Language Standards in New Mexico

In New Mexico, the New Mexico English Language Development (ELD) Standards (2009) were redesigned as a necessary foundation to guide and differentiate language instruction and assessment for ELLs in grades pre-kindergarten through 12. The revision of these standards was a response to meet the current needs of practitioners and students in New Mexico schools. Other changes in these standards include recent findings in the educational and language development fields brought through current theory, research and legislation. For example, New Mexico standards focus on today's educational paradigm, which supports curriculum, instruction and assessment that is based on standards and research. Second, language proficiency has expanded to the social and academic success. Third, the federal NCLB and corresponding state statutes mandated that states administer a standards-based English language proficiency test annually to ELLs in kindergarten through twelve grades in public schools (New Mexico ELD Standards, 2009).

According to the New Mexico ELD Standards, (2009) English language proficiency test must assess the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing (with a derived comprehension score) and be linked to content standards. It is the hopes of the state, that these standards will provide a reliable and valid assessment tool for teachers of ELLs. The ELL population will be made up to three categories:

1. Students whose primary or home language is other than English, including recent immigrants;
2. Students from heritage language groups needing enrichment and further development of academic English, some of whom maintain degrees of fluency in their heritage language; and
3. Any other students needing enrichment and further development of academic English.

Language Standards in Texas

In Texas, English language standards were adopted in 2007 as per Texas Administrative Code §74.4 Chapter 74. The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) were developed to address the needs of ELLs and outline English language proficiency and student expectations for ELLs. School districts must implement them as an integral part of each subject in all required curriculum.

In order for English Language Learners to be successful, the standards will ensure that students acquire both social and academic language proficiency in English. One of the goals of these standards is that classroom instruction that effectively integrates second language acquisition with quality content area

instruction will ensure that ELLs acquire social and academic language proficiency in English and learn the knowledge and skills to reach full academic potential. In addition, effective instruction in second language involves providing ELLs opportunities to listen, speak, read and write at their current level of English proficiency while increasing the linguistic complexity of the English they read and hear, and are expected to read and write. Through the standards, the English proficiency levels of beginning, intermediate, advance, and advanced high are not grade-specific and should serve as a road map to help content area teachers instruct ELLs commensurate with their linguistic needs (English Language Proficiency Standards, 2007).

School districts in Texas are required to adhere to the following:

- 1) Identify student's English language proficiency levels in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in accordance with the proficiency level descriptors for beginning, intermediate, advance, and advance high levels;
- 2) Provide instruction in the knowledge of skills of the foundations and enrichment curriculum in a manner that is linguistically accommodated (communicated, sequenced, and scaffolded) commensurate with students' levels of English language proficiency to ensure that the students learn the knowledge and skills;
- 3) Provide content-based instruction including cross-curricular second language acquisition essential knowledge and skills in a manner that is

linguistically accommodated to help the student acquire English language proficiency; and

- 4) Provide intensive and ongoing foundational second language acquisition instructions to ELLs in grade three or higher who are at the beginning or intermediate level of English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and/or writing as determined by the state's English language proficiency assessment system. These ELLs will require focused, targeted, and systematic second language instruction to provide them with the foundation of English language vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and English mechanics necessary to support content-based instruction and accelerated learning of English.

Common Core State Standards

In 2009, the national-led effort to develop Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was launched by state leaders, including governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia, through their membership in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (National Governors Association, 2010). According to the Center on Education Policy, as of January 2012, the District of Columbia and 45 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics. These voluntary standards outline the knowledge and skills in English language arts and math that students in grades kindergarten through 12 are expected to learn to be prepared for college and careers. Advocates of the

standards envision that these standards will guide teaching and learning and will help ensure that students receive a consistent, high-quality education (Kober & Rentner, 2011).

Kober & Rentner (2011) analyzed that primary issues with CCSS is how they will be put into practice in the classroom. A recent survey by the Center on Education Policy in winter and spring of 2011 found that 75% of districts have perceived the CCSS to be more rigorous than their state previous standards, with 58% strongly agreeing that the CCSS will improve students' skills. This survey also indicated that two-thirds of districts have develop a plan for implementing the standards for the school year, while 76% of school districts perceive adequate funding for such implementation to be a major challenge and about two-thirds noted a lack of guidance from their states on teacher evaluation systems, assessment development, or alignment of the standards with teacher education programs.

The translation of CCSS into practice points to the need for understanding how teachers will actually interpret the CCSS related to their instruction due to the fact that the CCSS should only serve as a framework or set of guidelines for curriculum development (Beach, 2011). For example, a key focus of the CCSS is the idea of preparing students to be successful in college and other careers. This paradigm has lead to the emphasis on reading complex texts that will prepare students to read these types of texts usually assigned in college, which some research indicated students are not reading or if they are reading, they have difficulty comprehending (Beach, 2011). According to Beach, many issues and questions have been raised as

to whether reading more difficult texts will be beneficial, especially for beginning readers and whether the measures employed by the CCSS to identify text complexity are valid and should be employed to discriminate between difficulty levels and types of beginning reading texts. These current issues in the current implementation of CCSS point to major questions as to what literacy learning paradigms will frame instruction and assessment in the classrooms. Some argue (Alfaro, Durán, Hunt, & Aragón, 2014) that adopting more rigorous standards will not address the economic inequities that have been identified as direct correlation between poverty and reading tests scores but will only increase the gap in performance between affluent districts and those with larger numbers of low-income students. In addition Alfaro et al. (2014) states that CCSS will not remedy the problems of school districts that face highly segregated and impoverished communities.

Critical Issues Related to Educational Achievement

Early Childhood Years

The importance of early childhood education for children has been given great importance, especially the idea of creating improved, better connected education for preschool and elementary children (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Snow et al. (1998) support this idea, especially in formulating experiences in early childhood that foster motivation and provide exposure to literacy in use to support literacy development in the very early years; it has become important to understand that the demographics of children who will be attending early childhood settings is changing. It is projected that over the next 20 years, there will be an increase in children whose home language

is not English. Nevertheless, it is also essential to recognize that there are three challenges that must be taken into consideration by policy makers and educators who are making decisions for young children: a) reducing learning gaps and increasing achievement of all children; b) creating improved, better connected education for preschool and elementary children; and c) recognizing teacher knowledge and decision making as vital to educational effectiveness.

Copple and Bredekamp (2009) agree with previous research (Lundbert, et al 1999) and recognize that families, educators, and the larger society hope that children will achieve in school and go on to satisfying and productive lives. However, the optimistic future is not equally alike for all the nation's schoolchildren. Copple and Bredekamp's comments aligned with Valencia's (2008) about the critical disparities in school-related performance and the underlying reasons due to differences related to early experiences and access to good programs and schools. There is a mismatch between the school culture and the children's cultural backgrounds. Additionally, children in low-income homes hear fewer words and are engaged in fewer extended conversations due to their parents working more than one job to fulfill their basic needs. Thus, by 36 months of age, substantial socioeconomic disparities already exist in vocabulary knowledge that is fundamental in literacy development and all areas of thinking and learning.

Tienda and Mitchell (2006) agree with previous findings about the early beginning experiences for Hispanic students. They described that these students' educational disadvantages begin due to two reasons: (1) their delayed entry into

formal school setting and (2) their limited opportunity to acquire pre-literacy skills. Parents of Hispanic children are less likely to be fluent in English and usually have limited educational levels that prevent them from finding the necessary resources to support and promote pre-literacy skills. For example, reading to preschool children to foster language development is crucial because it will enhance early reading performance and social development which will lead to future academic school success. Tienda & Mitchelle (2006) also found that visiting the libraries, storytelling, and other home literacy activities are usually low for Spanish speaking children. Tienda and Mitchell report that lack of exposure to preschool literacy activities, particularly among Spanish speaking children, will create literacy disadvantages in the early grades.

In response to these issues, The National Association for the Education (2009) of Young Children (NAEYC) has identified some considerations in developing developmentally appropriate practices for young children:

- 1) What is known about the child's development and learning—referring to knowledge of age related characteristics that permit general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children's learning and development.
- 2) What is known about each child as an individual—referring to what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how to best adapt and be responsive to that individual's differences.

- 3) What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live—referring to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children’s lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family (p. 9-10).

The Elementary and Middle School Years

Over the past 25 years, a great deal of research about the importance of reading acquisition in the elementary grades has accumulated with crucial importance to the development of reading instruction during the elementary years (Adams, 1990 & Perfetti, 1985).

The ages at which children are eligible or required to begin attending school and enter kindergarten vary from state to state. Usually children enter elementary school when they are five years old, but the range can go from four to seven years (Berk, 2006). Copple and Bredekamp (2009) describe that when children enter school, their thinking is reorganizing, gradually become more systematic, accurate, and complex. Hartas (2006) describes that children’s development of social, language, and communication skills will also depend on the quality of early years in their education. In addition, it is during the early elementary years, especially in kindergarten when children’s brains are responsive to stimulation, prompting massive wiring of neurons and sculpting of brain regions (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). It is during this time that children’s brains are more malleable than they will be later.

Although Hispanic elementary school children continue to make steady growth in reading and math, greater gains by other groups continue to demonstrate that their progress is sustainable and in some cases widens Hispanic achievement gaps (Tienda & Michell, 2006). The latest 2011 data of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that approximately one-third of American school children in grades four and eight performed at proficient rates in reading and math in comparison to students in other countries (Dudley-Marling & Michaels, 2012). It is evident that these gaps are the largest for Mexican Americans (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). In the borderland state of New Mexico, for example, the number of ELLs demonstrating proficiency on state reading assessment continues to decrease year after year for all students in grades three to eleven (Bilingual Multicultural Education Annual Report, 2012). Dudley-Marlin and Michaels (2012) draw attention to the fact that Hispanic, Black and economically disadvantaged students do poorly on NAEP assessments when compared their white counterparts. These findings support the obvious conclusion that U.S. schools fail a disproportionate number of Black and Hispanic students and students living in poverty.

Tienda and Mitchell (2006) agree with previous findings and outline that the academic achievement gap becomes increasingly evident when children enter the primary grades. In addition, teachers' perceptions about Hispanic students' abilities differ from that of their white peers. Tienda and Mitchell found that Kindergarten teachers systematically rated Hispanic students below white students when they first

enrolled. Teacher biases are apparent and few of them understand Hispanic children's' cultural backgrounds.

For middle school, Hispanic students usually encounter other challenges that limit their chances for school success (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). For example, large, urban schools are not considered optimal for learning in the middle school grades. Another challenge that students encounter is weak ties with their teachers. Tienda & Mitchell describe that weak ties reduce students' motivation to excel academically and will result in lower teacher's expectations, lower under-achievement and academic disengagement. These reasons perpetuate and lead to lack of relevance of what is being taught in school, which will contribute to poor academic performance in high school and will dampen their aspirations for college (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006).

Policy makers, administrators and educators need to develop a sense of urgency in addressing the needs of children who do not acquire reading skills to prevent them from falling behind. There are several important issues that must be taken into consideration as they move forward. First, children need to have access to quality reading instruction beginning in the early childhood years and continuing into elementary years. Second, schools need to embrace the notion that the face of U.S. schools is changing and the student population is becoming more diverse. Third, school needs to create environments that support these diverse learners (August & Shanahan, 2006). Last, change agents need to critically examine the deficit perspective that has dominated thinking about high levels of educational failure among poor and minority students and consider alternative, social constructivist

perspectives to explain disproportionate academic failure among Black, Hispanic and poor students.

The High School Years and Beyond

Tienda and Mitchell (2006) reported that even when under the best circumstances, students face many challenges when they transition from middle school to high school. For Hispanic students, this challenge is even more global because they are destined to school that are oversized, resource-poor and staffed with many inexperienced or uncertified teachers. Additionally, Hispanic students who come from homes where parents lack a high school education are in the most need of early guidance in course planning and preparation for college. This type of guidance is in short supply in the schools these students attend. Hispanic parents have limited experience with U.S. schools and they usually place unquestionable authority to teachers and administrators for any decision-making.

High school experiences are crucial in shaping students' educational expectations and their aspirations (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). Yet recent studies have concluded that Hispanic eighth graders are less likely planning to enroll or attend college preparatory curriculum. These findings urge that effective counseling on course selection take priority, especially for students whose parents are unfamiliar with the complexity of the U.S. educational system (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006).

Tienda & Mitchell report that for many Hispanic students who want to attend college, their chances become limited because they fail to take the courses or exams required for college entrance, which is another consequence of their poor guidance

counseling during high school. For example, achievement in mathematics is a strong predictor of college enrollment and Hispanic high school graduates are less likely than whites to take college entrance examinations or apply to college. In addition, these students are about 20% less likely than whites to complete advance mathematics, as well as less likely than whites to take advance science courses, which compromises their post-high school educational options.

Disproportionate student achievement has been evident for minority students at the national and state levels. The Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) instituted a three-year cycle for looking at reading for 15-year-olds, called the PISA studies, for the Program for International Student Achievement. Disaggregation of this data indicate that the performance in 2000 of U.S. 15-year-olds in literacy in relation to other nations placed white students in the United States among the highest performing students in the world and Hispanic students were among the poorest performing students internationally (Rodriguez & Rolle, 2007).

In conclusion, it has become critical to analyze the educational experiences encountered by these students during their school years. If the educational opportunities available to white students were available to all our students, in 2000, the United States would have been the third-highest nation in reading. Public schools for millions of white children are clearly working very well, while minority students will score almost last among the industrialized countries in the world. Given these findings it is important to ask what plausible hypotheses differentiate the education of white students from minority students, especially English Language Learners

(Rodriguez & Rolle, 2007). Additionally, Burns et al. (1998) found in their research that levels of literacy for high school completion, employability, and responsible citizenship in a democracy is feasible for all but a very small number of individuals. Yet a substantial number of American youth continue to not graduate from high school or graduate with limited literacy skills. These youth are often from minority groups who differ from dominant norms in schools in multifaceted ways, like culture (Marshall & Oliva, 2010).

The Importance Preventing Reading Difficulties

According to Gándara and Contreras (2009), large gaps in school readiness already exist between poor children and middle-class children, as well as between white and Latino children. By the end of third grade it is alarmingly easy to predict who will go to college and who will not, based on students' reading scores (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Thus interventions to improve the educational outcomes of all students must begin at the earliest stages possible in a child's life.

Interventions for Native English Speakers

Numerous findings have confirmed that early intervention in the elementary grades is crucial for students who are experiencing difficulty learning to read (Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, Pollard-Durodola, Mathes & Cardenas-Hagan, 2006). According to Snow (1992), children who will need additional support for language and literacy development should receive it as early as possible because children develop and grow rapidly. Numerous findings have confirmed that early intervention in the elementary grades is essential for students who are encountering difficulties in

learning to read (Vaughn et al 2006). For example, Cavanaugh and colleagues (Cavanaugh, Kim, Wanzek, & Vaughn, 2004) compiled many studies that yielded positive effects for students who participated in reading interventions during their elementary school years, specifically in kindergarten. Additionally, several studies have also been replicated to demonstrate the effectiveness and importance of providing early interventions for children who are not learning to read (Vaughn et al., 2006). Vaughn et al. (2006) found that supplemental instruction in reading for students who might be at risk for reading failure, demonstrated significant growth improving children's phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, alphabetic decoding, decodable text practice, and comprehension strategies. Numerous research with native English speakers continue to suggest that students at risk for reading difficulties will make significant progress when they are provided with systematic and explicit interventions in reading (Vaughn et al., 2006). Even though many questions regarding interventions for monolingual English at risk for learning to read do require further study, a good deal is known about the effectiveness and importance of interventions for these students.

Torgeson & Wagner (1992), Torgeson, Wagner, Rashotte, Rose, Lindamood & Conway (1999) found that daily one-to-one intervention for 88 hours enabled most of the first graders who were in the bottom 10% for reading ability move into the average range. A similar study by Mathes, Denton, Fletcher, Anthony, Francis & Schatschneider (2005), demonstrated that all but only about two percent of children could attain reading levels within the average range by the end of first grade when

high-quality classroom instruction and intensive small-group intervention is provided. Furthermore, these interventions can help reduce the gap between current student performance and performance of typically achieving peers in reading (O'Connor, 2000; Foorman & Torgeson, 2001; Lundberg, Frost, & Peterson, 1988).

Interventions for Native Spanish Speakers

According to Mathes, Pollard-Durodola, Cárdenas-Hagan, Linan-Thompson & Vaughn (2007), reducing reading failure for nearly all children who are native English speakers has demonstrated to be an obtainable reality. However, these findings often fail to focus on special population of children, like English Language Learners or children whose native language is other than English. Many states with larger number of bilingual students such as Texas, California, New York, and Florida face many challenges because there is little or no guidance for providing effective reading intervention for bilingual students (Vaughn et al., 2006). Mathes et al. (2007) indicates that it is often assumed that what is known about teaching native English speakers who are struggling readers is applicable to teaching native Spanish speakers who are struggling readers, and that promising practices such as English as a second language (ESL) further assist these children to become competent readers. It is often assumed that the knowledge that students gain in one language will transfer to a second language. Vaughn et al. (2006) indicate that the most contested issues related to teaching young Spanish-speaking children to read are language of instruction and timing of transition from native language to English. For example, children in bilingual and immersion programs face the challenge of learning to read in a language

that is different from the one spoken at home. According to Vaughn (2006) et al., most would agree that for most children, good instruction is the most adequate means of preventing reading failure and that there is some evidence that interventions for first grade Spanish-speaking students can be implemented well and these findings suggest that students who participate in interventions are better prepared for the rigors of reading in the later years of schools. Furthermore, future research is needed to better understand beginning reading instruction for ELLs, especially in the role of language competence in Spanish and English and its influence on reading in each language (Vaught et al., 2006).

Thoughts on Prevention for English Language Learners

Prevention of failure among English Language Learners involves many critical elements. Artiles and Ortiz (2002) describe two critical elements: the creation of educational environments conducive to academic success and the use of instructional strategies known to be effective with these students. Bialystok (2007), discusses three prerequisite skills in his research that requires educators to take in consideration when addressing the acquisition of literacy skills with bilingual children. Bialystok discuss the importance of competence with oral language, understanding symbolic concepts of print, and establishing metalinguistic awareness are all equally important and influence the acquisition of literacy differently in ELLs from monolingual speakers.

Bialystok urges educators to consider that there is a relationship between bilingualism and the development of each of these skills. For example, concepts of

print may pose an advantage in some children, whereas oral language may be a disadvantage and metalinguistic competence may show very little difference. Bialystok (1997) concludes that developing literacy in bilingual children must be examined closely and factors affecting will never be simple or unitary. Unfortunately many teachers and support personnel are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of ELLs' literacy and language needs. Teachers describe feeling "challenged" to help these students reach their level of proficiency required for learning sophisticated academic content through English. In effect, The Common Core State Standards have pushed an emphasis on increasingly complex texts that make these challenges more overwhelming for educator (Beach, 2011).

Although most learning problems can be prevented in schools and classes that accommodate individual differences, some students will experience a great deal of difficulty (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Klingner, 2014). For these students, early intervention strategies must be implemented as soon as learning problems are noted. According to Artiles & Ortiz (2002), early intervention provides supplementary instructional services early on to students' schooling and they are intense enough to bring at-risk students quickly to a level at which they can profit from high-quality classroom instruction.

Given the enormity of the challenge, Gándara and Contreras (2009) urge that public schools are not left alone with this responsibility. Although schools will still be responsible for equalizing the opportunity for students and ensuring that they succeed, they will need help. Although early intervention have proven positive effects for

students, the reality is that educational success begins even before kindergarten and perhaps even before conception. Educational leaders must cautiously examine and acknowledge parent economic situations, their school history, the neighborhoods where they children live and are raised because they all have powerful effects on children's' aspirations and preparation to attain success even before they step into the school classroom. (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Hispanic and Latino Students in America

The Hispanic or Latino populations of the United States are growing fast and now constitute the country's largest minority (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). According to Tienda and Mitchell (2006), Hispanic refers to a population that differs at large by history, nationality, social class, legal status, and generation. It includes descendants of early Spanish settlers, immigrants, and their offspring from Spanish-speaking countries like the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. The Hispanic population is composed of 20 nationalities, of which the most numerous are Mexicans which make up for two-thirds of this population; the rest are Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, and Spaniards (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). Census from 2000 marked the Hispanic population at 35.3 million and today they are over 40 million to which is a 58% increase from 1990. Latino population has been increasing drastically due to the fact that white and African-American populations are not stable in size and have been aging. Young Latinos or Hispanics will begin to fill the huge baby boom generation that is beginning to move toward retirement (Fry, 2003). Hispanics are projected to comprise one-fourth of the U.S. population by 2030

(Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). As most of the Hispanic population grows, they are showing less signs of becoming immigrant-based and they are starting to spread out.

Hispanics continue to concentrate geographically in California, Texas and other states with large Latino communities, however, they have begun to disperse across the country with fast growth rates in states as scattered as Georgia, Nebraska and Washington (Fry, 2003 & Tienda, 2006). Nearly 80% of Hispanics live in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, New Mexico or Colorado. However, when the population grew between 1980 and 2000, it dispersed somewhat. Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia and Massachusetts saw fast growth with more than a 200% increase. In Nevada, the Hispanic population more than tripled between 1990 and 2000, while in Georgia their presence quadrupled and nearly quintupled in states like North Carolina (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). States with large numbers of Hispanics, such as California, saw substantial growth, because they started with a large-base of Hispanics and states that had tiny Hispanic populations just 15 years ago also saw significant rapid growth (National Pew Center, 2005 & Tienda, 2006).

According to the Pew Research Center (Fry & Gonzales, 2008) and Tienda (2006), most Latinos immigrated between 1970 and gained momentum in 1990 with 60 percent coming from Mexico and about 20% from the rest of Latin America. Tienda (2006) describes that most Latino immigrants are young adults who tend to be marry at a younger age than non-Hispanics and who have stronger family orientation and higher birth rates twice as high as those of non-Hispanics. Therefore, births to the

Hispanic immigrants, rather than immigration itself will be the key source of population growth in the near future (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). In the next few decades, it is estimated that the Latino population will be driven primarily by increase in the second generation, which will be native-born English speaking, U.S-educated Hispanics who will have a very different impact on the U.S. than their immigrant parents had (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). According to Tienda (2006), it was found that second and third generations exhibit less traditional family behavior than the first generation. Half of the second-generation of Hispanics are currently 11 years old or younger and are nearly divided between males and females and the majority of this generation is of school age (Fry & Gonzales, 2008 & Tienda, 2006).

Hispanics in School

According to Fry and Gonzales (2008), the number of Hispanic students in the nation's public schools nearly doubled from 1990 to 2006 and it accounts for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollment. There are approximately 10 million Hispanic students in the nation's public kindergartens, its elementary and high schools. The U.S. Census Bureau population projects that the Hispanic population will increase by 166% by 2050, which means that there will be more school-age Hispanic children than non-Hispanic white children. According to Fry and Gonzales (2008) 20% of the public school students nationally are Hispanics and their enrollment is great in several states. In effect, in 2006 Hispanic students made up half of the public school students in California. In Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, these students make up more than 40% of the student enrollment. States with

Hispanic student enrollment between 20% and 40% are Nevada, Colorado, Illinois, Florida and New York. Hispanics are the largest minority group in the public schools in 22 states (Fry & Gonzales, 2008).

Fry and Gonzalez (2008) indicate that 84% of Hispanic public school students were born in the United States; Fifty-two of all Hispanic students are enrolled in schools in the states of Texas and California. It was reported that 93% of kindergartners in public schools are born in the U.S. compared to 86% of Hispanics in grades 1 through 8 and 77% in high school. Sixty-nine percent of Hispanic students are of Mexican origin, 9% are Puerto Rican and 3% are Dominican, Salvadoran, while 2% are Cuban. Furthermore, 57% percent of Hispanic students live with both of their parents compared to 69% non-Hispanic white students and 30% non-Hispanic black students.

Fry and Gonzalez (2008) found that 70% of Hispanic students speak a language other than English. In addition, 30% of students report speaking only English at home, while 52% of the school-age students report speaking English very well. Most Hispanic students live in households where at least one member in the home speaks English very well. Over 400 languages are reported to be spoken nationwide with Spanish as the predominant language among Hispanics: 79% speak Spanish, 2% speak Vietnamese, 1.6% speak Hmong, 1% speak Cantonese, and 1% speak Korean (August & Hakuta, 1997).

English Language Learners

English Language Learners represent the fast growing population of U.S. students and to meet their needs, it is important to understand who they are. The terms Language Minority and limited English proficient are terms that are interchangeably used with English Language Learners. In schools, English Language Learners (ELLs) is a term used to refer to students whose English proficiency has not yet developed to a point where they can profit fully from English instruction (Garcia, Jensen & Scribner, 2009). The diversity that English Language Learners bring with them is unique and must be acknowledged carefully. For example, Ovando, Collier, and Combs (2003) highlight eight background elements that are relevant to understanding these students:

1. Country of origin
2. Length of residence in the United States
3. Extent of ties to country of origin
4. Political and economic situation in the region from which they immigrated
5. Reason for immigration
6. Other countries lived in prior to the United States
7. Amount and quality of schooling in native language
8. Languages other than English and their native language to which students have been exposed.

Garcia et al. (2009) report that in order to zoom in on English Language Learners, it is important to narrow down on recent estimates by the U.S. Department of Education which indicate that five million school-age children in the United States

(more than 10% of all K-12 students) are identified as being English Language Learners. This proportion of ELLs is at its highest comprising of 7.4% of all students from kindergarten to grade five and 5.5% of all students in grades six to 12. The concentration of ELLs among young children exists partly because children who enter preschool or kindergarten as ELLs tend to develop oral and academic English proficiency by third grade, and also because of increase rate of (legal and illegal) immigration combined with high birth rates among immigrant families. Although English Language Learners speak more than 350 languages, Spanish predominates with 77% of ELLs speaking Spanish as their native language. None of the other most common languages: Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Hmong/Miao, French, German, Russian, and Arabic, is spoken by more than three percent of all English Language Learners (Garcia et al., 2009). It is projected that by the year 2050, one of out every five students will be an English Language Learner (ELL). ELLs will represent the fastest growing population in U.S. public schools (August & Hakuta, 1997). Previous research by Fry and Gonzalez (2008) reports that minority students are already the majority in elementary schools. Over the last few years, the number of students who come from homes where English is not their primary language has significantly increased (August & Shanahan, 2006) and this population of children in immigrant families is growing faster than any other group of children in the United States (Garcia et al., 2009). These students continue to face educational disenfranchisement, disproportionately high dropout rates, educational underachievement in grades K-12, and inequitable access to and retention to college (Marshall & Oliva, 2010).

Critical Issues that Affect Educating English Language Learners

According to Artiles and Ortiz (2002), there is substantial evidence indicating that educational services offered to students with culturally and linguistically diverse home backgrounds are not sufficient to meet their needs. Several factors interface and shape the academic performance of English Language Learners: Social, linguistic and economic factors. These factors are further discussed in the following sections.

Socio-Economic Issues

Garcia et al. (2009) report that although there is a great deal of variation existing among ELLs, they are more likely to come from low-income families. In 2000, 68% of ELLs in grades pre-kinder to fifth and 60% in grades 6-12 lived in low-income families compared to 36% and 32% respectively of English proficient students in these age groups (Garcia & Cuellar, 2006). ELLs are also more likely to have parents with limited formal education: Forty-eight percent in grades preK-5 and 35% in the higher grades had a parent with less than a high school education, compared to 11% and 9% of English proficient students in the same grades (Capps, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel & Herwanto, 2005).

According to Gándara and Contreras (2009), poor children are less likely than middle-class peers to have access to books in the home, and they are less likely to be read by their parents or caregivers, or to view their parents or other adults reading for enjoyment. If they are undocumented, their families may live in fear of separation or deportation; if English is not their primary language, they most likely live in communities where English is seldom heard and are very likely to move frequently.

For these and many more reason, children are dependent upon their school and society to invest in them in areas where their parents cannot.

Another social issue that continues to be in debate is the effects of neighborhood, as distinct from the influence of family or peers on student achievement (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). For example, Gándara and Contreras claim that information that Neighborhood Resource Theory claims argues that the quality of local resources that can be available to families will affect the developmental outcomes for children. Children in more affluent neighborhoods have access to more resources and encounter both adults and peers in their communities who are supportive of high educational goals and can even assist young people in achieving them. Another aspect affecting children in their neighborhood is safety. When going and coming from school is unsafe and puts children at risk because of gangs in their low-income neighborhoods, their educational opportunities are limited (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Parent-education levels are another factor that can have an effect on the educational outcomes of students (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). For example, immigrant parents from Mexico come from a country where the average formal education attainment is much lower than in the United States and where students are not necessarily expected to complete the equivalent of a high school diploma. Thus in Mexico, not having completed high school does not carry the same social stigma as in the United States. Additionally, many Mexican parents experience inability to help their children with school related tasks (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Garcia et al. (2009) illustrate that the educational advancement of ELLs has remained relatively unchanged during the past few decades and asks: Why have decades of research failed to improve the performance of ELLs? Closing the achievement gap calls for collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders: federal government, local governments, schools, teachers and parents. Collaboration among these groups certainly will not come easily and educational leaders must become innovated with what is necessary to diminish the implementation gap and applying evidence-based practices while creating new knowledge of best practices (Garcia et al., 2009). It is for this reason that it becomes critical to understand that meeting the needs of ELLs is a complex issue.

It is unfortunate that many people believe that everyone is supposed to make it on their own or 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps' (Tienda & Gándara). Access to very basic resources is typically not deal with effectively through social policy and failure to succeed is usually attributed to individuals who are thought to be lazy or who have created their own destiny. Tienda and Gándara claim that this belief is so strongly held that even the poor often blame themselves for their own living conditions.

These findings suggest that there is a need to examine more systematically how political initiatives, availability of services and current placement practices for ELLs are being addressed (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Alternate solutions and issues, such as dyslexia, can also hold a promise and must be explored if prevention of

school failure and reading problems is going to be at the forefront for ELLs (Cárdenas-Hagan, 2005).

Language Diversity

According to Young and Hadaway (2006) language diversity has always been part of life in the United States. Since the 1800s, immigrants who were from Northern and Western Europe always had a desire to maintain their first languages. This wish to preserve cultural ties spurred legislation in more than 12 states to mandate bilingual education; In addition the following languages were included in the curriculum as both subject of study and medium of instruction: Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Italian, Polish, Dutch and Greek. However, when Southern and Eastern European immigrants began to outnumber Northern Europeans between 1890 and 1920, many states began considering “English only” legislation. In fact students were often punished for using a language other than English on school grounds. Then World War I came, which contributed to more prejudice and discrimination and more than 15 states passed laws mandating “English only” instruction and forbidden foreign-language instruction. Furthermore, World War II intensified discrimination even more and people who spoke other languages were seen as suspects.

Since the 1960s and still today language diversity and education continue to be very controversial. Many legislative attempts have emerged to reverse discriminatory practices that have arisen. Numerous litigations have been accounted for in regards to school segregation, school financing and special education (Valencia, 2008). Many of these litigations tell stories about the struggles that many

Mexican Americans have encountered as they battle for educational equity and oppressive conditions that perpetuated during their education and determine their successes or their failures. On the other hand, many other stories remained untold in the U.S. court but provide evidence of the lived experiences. For example, Gloria Lopez-Stafford (1996) in her book, *A Place in El Paso: A Mexican-American Childhood*, is a distinct example of how Gloria tells the story of her life. As a Mexican-American who grew up in the Segundo Barrio in El Paso, Gloria presents evidence of her experiences (Lopez-Stafford, 1996) in the search for her cultural identity and well being as a motherless child who has been left in the care of her much older father during the 1940s. Though her real-life story, Gloria depicts her struggles as she encounters racism, poverty and trouble with English. In addition, she provides several descriptions of how the deficit thinking mindset manifested in her personal experiences on a daily basis. Gloria goes on to share:

You still spoke Spanish at home because that was what your family used. Then when you spoke with someone who also spoke both languages, the language evolved to a mixture of English and Spanish that become an art form. The combination drew criticism from purist and people who did not speak both. They accused the bilingual person of being lazy or undisciplined (p.45).

Finally in 1965 the Bilingual and Education Act was signed into law to improve the instruction of English Language Learners, however educational opportunities continue to be narrow and focuses on assisting English Language Learners to acquire English and achieve in school thus very few states focus on preserving their first language and culture (Young and Hadaway, 2006).

Linguistic Issues

Gándara and Contreras (2009) resonate that there is a widely held perception that language difference is the primary cause of educational difficulties with Latino students, and if that was addressed, the educational crisis would be resolved.

Language has historically been a primary rationale for segregating Latino students and for this reasons it has remained to be the most obvious barrier and explanation of why Latinos do poorly in schools. Second-language interventions and instruction have historically been shaped by political expediency and pandering anti-immigrant sentiments. (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). There is a narrow construction of the concept of English proficiency. For example, one is either English proficient or not; one is either an English learner or a fluent English speaker. This dichotomy is forced on teachers and administrators because funding is based on being either one or the other. Gándara and Contreras state that while only those students who fail to pass a basic test of English proficiency are likely to be categorized as English learners and placed in some kind of special program, most Latino school children most likely need some kind of support and interventions to help them achieve equally as their native-English peers. There are a lot of researchers that argue that the type of language instruction to which most English learners are exposed is inadequate to allow them to perform at high levels of achievement in English (Wong-Fillmore, 1985 & Snow, 1992). This claim is supported by data from California that demonstrates that although 66% of tenth grade English learners passed the state test in 2006 at English proficiency levels of early advance to advance (roughly equivalent to “proficient”),

only four percent were able to pass the state's English Language Arts (ELA) test at a similar level of proficiency for that year (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Proficiency in English Language Arts assessments requires more sophisticated understanding of English than a proficiency test. Educators often fail to make this distinction in their instructional planning. For example, in Northern California school districts were found that in a typical school day, the average English learner actually used English for oral or written expression no more than two to three minutes over four hours of academic instruction and the highly qualified teachers in the district were generally aware of effective techniques, however, they found it difficult to use them in mainstream classes. A debate that has raged for some time over the importance of the role of English language development in the instruction and assessment of language development of English Language Learners, thus renewing, English Language Development (ELD) standards as markers of students' progress toward readiness to undertake the more demanding curriculum of English Language Arts and other academic content (Gándara & Contreras).

Valdés (2005) challenges the reconceptualization and expansion of second language acquisition (SLA) so that educational problems involving providing language instruction for heritage speakers and examining the bilingualism of these unique language learners can be addressed. Valdés describes that the challenge to meet the language needs of these learners begins by having a thorough examination of the bilingualism of these students. Because speakers who acquire and use two or more languages in order to meet their everyday communicative needs in such

settings, they are usually referred as circumstantial bilinguals/multilinguals who learn a second language in the classroom setting and have very limited opportunities to use the language for genuine communication. Valdés (2005) argues that the term *bilingual* has a different term that describes a language learner who may be exhibiting various degrees of language expertise and language affiliation in spite of their language inheritance. Valdés presents a continuum that exists between the first and second language. For example, a student who is a newcomer may be represented as Ab (dominant in the immigrant language and in the beginning stages of learning English) while a second-generation student may be represented as Ba (having acquired English as the first language and still retaining some proficiency in the immigrant language). Individuals in minority language communities will fluctuate in their preference or perceived strengths in each language, depending on the nature of the interaction, the topic of discussion, the domain of activity, and the formality of the situation (Valdés, 2005).

Addressing the Needs of English Language Learners

According to Marshall and Oliva (2010) leadership that is culturally responsive and explores social justice can promote and explore ways to achieve equity and make educational success happen. The continued challenge that schools will have today is not the growing numbers of English Language Learners in their classrooms but their continued need to do a far better job of delivering high quality instruction (Young & Hadaway, 2006). Addressing the needs of ELLs will require educational leaders who fully understand practices in Latino impacted schools district

(Lopez, González & Fierro, 2006). These leaders must be willing to renovate their practice and transform them. For example, Santamaría & Santamaría (2012) describe that leadership should focus on a model that is strength-based vs. deficit-based. Strength-based practices can allow leaders to focus their practice on social context of their educational communities and empower individual members of these communities.

Artiles and Ortiz (2002) also recognize that prevention of failure among English Language Learners involves two critical elements such as creating educational environments that are conducive to academic success and using instructional strategies that have been known to be effective with these students.

Responsive Leadership

Critical Leadership interfaces with principles of transformational leadership, critical pedagogy and critical race theory (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). This leadership becomes reconceptualized and focuses on what works as opposed to what does not work. For example, a strength-based vs. deficit perspectives always identifies positive attributes in the communities they serve. Leaders who apply critical leadership always use a CRT lens to recognize the challenges and examine race, language, or culture as a major part of their decisions (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). In order for educational change to occur, a transformation leadership will be needed in terms of educational inequities and effective practices. Marshall and Olivia (2010) make a general call for the need for leadership in education that will target social justice.

According to Lopez, González and Fierro (2006), addressing the needs of border schools and students requires a leadership that steps out of a comfort zone, is motivated to challenge oppressive systems, has a desire to work toward social justice, and takes personal and professional risks. This type of leader is not solely for schools in the borders but essential in *all* schools. Lopez, et al. (2006) recognizes that in this rapidly changing social context, schools will need leaders who are willing to think differently and work differently. Lopez, et al. (2006) describe six characteristics that leaders who are culturally responsive exemplify:

1. They are instructional leaders who know which instruction policies and practices are good for children and constantly challenge educational methods, content, and mind-sets that are not conducive to effective teaching.
2. They constantly challenge themselves and others to remove their blinders to a more broader and economic issue that impact the community around them.
3. They engage parents and community members in critical dialogue about their needs, desires, and expectations.
4. They are not afraid to engage in their own emotions. They constantly seek parent stories and concerns. They respond to criticism by examining their own biased and unexamined practices.
5. They are advocates for social justice. They are deeply committed to a reform for solutions. They fully understand that change involves

advocacy, activism, caring, open-mindedness, love, and a deep willingness to serve those who are marginalized in society.

6. They make personal investments in families and communities. They take both personal and professional risks by advocating and challenging assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and practices of others (p.113).

According to Santamaría and Santamaría (2012), leaders can view change in different ways. Leaders in education can choose *change* by adapting, being flexible, and moving freely within a given context or circumstance; or they can also choose *to change* as a reaction based on pressures inherited to the educational system. When leaders choose *change* they are preventive, in control and can create new realities. If leaders choose *to change*, it will result in results that are powerless and reactionary. Santamaría and Santamaría call for a *change* that will challenge thinking and will make a difference when educational leaders are faced with the complex challenges in the education of English Language Learners.

Educational Environments

Many English Language Learners, who enter school with social, cultural and linguistic experiences that differ from what is expected in the classroom, encounter teachers who are not members of their own communities (García & Dray, 2007). It is very likely that these students will become “curriculum casualty” because the school culture is not responsive to their differences.

Artiles and Ortiz (2002) describe that schools should foster school climates that have high expectations for all. It should reflect a philosophy that all students can

learn. These expectations are fostered through strong leadership, high expectations for student achievement, challenging curriculum and involvement of all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, community members, and parents) in all decision-making.

The language and culture of these students should be viewed as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem. These differences should not be deficits. English language proficiency should not be a barrier to school success *unless* the schools and its staff are not proficient in bilingual/multicultural education (Baca & Almanza, 1991). Baca and Almanza urge teachers that students with limited language proficiency need high-quality language instruction in order to reach their full academic potential.

Schools that accept linguistic and cultural diversity will promote environments that support language programs that foster and cultivate bilingualism (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Cummins (2000) defines that languages of instruction should not be mixed in any way and it is very important to provide students with appropriate oral and written models of each language. In addition, whenever classrooms do not provide a context for bilingual language exploration in the classrooms, students miss out in the most powerful tools to develop literacy and awareness of language (Cummins, 2000). Spanish-English programs, the connection between the languages provide enormous possibilities for linguistic enrichment, but this will not happen if the program is set up and prevents the two languages from ever meeting (Cummins, 2000).

Another way to promote positive learning environments for ELLs includes involving families and communities to come together to understand the social, linguistic and cultural contexts in which their students are raised (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Educators must create partnerships and learn to respect cultural differences in child-rearing practices and in how parents choose to be involved in their children's education. According to Cummins (2000), when educators involve minority parents as partners in their children's education, parents tend to appear to develop a sense of advocacy that will communicate itself to children---with positive academic consequences.

Instructional Strategies

Teachers of English Language Learners need to ensure well-integrated instruction that focuses on students' cultural characteristics and language needs and any identified disabilities (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Artiles and Ortiz emphasize that all three factors are essential and should not be ignored or the instructional program will suffer. In addition, creating culturally responsive learning environments require learning environment that take into consideration curriculum and materials, classroom interactions, teaching approaches, resource management, and counseling and parent outreach efforts.

Curriculum and materials should always be selected acknowledging the life experiences and background knowledge of the students (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Additionally, students' experiences, needs, and interests become the basis for creating personally relevant curricula. Multicultural literature is essential and helps reflect the

values and beliefs of all children. Artiles and Ortiz strongly argue that culturally relevant materials strongly support the development of literacy.

Classroom interactions vary among cultures. Artiles and Ortiz (2002) highlight that students from some cultural groups have been taught differently. For examples some students have been taught that they should not show off or stand out in the company of others; others have been taught not to speak out but rather learn by watching others. It is important to understanding that schooling in U.S. schools calls for different behaviors. Teachers must understand that these changes will take time before students feel comfortable and overcome these new ways of behaving (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002).

Effective teachers chose teaching approaches that are compatible with students' preferences and prior learning experiences (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). For example it is important for teachers to consider which methods students prefer by asking, "Do students prefer cooperative learning?" "Do students do better with inquiry-based methods, independence, or do they prefer teacher instruction and demonstration?" Hilliard (1992) inform us that students from diverse backgrounds require diverse instruction if equity in schools is to be achieved. It becomes important to remember that fair is not equal. For example, allowing students read in their native language versus requiring them to read in English allows for this diversity.

Resource management involves using resources in a culturally responsive way and being sensitive to students. Artiles and Ortiz (2002) outline that every little things

matter. For example, from how the daily schedule is organized to how furniture and open spaces are arranged in the classroom. The way the teacher designs classroom space may create comfort or discomfort for students who inhabit it. It is important that teachers are available to all students and they ensure that students are always certain with the organization of the classroom (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Artiles and Ortiz recommend that a great way for teachers to learn and discover more about their students is through a student interview. In this manner teachers can become more certain that resources are culturally responsive (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002).

Counseling and parent outreach efforts is an added value to instruction (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). It will become essential that teachers become knowledgeable about student families. Understanding their traditions and culture can provide valuable information that will help them understand and serve their students better (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002).

According to Obiakor (2007), creating culturally responsive pedagogy, instruction and leadership can be a guide to address the needs of English Language Learners. This approach must become central and an integral part to any solution by acknowledging students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences and diversity whenever change in leadership, environment, and instruction are the priority.

Reforming Schools to Provide Equitable Access

Historically, educators in U.S. schools have responded to differences among students and groups by separating them and exposing them to different curricula through the practice of tracking (Mehan, 2012). Tracking begins informally in the

elementary years and becomes more institutionalized in the middle school and high school years. Since the 1920s most high schools have offered tracked curriculum that range from slow-paced remedial classes to rigorous academic classes. The curriculum for slow-paced students is reduced in scope, content, and pace relative to high-ability groups (Mehan, 2012). Mehan states that tracking students for different reasons was thought to be fair and was democratic because schools sorted students based on their talent, effort, and hard work, by providing students with the education to best meet their abilities. Research from public commentary indicates that tracking does not fulfill either of its promises. It does not provide students with equal educational opportunities nor serves the needs of employers for a well-educated workforce. Even more serious, the distribution of students to high, middle and low ability groups or academic and vocational tracks seems to be related to ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Children from low-income, one-parent households or from families with an unemployed worker, or from linguistic and ethnic minority groups are more like to be assigned to low-ability groups or tracks (Mehan, 2012). Unfortunately, the higher the percentage of minorities in schools, the larger the low-track and remedial classes offered and fewer advanced and rigorous curriculum. Mehan (2012) also reports that students receive *different treatment* depending on the track. For example, low-ability students are taught by the same teacher, have more control by teacher and are taught less time, while high-ability groups have different teachers, progress farther in the curriculum and cover more complex material.

Dyslexia and Its Historical Development

Understanding reading impediments is very complex and the critical importance of reading in this contemporary society has been reflected by the increased attention on this subject and the extensive research that has developed very rapidly with substantial contributions to this field from several different disciplines (Lundberg et al., 1999). The complexity of reading can only be understood by multiple layers ranging from physical to historical-cultural contexts (Lundberg, 1999).

The definition for dyslexia has a history of long debates and negotiations that have been intensively fought over the last 40 years and has been criticized for its vagueness and lack of inclusionary criteria, thus limiting the practical usefulness of the definition to prevent and take action (Lundberg et al., 1999). For example, Weaver (1994) describes that readers with dyslexia are said to have something wrong with, or at least not quite right with how their brain functions. According to the definition, the disability usually amounts to a deficit and deficits define the problem with the child and not the educational system. Finally in 1994 a consensus on the definition was reached by the International Dyslexia Association, formerly known as the Orton Dyslexia Society, and later adopted by the National Institute of Health and is as follows: Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by the difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.

Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (International Dyslexia Association, 2002).

Understanding Dyslexia

Improving the educational experiences of students with dyslexia requires an endeavor to a deeper understanding of its current definition. First, according to Lyon et al. (2013), the identification of dyslexia as a more specific learning disability and contrasting the more general term of learning disabilities, which can encompass a wide range of difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics, can aid in undertaking efforts to improve the differences associated with acquiring basic reading skills. It is recommended that the broader term *learning disabilities* be discontinued and adopt the term specific disabilities which can be defined in terms of coherent and operational domains (Lyon, et al., 2013). Second, recognizing that is neurobiological in origin acknowledges the great advances in understanding the neural basis for dyslexia that were suspected over a century ago as early as 1891 by French neurologist Dejerine. A large body of literature describes neuroanatomic lesions most prominently centered in the parieto-temporal area as a region pivotal in mapping the visual perception of the print onto the phonological structures of the language system. Scientists around the world have documented a range of neurobiological investigations that document the disruption of the neural system for reading in dyslexia cross languages and culture (Lyon, et al., 2013). Third, the new definition expands from its previous definition by raising important characteristics

that an individual with dyslexia encounters difficulties with accurate word recognition (real words) and decoding abilities (pseudowords). It also recognizes poor spelling skills as a characteristic of dyslexia. Another important change in this portion of the definition is drawing on the implications of the inability to read fluently. Fourth, being aware that difficulties typically result from insufficiency in the phonological components of language explain and have created a strong consensus among investigators in the field that dyslexia reflects a underperformance within the language system that prevents a reader from stringing and decomposing letters into speech sounds. Awareness that all words can be decomposed into these basic elements of language (phonemes) allows the reader to decipher the reading code. In order to read, a child has to develop awareness that spoken words can be pulled apart into phonemes and that letters in written words represent speech sounds. Lyon et al. (2003) reported that numerous studies have shown that this awareness is missing in children and adults with dyslexia, which can translate into the advancement of incorporating preventive measures at the school levels.

Fifth, it has captured the attention that these difficulties in learning to read are unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction (Lyon et al., 2003). There is an enormous consensus among researchers and clinicians that suggest that “unexpectedness” should be evaluated via comparison of reading age with chronological age and/or by comparing reading ability to educational level and professional level and avoiding the notion that underachievement must be significantly lower than intelligence quotient (IQ). Lyon,

et al. (2003) conceptualizes that this new component of the definition guides educators in documenting an individual's instructional history as critical to understanding the nature of the observed reading difficulty and providing effective instruction that is targeted to preventing gaps in reading development.

Last, emphasizing that phonological difficulties can lead to secondary consequences in acquiring vocabulary and problems with background knowledge provide educators with the realization that these effects may impact an individual's understanding of connected text (Lyon et al., 2003). According to Lyon, understanding dyslexia is a work in progress and will continue to be that in hopes that improved research and methodologies will continue to guarantee new knowledge that will further modify its current definition to reflect and bring best opportunities to individuals with dyslexia.

Who has Dyslexia?

According to Shaywitz (2003), identifying who has dyslexia is not an easy task and many factors can contribute to this challenge. One way to account for reading problems can be by considering statistics from the U.S. Department of Education. It is reported that 2.5 million schoolchildren (4.4%) ages six to twenty-one are receiving special education services in their school. Because reading difficulties are estimated to comprise 80% of all learning disabilities, it would be estimated that about three and one half percent of the school population or more than two million children who are receiving special education services have a reading difficulty. These statistics can be found contradicting when large-scale surveys that

directly measure reading proficiency report that reading difficulties are most prevalent than what they are reported to be (Shaywitz, 2003). The National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) evaluates thousands of school-age children annually and provides clear indications that many of these students are reading below level for their grade. Shaywitz (2003) found that there is an important difference in how children are identified as having reading difficulties by schools and by research studies.

Dyslexia is thought as a discrete entity where children who satisfy what are seen as specific, unvarying criteria are provided services often through special education (Shaywitz, 2003). Students who do not meet arbitrarily imposed criteria are left without the benefits of special help and go on to experiences significant reading problems. Shaywitz (2003) reports that there is a large and apparent under-identification of children who have reading difficulties; and even when identification takes place in schools, it occurs relatively late. Students with dyslexia are generally in the third grade or above when they are first identified by their schools as having a reading problem. In the United States, reading difficulties are often blamed on watching too much television, lax discipline in the classroom, teaching children to read too early or too late, and too many mothers working (Shaywitz, 2003). Dyslexia is not a consequence of specific cultural or regional phenomena, but rather the expression of a more universal vulnerability. Shaywitz reports that dyslexia knows no boundaries, neither geographic nor ethnic nor intellectual. According to the International Dyslexia Association (2012), studies have suggested that one half of all

students who qualify for special education services are classified as having a learning disability and about 85% of those students have a primary learning disability in reading and language processing. It is estimated that many more people have some symptoms of dyslexia and as many as 15-20% of the population struggle with many aspects of academic learning although they do not qualify for special education services.

Dyslexia and English Language Learners

Historically, ELLs with reading difficulties have either been over-identified or under-identified (Cummins, 1984). This dilemma is the result of uncertainty as to whether their poor reading ability stems from their developing language skills or from a real problem in reading (Geva, 2000). Geva (2000) claims that this uncertainty may be in combination with the belief that reading disabilities in ELLs cannot be properly assessed until they have reached adequate levels of language proficiency in their second language.

On the other hand, over-identification can also occur when ELLs exhibit the same characteristics as students with learning disabilities. Both groups may demonstrate difficulty with following directions, errors in grammar and syntax, difficulty with task completion, poor self-esteem, poor oral skills, and low motivation (Fraser, Adelson & Geva, 2014). If ELLs do not receive explicit instruction and programming in their areas of difficulties, they may not develop the skills they need to make progress in reading, which will cause them to fall further behind in their other academic areas (Fraser et al., 2014).

It is vital to acknowledge that ELLs should be assessed for difficulties as soon as the need arises; it is not necessary to wait for second language proficiency.

Fraser et al., (2014) highlights that English Language Learners are as likely to experience reading difficulties as their monolingual peers. Reading difficulties are distributed equally across all populations. It becomes very important to be aware that most ELLs with reading difficulties do not have difficulties with their word reading skills because of their developing language status. In fact, ELLs would have trouble with word reading in any language in which they were learning to read (Fraser et al., 2014).

It is important to acknowledge that just like monolingual peers, ELLs with reading disability may struggle in one or more areas related to reading: phonological awareness, word reading, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Fraser et al., 2014). It becomes vital that whenever an ELL is not making the expected progress in reading when compared to other students with similar background and who have received similar instruction, interventions be delivered as early as possible (Fraser et al., 2014).

Cummins (2000) presents a linguistic interdependence hypothesis that a student's knowledge in his first language will transfer to his second language. Therefore, a deficit in a student's first language will also be evident in his second language. It is also important to understand that language abilities and reading difficulties are influenced and by specific characteristics of the orthographic system of that language. For example, children learning to read in languages that are

consistent with letter and sound correspondences tend to make progress much faster in literacy development and tend to develop phonological awareness more quickly. Therefore, educators must come to the understanding that deficits associated with dyslexia will vary by language (Linan-Thompson, 2014).

Current Research and Dyslexia

Finding an answer to the question of why some children have difficulty learning to read has been the focus of a great deal of research that has undertaken over the past four decades and a lot has been learned about the causes of such difficulties (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling & Scanlon, 2004). This topic become of special interest when these children have at least average intelligence, do not have other general learning difficulties, and their reading problems are not due to extraneous factors such as sensory deficits and socioeconomic disadvantages. Children with dyslexia face many challenges that result in extreme difficulties acquiring basic reading subskills, such as word identification and phonological decoding (Vellutino et al., 2004). Birsh (2011) describe that difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition mean that poor readers lack the ability to read quickly, accurately, and with good understanding and thus do not get to the meaning of the text. These students usually avoid reading and fail to develop adequate levels of vocabulary and background knowledge for comprehension

For these reasons, parents and teachers should be aware of how dyslexia manifests in children (Birsh, 2011). For example, in early childhood, children may encounter difficulty learning to talk and incorrectly pronouncing words. In addition,

they might demonstrate difficulty following directions, retrieving names of things such as letters of the alphabet, sequencing, and/or forming letters or numbers, which can also be areas of poor functioning. Other characteristics that may accompany dyslexia are time management and organization problems, poor spatial sense, and difficulty with motor skills.

According to Lundberg et al., (1999), the most accepted view of dyslexia is that it can be considered part of a continuum of language disorders. Children with dyslexia have poor phonological awareness and verbal memory impairments that stem from limitations of phonological coding. Children with dyslexia also have difficulties with long-term verbal learning and in retrieving phonological information from long-term memory. These children are usually slow on tests of naming but demonstrate vocabulary skills within normal limits (Lundbert et al., 1999). Birsh (2011) discusses that deficits in attention, problems in short verbal memory and difficulty with word retrieval and mathematics have been also identified in students with dyslexia. Students who spell poorly often have difficulty with motor aspects of writing and will demonstrate poor pencil grip and messy handwriting.

Dyslexia in United States

Youman and Mather (2012) report 22 states have adopted statewide dyslexia laws as of July 2012. Three of these states provide a dyslexia handbook to inform parents and educators about the proper procedures for students in public and private educational settings and an additional three states have drafted a dyslexia handbook to provide resources and guide school personnel and parents in both identification and

interventions for children with dyslexia. Of the remaining states, six have laws making their way through the legislature to increase dyslexia awareness by the creation of dyslexia week and dyslexia month. Most school districts in the U.S. place students with dyslexia under the large umbrella of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), which has caused confusion regarding the distinction of dyslexia from other language and learning problems (Youman & Mather, 2012). Some states have implemented separate methods for identification and delivery of services for students with dyslexia. In conclusion, Youman and Mather affirm that state laws must include at least the same rights and protections as federal laws. State laws can provide more protection but not less. Many advocates in many states have paved the way to improve the educational outcomes for students with dyslexia; however, there still exists much contradiction and acceptance (Youman & Mather, 2012). In some states, like Alabama, many schools refuse to acknowledge that dyslexia even exists. Progress has been made regarding the creation and passing of state dyslexia laws in many states but much remains to be accomplished. According to Youman and Mather the passing of laws does not fully guarantee that individuals with dyslexia will be identified and provided with appropriate accommodations and instruction.

Dyslexia in New Mexico

In New Mexico during the 2010 session, the New Mexico Legislature passed House Bill 230, which mandates interventions for students displaying characteristics of dyslexia. This bill, Chapter 95, Section 2 relating to special education was amended to include “dyslexia” under the current special education definitions. In

addition, Section 2 enacted a new section of Chapter 22, Article 13 NMSA 1978 to read as follows (New Mexico PED, 2010):

Interventions for student displaying characteristics of dyslexia.

- a. A student who, despite effective classroom instruction in general education as provided by department standards, demonstrates characteristics of dyslexia and is having difficulty learning to read, write, spell, understand spoken language or express thoughts clearly shall be referred to a student assistance team.
- b. In accordance with the department response to intervention procedures, guidelines and policies, each school district or charter school shall provide timely, appropriate, systematic, scientific, research-based interventions prescribed by the student assistance team, with progress monitoring to determine the student's response or lack of response for a student in the secondary tier of response to intervention who meets the criteria in Subsection A of this section prior to referring the student for a special education evaluation.
- c. A parent of a student referred to a student assistance team shall be informed of the parent's right to request an initial special education evaluation at any time during the school district's or charter school's implementation of the intervention prescribed by the student assistance team. If the school district or charter school agrees that the student may have a disability, the student assistance team shall refer the child for an

evaluation. The student shall be evaluated within 60 days of receiving the parental consent for an initial evaluation. If the school district or charter school refuses the parent's request for an initial evaluation, the school district or charter school shall provide written notice of the refusal to the parent, including notice of the parent's rights to challenge the school district's or charter's school's decision as provided in state and federal law and rules.

- d. The department shall provide lists of recommended teacher professional development materials and opportunities for teachers and administrators regarding research-based reading instruction for students at risk for reading failure and displaying characteristics of dyslexia.
- e. School districts and charters schools shall train school administrators and teachers who teach reading to implement appropriate research-based reading interventions prior to referring the student for a special education evaluation. School districts and charter schools shall train special education teachers to provide appropriate specialized reading instruction for students who are identified with dyslexia as a specific learning disability and who are eligible for special education services.
- f. The department shall provide technical assistance for special education diagnosticians and other special education professionals regarding formal special education evaluation of students suspected of having a specific

learning disability such as dyslexia. The department shall adopt rules, standards and guidelines necessary to implement this section.

Dyslexia in Texas

According to the Texas Dyslexia Handbook (2010), Texas has a long history of supporting the fundamental skill of reading. This history has focused on early identification and interventions for children who experience reading difficulties. The Dyslexia Handbook was revised in 2007 and updated in 2010 and it contains the State Board of Education (SBOE)-approved procedures concerning dyslexia and related disorders. In addition, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) handbook provides guidelines for school districts to follow as they identify and provide services for students with dyslexia. It also provides parents and school districts with information on the state's dyslexia statutes and their relation to the federal laws of Section 504, the American with Disabilities Amendments Acts and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004). The state also has resources through the State Dyslexia Network, a State Dyslexia consultant and a hotline at regional Education Service Center (ESC) to assist district stakeholders with implementing state law and SBOE rules and procedures regarding dyslexia.

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) is a state-level effort to ensure that all Texas students receive the instruction and support needed to be successful in the academic areas of math and reading. For student in grades K-2, the most common form of instructional help is available through the SSI as mandated by TEC §28.006. This code also requires districts and charter schools to administer early reading

instruments to all students in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 to assess their reading development and comprehension. If students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties, the district will notify the parents or guardians and must also implement an intensive reading program that appropriately addresses the students' reading difficulties and enables them to catch up with their typical performing peers.

The Texas Dyslexia Handbook (2010) indicates that interventions provided to students who are reported to be at risk for dyslexia should align with the requirements of NCLB legislation requiring school districts the implementation of reading programs that are scientifically based reading research (SBRR). Quality of instruction and documentation of student progress must be maintained to emphasize whether a student's lack of response to the intervention can be criteria used to determine whether a student has a specific learning disability, including dyslexia. Monitoring the student's progress and ongoing assessments of reading achievement gains are required for students at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties. Parents and guardians always have the right to request a referral for assessment at any time during this process (Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2010). Students in Texas public schools shall be assessed for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times which depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance; reading difficulties; poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction; teacher's input, and input from parents and/or guardians.

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, the school district shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student as required in §TEC 38.003 and the following procedures must be followed:

- A team who is the most knowledgeable about the student makes instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia.
- School districts shall purchase or develop a reading program for students with dyslexia aligned with specific descriptors.
- Each school must provide each identified student with access at his/her campus to an instructional program that meets the requirements and to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders.
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained in instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components (Texas Dyslexia Handbook, 2010).

Addressing the Needs of Students with Dyslexia

Instruction

Lundbert et al. (1999) identify that learning to read in an alphabetic system like English requires both building a sight vocabulary and developing decoding skills. The ultimate goal of reading, however, should always be the comprehension. In effect, making explicit links between orthography and phonology not only will facilitate reading development in normal populations, but it will bring substantial

gains in literacy development in poor readers. For example, two different interventions were evaluated to make determinations about which one produced the greatest gains for children with dyslexia (Lundbert et al., 1999). Lundbert et al. described that one intervention involved training in phonological analysis and blending words together with direct instruction in letter-sound correspondence. The second intervention involved training in word identification strategies including reading by analogy, looking for the part of the word that is not known, attempting variable vowel pronunciations and peeling off pre-fixes and suffixes where appropriate. The results found that children with dyslexia impressively improved in word identification with both interventions; however, the group who received the phonological training did better than those trained in only strategies for word-identification.

Birsh (2011) outlines that to minimize reading failure, reading approaches in classrooms must include systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness; particular attention to letter-sound knowledge; spelling integrated with reading; fluency; vocabulary building; and text comprehension strategies. In addition, if such programs still prove to be insufficient for students with dyslexia, then students will need to have multisensory structure language education program.

According to Farrell and Sherman (2005), multisensory structured language education (MSLE) is practice by many teachers with students that encounter a wide range of learning difficulties. Multisensory structure language education programs incorporate systematic, cumulative, explicit, and sequential approaches that are taught

by teachers who are trained to instruct language structure at the levels of sounds, syllables, meaningful parts of words, sentence structure, paragraph and discourse organization (Birsh, 2011). These practices have been effectively used since the earliest teaching guides were written; however, these techniques are waiting for scientific research validation and explanation. Regardless of lack of definition and recognition, teachers and practitioners continue to embrace these methods due to the nature of reading development, the efficacy of certain reading instruction practices, and the multisensory organization of the brain (Farrell & Sherman, 2005).

Farrell and Sherman (2005) describe the term *multisensory* to describe strategies that engage learners in activities that use two or more sensory modalities simultaneously to take in or express information. This term refers to linking eye, ear, voice and hand to enhance learning in the sequenced teaching of language structure. For example, when a letter-sound is introduced to a student, the information is visually reinforced by looking at the letter; auditory reinforcement is derived from listening to and hearing the sound identified with letter. Kinesthetic reinforcement would occur when the student feels the articulatory muscles movement associated with saying the letter; the tactile reinforcement occurs when the student writes the letter on a roughened surface and they feel the association sensation (Farrell & Sherman (2005).

Orton-Gillingham Approaches

Birsh (2011) outlines that the Orton-Gillingham approach began in the 1930s when Anna Gillingham and Bessie Stillman collaborated to develop remedial

techniques based on Dr. Samuel T. Orton's neurological explanation for language learning disabilities; his approach was derived from his neuropsychiatric background and several case studies of children whose learning differences and instructional needs did not match the sight word method reading curriculum that was used in traditional classrooms.

Orton-Gillingham approaches are highly structured and systematic and they try to engage all the senses in learning about letters and sounds; they will be typically taught one-to-one or in small groups. Some of these programs may include: *Wilson Reading System*, *Spell P.A.T. (Phonemic Analysis Training)*, *Slingerland*, *Spalding*, *Multisensory Teaching Approach*, *Alphabetic Phonics*, *Sonday System*, *LANGUAGE!* and *Project Read* (Shaywitz, 2003 & Birsh, 2011).

According to Birsh (2011), today all MSLE programs rely on important instructional principles from Orton-Gillingham. These programs are structured and organized to meet the unique needs of students who struggle to read and spell with traditional and customary classroom methods. These methods involve teaching language-related skills that incorporate letter sounds, syllables, words, sentences, and writing contained within a daily lesson plan where all aspects of the alphabetic phonetic approach to reading and writing are always detailed. Teachers are responsive and intensive and provide many opportunities for corrective feedback as each element is taught and practiced (Birsh, 2011).

Dyslexia over Time

According to Shaywitz (2003), dyslexia is not only very common but is also very persistent. It is now known that dyslexia is not a developmental lag that children will somehow outgrow. For this reason, Shaywitz urges that children be identified early on to ensure that they receive help as soon as they are identified. Data provided by the Connecticut Longitudinal Study confirmed that dyslexia is a chronic condition and that it does not represent something that will go away. In addition, Shaywitz outlined that about one-third of the children in the study were receiving special help, but this help was not happening consistently and could have been described as a *band-aid* approach. It was found that children received very limited help and the methods did not reflect state-of-the art, evidence-based instructional strategies. Therefore, Shaywitz claims that it is important that children are identified early and receive intervention that is consistent with the seriousness of the reading disorder.

Birsh (2011) concludes that although dyslexia affects individuals over a life span and cannot be cured, reading skills can be increased with the right early intervention and prevention programs. In fact, a lot of research has been drawn to demonstrate the interactions between neurobiological and environmental factors in students with reading difficulties using functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). When children with reading disabilities are given intensive, systematic code-base reading interventions, they demonstrated increased activation in the left occipito-temporal brain region and also make significant gains in reading fluency and comprehension. For example Shaywitz (2003) found that after one year of intensive

phonologically based interventions, there was evidence to demonstrate that significant and durable changes in brain organization took place so that the brain could activate patterns that resemble those of typical readers.

Accommodations

According to Shaywitz (2003), accommodations represent the bridge that connects a student with dyslexia to his or her strengths, and in the process allows the ability to reach potential. Accommodations become essential as the student advances through schooling because his strengths mature in thinking, reasoning, vocabulary and analytic skills and at the same time his challenges increase. Shaywitz describes that scientific evidence indicate that good readers and readers with dyslexia follow different pathways to adult reading. For the student with dyslexia, the phonologic weakness makes reading demands more challenging and demanding. For example, in order to achieve the same level of reading accuracy as a non-dyslexic peer he or she must read more slowly and with great effort because the automatic route to reading is unavailable (Shaywitz, 2003).

Because teaching students with dyslexia across settings is a challenge for both general education and special education teachers (Mercer, 2002). Teachers seek accommodations that will foster the learning and management of a class of diverse learners. It is important to identify interventions that are reasonable to ask of teachers in all classroom settings. The International Dyslexia Association made the following accommodations that appear to be reasonable and provide a framework for helping students with dyslexia achieve in general education and special education classrooms:

Accommodations involving materials. Because students spend a big part of their day interaction with materials the following material accommodations should be considered: Use of tape recorder to record directions, stories and specific lesson so that students can replay tape for clarification.

Clarify or simplify written directions. Teacher can help by underlining or highlighting significant information or parts of the directions. Rewriting the directions can also be helpful.

Present small amount of work. The teacher can tear pages from workbooks and materials to present small assignments to students who are anxious about the amount of work to be done. This can prevent students from becoming overwhelmed from examining the entire workbook. Teachers can also reduce the amount of work when it appears redundant.

Blockout extraneous stimuli. When a student is easily distracted, it may help to use a blank paper to cover sections of the page not being worked on at that time. Line markers can be used to aid reading, and windows to display individual math problems.

Provide additional practice activities. Teachers can supplement materials with practice activities whenever materials do not provide enough practice activities for students with learning problems to support mastery on selected skills. Recommended practices can include games, peer teaching activities, computer programs and self-correcting activities.

Provide a glossary for content areas. At the secondary level, the specific language of the content area requires careful reading. Students benefit from a glossary of content related terms.

Accommodations involving interactive instruction. In order to gain students' attention and keep them engaged for long periods of time, teaching interactions should provide successful learning experiences for each student. Some accommodations to support successful instructional activities include:

Use explicit teaching procedures. Because many commercial materials do not offer teachers opportunities to use explicit teaching procedures, teachers can include explicit teaching steps in their lessons such as advance organizers, demonstrate the skill, provide guided practice, monitor practice, and provide corrective feedback.

Repeat directions. Asking students to repeat directions in their own words helps students who have difficulty following directions. Students can repeat directions to the teacher or to a peer who is available.

Maintain daily routines. Students must know what is expected daily in their classroom.

Provide copy of lecture notes. Outlines, charts, or blank webs can be given to students to fill in during presentations. This helps students listen for key information and see how information and concepts relate.

Simultaneously combine verbal and visual information. Verbal information can be provided with visual displays.

Use balanced presentations and activities. Efforts should be made to balance oral presentations with visual information and participatory activities.

Accommodations involving student performance. Students will vary significantly in their abilities to respond in different modes. Some students vary in their ability to give oral presentations; some students vary in their ability to process information presented visual or auditory formats. The following accommodations involve mode of repetition and expression that can be used to enhance students' performance in the classroom:

Change response mode. For students with difficulties with fine motor skills, the response mode can be changed to underlining, selecting from multiple choices, sorting, or marking. They can also be given extra space for writing answers on worksheets or can be allowed to respond on individual chalkboards.

Provide an outline of lecture. An outline can help a student follow the lesson successfully and make appropriate notes. It can help see the organization of the material.

Encourage use of graphic organizers. A graphic organizer will help organize information into a visual format.

Place students close to the teacher. Students who have difficulty with attentions may be seated close to teacher, chalkboard, or work area away from distracting sounds, materials, or objects.

Reduce copying. Students should be provided handouts or worksheets to minimize copying information.

Display works samples. Samples of completed assignments can be displayed to help students see the expectations accordingly.

Use peer mediated learning. Teacher can pair students with different ability levels to review their notes, study for test, read aloud to each other, write stories, or conduct experiments. A partner can read math problems for students with reading problems to solve.

Use assignments substitutions or adjustments. Students can be allowed to complete projects instead of oral reports or vice versa. Tests can be given in oral or written format.

Technology

Assistive Technology (AT) is a device or service that will enhance students' abilities and reduce barriers to achievement (Zabala, 2005). AT can be used to across disability groups, across settings, and across time. According to Erickson, Hatch, and Clendon (2010), AT can take many forms, however, as a support for reading, text-to-speech with electronic text has been recognized as an important reading solution for students with dyslexia. It is important to recognize that the impact that AT can have on the reading success of students requires a closer look at the students' profile of strength and weaknesses; students' abilities in silent reading and listening comprehension in the absence of AT relative to the difficulty of the text they are being asked to read should be analyzed.

According to Okolo and Kopke (2013), AT can provide other tools that can enable disciplinary literacy. For example, not only can text-to-speech support students

with reading comprehension but multi-purpose tools such as word prediction and speech recognition can also aid with aspects of writing. Disciplinary Internet portals and video libraries can help build background knowledge and support vocabulary; reference and research management tools are indispensable for collecting, organizing, and documenting research. In addition, a variety of research, reference management, and collaboration tools can support students' disciplinary inquiry (Okolo & Kopke, 2013).

Okolo and Kopke (2013) claim that educators will play key roles in developing and sharing innovative ideas and examples of how commonly available technology tools can be adapted to accomplish goals and activities in the classroom. In the current educational climate, technology tools can serve as a temporary scaffold to be abandoned once the skill is acquired and developed to a level of automaticity. Other students may become reliant on the tool that they need whenever they complete a specific task (Okolo & Kopke, 2013). Whereas research has provided significant insights on how assistive and instructional technology can be used to enhance students' learning, parents and educators must be enthusiastic in searching for tools that will assist, scaffold, and support students in the classroom (Edyburn, 2013).

Teacher Preparation

According to Moats (2000) teaching reading and writing requires considerable expertise. Teachers who are successful with most students know their content and have learned effective teaching strategies through several years of study, experience, and mentoring. It is important to recognize that more children will learn to read and

write when teaching is skillful and organized around well-defined content. Moats (2000) describes that learning to read is a complex linguistic achievement that is dependent for many students on effortful and incremental skill development; only teachers who have a clear understanding of reading psychology, language structure, and proven methods will enable that achievement in students.

Teaching reading effectively requires a lot of knowledge and skill, in a time of increase focus on standards for student achievement, such as Common Core State Standards. These and other standards do not define what teachers of reading need to know to deliver informed instruction. The International Dyslexia Association (*IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*) were designed by a committee spearheaded by Louisa Moats and other professionals to fill that crucial need for effective teaching of reading (IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards, 2010). The standards outline: a) content knowledge necessary to teach reading and writing to all students and (b) practices for effective instruction.

Teachers

must have foundational knowledge about language and literacy development and an understanding of individual differences to serve all the children in their classroom.

Moats (2000) claims that most reading problems can be prevented through appropriate instruction. Moats describes that classroom instruction that integrates language and reading skills in kindergarten and that is sustained throughout school will ensure success for many students.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged in the 1970s as a result from criticism of the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement (Yosso, 2005). During that time, many scholars, lawyers and activists across the nation were determined that the momentum of civil rights litigation was coming to an end (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) and their desire to continue examining these issues become a priority. CRT, as a form of oppositional scholarship, challenges the experiences of whites as a normed standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the unique experiences of people of color and addresses campus speech codes, disproportionate sentencing of people of color in the criminal justice system, and affirmative action (Taylor, 1998). However, Yosso (2005) describes that critical race theorists begin to deviate from Critical Legal Studies because it presented only a two-dimensional discourse, black/white, which did not offer a deep understanding of multiple ways in which other racial groups were experiencing different forms of oppression. Over the years, CRT has branched and expanded to articulate the voices of the racialized experiences of women, Latinas/os, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. Furthermore, CRT can help examine the practices in the field of education that are often practiced without centering on issues of race and racism, inequitable policies, and deficit thinking positions (Aleman, 2009; Yosso, 2005).

In the field of education, Valencia (as cited in Solórzano, 1998) presents five themes identified by Daniel Solórzano that should inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum, and policy: (1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the

centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches.

1. *The centrality and intersectionality of race and racism.* CRT begins from the premise that race and racism are central, permanent, and define how US society functions. CRT calls for an examination of how race has come to be socially constructed and how the systemic nature of racism serves to oppress people of color while it protects white privilege.

2. *The challenge to dominant ideology.* CRT challenges the prevailing attitudes, particularly claims of the educational system and its view toward meritocracy, objectivity, color and gender blindness, and equal opportunity.

3. *The commitment to social justice.* CRT in education includes a firm duty to social justice and the elimination of racism.

4. *The centrality of experiential knowledge.* CRT recognizes the great importance of experiential knowledge of people of color and that such knowledge is valid, appropriate, and essential to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racism in education.

5. *The interdisciplinary perspective.* CRT in education challenges the historical and unidisciplinary preoccupation of most investigations and argues that one can best understand race and racism in education by incorporation interdisciplinary perspectives.

Yosso (2005) states that these themes are not new, but have collectively continued to help scholars explore the challenges in education around the discussions

of how race and racism impact educational structures, practices, outcomes and current discourses. In addition, Yosso notes that CRT in education can validate and focus on the experiences of the most marginalized.

Yosso (2005) outlines the five themes identified in CRT as a helpful guiding lens to inform research, especially with Communities of Color. Additionally, Aleman (2009) argues that formal education operates as an avenue for success and opportunity and can also become detrimental, divisive, and a disadvantaging space for students and Communities of Color. Therefore, Aleman describes schools as places highly competitive and political in nature, often bestowing their most damaging effects on racially marginalized students. Additionally, numerous scholars have demonstrated that educational settings systematically oppress, exclude, and damage students of color. Using a CRT lens can be an avenue to explore racism in U.S. schools. Yosso (2005) describes the most prevalent form of racism in US schools is deficit thinking. Valencia (2010) defines deficit thinking as the idea that minority students labor under intellectual handicaps because of their family structure, linguistic background, and culture. These assumptions place students and families at fault for their own poor academic performance (Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, Valencia describes that deficit thinking in education injuriously continuous to dominate schooling conditions that has lead to intractable school failure among millions of students. On the other hand, Yosso, through CRT, has demonstrated that Communities of Color have a community of cultural wealth through six forms of capital that can be utilized to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of

oppressions: (1) aspirational; (2) linguistic; (3) familial; (4) social; (5) navigational; and (6) resistant.

1. *Aspirational capital* draws on the work from Patricia Gándara (Yosso, 2005) and refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real barriers. This resiliency is evident in those who allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the objective means to attain those goals.

2. *Linguistic capital* draws on over the work from over 35 years research About the value of bilingual education and emphasizes the connections between racialized cultural history and language. Linguistic capital refers to the idea that Students of Color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills because they have been engaged in traditions of storytelling, parables, stories or proverbs.

3. *Familial capital* refers to the cultural knowledge nurtured among families that carry a sense of history, memory and cultural intuition. It expands the concept of family to include a more ‘extended family,’ which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends who might be considered part of the *familia* (kin). This kin models lessons of caring, coping and providing education that will inform emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness. This consciousness can be fostered within and between families, as well as through sports, school, and religious gatherings and other social community settings. Families “become connected with others around common

issues” and isolation is minimized and they are “not alone in dealing with their problems.”

4. *Social capital* can be explained as networks of people and community resources. These peer and social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions. For example a student preparing a college scholarship application can draw on these networks, while being reassured that he/she is not alone in the process of pursuing higher education. Mutual aid societies are examples of how historically, immigrants to the US and indeed, African Americans even while slaved, created and maintained social networks).

5. *Navigational capital* refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions that were not created with Communities of Color in mind. It examines individual, family and community factors that support Mexican American students’ successful navigation through the educational system. Solórzano and Villalpando (as cited by Yosso, 2005) described that People of Color draw on various social and psychological ‘critical navigational skills’ to maneuver through structures of inequality permeated by racism.

6. *Resistant capital* refers to the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. This form of cultural wealth is grounded in the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited by Communities of Color and presented by numerous examples like Latina mothers who are trying to teach their daughters to be self-reliant and challenge the status quo within structures

of inequality. Therefore, transformative resistant capital transforms oppressive structures like racism and motivation through cultural knowledge. (Yosso, 2005). I

This theoretical framework will best fit this research because English Language Learners in elementary school who have dyslexia are often seen by a label that can become more harmful than beneficial (Weaver, 1994). According to Weaver, what these students have in common is that their families and their home environments have traditionally been considered deficient in some way. In other words, students with dyslexia are said to have something wrong with their brain functions, which is defined as a deficiency. In addition, drawing on community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), students with dyslexia have many strengths and assets that can lead to great contributions for their academic success.

Utilizing a CRT framework, Yosso (2005) and Valencia's (2010) work on deficit thinking, I plan to situate my understanding to recognize voices that have been silenced through existing practices dominating in U.S. schools and identify ideologies that continue to quiet the voices of elementary students with dyslexia. This framework can assist in promoting social justice and educational transformation, from which leaders in education can challenge their traditional practices in education and school policy. CRT can help analyze common themes that can serve as tools to help better understand how race and racism affect education and the lives of students and families with dyslexia. Additionally, it is by using CRT that examining the experiences of students and families with dyslexia can offer an analysis that can serve as an advocacy in the education of the most marginalized and oppressed.

Dyslexia Framework

The British Dyslexia Association describe in their book, *Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide—Abridge Version*, a framework named the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark which has received an international recognition and is built upon standards that cover four key areas. The following standards comprise this framework (Cochrane, et al., 2012).

Standard One: Leadership and Management. The criteria that make up this standard are concerned with policies embedded within the school to support learners with dyslexia and require schools to provide evidence of such policies that are firmly rooted into day- to-day practice within their learning environment.

Standard Two: What is the quality of learning? This standard comprises criteria that investigate the level of expertise and knowledge of staff to identify and support students with dyslexia, as well as evidence of effective use of appropriate intervention strategies.

Standard Three: Creating a climate for learning. The criteria stipulated will, for example investigate evidence of appropriate marking policy being utilized through the school, demonstrating that students are marked on their knowledge of understanding rather than deficits.

Standard Four: Partnership and Liaison with Parents, Carers, Governors and other concerned Parties. The criteria will explore the signposting opportunities provided to parents and how accessible they are. It will also look at the processes in place for response to concerns by parents (Cochrane et al., 2012).

According to Cochrane et al. (2012), these standards clearly outline the criteria for identifying whether schools are dyslexia friendly. Using the standards can aid schools in carrying out a self-audit to assess whether or not the school meets the criteria or whether more development is needed in a particular area. Through an action plan, schools will be enabled to visibly identify and plan activities that need to take place in order to meet the criteria. It is intended through this framework that all students will benefit and develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence, which are keys to maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses. It is further described that many apparent learning difficulties can be best explained as learning differences. Learners with dyslexia have strengths in many areas like problem solving, creativity, verbal skills and leadership. By acknowledging dyslexia as a learning difference, the focus is placed on raising awareness within the school in a positive way.

Summary

In summary this review of the literature looked for key factors that are essential to addressing the needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia. The review of this literature will also provide groundwork for specific research in the state of New Mexico. This literature review began with general topics that will include: General Examination on the Importance of Reading; English Language Learners and Dyslexia. It will then transition to examining the Dyslexia Framework and Theoretical framework that will guide the lens for the study. Then the whole general perspectives will be narrowed down to Dyslexia in New Mexico and more

specifically to elementary schools in New Mexico. This chapter concludes with the discussion of the frameworks, which include Critical Race Theory, and Dyslexia Framework.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

English Language Learners and student minority communities have historically struggled for educational equality (Valencia, 2008). Many layers and forms of advocacy have emphasized and promoted the advancement of minority students and have included the following: advocacy organizations, individual activists, political demonstrations, legislation, and litigation.

Differences in academic reading outcomes and graduation rates for minority students compared to white students continue to persist and these results should be spurring policies and practices to be high on policy reform agendas (Hawley & Nieto, 2010). There has been widespread discussion on the “the minority achievement gap” but solutions on public policies continue to be color-blind and are not culturally responsive. Hawley and Nieto (2010) emphasize that schools continue to operate under the assumptions that what works for white students will work for students of color, if only it was done more often.

Research Design

In the last two decades, a notable growth in the use of qualitative methods for applied social policy research continues to increase. Qualitative research is used to explore and understand diversity of social and public policy issues, either as an independent research strategy or by combining some other statistical inquiry (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). In order to continue a political discourse that campaigns for equality in education for English Language Learners with dyslexia during the

elementary years, it was important to focus and highlight on the current pedagogical practices existing in schools. A qualitative case study (Yin, 2003) design for this study allowed the researcher to focus on the context of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which aided in the investigation and analysis of issues that were centered on race and racism. The Dyslexia Framework supported the examination of the day-to-day practices in the schools as well as artifacts that were collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A qualitative case study designs permits the researcher to employ multiple methods for the collection and analysis of data through microanalysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2003). Microanalysis uses a combination of research methods and tools for conducting a systematic exploration pertaining to the theme of the study. This research employed in-depth interviews, observations in the classrooms, and analysis of artifacts provided by participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

According to Ritchie and Spencer (2012) addressing important questions in order to obtain “answers” toward illumination or an understanding of the experiences from participants will vary from study to study. The questions, observations, and artifacts that shaped this research were specific to the objectives of the frameworks identified in this study. The frameworks allowed for the analysis of “answers, observations, and artifacts” to facilitate the tasks of defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring, and mapping the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 2012). I became familiarized with the data that was gathered and identified key issues, concepts and themes by drawing upon previous objectives from the frameworks that arose in

recurring patterns of particular views or experiences from the participants (Richie & Spencer, 2012).

Data Sources

This study used three primary sources to gather data: in-depth interviews, observations, and artifacts. In order for this research to explore the experiences that are shaped through the processes that are structured and unstructured, formal and informal in the organization of elementary schools, in-depth interviews were utilized as the primary strategy for this qualitative study. Interviews were approximately 45 minutes in length and it allowed for interchange of ideas between two persons. Interviews can have limitations that are intimate and are dependent upon trust (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). This study also connected observations and the collection of artifacts to cross check the findings of data than helped answer the research questions. When interviews are combined with observations, they can allow the researcher to understand the meaning that everyday activities hold for people and can provide a richer understanding.

Merriam (2009) illustrates that the integration of multiple methods for data collection can be richer. For example, what someone tells you in an interview can be checked against what you observe on site or what you read about in documents relevant to the phenomenon of interest. Triangulation was employed in this research to crosscheck data collected through observations, artifacts, and interview data collected from participants. Triangulation ensured validity and reliability in the

research and this strategy helped assert that the data interpretation become more credible (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and the data collected, as well as compliance with the New Mexico State University Institutional Review Board. Pseudonyms were used and assigned to the participants and reported as such in the study. Actual identities of participants were not revealed in any manner or form. The researcher recorded the actual names of the participants in the initial data collection process. All data and information containing names was converted to selected pseudonyms for the interpretation and reporting of results.

Interviews

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the use of interviews as a research method is not a mystery but a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the exchange of views in everyday conversations and becomes an approach with careful questioning and listening with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In-depth Interviews are optimal for collecting data on participants' perspectives and experiences, particularly to the topic of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). According to Yow (1994), once the researcher begins the with the interview process, ownership of this information belongs jointly to both the participant and the researcher. The explicit release to use the interview material was voluntarily obtained from the participants. A separate written release form, the informed consent, was drawn and made available to each participant in their dominant language, English or Spanish, including a clear

statement that by signing the consent form they had agreed to participate in the study but their participation was voluntary. The participant gave permission to the researcher to use their words in the way described in the consent. The consent form informed the participants that they freely volunteered to participate in the research and that they had the right to drop out of the research at any time.

The data collection process allowed for a deeper understanding of perspectives that could be captured through face-to-face interactions with participants. This research method provided an opportunity to analyze the perspectives of teachers, administrators and parents to unfold themes and patterns (Marshall & Rossman, 2012). The use of inductive analysis was utilized to analyze the collection of data from the interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2012). Marshall and Rossman state that inductive analysis allows the researcher to “discover patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data.”

Observations

Observations were attempted at both elementary school but were only conducted at Blue Elementary School. Although teachers at Golden Elementary agreed to participate in an observation, it became difficult to find a mutually agreed date and time. During the observations at Blue Elementary, the role of the observer was supplementary to the interviewer role. The observations were conducted in the teachers’ classroom during reading intervention times while the teacher was instructing the students. Open-ended observations can allow the researcher to discover patterns and their relationships as opposed to predetermined categories or

strict observational checklists (Marshall & Rossman, 2012). For this study, however, using an observation protocol (see appendix B) was found to be appropriate because it was adopted and modified from the Dyslexia Framework. The observation protocol focused on three areas: classroom environment, teaching methods, and procedures for assigning homework. The modifications in the observation protocol included rewording the three areas of focus by reducing the number of items from the original protocol and rewording each statement and category. Other modifications included adding different statements to allow the researcher to examine key areas like the use of technology and accommodations in the classroom. Students were not observed directly, only their classroom teacher. Marshall and Rossman (2012) report that gaining access to the sites and receiving formal approval requires sensitivity to the norms of a group. In order to conduct the observations for this research, formal approval was obtained from the school administrator as well as from the classroom teachers. Teachers were asked to confirm the accuracy of the observations through iterative interviews as determined necessary, and to comment on the interpretations to determine if these observations were meaningful.

Artifacts

Marshall and Rossman (2012) describe artifacts that individuals, families, agencies, townships or larger social groups produce can be actual documents or objects. The artifacts that were obtained in this research included documents that could generate supplemental information about English Language Learners with dyslexia. Artifacts were provided by teachers and one administrator; these included

daily classroom planners, lesson plans, sample assessments, sample of visual accommodations used with students, parent letters, and classroom activities that were employed in the classroom. These documents can provide useful information that can be gathered and analyzed as part of the in-depth data (Marshall & Rossman, 2012). Analysis of artifacts is potentially quite rich in portraying the values and beliefs of the participants in the actual settings. The documents were reviewed and coded through content analysis to answer the guiding research question: How can elementary schools foster a learning environment that is culturally responsive to support the needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia? And its two subquestions: What experiences contribute to a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the elementary years? What experiences impede a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in elementary years?

To answer the main overarching research question, the procedures detailed in this chapter were used to address the following through the use of interviews, observations, and artifacts.

1. Why were specific instruction and methods selected and implemented in the classroom for this student?
2. What methods were identified that could ensure that this student was successful with the information presented?
3. How did this information make this student more successful?

According to Marshall and Rossman (2012) content analysis can be viewed as an objective and neutral way of generating a quantitative description of the various forms of text such as those used for communication.

Setting and Environment

Blue Elementary School and Golden Elementary School located in the Borderlands were chosen for this research study. The schools are located in the southwest communities of Doña County and El Paso Counties located in the states of New Mexico and Texas. Schools were selected based on their socio-economic status and population of English Language Learners. Although two schools participated in the study, this was not a comparative study. The focus of this study was kept on English Language Learners with dyslexia who resided in the Borderlands. Two states in the Borderlands were chosen to provide a bigger picture of the experiences that English Language Learners with dyslexia encounter.

Participants

The participants for this study included a total of ten participants from both elementary schools. The participants included two administrators, two general education teachers, two special education teachers, two reading intervention teachers, and two parents or guardians (see table 1).

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe that sampling is crucial for later analysis because you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything. The choices of whom to look or talk with, where, when, about what, and why will all place limits on the conclusions that draw, and on how confident you and others will feel about them.

Miles and Huberman (1994) state that sampling means just that: taking a small chunk of a large universe. They recommend beginning with convenience sampling, which allows for the selection of participants who can be available in selected settings for the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe that sampling involves and demands making clear choices and setting parameters around the conceptual framework and research questions to facilitate sampling decisions. The participants for this study were identified through snowball sampling by the researcher and administrator at each site. Snowball sampling allows the identification of people who know people who know what cases are information rich for this study and that would have the greatest potential to yield data established around the boundaries and foci of this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sampling parameters lined up with overarching the research question: What experiences promote or impede creating culturally responsive learning environments for English Language Learning with dyslexia in the elementary years? The identified participant must have had an inter-connection with the student with dyslexia (e.g., teacher, administrator or parent). After possible participants for the study were identified and selected, they were sent an informational/invitational letter to participate in the study. Following this letter and with permission from the school administrator, the participants were contacted through telephone, letter or e-mail to encourage their participation. The researcher obtained informed consents from each of the prospective participants upon receipt of the signed acknowledgement to participate. The researcher and the participants

proceeded to schedule a mutually agreed date and time to begin the interviewing process.

Sampling Procedures and Participant Selection

The process for conducting research with human subjects was followed for this qualitative study. Protocols were followed to obtain permission from the two local elementary schools and their school districts where the study was conducted. Once approval from New Mexico State University Institutional Review Board was obtained, informed consent from the participants was obtained, which informed them of the study and their voluntary participation, as well as their ability to not participate or withdraw at any time from the study.

The participants were selected from two local elementary schools from school districts in the southwest regions of New Mexico and Texas. Two schools were chosen in order to gain a fuller picture of students in the borderland area. The elementary schools selected were based on students' demographics and the approval and willingness of the campus administration to cooperate with the selection process. The participants were chosen using convenience sampling to ensure that they met the criteria previously identified in the study.

Interview Question Development

Interview protocols (see appendix A) were developed based on the research questions addressed in the study, as well as the theoretical frameworks that were utilized for this study. Different interview protocols were developed for the different participants of the study: administrators, teachers and parents or guardians. The

interview questions were organized into different areas that gathered the necessary information to answer the research questions and each of the interview protocols was structured around both of the frameworks that have been presented for this study. One section of the interview questions was to serve as an icebreaker. In the second section, participants were asked to describe specific school procedures and literacy strategies. The interview protocol for the parent or guardian participants asked them to share information about their child's school, identification with dyslexia, and their child's feelings and experiences with how the school or teacher helped their child. It also asked them to voice the students' experiences with dyslexia with reading and writing tasks. The interview protocol for the teacher and administrator asked them to share experiences about their professional career, as well as school/classroom procedures, methodologies or strategies to promote parent involvement.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher contacted the participants by telephone or electronic mail and coordinated the date and time of the interview. Nine of the interviews were conducted on site, at the location of the schools. For the convenience of the participants and as deemed necessary, one interview was held at an identified location which was a public venue conveniently located for the participant. The interviews were held in the dominant language of the participants and in this research it was always English. The teachers, administrators, and students' parent or guardian were interviewed when school was in session. The researcher also observed the two teacher participants'

classrooms and several artifacts were obtained from the six teachers and one administrator.

The researcher served as the moderator and recorder for responses of the interview protocols. After the interview, notes were compiled. The researcher assigned each participant a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality and to prevent the use of real names in the research. Pseudonyms were substituted in the research for all names of persons, schools, school districts, cities, and towns. The researcher audio recorded the interview and utilized an interview protocol to record all necessary data from the participants' responses, as well as any other considerations about the environment during the interview, interruptions, span of time, and other important information.

Data Analysis and Management

The process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a volume of collected data is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating. It is not neat and it does not proceed in a linear fashion. Analysis of qualitative data is a search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Seidman (2006) agrees that the researcher has an important charge to make accessible and organize the material that interviewing generates from participants. Wolcott (1994) describes that the entire process of *analysis* encompasses three distinct activities with the data: description, analysis and interpretation. The strategy used to analyze the data obtained from the interviews was analytic (Marshall & Goodman, 2011). Using an analytic strategy is less

technical/objective and closer to the interpretive/subjectivist end of continuum of analysis strategies allowing the researcher to analyze as he goes along and adjusting as needed. Participant interviews were audio recorder and then transcribed word-for-word on a transcript. Although a transcript can only be a partial representation of the interview, it can reflect the interview as fully as possibly by being verbatim (Seidman, 2006). The researcher transcribed the each participant transcript verbatim. The transcripts remained in the direct physical possession of the researcher at all times.

Seidman (2006) recognizes that in-depth interviewing generates an enormous amount of text. The enormous amount of text must be reduced to what is most important through an inductive process. According to Seidman, the researcher should read the transcripts with an open attitude seeking what emerges as important and of interest from the text. Coding the data is the formal representation of analytic thinking and may be described as deciphering or interpretation of data and includes the naming of concepts and also explaining and discussing them in detail (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). The work of analyzing categories and themes is a tough challenge that must be accomplished (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The first step to coding the data was through open coding which allowed the data to be “broken down” analytically to create a succession of concepts that were developed and ultimately used as building blocks. Through thematic and analytic memos written that summarized key “chunks” of the findings, emerging themes and patterns were generated and were central to the theoretical frameworks identified in this research

(Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The second step for coding the data was through axial coding which refined and differentiated concepts that were already available through open coding (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004). Axial coding uses clustering in which relationships will be outlined through mapping concepts and (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) overlapping categories of evident themes and patterns (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The categories were derived from the theoretical frameworks and literature review that were outline in this research.

Confidentiality of records and securing data was followed according to the regulations outlined by the Code of Federal regulations, Title 45, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects (Seidman, 2006). Original records such as information sheets, informed consent forms, and audiotapes were kept in a secure place to guard against the names of the participants being accidentally revealed in compliance with the Institutional Review Board requirements at New Mexico State University.

Summary

This chapter outlined all the research methods, strategies, and designs that were employed in this study. It concluded with procedures, participants, interviews, data sources, protocol development, data collection, and data analysis.

Table 1: Summary of Participant Demographic & Experience Information

Name	Title	School	Years Education Experience
Tomas Parent	Teacher	Golden	
Mari's Parent	Teacher	Golden	
Esperanza	Administrator	Blue	14 administration 23 total
Socorro	Administrator	Golden	9 administration 14 total
Hope	Special Education	Blue	15
Dream	Special Education	Golden	17
Costanza	Intervention	Blue	9
Infinity	Intervention	Golden	33
Paz	4 th Grade	Blue	7
Felicia	4 th Grade	Golden	3

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Reading is a fundamental skill taught in elementary schools and is the key to graduate from high school, become employable and gain social advancement. As educational leaders face rapid changes in today's K-12 schools, they must recognize the need to renovate current educational practices with models that will address academic, cultural, and socioeconomic gaps.

The learning environments defined within a school may influence the learning experiences of English Language Learners with dyslexia. This dissertation explored factors that may improve or impede the learning environments of English Language Learners with dyslexia. The participants were selected from two elementary schools from two different school districts. The elementary schools, Golden Elementary and Blue Elementary, were considered to be rural school communities that were located long the New Mexico-Texas border.

School Demographics

With a population of 5,381 and a median income of \$27,500, Golden Town is the home to Golden Elementary School. Golden Elementary School serves a total of 447 students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Their student enrollment was 94% Hispanic, 2% Black and 5% white. Their student population has grown by 14% over the past five years. About 36% of their students have limited English proficiency and 100% are classified, as economically disadvantaged and 100% are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Blue Town is the home to about 9,000 people with a median household income of \$22,216 and is also the home to Blue Elementary School. Blue Elementary school served a total number of 437 students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade sixth. Their student enrollment was 100% Hispanic with 99% eligible for free and reduced lunch. About 70% of their students are English Language Learners. In 2013, this school was named a Blue Ribbon School and was recognized by the department of education as a high achieving school with superior standards for academic excellence. This national award is reserved for schools that promote students to achieve high educational goals regardless of their backgrounds, ability or location, and who face many hurdles like poverty.

Participant Profiles

The participants in this study were selected because they were identified to have an inter connection with students identified as an English Language Learner with dyslexia. A total of ten participants were interviewed: two parents, two administrators, two special education teachers, two reading intervention teachers, and two general education teachers.

Although the ten participants differed in their experiences, roles within their perspective schools and views about the various questions they were asked during the interview, they voiced related and distinct stories about their understanding of dyslexia. As a result, it has been communicated in this research that dyslexia occurs at varying degrees and this variation may affect participants' perceptions about what dyslexia is. It is important to note that participants' variations about their experiences

with dyslexia may be due to their own familiarity, point of view, and knowledge in their own lives.

Observations and Artifacts

Observations

This study also connected observations and the collection of artifacts to triangulate and cross check the findings of data that answered the research questions. Two observations were conducted. I attempted to conduct observations at both schools. Two observations were conducted at Blue Elementary School. There were scheduling constraints and a lack of teacher availability at Golden Elementary School.

The observations were conducted in the teacher's classroom during their reading intervention time when they were instructing students. A checklist (see appendix B) derived from the Dyslexia Framework was used during the observations. The purpose of the observation was to seek information about the students' classroom environment, teaching methods, and procedures utilized by the teacher for assignments and homework. This framework assisted me to focus on the classroom environment that should foster a safe place for students with dyslexia that can benefit all type of learners. The observations served as an assurance to support the participants' stories about student supports like strategies and accommodations that were employed in their classroom. They also provided me with an opportunity to discover a deeper interpretation of the teaching methods and strategies because they confirmed the accuracy of the emergent themes.

The first observation took place at Blue Elementary in Costanza's classroom one afternoon close to the end of the school day during her reading intervention class. The observation was approximately 45 minutes. The classroom was located near the main school office, which was in the first classrooms in approximation to the school entrance. As I walked down the hall to get to her classroom, the school hallways were empty and classroom doors were closed. When I arrived at the classroom, the door was partially open and I entered the room. Costanza gave me a warm welcome and asked that I sit. There were no students in the classroom at that time. The classroom appeared of average size. The furniture consisted of four tables with chairs. Posters, charts and program materials decorated and covered most of the walls. The classroom appeared well organized and materials seemed readily available for the students. The classroom also had a big interactive white board and a document camera. The room was well ventilated and the temperature was comfortable. A total of five students arrived and sat on a kidney table near the interactive board. The teacher sat at the center of the table to guide each of the students. The teacher stated the objectives of the lesson for that day and began reviewing letters and sounds. The information was presented through visual and auditory modes and the students responded orally. The students used letter tiles to spell words dictated by the teacher. Then the teacher transitioned students to read a book aloud. She discussed the story and stopped many times to provide clarification. Teacher introduced a new lesson, which consisted of long vowel sounds. Then the teacher continued with this format, introduction, review and discussion of lesson. The instruction and information

presented to students was not broken down into small steps. Students were presented with five different vowel sounds at the same time, which could have resulted in too much information at once. Procedures for assignments and homework were not observed during this time. At the end of the lesson, the students were rewarded with tickets that could be exchanged for prizes at the end of the week. Overall, the conclusion of this observation indicated that the observation did achieve the requirements for the environment and teaching methods based on the observation protocol (see appendix B).

The second observation also took place at Blue Elementary School one day close to noon at about 12:35 pm. The observation lasted approximately 35 minutes. This observation was done in Hope's special education classroom. Hope classroom was located very far away from the main office and school entrance. I had to walk and cross several hallways until I could find her room. I went around and around several times and got lost. A teacher who was walking to the office at that time instructed me to follow her so that she could lead to the room. When I arrived at Hope's classroom the room appeared rather small and somewhat crowded. Most of the classroom materials rested on top of the shelves that went around the all the walls. She had four tables with chairs and all were occupied with students. Although the room appeared ventilated, there were too many students present at that time. Hope was working with a five students in the front of the classroom doing a *Sunday* reading lesson. The classroom assistant was also working with four other students. There were groups of other students working independently at other tables. The room

appeared busy and occupied. Hope was presenting a lesson about consonant blends. She had all the materials within her reach and appeared organized. Although most students were at work and engaged, the room seemed rather noisy and too many different events were happening at once. During the lesson, Hope had to stop and redirect the other students at the other tables. Hope employed teaching methods that were multisensory (visual and auditory) and provided frequent feedback. She did not state the objectives at the beginning of the lesson but encouraged students to make contributions during the lesson. She allowed for additional time for students to process information. For the second time, procedures for assignments and homework were not observed. At the end of the observations, Hope asked students to write words with “spl” as an independent follow-up activity at the end of the lesson. It was concluded from this observation that the environment of Hope’s classroom were not all met or observed which could have been reflected from the large number of students that were present in the classroom at that time. The teaching methods did achieve the requirements for the teaching methods in the observation protocol (see appendix B).

Artifacts

A total of seven artifacts were collected from the participants. Artifacts were provided by six teachers and one administrator; these included daily focus calendar, parent letter, Wilson Foundation program samples, *Sunday* program samples, teacher made reading and writing materials, and sample of visual accommodations used with students.

Daily focus calendar. This artifact consisted of a sample student planner that is utilized in Paz' fourth grade classroom. The planner is sent home at the end of each day. Parents are expected to review daily and initial after they review. It included a behavior log where teacher rates students' behavior for the day. It was unknown how behavior was reported to parents. The planner also included weekly reminders for parents and daily reading and writing homework. The planner was only available in English.

Quick phonics screener. This artifact was a study copy of a phonics screener used in Infinity's classroom. It consisted of nine tasks that the student had to complete. The tasks presented phonics concepts along with reading sentences. The tasks progressed in order of difficulty. For example in task one the student had to name letters and their sounds. Task two consisted of reading a total of ten sight words as well as simple sentences with one-syllable words. Task three consisted of reading words with ending consonant blends and simple sentences with more advance words with initial and final consonant blends. The last task, task nine, presented multi-syllabic words like *contaminate, particular, and emergency*. This screener was only available in English. Infinity used this screener to identify phonic strengths and weaknesses that would guide her instruction with each of her students. The teacher would pass this information into another chart where she would keep other assessment information for the student.

Parent letter. The sample letter was used by the school administration to notify parents that their child was being recommended for after school tutoring. The

letter indicated that the student would participate in Reader's Theater based on his most recent tests score. It acknowledge for causing an inconvenience but this would allow the school to try to help the student meet grade level targets for reading and math. The letter also identified that if the student did not attend the after school tutoring, her or she would be recommended for retention. The letter requested a teacher and parent signatures on the letter. The letter was only available in English.

Wilson Foundations sample program letters, assessments, and lesson plans. This artifact was provided by Costanza. Costanza wanted me to become familiar with the intervention she employed in her classroom as part of the school's reading intervention efforts. It consisted of a parent letter that went home at the beginning of year or when students were beginning to participate in the intervention. The letter informed parents that their child would be participating in *Foundations* reading program. The letter described the parent as the *coach* and together with the teacher formed a *team*. The letter thanked the parent for their cooperation. It also contained two additional pages where parents were provided an explanation of their role as a coach, as well as how they could help their child develop oral expression and vocabulary. The letter was only available in English. The sample assessments consisted of program placements inventories presented to students with letters and words. These would determine where in the program the student would begin. One of the program materials provided by Costanza included a writing page, which had visuals to help students with letter formation. It consisted of three different starting points, as well as visual cues to help students know whether a

letter was one space, two spaces or so on. It provided the student with visual cue to know whether the letter only reached the grass, sky or went below the grass. Costanza indicated this was very helpful when teaching letter formation and handwriting.

Sonday System sample program assessments and lessons plans. Hope provided this artifact. She indicated that *Sonday* was the reading program she used at her school with students who demonstrated difficulties in reading. She acknowledged that this reading intervention program took over two years for a student to complete it. The artifact consisted of an implementation checklist that provided the teacher with a quick visual guide to ensure she addressed all areas of the program which included: read sounds, spell sounds, read words, spell words, introduce new material, and read aloud. Hope also provided me with a *Sonday* scope and sequence of concepts introduced in the first 36 lessons. At last, Hope provided with sample benchmark assessments, which were to be presented to the students after completing a number of lessons. These assessments would provide information about mastery of skills. It also included pretest and post-test summary charts for each student. Hope indicated this information helped her analyze her student data.

Teacher made classroom materials. These materials consisted of reading and writing activities that were employed in Paz' classroom. The first one was daily writing prompt that was glued onto the student's writing page. It read as follows: "Write two pages on, 'what does having a positive attitude mean to you? Why should you have a positive attitude? Explain how your actions can affect other people and can affect yourself? How can your actions describe what kind of person you are?'" It

was uncertain how students were scored on this writing assignment or if was addressing specific skills for grammar or punctuation. The writing prompt was available in English and it was not made known whether Spanish prompts were provided for Spanish monolingual students. The second activity consisted of a story titled *Coaster History*. The story was about the history of roller coasters. It discussed famous roller coasters found in places like Pennsylvania, Disneyland, and Six Flags. At the end of the story, there were comprehension questions that the student had to answer. In addition, the student was provided with a response packet sheet, which consisted of writing activities employed before, during, and after reading the story. Paz indicated that the goal of the activity was to improve reading comprehension through active interaction with the text.

Visual student accommodation. Felicia provided this artifact. She provided this artifact because she used it to provide writing accommodations to one of her students with dyslexia. The writing paper consisted of visuals embedded in the paper to signal the student were to begin writing in the paper and where to stop or end his writing. It also provided with very bold lines at the beginning and end of the paper to remind the student where to keep his writing. The paper provided individual boxes and lines to remind visual cues about where to begin and end words. It provided visual cues with spacing. Felicia indicated that this paper was very helpful for her student. It really helped her student keep more consistent with letter formation and letter and word spacing.

These documents provided useful information that was used in the triangulation of the data and in the development of the emergent themes. The analysis of the artifacts portrayed and reaffirmed the values and beliefs that were shared by the participants during the interviews.

After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed verbatim. I listened to each participant's complete conversations and also read the transcripts that helped me come up with a profile for each participant. After re-reading the transcripts, analyzing the observations and artifacts, several times themes began to emerge. I found a relationship between classroom observations and the artifacts that portrayed rich information that supported the participants' stories that were shared.

Interview Analysis

This study explored the factors through which the educational experiences of English Language Learners with dyslexia may be shaped. In-depth interviews were used to elicit information from participants in order to achieve a holistic understanding of their point of views or experiences; this approach was used to explore interesting areas that may need further investigation. Therefore, individual interviews and their analysis, the observations and the artifacts were essential in this study in an attempt to delineate factors that impact the educational experiences for students with dyslexia. It was critical that these factors encountered in their every day learning environments and every day experiences were drawn from conclusions about their educational outcomes as English Language Learners with dyslexia. As I navigated through this research, I was touched and impressed by the experiences that

were shared, the emotions, and the honesty and courage of my ten participants. This chapter captured these factors that define this holistic understanding about their experiences, and includes rich interview analysis that highlighted salient aspects of these every day experiences. The participants' identify and confidentiality is protected and this study excluded real names and used pseudonyms.

Parents

The interview protocol for the parent or guardian participants asked them to share their experiences about their child's school, teacher and their child's feelings on how the school or teacher helped their child. It also asked them to voice the students' experiences with dyslexia and reading and writing tasks. Two parents were interviewed: Tomás' Parent and Mari's Parent.

Tomás Parent

Setting. I met with Tomás' mother in a public venue one morning. She came to the interview with her spouse and two children. Her happiness and affection were evident as we met and she sent her children to go play. She appeared very willing to participate in this interview, and her smile, laughter and confident proved to be a personal characteristic about this parent. Tomás' parent was a general education teacher in a nearby school district. Tomás, one of her children had been diagnosed with characteristics of dyslexia. Tomás was in the fourth grade at Golden Elementary School. She talked about Tomás' educational trajectory.

Tomás attended the pre-k program when he was three. He did that for two years until he was five and could go into kindergarten. He had a speech delay

and they put tubes in his ears to help him hear. So he was a little bit delayed in the beginning. After that he went to school with me. I teach at an elementary school and he attended kinder at my school. After that, I wanted him to have more structure; his father and I were going through a divorce at that time so structure was very important. I went ahead and placed him at the school where we live. So he started first grade and has been at this school since then.

Tomás' mother recounted Tomás' struggles in school, her experiences in attempting to find out why her son was having difficulty with reading, finding a diagnosis, as well as trying to get him help so that he would be able to do well in school because he was very smart. She explained,

He's always been a little behind since kindergarten. The kinder teacher would come after school and talk to me [laughing] to tell me that he was behind. He has always been behind in all areas, especially reading and his writing.

Penmanship was bad. In kinder he did a lot, of you know, to me I thought it was very normal. And I think that's why I had a hard time because I already knew he was delayed in speech so I thought that was bringing on the other stuff but he had a hard time with writing his name. He took longer than most kids. I think he was already in... [thinking] and that's why he had already been in preschool since he was three. He had been practicing writing his name and took some time. It was about four months into kindergarten when he finally was able to write his name, all of it: Tomás Hernandez. So that was one thing. Even then, it was still that he would use capital and small letters

and they were mixed the way he did it. The *bs* and *ds*, and you know the common ones that are easily confused. So he would do that, so his penmanship was a big thing. His reading, he always was very...when he would read or I would read to him, it was always very choppy. And so I knew it would take him a while. Even if he reread the same page, I would say okay it's your turn so he would read and even though he had read that page like three times, he would struggle with whatever passage he read. Tomás is in fourth grade now and he's still behind. He's doing a lot better. He had a very, very good second grade teacher that caught him up a lot. And so she worked with him, I think her name was Ms. Torres. She was a very good teacher and so she kind of caught him up because he was really, really, really behind. So now he's only about a grade level behind in his reading.

Tomás' mother recalled Tomás struggles with his dyslexia and the difficulties with the identification process. At Tomás' school, the process went through the special education department and the people involved were the general education teacher, and the educational diagnostician at the school. She described the process as lengthy, frustrating and requiring her to put pressure the school in order to expedite the process. She shared,

It's a struggle. I graduated as a 504 myself with dyslexia. And so he barely was diagnosed with dyslexia last year in third grade. And so before that, we had a student team meeting. We thought he had a learning disability or another type of disability like ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder]. And he was

diagnosed when he was really young. I didn't agree with the diagnosis. They wanted to put him on medications.

This district has been kind of hard. And I understand because it is a smaller district. I don't think they were very...I feel like they weren't trained to notice children with dyslexia. In first grade, I knew there was something not quite right. Like the way he was reading...cause he's very smart. He's a smart kid but for some reason he can't, he wasn't performing to what he could, what I felt he could do. And so I addressed it with the school and said, "Hey, these are my concerns; he should be doing better." The teacher would tell me, "Let me try my strategies first. I have to do my strategies first before we take him to get tested." So that went on for the first year.

The second year, I thought, I need to get him help and if I don't help him, he's going to get washed up and they're going to overlook him and I'm worried cause I want him to be successful. I talked to his teacher. I told her I would get a diagnosis for ADD so that way they could help him in school. So they can help him read the assignments and help him at school and do the things that I do at home that I know were working for him. And give him extra time, that's the biggest thing, extra time. He needs extra time to do things.

And so I went to get the diagnosis and it ended up that he didn't have ADD. But I knew there was still something wrong. So then afterward, I told them it has to be something else. I want him tested for dyslexia because of the patterns he had, the way he read. And so after that, I pressured and I wrote a

note to the school and told them, “You need to test him for dyslexia.” And they took a long time to respond. It wasn’t right away. It was three years after. It was frustrating, very frustrating. Finally he was evaluated and they determined that he had characteristics of dyslexia and that’s the only way they were going to provide some accommodations at school.

Tomás’ mother described how other relatives or friends helped Tomás with school-related tasks,

It’s always a struggle and it takes him very long to do anything, especially anything that has to do with vocabulary...it takes a lot of work, a lot of work. I think what it takes a normal kid probably 30 minutes to do homework after school; it would take him more than one hour to do. Writing sentences out, take a while. So what we do, as soon as he gets home he starts his homework. He takes breaks, plenty of breaks while he’s doing his homework [laughing]. He gets up, drinks water, etc., but it takes a long time.

Tomás’ mother discussed how the school helps her son; she explained that after Tomás’ identification, he had been placed on a 504 plan and he is not receiving services from special education. In addition she believed not much is happening at the school despite this identification. She talked about the supports he currently receives from his general education teacher, the school interventionist and the school administration. She discussed how the school could improve in these areas. She described that Tomás receives accommodations like extended time, small group testing and oral testing. She pointed out that the reading intervention teacher at the

school was currently seeing Tomás. She didn't know how often or for how long he met with her. She was certain that her son was not receiving any type of dyslexia services.

I know Ms. Silver is his reading teacher and sees him. I'm not exactly sure how much she sees him but I'm thinking it's at least three times per week. He gets picked up and she's been really good helping him out with his reading and the words, vocabulary. So I know that's happening.

I'm not sure how he's supported in his classroom. I asked him and he says that she does give him extra time to do stuff and that if he doesn't finish he doesn't get to go P.E. or art. He gets upset on Fridays because I think they do fun stuff on Fridays and he hates staying in.

I don't know how the administration of the school helps my child [laughing]. I honestly don't know; other than being there at his meetings. The administration can improve in getting teachers trained. I think training teacher to identify some of these characteristics earlier because none of this would have happened if I hadn't notice it.

It was evident that Tomás was not receiving any dyslexia services at his school.

Tomás was being provided with accommodations in his general education classroom.

Although the reading interventionist at the school was seeing him, the services that were being provided to him were not specific to address his dyslexia. Mother indicated,

I would like that he receive some type of dyslexia services at the school. Over at my school, they use something called, the *Wilson Strategy*, and I don't know exactly what it is but these kids are going a few times a week and they're helping them with their dyslexia and Tomás is not getting that. You know I just dream that what I'm doing at home and what they're doing at school is enough for him to be successful.

Tomás' mother often compared and expressed concerns about what she knew could be available to students with dyslexia because she was a teacher at district that provided dyslexia services their students. She was convinced that when students were provided the proper services and programs to address their dyslexia, they were able to succeed and make progress. She commented on the following about her school,

I don't know what they're doing exactly, but whatever they're doing it helps them a lot. These kids I have seen them in second grade with dyslexia and now going into the fifth grade and they don't need all these extra stuff anymore. They don't need the small group and they have been progressively doing better. And Tomás hasn't, he's been kind of stuck in the same place since, at least second grade, first grade. It's been the same thing. And I wish... I've seen progress but I wish it were more. I really wish he was already at his reading level. I mean that would be great.

When Tomás' mother described her son's emotions and feelings whenever he had to engage in reading or writing homework, she described Tomás as a very sensitive child who was naturally anxious and who took a long time to complete reading and

writing assignments. She described him as becoming easily frustrated, especially when he had a difficulty time going through the words.

If he's reading, his biting his nails...because like he'll read it very fast but he doesn't understand what he's reading, like the comprehension is not there. If it takes him a long time, he struggles with the words. If he goes slower, he'll have a hard time reading the words and his comprehension is still not there either. So it's frustrating trying to figure out what is best for him. We've been taking a long time because I rather have him have the comprehension and understand what he is trying to read.

Tomás was identified by his local school district as an English Language Learner; it was important to know whether he participated in a bilingual program and how much Spanish he used. It was very obvious that Tomás had never participated in bilingual programs and although he was exposed to Spanish, he no longer used this language. His mother shared,

He uses predominantly English and very little Spanish. Since he had a speech delay, I did not want to confuse him and so I thought it would be better just to do one language. And so I chose English.

Our last discussion about Tomás revolved around modifications and accommodations that he will need to make sure he continues to do well in school, even middle and high school as he grows older. Mother was asked about how she will continue to help Tomás and to share her plan for him after high school. She was

asked to describe how she would keep him motivated despite his difficulties with reading and spelling. Tomás mother assured that he would attend college because he wants to be a doctor.

Tomás enjoys science and has shown an interest in this field.

He's going to go to college. I already have everything lined up for him. A physical therapist that he's going to shadow [laughs] and he has an older sister that is going to be a doctor so he wants to follow what she's doing. He's very kind and he's a very sensitive person and so I see him, he's intelligent, I think that would be a great career for him. He tells me he wants to do science, that's his thing, even if his grades don't show it [laughing] it's okay but we're hoping he goes far.

Tomás mother hoped to continue helping him by doing what she has been doing. She stated she would stay on top of his grades and make sure she's doing the most that she can do to help him. She plans to support him in everything he wants to accomplish by praising him on things he does well and whenever he is doing a good job on something. Tomás mother has a vision to continue to stay actively involved in his education and encouraging taking breaks when needed it.

Praising him for things he's does really good, and that helps a lot with him.

And if he's doing a good job on something, make sure you let him know that he's doing a good job and he will try harder. Take a break every now and you know take a break, let him clear his mind. And then he'll come back and start

again trying to figure it out, but that's the best that we do. I don't know any other way [laughing].

To conclude our interview, Tomás' mother was asked to share any additional information or provide comments. She described that she wished she had a better understanding of the school system and what else the school could do to help Tomás. She reflected upon the fact that Tomás attended a very small district and whether this was the reason for the lack of dyslexia services or whether the reason was that there weren't enough students at the school who needed dyslexia services. She ended by acknowledging that she hoped she was doing the best for Tomás.

Is there a possibility of him, of them providing him dyslexia services? If they can, why aren't they doing it? I know it's a very small district and that is where I get caught up. They're a small district and that's why they can't do this. I don't want to move him to a bigger district that does have these services because I don't want to take him from where he's comfortable and just take him out. That's hard. We're trying to do the best for him and you're just hoping that you're doing the right thing.

Mari's Parent

Setting. I met with Mari's mother at her place of work one afternoon. Mari's mother was a general education teacher who worked at Golden Elementary School. We had agreed to meet at her school after her tutoring class. She had graciously accepted to participate in this study and had contacted me by telephone indicating she would be happy to contribute to this study. She appeared very confident when we met

for the first time. As I prepared to conduct the interview, she appeared rather shy and timid but opened up and provided a wealth of knowledge about her experiences with Mari's dyslexia. Mari was a fifth grade student at the same school where her mother taught. She described Mari's educational time line, "Mari has been at this current school for three years...she went to a charter school for two years and then she went to another public school for two years and went to a preschool two years before then...she also went to private school."

Mari's experiences with dyslexia during the early years of her schooling were not evident. Mari's mother recalled that Mari had been an average student and she had never noticed anything until Mari's third grade teacher brought up to her attention.

I hadn't really noticed anything. Her third grade teacher said that perhaps she MAY [emphasizing] have dyslexia or it was maybe attention deficit or something to that regard. So I took her to her pediatrician. She was screened there, and the pediatrician didn't think anything of her; I guess Mari was okay. And that was pretty much it. I then decided to submit the paper work here [school] to begin her testing for dyslexia.

Even though Mari had not demonstrated any struggles in her school during the primary grades, her mother indicated the identification process at the school was a challenge. Mari's mother agreed that a previous general education teacher had been a key player in this difficult and simple process. She described,

It was very long. And I guess simple in the fact that there wasn't a lot done. It took them quite a long time for them to identify her as dyslexic. It was about a year and a half. The process was hectic. We have a very small district and so, it was just...[pauses] well myself as the parent, and I guess our reading specialist, and then the diagnostician who actually did the testing on her.

Mari's mother restated she had no concerns about Mari's progress in school and that she did not suspect anything, much less dyslexia. She indicated that it was in the third grade when Mari's teacher suspected dyslexia. She noted, "It was here [school] that her third grade teacher noticed and it was only because the teachers' daughter had it [dyslexia] and she noticed some similar patterns or characteristics."

Mari's mother indicated that Mari is her only child with dyslexia. She was asked to explain how she helped Mari with spelling or writing assignments. Mari's mother described that Mari did not have a lot of homework this school year and that the need to help her had not been necessary. She occasionally provided help, as needed and for the most part Mari worked on her homework independently. The interview and conversation continued to focus on how the school and teachers helped Mari during school or after school. Mari's mother informed me that Mari didn't receive any special instruction and was currently under a 504 Plan. She concluded, "She's been identified and they told me on her 504 that she was going to get pulled a couple of times out of the week and get a little bit more hands on or one-on-one. I think this happened once, and then that was it."

Mari's mother expressed frustration about the disadvantage of being a teacher at the same school where her daughter was enrolled and expressed feelings of dreamlessness about how much she can push and demand from the school. She expressed,

And it's tough being a teacher here and working here, I don't want to...[pauses]. Yes, I know we're overwhelmed. I know there are so many kids here that need so many services that we just don't have enough staff to [pauses], so they're putting the kids that need priority first before her.

Mari's mother was asked about how the school and teachers supported Mari in school and in the classroom. She reported no changes or any adjustments in how the school was supporting Mari after her identification of dyslexia. Mari's mom emphasized that Mari's current fifth grade teacher had never expressed any concerns and was surprised to find out that Mari had been identified with dyslexia. Mari's mother was not even aware of any accommodations or modifications that were taking place in her classroom or at school. She stated, "Her current teacher, she had not seen any concerns. Like I said, her grades were average. But like I said, I don't think she really gets any sort of accommodations or anything."

In terms of the school administration, Mari's mother couldn't recall when Mari was identified and attempted to remember as she tried to recall dates. She summarized that she wished the school could improve in the area of assisting her daughter's learning by providing what was agreed on her 504 Plan during the meeting. Although she continually expressed little distress because Mari was doing

well at school and her teachers never expressed concerns, deep inside she revealed and wished they [school] would help her daughter. She appeared disturbed as she said,

I would say they're not doing a lot. Like I said she was just identified maybe in Novem...[*mumbling*], like September, or October and we did the 504 Plan. She was supposed to get pulled out. It happened maybe like once or twice. So not too much has been happening. I know we're [school] in the process of developing and making our dyslexia program more accessible to more students so that could be it, but not a lot has been done here. Well, I would... [*pausing*] they need to do what we had agreed should happen on her 504. You know she should get one-to-one instruction and the extra support [*pausing*] that you know she's *SUPPOSE* [*emphasizes*] to be getting.

It was very evident that Mari had not experienced any problems during the primary grades in elementary school, at least her mother did not point out any problems prior to Mari's identification. Mari's mother had expressed no concerns or frustrations about Mari's educational performance, but her responses still alleged the need for services. Although Mari's current teacher did not express any concerns and Mari required very little assistance from her mother to complete her school assignments, even reading and writing assignments, I was astonished to find out that Mari's feelings and emotions about reading and writing homework were attached to exasperation and lack of interest. Mari would take a long time to begin and complete reading/writing tasks at home. Mari's mother expresses,

I know they have started a school wide thing where we do reading goals like for the week. And kids are rewarded if they read to a certain amount of points or percentage on their reading goals. Then like toward Fridays, they're getting a little extra special time. She seems a lot more motivated and I guess EXCITED [*emphasizing*]. You know, maybe she could bring technology or a little snack or something on Friday. So that seems to motivate her, but as far as like the homework, I would say more frustrated and not really very happy. Mother provided a comparison about how Mari's motivation and frustration differed from her other children, especially her children who did not have dyslexia. Mari's mother portrayed very distinctive experiences amongst her other children and Mari. She depicts,

Well my other child is just, I don't know very self motivated. The minute school's released or we go home, she's just ready to do her homework. She's even got a little timer on herself that reminds her to do homework. Just a lot more, I guess independent, self-guided. And then my other one, it takes a lot more prompting, redirecting, well the one that has dyslexia.

It was evident Mari did not participate in any dyslexia program at her school and the services that were outlined in her 504 Plan were not being delivered or had not been followed through. It was even unknown whether accommodations in her general education classroom were being provided. Although Mari's mother had previously shared no concerns about Mari's progress in school, she appeared

heartbroken with the school's inability to provide Mari with dyslexia services. Mother indicated,

She is supposed to go. She's only gone once. I guess the time she went, she really enjoyed going. They go to do activities. It was during school. Well our reading specialist, who is the one who was giving her the instructional support, she's overwhelmed with, well you know, with the population of students that need *[pausing]* the help...she just ran out of time for...*[pausing]* my child.

Mari's mother made recommendations of how the school could improve services for students with dyslexia, but at the same time she faced the reality of why this was a problem at the school,

I think they need to get more staff. We need to hire more staff that are specialized or certified in that sort of area. That's what I see. Cause the scheduled can only go so far. You know one teacher can only do so much

Mari had been identified as an English Language Learner at her school; however, it was known that she had only received English only instruction. She had never participated in a bilingual program and it became unknown how much Spanish Mari was exposed to. Her mother stated, "Mari communicates only in English at school and with her friends. She's never been in bilingual classes and she speaks English only. All English at home."

The focus of the interview continued to guide Mari's parent to identify the supports Mari would need to continue to be successful in middle school and high school, as well as sharing her future plans after high school. Mari's mother said, I guess some basic accommodations. You know maybe a little extra time, maybe even peer reading just because her main thing is the reading. She has problem with the reading. That's where I see most of it, just the reading. I would like to see more support with her reading. Maybe through a pullout program. Just making sure that she is comprehending, so you know maybe something like, you know some sort of a thinking map something to help her with that.

I want her to go to college. She wants to be a professional wrestler and actually become a WWW wrestler. But as long as she goes to college first, I don't have a problem with what she wants to be. But now those are my goals, my goals for her. [Sighs] Any extra supports that she can get. And I guess it's a good thing, being a teacher because I'll be able to help her with strategies and techniques that I know. But [*pausing*] like I said, I'm kind of...I'm blessed in the sense that her dyslexia is not as severe as other cases. So she's right now able to get by.

At the end of the interview, the parent was given the opportunity to share additional information or state any comments or pose other questions. Mari's mother asked a question eagerly. She asked me to define dyslexia and explain whether dyslexia is something that you are born with or if it is something that develops over

time. She wanted to understand why it was possible that her daughter had dyslexia in pre-kindergarten or in elementary and no one ever noticed. As I offered her information and examples of what it is to have dyslexia, she smiled and demonstrated signs of confidence and reassurance. She wanted advice; she wanted someone to assure her that her daughter would be okay.

As our conversation came to an end, it became obvious that Mari was a very intelligent student and she experienced difficulty with reading, specifically reading comprehension. Her mother became more open to the fact that reading was difficult for Mari and that she would need extra supports to make it through high school. She said,

She's also in GT [gifted and talented] program. And you know, that's where I'm stuck. She has problems with the reading. That's where I see most of it, just the reading. I would like to see more supports with her reading. Just making sure that she's comprehending because I think a lot of times, she likes to read so quickly and I don't really think she fully comprehends. So you know maybe something like, some sort of a thinking map that could help her with that.

Administrators

The interview protocol for administrator covered questions about their experiences in their professional careers, as well as school procedures, methodologies and strategies and processes that was utilized to promote parent involvement. Two administrators were interviewed.

Administrator Esperanza

Setting. Esperanza had been an administrator at Blue Elementary School for the past five years. She had a total of 14 years experience as an administrator in the same school district where she was currently employed and had totaled 23 years of experience in education. She had been a teacher at the elementary and middle school level for nine years. From the minute I entered the door at her school, the office personnel greeted me and I felt welcomed. I was informed the school staff was taking group pictures and was asked to wait. While waiting, I glanced around and noticed numerous wall plaques and banners indicating that this school was a *National Blue Ribbon School*. I knew this school had been exemplary in this district for several consecutive years and this was one of the reasons why I wanted to hear the stories from this administrator. Esperanza greeted me after 15 minutes and appeared very relaxed. I followed her into her office where we began our conversation.

Interview

Esperanza identified her experience working with students who demonstrated difficulties with literacy such as dyslexia very eagerly. She described, "What we do here at this school and what we did at the other schools is that we have reading interventions teachers who pick up students that are not reading at grade level or are not moving at the pace that most students do. Our population is almost 70 percent of our students are English Language Learners. A lot of those kids that have difficulty are either in the regular English class or in a bilingual class but they are still labeled ELLs. The program we use for reading intervention is *Foundations*."

From the minute we had sat down for our interview, Esperanza easily eased into the conversation and answered very confident. She identified information very quickly and appeared knowledgeable about the literacy approaches that were employed at her school and the processes for identifying students who were selected for interventions. She stated,

We use balance literacy as our approach to language and the students are administered a developmentally reading assessment to identify students that are reading below grade level. Based on that, we develop the intervention list and those are the kids who go to the Foundations for 30 minutes a day every day.

Esperanza indicated that students in need of additional help received the same intervention throughout the district. However, she was not aware whether all the schools in this district used the same assessment to place students into intervention programs. She described the groups as fluid and different every 9 weeks. She says, “I don’t know what they have to place students. Because here at this school this is what we use so our intervention list changes every 9 weeks.”

It was obvious that all costs associated with the reading interventions were funded by the local school district. The professional development for teachers was linked to the specific programs and was part of the publishers’ agreement with the district. It was unclear how the district identified the needs of each school or determined which programs would be implemented, “so the district handles the funding, buying all the materials, and making sure that those teachers continue with

the professional development.” Esperanza continued describing how student improvement initiatives took priority at her school and was ongoing. Assessment information was part of their decision making process and it reflected upon the teaching methods. I found it very interesting to know that assessments were not seen as punitive and not only did they provide information about student performance, but they also serve as a guide to help teachers reflect on their teaching methods. She added,

I think the most beneficial thing that we do is that we have units of study that focus on the standards and our units are every 9 weeks. The teachers develop assessments that test the students before the 9 weeks begin and they look at that information to focus their teaching. At the end of the 9 weeks, they do a post-assessment to evaluate how they did in their teaching and how the students did.

Esperanza described that assessments were key in the student improvement process and were essential in identifying students needing additional help. In addition to the school post-assessments utilized by teachers, they used guidelines from *Fountas and Pinnell* reading assessments to inform them of student reading levels. This particular assessment was administered at the beginning, middle and end of the year. She shared that students who did not master the standards would participate in after school tutoring, re-teaching and interventions during the school day. Esperanza knew that this process was working and exclaimed, “We know interventions are working because of the number of students that score proficient or advance on state

tests.” The school’s goals of increasing student achievement by 10 percent every year had continuously been met and she described that teachers never stressed over this goal. She commented, “The goal is very reasonable and it’s going to be achieved.” As our conversation continued, the focus changed to a discussion about stakeholders. Esperanza identified parents as stakeholders in this improvement process. Ensuring that parents understood how to work with their children at home was essential for the school. The school’s reading nights were when these strategies were shared with parents. She added,

The parents come into the classrooms and the teachers teach the parents the way they teach the kids. They teach them strategies that they’re teaching the kids. That way, when the kids go home with homework, the parents know how to help them.

Esperanza identified her next group of stakeholders being the school teachers. She described that teachers were encouraged to attend professional development that the school district set out for a balance literacy approach to reading. Teachers were not required to attend nor were they required to devote a set amount of hours toward professional development. Because professional development was optional for teachers, Esperanza was asked to describe how she targets professional development to address the needs of her staff or school. She stated,

What happens is that when I got here, there was an initiative within balance literacy called word study. I had Saturday training where all my staff was

required to attend. If I feel that there is something that they all need, I will do it in house.

Esperanza expressed self-assurance in involving teachers in major decisions, especially student achievement. She shared that the school staff had develop the mission and vision statements for the school, as well as establish the percentage of how much student achievement should increase every time. She commented, “They [teachers] came up with that...if the students fail, we’re failing them...and they came up with that on their own. So I think there was that buy-in making themselves accountable for student learning.”

Esperanza reaffirmed that teachers also faced boundaries and not all of their differences or dislikes always reached a resolution. For example, she described that the balance literacy approach was a district initiative and teachers did not have a voice in using these approaches, “With reading, all of the initiatives we follow are district wide.” So even if they come up to me and say, “I don’t like using word study, I don’t like using guided reading or independent reading”, it’s part of the balance literacy approach. Esperanza continued to described that teachers are always provided with opportunities to work with the literacy coach, especially if they have concerns about strategies that are being used with students, “a lot of times when they have a concern, they bring it up to the literacy coach...that’s when it’s the literacy coach’s responsibility to talk it out with the teacher.” It was obvious that the literacy coach also had a major role in supporting teachers with the school’s literacy

initiatives. In effect, Esperanza reaffirmed that the literacy coach always needed to have an open dialogue with teachers.

I wanted to find out different ways in which the school involved parents other than just your ordinary reading nights. Esperanza had previously shared that parents were taught strategies to help students at home but I wanted her to talk about other ways in which parents were involved. I was unable to find out in what other ways they were involved. She repeated, “When we changed the themes of our reading nights and our math nights and they’d see how we help the students and we gave them the tools so they could help at home, that’s when they bought into it also.”

There was no doubt that Esperanza’s school represented a very diverse population. She described the student population as 100% Hispanic with 70% English Language Learners. In addition, she said about 99% of their student population was economically disadvantaged and many students lived in homes where parents had been incarcerated or deported. Esperanza clearly defined that their students faced many barriers and challenges on a day-to-day basis but the school’s priority still focused on student learning, “those barriers that kids face, we don’t account them here at school...we have to teach them while they’re here.” She did not describe how barriers were overcome or what the school was doing to support students and their families, but she did consider these barriers as positive things rather than negative, “instead of saying pobrecito [poor little one], he doesn’t have this at home, we look at it as positive...and we push it at the kids that they’re here to learn.” It was unclear how the school viewed these barriers as positive and what kinds of things were

happening at school or in the classrooms to support this statement. It was evident that learning was expected at all times and teachers held high expectations for students, however, it was unknown how the school offered long term solutions for these barriers, “we all have problems...but when you’re here you’re going to forget about those problems and you’re going to learn.”

Esperanza had described her student population with high numbers of English Language Learners. It was important to know how the school supported these learners and the expectations to support their language development. While waiting in the school lobby, I had read that one of the school’s goals was to promote “bilingual, bi-literate students.” Esperanza shared information about the number of bilingual classrooms but not specifics about the bilingual program model that was used or how the school supported the language needs of these students, “when you look at the kinder population, I have two bilingual classrooms and two regular classrooms... in first grade I have two bilingual and one regular.” Attention was placed on the fact that many students who were ELLs often chose to be in the regular classrooms even if their first language was Spanish. It was unknown whether the school was creating bilingual, bi-literate learners or whether language was considered a barrier.

Esperanza recognized that the school faced barriers like poor school attendance. Although the school’s attendance rate was unknown, she shared that it was a very tough obstacle to overcome. She described that problems with attendance could be linked to cultural beliefs held by the families, school location, or access to other resources, “[parents say] if it’s cold, don’t go to school cause it’s cold...if you

go outside to the cold, you're going to get sick...all the offices are here so the doctors don't work with the school to schedule appointments around the school time...they schedule appointments from 8:00 to 4:00 p.m.”

As we concluded our interview, Esperanza's leadership and dedication were evident and she believed everything was possible and that it took a lot of work from everyone to make success happen, especially to attain high student achievement. She acknowledged that it required a lot of patience and persistence to inspire people to believe in you; at the same time setting goals was important in the process, “last year we were named a National Blue Ribbon School and that was a goal...we wanted for our kids to be at the same level as kids whose parents are educated or who live in more affluent middle class neighborhoods.”

Administrator Socorro

Setting. Socorro always agreed to participate in the research and demonstrated willingness to have an interview. I had spoken with her several times by phone prior to our interview, but trying to meet with her to discuss the research had been a challenge. Finally, the day of our appointment came and I met with her for the first time. She appeared very relaxed and sincere and offered very valuable information. Socorro had been an administrator at Golden Elementary School for the last four years. Previously, she had been fourth and first grade teacher for four and a half years and then she became an assistant principal for five years. She also served as an instructional coordinator for one year; her experienced now equaled to 14 years

experience in education. She possessed a lot of experience, knowledge and dedication.

Socorro aligned her experience working with students with literacy difficulties and dyslexia to her teaching career. She remembered one student in her class who actually had a diagnosis of dyslexia and the school provided interventions. She also acquired experience working with English Language Learners with dyslexia as a fourth grade bilingual teacher. She described the student as having difficulties with reading and attending a pull out program where he received interventions for dyslexia. She also talked about how she supported this student in her classroom, “I had to do simple things like put a sticker on his left side of his desk so that he knew what side the paper went on...little things like that.”

Interview

Socorro discussed how her school identified students who have difficulties with literacy or dyslexia. Socorro was confident and knowledgeable about the different systems put in place at the school, “we use TPRI [Texas Primary Reading Inventory] or Tejas Lee [Spanish instrument]...it’s done at the beginning of the year, middle of year, and end of the year.” She discussed that it’s used for students in the primary grades, kinder to second; students in the upper grades use an I-station which also generates assessments every month to provide information about how students are doing with reading fluency on comprehension skills. Socorro indicated that the I-station was a computerized program. All this assessment documentation was used to determine the needs of the students. In identifying dyslexia, Socorro did specifically

stated that the school diagnostician would provide that diagnosis, “we use all that documentation to see if kids are having difficulty...and if they are exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia, we have our diagnostician test them.” It was clear that this information was essential for the school team to determine the type of services for students, “from there, we determine what type of interventions we’re going to provide for them...whether pull out with our reading intervention or 504 services.”

Socorro discussed that none of the reading programs utilized by school during interventions were specifically for dyslexia, “They’re basically just reading programs...the interventionist will give them some tests and it breaks down to what the student needs to work on.” Socorro indicated that students were grouped by skills like phonics, sight words or sounds and then from there moved onto other higher skills, “We start from where they’re at to where we want them to be.”

It was made known that many of these resources used by the school were state funded and required. She added, “The I-station, the state decided and is paying for kids from third to twelve grade.” Other assessments were also funded by Title I and were required for the school. Because the school faced mandated assessments and programs, it was important to find out whether they [programs] provided good outcomes like increasing students’ reading achievement. Socorro acknowledged these programs helped reduce the number of students experiencing literacy difficulties because of assessment information, “We continue to do benchmarking [testing]...we see that they’re [students] progressing.” Socorro described that team meetings and a lot of collaboration among teachers were a secondary focus in addressing the needs of

students, however, assessments were primary, “We meet and determine if further testing is necessary or what other strategies we can use, but we rely on those tests.” It was evident that all teachers were involved and provided interventions to all students, even if they were not in their grade levels, “everybody gets involved as far as tutoring...it’s not only the same teacher doing the tutoring.”

Socorro talked about the stake holders at the school being the parents and teachers and their roles for improving student achievement; it focused on providing interventions with students and the communication that goes on as part of this process. Communication was identified as being constant among all stakeholders, especially between teachers and parents. Parents were also presented with strategies to work at home with their students. Socorro shared that increasing student achievement by five percent was a district goal which was set by teachers, “they felt that was no asking too much of them...and they could actually meet that.” Socorro had meet with other administrators in the school district to discuss the use the I-stations to monitor students’ progress and make recommendations at the district resources on other resources that would be needed, “help us in planning the budget for next year as to what other resources we need to make these improvements.”

Socorro discussed other initiatives at the school level to obtain feedback from teachers and parents as to whether the school is meeting the needs of the students. Campus Improvement Committee (CIC) was a common thing at the school where representatives would bring their colleague’s concerns not only for reading but also for any other issues. The committee met once a month throughout the year. Socorro

admitted that involving parents had not been easy for her or the district administration. She had tried things like breakfast with the principal and only five parents would show up, “I tried it...the superintendent tried to have something like that, but he got no parents.”

Although Socorro did not provide any details about the demographics of the student population at the school, she shared that the school had a high number of Hispanic students who were English Language Learners. She described most students knew English and Spanish and very few Spanish monolingual students, “I don’ ever get kids that jus know one language...the new comers will struggle with English but very rare do we have those type of students.” Socorro commented on having dual language programs at the school with always at least one bilingual teacher at ever grade level where they taught students in both English and Spanish. She described that even teachers in English only classroom possessed a bilingual certification or English as Second Language certification. This helped to meet the needs of many students whose parents did want to enroll their students in bilingual programs, “I even have monolingual teachers who teach only the English speaking students that are certified in bilingual or ESL because we have a lot of parent denials.”

Other barriers that Socorro identified as challenging were attendance and parent involvement, “the attendance is atrocious.” The school and the whole district had been using several incentives to improve student attendance but had very little success, “there are days when we have 33 kids absent for no reason.” She expressed

that parents would often participate in field trips or other school functions but were not very involved, “we only get maybe ten parents...that’s for the entire district.”

As we concluded our interview, Socorro never appeared reluctant to ask questions and did not hesitate to provide answers. She ended by discussing the district focus was to improve their dyslexia program. She admitted the need for more teacher training in serving and working with students with dyslexia, “that’s something that the superintendent, when he came, one of the initiatives that he wanted to work on.” She was energetic and eager to take on this endeavor, especially as this population was increasing every year, “that’s something that we’re working toward...we’re getting more kids that either come to us with dyslexia or are having those dyslexia characteristics.”

Teachers

Special Education Teacher Dream

Setting. I met Dream one afternoon in her classroom during one of my visits to the school. I had persisted in asking her to participate in this research because she had not responded to my previous requests. She accepted with hesitation because she didn’t think she was working with ELLs with dyslexia. We set up an appointment and one week later we met for the formal interview. I arrived in her classroom after school. She was polite and made every effort to make our discussion valuable. Dream is the Resource/Inclusion teacher at Golden Elementary School for grades kindergarten to fifth grade. She brings 17 years of teaching experience from public school and private school. Dream has taught various subjects but has always worked

with special education students. She has been teaching 12 years at her current school with a focus on math, reading and writing. She and her para-professional provide resources and inclusion services.

Interview

Dream talked about supports that ELLs need in order to address their language and academic needs, “for students who English is not their first language...they’re learning the language and they’re learning to read at the same time.” Dream supports students through pictures, visuals and acting things out as needed it. She recognizes students have limited experiences and her role in fulfilling these limitations is key, “they might not know what a yard is because they’ve always lived in an apartment...they’ve heard the word forest but they really don’t know what a forest is and never seen one.”

In our discussion about Dream’s experiences in working with ELLs with reading difficulties such as dyslexia, she discussed that at first their progress will be very slow and one is building many basics skills. She continued claiming that current ELLs she works with do not display characteristics of dyslexia. It was evident that Dream had a high level of knowledge and understanding about dyslexia and second language learners. She also talked about the strengths they possessed. She admitted that it could be possible that her students did have dyslexia but may be it manifested differently in Spanish, “I have not noticed as much dyslexia...it could be because the Spanish language is so regular. She added, “I also do spelling bee and I find that kids

who come from bilingual classrooms are some of our best spellers, very often have won our local spelling bee.”

Dream positioned herself in not knowing very many ELLs with dyslexia. However, she did describe that the strategies she used with her students would be similar because they [students without dyslexia] demonstrated the same needs. She was asked to describe her school’s process for identification of dyslexia. Dream shared that when a teacher identifies dyslexia in a student, it will through the RTI process and only after trying different interventions, it might be decided if student will be tested for dyslexia. Dream declared that she has worked with students with dyslexia who come from other districts. At her local schools, student with dyslexia were serviced through a 504 Plan, “Usually if it’s identified here, it’ll be through a 504 program rather than through a special education program.” Dream agreed that the process for identification of dyslexia between English dominant and ELLs was the same.

It came time to discuss the strategies and methods that Dream, other staff and administration used to support ELLs with reading difficulties; books with pictures and exposure to a lot of vocabulary was key in her instruction. Dream utilized strategies with young and older ELLs targeting vocabulary building, “I want them to develop their own meaning of words.” Dream could not recall specific names of strategies used in her school to support ELLs in their general education classroom, however, English development standards was the guide to differentiate. Instructional assistants also supported ELLs in some way, “My instructional assistant speaks

Spanish...if she's working with an ELL; she can give directions in English and Spanish and can help them in both languages." Dream felt that the administration offered a lot of support to ELLs through the bilingual programs, "The bilingual classes are given a lot of resources to use." Although many materials were available at the school, it was never enough, especially for monolingual Spanish students. Dream said, "If I have a student who truly is Spanish speaking, there's no STAR test that is accommodated in Spanish...so that's a real minus." She continued, "They have a real hard time finding books that are differentiated for the kids." Dream felt that not having accommodated tests in Spanish was a difficult issue and students could not be given diagnostic assessments.

Dream was convinced that none of her students had dyslexia. She reassured herself always reaffirming and describing her students' difficulties were always with reading comprehension and vocabulary; *Reading A to Z* was utilized to target their reading level and *Raz Kids* provided the picture and audio support. A program called *Help* addressed fluency and for phonics she pulled from different sources.

Communication was an important component that Dream used to involve parents, "communication, communication, communication [*laughing*]...let them know what's happening...let them know what's good." Dream described the importance of keeping an open communication with parents. It was essential that parents knew exactly what would be recommended at an IEP or discussed during a meeting, "I know for myself...I don't want to walk in and hear something for the first time." When Dream communicated with parents of ELLs, the meetings would be held

in Spanish when necessary and her aide translated; she felt confident that this worked well. She discussed how the administration involves parents through the various school functions such as Thanksgiving, Easter, Halloween, etc.,

As we came to the end of the interview, I wanted to learn the types of programs that were used in Dream's classroom, as well as training and supports she received to work with students with dyslexia. She talked about an array of programs such as *Reading A to Z*, *Raz Kids*, *Spelling City* and *Helps Program* for fluency, however, not many were available in Spanish. Dream had received intensive training and although not specific to dyslexia, her training targeted reading and special education, "the classes I take through Region 20 have to do with reading and other areas." She admitted feeling confused about understanding dyslexia but assured me that dyslexia had to do with difficulties in phonemic awareness and phonics, "I think is a problem with phonics and the comprehension is a different issue...a child might have dyslexia and comprehension problems both but dyslexia itself truly is phonemic awareness rooted within phonics."

Dream felt that the mentoring and supports to gain an understanding to work with students with dyslexia were self-guided. She increased her knowledge by reading Internet research and taking classes that were offered through professional development, "all of it has been through my reading and my research." We next discussed things that Dream would change in how the school supports ELLs with dyslexia. She believed that every student learns at a different rate and instruction should focus on mastery of content and not on what must be learned in a grade level,

“I really believe in mastery rather than grade levels...you should have a class where in reading you learn a certain thing and then you go on to the next level...within that class there’s going to be different ages, until they’re ready to go to the next reading level.”

Special Education Teacher Hope

Setting. Hope had eagerly accepted to participate in the study although I had to follow up with her numerous times. We met in person before the formal interview and I had the opportunity to observe her in her classroom before our interview; Hope was very articulate and intelligent. She appeared very interested in learning more about dyslexia because she had an ELL who she suspected had dyslexia. She described her student as a brilliant and motivated to always do well—despite this, he could not read. She expressed frustration telling her story because the student’s first language was Spanish and his interventions were provided in English. She opened up and was second-guessing whether the language of instruction for this student had been the best choice.

Hope was the special education teacher at Blue Elementary School. She provided resource, inclusion and academic skills to students in grades third to six. She had taught regular education for nine years after she had taken seven years off to be a mother. During that time she worked on her Master’s Degree. She had been a special education teacher for six years with a total of 15 years teaching experience. Hope possessed extensive experience working with ELLs, “no matter which grade I thought, since the beginning of my teaching experience, I’ve always had English

Language Learners.” Hope shared that during her first nine years in the classroom in a different school district, all of her students were ELLs and currently even more so in her current school district, “between 75 to 80% of my students are ELLs.” Hope knew that as a special education teacher, she worked with many students with reading difficulties and her high level of knowledge contributed to her suspicions of working with many ELLs with dyslexia, “I’ve always had English Language Learners that I suspect have dyslexia only because they haven’t been identified specifically as having dyslexia but they do show some signs of dyslexia, reversing letters or just having a very difficult time learning how to read or write.” Hope realized that the task of learning to read was more difficulty with second language learners and their language difference contributed to a more complex issue in learning to read, “with English Language Learners is even harder because they’re having to learn how to read in a second language so sometimes I’m no always sure if it’s the language or if it’s dyslexia.”

Interview

Hope was asked to discuss the process of identifying dyslexia at her school. Although Hope was a special education teacher and she suspected dyslexia for many of her students, she was not sure of any process, “honestly no one was ever told this particular student has dyslexia. Other than the code is usually Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) and sometimes within that SLD I would say students fall into the dyslexia, but nobody has ever specifically said this student has dyslexia.... I do not know, I’ve always been curious.” Hope shared that for the many students whom she

suspects have dyslexia, she uses a reading program called *Sonday*. The program is specifically for dyslexia and is phonetic-based, repetitive and breaks down words into sounds. Hope reported that students do improve their reading using this program but it's a long process, "they have to get through so many levels of that program before I finally see that they start taking off in their reading."

Hope uses many strategies in her classroom to support students with dyslexia but she faithfully uses *Sonday* every day to address reading and writing needs. She acknowledged that it's very difficult to be consistent due to the various grades and reading levels. Hope identified several computer programs being used in her classroom to support students. She identified that *Lexia*, *My Reading Coach* and *Flirt*, were the most common. For writing, Hope talked about using a program called *Word Q* with a specific student who had a great deal of difficulty with writing, "as he starts typing a word, it generates a list of words that he might be trying to write and that way he can just choose from the list instead of struggling to spell out that whole word...it's auditory so he can listen to every word to know if he's choosing the correct one if he's unable to read it." Hope supports her students through group work, especially for reading. To support their comprehension, she and other fluent students read aloud, while others listen and they have group discussions about what they read. Hope feels that this method bridges many gaps and at the same time there's a lot of modeling, vocabulary building and discussion that goes on to support students' different reading levels and needs.

Hope noted many of her students spent most of their day in her special education classroom, however, students who had reached enough fluency and comprehension are the ones who participate more in the general education classroom, “most of my students that I work with tend to have severe needs and they need a lot more help...those that truly, really have dyslexia, spent the majority of their time in the special education classroom.” Hope discussed how other teachers support her students, “the majority of the teachers do a lot of small group teaching where maybe they explain to the whole group then break into small groups...a lot of times it’s teacher directed but many times it’s supported by their peers.” Hope talked about how the instructional assistant supports students’ needs in the classroom; she identified her role changing from year to year depending on factors like number of students, students’ ages and students participation in inclusion services. Hope reported that this current school year, the educational assistant spent most of the time in the special education classroom providing reading instruction to third grade students; this would allow for two teachers to support various reading levels, “she teaches *Sonday* and pretty much does everything else...we switch off week to week so that I always get to work with the students and she doesn’t always have one particular group.”

Next, Hope discussed how the administration supports ELLs with dyslexia. She talked about the different opportunities provided to attend district training. She reported that students are supported through the different intervention programs available in the district. At the same time, Hope expressed mixed feelings about

expectations and pressures she feels at times, “especially during evaluations, that comparison to a regular education classroom makes it hard it and puts additional expectations and additional pressures on special education teachers to feel that their classroom needs to look like a regular education classroom, and it doesn’t...they [administrators] are supportive but on the other hand I don’t know if they truly understand what it’s like to manage so many grades and so many needs, and students that are in and out with different schedules.” Hope recommended that improvements in this area could comprise of increasing student participation in the general education classroom. She indicated that students only needed to be taken out of their general education classroom for direct instruction in reading and math or to address specific skills, “having dyslexia or a having a reading problem didn’t mean that you had to be out of the classroom for the whole day...they [teachers] don’t adopt differentiation to include their special education students more; they have so much pressure on them.”

Hope acknowledged that when special education students are very behind in their reading skills, general education teachers might not feel secure in dealing with these students or they don’t have the time. She ended by hoping, “if there were more special education teachers and more assistants, we could be out more in supporting them [teachers] with how to differentiate for them [students] and how to include them and help them be successful, maybe not in everything but in a portion of what the regular education students are doing.”

Hope talked interventions specifically for ELLs with dyslexia. She identified a program called *Aventuras* [Adventures], similar to *Sunday* and indicated that the

special education teacher teaching the primary grades had access to that program, “although I can have access to this program as well, I have never been trained to use it.” Hope felt unfortunate that all the reading programs were only available in English. She indicated that many times most ELLs are provided with English only instruction, “what ends up happening a lot of times, an English Language Learner will learn how to read better in English before they learn how to read in Spanish or they might not ever truly learn how to read in their native language...they might be learning how to decode, but they might not comprehend well because they don’t know what all those words mean.” Hope admitted and expressed feeling responsible for allowing this to happen, however, she wished that there was equal access to programs in Spanish, “my colleagues who have used *Aventuras* say that it is not equal...I wished there were computer programs, as well as workbooks and hands on program that were similar to *Sonday* but in Spanish.”

In reaching out to parents of ELLs, Hope speaks about much effort and encouragement that is put so parents will read at home with their children. She provides daily homework to reinforce skills but many times she finds that parents are also limited with how they can help their children, “many times with some of my most struggling readers I find that they have one parent that also struggles how to read...the parent doesn’t know how to read in English or is not a reader themselves.” Hope expressed that parental support was difficult and created huge demand on the students to work independently at home. Hope offers opportunities for parents to

learn how to help their children during literacy nights; she wishes she could do more to get them involved.

In understanding ELLs with dyslexia, Hope discusses that she usually seeks out a colleague who is special education teacher and who has gone through specific training for dyslexia at the Scottish Rite Center. Hope wishes she could participate in this training because she finds it very valuable. Hope reports not having a lot of support in this area, “it’s trial and error...this didn’t work, let me try that.” Hope expresses that it’s a lot on her to look and research for this type of supports on her own.

Hope communicates with parents through daily planners that students take home. She shares that some students have individual contracts while others have other methods. Hope reports using behavior charts to let parents know how students do and also to motivate students to stay on task. Hope uses small reinforces and sends this information home as well as planners and words that students are learning. She is consistent on sending it home. Hope explained that some parent take it very seriously. They’ll check it every day and will write back notes. Hope still reports struggles in getting some parents involved with the daily planner. Hope knows that she has to take any opportunity to communicate with parents in different ways and she has many conversation when children are picked up from school, “I don’t always want to be the bearer of bad news...I also share my cell phone number and some parents or students will call or text me.” Hope knows that other teachers also try to involve parents in similar ways. Hope also shared that the Administration tries to involve parents by

being visible, especially when students are dropped and picked up. Hope felt that the Administration does have sense of student's schedules and major things happening in their home lives.

Hope ended our interview by sharing that she would like to see more training for all teachers, especially herself so that she could support students more and feel more confident, "if I felt like I knew more, I could have mini presentations for parents or at least give them information...I feel very insecure, myself." Hope admitted feeling limited to help parents when they ask how they could help their child at home, "other than read with them more, or read with them more, the more they read the better they get...I didn't have any specific strategies to give them." Hope resonates having more opportunities for training to become more resourceful and she wishes for more inclusive practices for students. Hope thoughtfully ended by asking, "what is the best way to teach a child with dyslexia who's coming as a second language learner...what does the research say about how they need to be taught in their native language...are they going to struggle in both languages...should you start teaching them to read in English because they are already going to be so far behind?"

Intervention Teacher Costanza

Setting. Costanza had been one of the few participants who responded immediately to my request to participate in the study. She was currently a university student working toward a degree in administration. Costanza agreed to have me come into her classroom to observe her during her intervention program; the observation took place before we scheduled the formal interview. Since the beginning she was

eager to participate and quickly agreed to a date and time. She was young, energetic and enthusiastic which made the interview smooth, fun and interesting. Costanza was a math and reading intervention teacher at Blue Elementary School. She had previously taught in a fifth grade classroom for five years and now had been the intervention teacher for the past four years; she had a total of nine years teaching experience.

Interview

Costanza acknowledged that the interventions she provided were not supposed to be in Spanish but materials could be made available in Spanish for students who need it. She did admit work with ELLs at her school, especially students who were believed to have dyslexia.

Costanza shared that she was not aware of how her district identified dyslexia. She was aware that the reading program she used was to address dyslexia, but she could not think of how the identification began, “the intervention that I do, I do work with students that they believe might have dyslexia but as far as I know I don’t think we have anything in our district that specifically test for dyslexia.”

Next, Costanza revealed that the reading intervention programs used in her school were the *LLI* [Level Literacy Intervention] and the *Wilson*. Costanza indicated that the *Wilson* is used only when students are not doing well with the level literacy intervention, “the Wilson is a Tier II, and if the students are not succeeding in the leveled literacy, we put them in the Wilson to see if that will help them better.” Costanza knew there were other intervention programs that were available in the

district such as *Read 180* but she appeared to only be familiar with the Wilson program, “the only program that I was trained in is the Wilson...I haven’t been doing the Wilson that long, I think that I got trained last year on it and I’ve been doing it for the past two years.”

Costanza supports students with dyslexia in her classroom through various hands on activities and uses manipulative to expand on concepts. She referred back to the supports embedded in the Wilson program to support these learners to address letter reversals, “with the Wilson we do a lot of writing showing them how to write the words correctly...the Wilson is really good about showing them how they need to write their letters correctly from top to bottom.” She touched briefly about using cognates in her classroom as well as exposing students to information both in English and Spanish for math concepts. Costanza was not sure how students were supported in their classrooms by other staff. She knew that for writing and letter reversals, she had demonstrated visual strategies for teachers to use; she did not identify any other strategies used by teachers. Costanza claimed that instructional assistants and special teachers (computer, art, P.E., music, etc.) were required to provide and help with reading interventions. Although some of these teachers were certified, they had no knowledge about reading, while others were classified and had lesser knowledge about teaching. She admitted that she had to provide a lot of help in preparing them to provide interventions, “we had to help them a lot in how to teach the leveled literacy...a lot of them never have had any type of training.” Costanza questioned the

quality of interventions provided by other staff, “they’re teaching it but...they’ve had a lot of problems about getting it started and making sure they’re doing it right.”

Costanza explained that the administration supports ELLs with dyslexia by promoting and requiring small group instruction for interventions. Costanza reports that administration can be more supportive by providing training because teachers have to learn on their own or train themselves on certain programs, “the only one that received and went to district training was our reading intervention teacher...when she brought back the leveled literacy and I asked her how to use it...she said...read the books, there, there, it’s easy, just read the books!”

Costanza shared about other interventions and strategies that are used by other teachers to support ELLs with dyslexia our district has balance literacy they have to do DRAs as far as intervention they look at those test and determine students’ needs, “are they having issues with comprehension or fluency...and they’re [teachers] suppose to be pulling them for small group intervention within their classrooms.” For ELLs, Costanza indicated that bilingual classroom should support their language needs and should provide small groups to help struggling ELLs. Costanza shared that she works closely with teachers to determine if any ELLs need additional intervention supports. Costanza indicated that she will work and pull ELLs out of class but the intervention is delivered in English only. Costanza acknowledged that for students who need intervention in Spanish, there is a teacher who provides reading intervention in the targeted language.

Costanza admits she faces many challenges when working with ELLs, especially with her limited Spanish proficiency, “I’m not fluent in Spanish so it’s hard for the bilingual students... even though I use strategies, we use cognates and I have them look at the book...it’s really hard me not being fluent in Spanish and teaching in Spanish...I feel I’m not completely effective with Spanish speaking students’.”

Costanza recognizes that the *Wilson* program has provided reading training for her in the last two years. For math, the intervention became computer based so more training would help her prepare better. She finds that she finds most support to help this learners, she will contact other colleagues at other schools, “when we first started using Wilson, we were all kind of lost so we would call each other...do you have these words, do you have this set?” Costanza knows she can always contact a district person for math or reading whenever she needs assistance.

One way Costanza communicates with parents was through program report printouts. These reports go home with students every 20 days and provide information on pre-tests and post-tests. Costanza encourages students to have their parents contact her if they have any questions about the interventions or why they are pulled out. She stays in communication with parents through a newsletter embedded in the Wilson program. This newsletter is only in English and she feels this is a disadvantage for Spanish speaking parents, “it’s hard, especially when a lot of the forms are not in Spanish.” Costanza acknowledged that during parent-teacher conference many parents don’t come to meet with her because she does not speak Spanish. She tells students, “how come you didn’t come see me during parent-teacher

conference?” and students respond, “Miss, my Mom only speaks Spanish.” Costanza replies, “show your work...we’ll figure it out...just tell them to come and see what you’re learning in intervention.” Costanza reports that she relies on students or other colleagues for translating when necessary or by speaking, “Spanglish [mix of Spanish and English].”

Costanza recognizes that parent involvement is a challenge at her school but many parents will ask information about the reading intervention to the general education teachers. She keeps an open communication in explaining why students are in intervention programs, “they seem very supportive when they know why their son or daughter is with me.” Costanza knows that parents might also be involved through other school activities such as coffee with the principal or PTO. The school communicates with parents monthly through newsletters in English and Spanish to parents. Costanza knows that other teachers will call parents to try to get them involved, “some teachers are faithful in doing that...calling parents and letting them on a daily basis, they [students] didn’t turn in homework today.” Costanza discussed that the administration tries to involve parents through activities such as Christmas programs, reading night and math night, “we really don’t have too many events...she [Principal] doesn’t like to do too many like programs or anything like that.”

Costanza realizes that improvements to support ELLs with dyslexia could begin by having more events or meetings at school to involve parents. She recognizes the need for more training for teachers, especially when implementing reading programs. She acknowledged not being aware of many things that are happening at

her school and concludes, “We’re not aware of a lot of things.” Costanza ended very excited and shared that she became the technology lead at her school and will be using interactive boards daily in the classroom, as well as other technology such as student response systems and document cameras to provide more visual and hands-on supports for students’ learning, “Students love that.”

Intervention Teacher Infinity

Setting. Infinity answered quickly to the invitation to participate in the study. She called me and we agreed to a date and time. She had followed-up with an e-mail asking not to be audio recorded or videotaped during the interview. I was puzzled and fearful that she might chose not to participate if I asked her to agree to the audio recording. After our second conversation, she agreed to participate for the second time but hesitated about the method. When I arrived in her classroom that day, I was surprised to learn who Infinity was. She had been my dance teacher in high school about 30 years ago. She did not recognize me and asked me sit by her at one of the classroom tables; she was courteous and polite. I began by introducing myself and boasted by bringing back special memories hoping she would remember. She gasped, laughed, and quickly became pleased, relaxed and cooperative. She congratulated me many times. We conversed bringing back special memories and laughing together. She apologized for asking not to be audio recorded but she was concerned about her accent because she was from the Philippines. After her apology, it was evident that she had changed her mind and agreed to be audio recorded during the interview.

Infinity was very short in stature and very petite. She possessed a wealth of experience in education. Infinity shared that she had been teaching since 1972 and not only in this district. She has taught in other states and has taught grades kindergarten through the seventh grade. She had experience working with monolingual, bilingual students who had dyslexia, as well as students with no English background. She had been at her current school district for 33 years. Infinity shared that she had started in her district as a classroom teacher but her position had evolved into a reading teacher due to the need of students having difficulty with reading. Infinity was identified as the campus interventionist at Golden Elementary School and had been trained in Reading Recovery by her school district. She worked with students in grades kindergarten through fifth grades supporting reading and math in English and Spanish.

Interview

Infinity shared working with students who were identified as ELLs, as well as those students who were parent bilingual denials. She elaborated on the process that was used to select the students she would teach, “we have like a system, called RtI, and I get first- hand knowledge of what has occurred in the classroom...I have to look at the data and have to assess them again...I have to determine what the child needs...does the child need more phonics? What is it that they need?”

Infinity hesitated when sharing whether there was someone in her district that could identify characteristics of dyslexia, “we write down our observations and give that information to the committee and they look at it and decided if the child needs to

be tested for this....our diagnostician has instruments that she will use to find out whether they have symptoms of dyslexia.” After Infinity receives information that demonstrates the student does have traits of dyslexia, she’ll determine targeted instruction for each student. She claimed that classroom teachers used the same process to gather information for the student committee. Infinity assumed that the process for identifying dyslexia in ELLs consisted of the same process but may include Spanish assessments used by the school diagnostician, “dyslexia whether is in English or Spanish is how one looks at the reading and how they do in spelling...I would think that it would be the same.”

Next, Infinity shared how these learners are supported in the school. She began by concurring that her daily schedule included various hands-on activities. She begins by reviewing letters and sounds. She used manipulative, magnetic letters, and sound boxes for teaching the English phonetic system, “it’s like letter and sound recognition...I used sound boxes so that they can hear each of the phonemes...we have chips to break words into sounds.” Infinity added that Spanish strategies include using a subscription named *A to Z* that provides many Spanish readers. She goes on to demonstrate many materials that are part of various programs [gets up and walks toward another table]. Infinity concluded not knowing what other general education do in her classroom to support these learners, “I actually don’t know what the teachers are using [thinking]...I don’t go into their classrooms.” Infinity articulated that the school administration is very supportive, especially when it comes to having adequate materials for ELLs, “I am very, very happy of...materials and if there’s

things that I need that will support the bilingual kids...I've never had any issues with not having that kind of support." She continued, "She [referring to administrator] loves when that child had not made any progress and suddenly...boom! That child begins to make those connections." In order to improve or change, Infinity hoped that she could be trained specifically with dyslexia training, "there's a lack of that training in our region...I would like to be trained in using a specific program for dyslexia."

Infinity elaborated about the strategies used in her classroom. She excitedly disclosed many of her materials, charts, boards, and routines she uses. She affirmed that strategies for ELLs look the same as for non ELLs, "no, they're the same...this is some of the strategies I use [handing me chart]...these are strategies that actually work with [gets up to look for other materials and talks across the room] my students." Infinity asserted that these strategies worked with her students because of the progress she sees, "I test them [gets up and looks for a paper] using a phonics screener [gets up and walks away to look for form]...I test them on the DRA [Developmental Reading Assessment]...I use a conversion chart to interpret the different assessments." Infinity concluded by talking about how she must be organized to serve the various grade levels and different skills. She was very explicit, full of excitement, and modeled the use of various charts and visual strategies that help ELLs in the classroom.

Infinity added that parent involvement happens during parent-teacher conferences but very indirectly and mostly through the child's general education

teacher, “the time I actually speak to them is at parent conferences...they see me and they know I’m their child’s reading teacher and they thank me.” Infinity emphasized that parents only come to her if they have a concern but even then, it’s always communicated through the student’s bilingual teacher.

In order to understand dyslexia, Infinity was thoughtful to name opportunities available outside the school. Infinity emphasized that working in a small district brought challenges about having a lot of resources, “the person in charge in our district has assured me...and because there’s a need...she said whenever there’s training, she would send me.” Infinity stressed that the school district saw the need and now it has become a priority. Infinity was excited to be the teacher who was selected to receive training when available, “they want a commitment from a teacher...I will be the one to serve...if there’s any training, at the region or anywhere else, the general education teacher and such will be the ones to attend.” Infinity indicated that she reads and researches a lot on her to learn about dyslexia, “I found the dyslexia handbook [walks across room to get handbook]...and I have it close to me.” She talked about many other resources she has acquired in her career through the years. “This [ELPS handbook] is again for working with ELL students...this covers the listening, speaking, reading and writing.” Infinity ended by sharing language proficiency assessments and guidelines that were required by the state.

Infinity articulated communicating with parents through memos sent home with students. “Parents don’t get involved....not much....not in my classroom,” she added. Infinity thought that some parents do get involved with other teachers in their

classrooms, “I know that there’s a teacher that she has a parent come into her classroom...like a classroom mother.” Infinity explained that the administration gets involved in many ways, “we had parenting classes...our principal had coffee with the principal...volunteers would the book fair and after school sales.” Infinity finished by describing many other events at school, “they have parent orientations at the beginning of the year so that they could go over the rules.” Infinity thought that to improve in this area, the parent liaison played an important role in this, “getting the right person...that is familiar with this community...that’s creative.” She ended and agreed that district had a parent liaison at the middle school but it was not filtering to the elementary school, “I don’t even know if we still have that person right now...we have instant messenger to inform parents either through e-mail or telephone,” but Infinity believed it had to do with finding the right person.

General Education Teacher Paz

Setting. Paz was a fourth grade teacher who appeared friendly and honest. I had followed up with Paz several times through e-mail and in person before I was able to schedule an interview. Paz not only was polite and quiet during our interview but also reflected on being hard-working teacher. She was very organized and spent long days after school arranging her classroom. She had two students who had been identified with dyslexia and she had agreed to participate in this research with no hesitation. We met for our interview one afternoon after school. Paz was going through her students’ portfolios when I arrived in her classroom.

Paz had been an educator for seven years; she taught three years in kindergarten, one year in third and the fourth grade for the past three years. She indicated she had mostly taught language arts, math and science. She had been working at Blue Elementary School for four years and in her experience working with ELLs she indicated, “More differentiation needs to happen with those students just because their cognition in English is not there completely...they need extra reinforcement for all subject areas.” In her experiences working with ELLs with dyslexia, she indicated her experience was minimal, “this is the first year that I’ve been exposed to two students with dyslexia....you could see it in their writing....during math time with their numbers.” Paz indicated providing a lot of one to one support for these students and the constant redirection to correct their writing even though it was legible.

Interview

Paz was not familiar with the process for identifying dyslexia. In fact, she shared that these students had not been identified but there were many concerns about dyslexia. She had spoken with the school principal one time when one of her students enrolled and her principal had informed that there’s no dyslexia program in her district. Paz did indicate that these students get pulled out for intervention every day for 30 minutes a day, “I’m not sure what they do...they do intervention for reading.” Finally in terms of the process for identification for dyslexia, she added, “I am unaware...I’m not sure what the process is.”

Paz discussed the strategies used to support these students such as redirection during writing to address letter and number reversals. She talked about using visuals, small group and many visuals in the classroom. When necessary, she would see students one on one during reading and math to provide additional support. Paz knew that other teachers incorporated the same strategies that she used in her classroom and couldn't recall a specific strategy that one of her colleagues had used with another student for whom dyslexia was also suspected, "I can't remember.... there was something else, like a strategy for kids who are doing reversals, but I can't recall the strategy." Paz knew that the instructional assistants supported all students and assisted teachers especially with students who struggle, "in the past when I've had an assistant, they would work with small group and they [instructional assistants] would intervene with any concepts that were taught during the day...with students in middle group." Paz assured that the administration supported these students by ensuring they were receiving reading interventions.

Paz knows that dyslexia needs to be further explored at her school, "I think dyslexia is a concern...the district should put a program in place in order to address these students...and to inform the teachers how to address these issues with these type of students." Paz declares that more teacher training and information must be provided at her school to improve in these areas.

Paz works with parents through phone calls and communicates with them through students' planners, notes and parent conferences. Paz reported that parent conferences are twice a year but more often if there are concerns. Paz indicated that

she had seen a lot of improvement from the reading intervention with one of her students. She also reported feeling very comfortable about her student being pulled out, “our reading intervention teacher is very proactive...she does very well with the kids...she’s an excellent reading teacher.”

In improving ways to work with ELLs, Paz admitted she had taken coursework for two years that lead to a TESOL endorsement and how to help and address second language learners. She shared that collaboration among colleagues happens once a week along with the reading coach. During these meetings, there is an open conversation about many topics, “we discuss reading strategies for students that are struggling...whether language or other subjects.” Whenever Paz needs assistance about how to support students who are having difficulty with reading, she talks to other teachers. She mentioned one specific teacher because of the expertise she possessed, “I talk with Ms. Lorena...she’s highly qualified and has a Master’s degree in reading...she’s very knowledgeable.”

Paz reported that parent involvement was difficult. She admitted that some parents do get involved, “for example last night during reading night, the parent is always here...asks how is my student doing...is he showing growth?” Paz reported that other teachers and staff involve parents through the school events like coffee with principal and the school newsletter. Paz shared that the school administration tried to involved parents through these same methods.

In order to improve in this area, Paz longed for more teacher training on how to address the needs of these students. Paz ended with no comments or questions and had been very quiet and cooperative during the interview.

General Education Teacher Felicia

Setting. I had communicated with Felicia several times through telephone and electronic mail. She had contacted me eagerly through telephone and had agreed to participate in the interview very promptly. Felicia was a novice teacher and had been teaching fourth grade for three years at Golden Elementary School. She appeared young and seemed very energetic; her responses sometimes appeared limited which could be due to her limited teaching experience. The information she provided was very valuable.

Although her class used English only curriculum, she reported having a couple of ELLs in her classroom and she described the following, “Yes, is where they call it a parent denial...their parents want them in English instruction.” Felicia reported working with ELLs with dyslexia. She explained that there could be difficulties identifying ELLs with dyslexia due to language differences, “I do have that one student that does have the attributes of dyslexia... hasn’t been termed yet that he does have it...there are some situations where I have seen that they could be...I do not know whether is the language where is difficult for them to understand or process what they’re being taught.”

Interview

Felicia disclosed that her school had no process to identify dyslexia, “this the first year the school has a student with dyslexia...so it’s getting through the process of what they go and do.” She described the process as the student receiving extra help from the reading teacher. Although Felicia admitted to no process for identification of dyslexia, she expected that identifying dyslexia in ELLs would be a little different than for native English speakers, “It would be a little different just so they can kind of sense it if it’s the language or not...just determine if that’s where they’re struggling in.”

Felicia’s daily practices included visualization, building background knowledge and reviewing information to support ELLs with dyslexia. Felicia reported organizing students with notebooks, “using composition notebooks where they write down notes that we could go back and review...they do a lot of group work and peer to peer.” Felicia reported that the reading specialist offered more help through a pullout program to provide more reading instruction, “they go about 3 times a week during the reading time...they go and see her for that support.” Felicia emphasized not having knowledge about how other general education teachers supported ELLs with dyslexia in their classrooms. Felicia concluded that accommodations used in the classroom with her student with dyslexia included using word banks and differentiated writing paper, “I do use a different paper for him...his writing looks like dysgraphia...he does get some accommodation and modifications...he can also use certain words to help with writing.” Felicia

confirmed that accommodations for ELLs should be different because of their language differences.

To support ELLs with dyslexia, Felicia revealed that the administration sent teachers for training, “especially this year just because they’re identifying more students...so I think now that there’s more, they want teachers to be more understanding of what it is so we can identify it faster and easier.” Felicia pointed out that administration could improve in supporting these students by promoting a process for identification as well as providing more teaching approaches that could be used in the classroom, “to help to notice what dyslexia really are...more strategies we can do in our classrooms with these students.”

In an effort to work with parents of ELLs with dyslexia, Felicia reported having conversations with them during the IEP meetings, parent-teacher conferences or by telephone, “we talk about how he’s improved...we talk about his progress from the beginning to the end of the year.” Felicia reemphasized that working with parent was accomplished through conversations during meetings.

Felicia mentioned that whenever she needs assistance addressing the needs of ELLs with dyslexia, she networks with other teachers, especially the special education teacher or reading specialist. Felicia added that although her school provided training about differentiation of instruction, teachers are on their own for any specific topic of interest, “training is done usually outside the school but it’s provided through the district...we can look on our own...I haven’t seen any teachers go to any training that is specific for dyslexia.”

Felicia acknowledged that communication with all parents is done through notes, calling, e-mails and parent teacher conferences. Felicia ended by hinting that communication with parents of ELLs uses the similar processes, “it’s also the same.”

Felicia lamented that parent involvement was not very popular in her classroom but some parents demonstrated interest to improve their children’s academic progress, “they’ll usually come and ask about their [student] homework...is there anything they can work with at home?” Felicia elaborated that school administration also targets parent involvement through various school activities that are on-going through the school year, “usually with meetings that are held...during the day community involvement meetings.”

Felicia advised that in an effort to change how the school works with these students, it would be helpful for the school to provide more in-depth student information at the beginning of school year, “the information that we get is very general and not specific...more background information that we may have upon that student.” Felicia articulated that knowing more about each student would assist teachers in serving their needs better, “for example usually ELLs and students with dyslexia need more help with organization, specific help in instruction and directions....it would be nice to have an overview about each student from the previous teachers instead of waiting for that information.”

Conclusion

This chapter presented the interviews from ten participants from Golden Elementary and Blue Elementary schools in the borderland of Texas-New Mexico

The aim in of the in-depth interviews was to hear the stories from parents, administrators, and teachers who have an inter-connection with an English Language Learner with dyslexia. The purpose of the interviews was to gain an understanding about the experiences that may impede or promote culturally responsive learning environments for ELLs with dyslexia. A total of seven themes emerged from these interviews, observations, and artifacts: (a) a late and inefficient identification process (b) reading programs that are mandated, prescribed and unequal (c) more strategies and less accommodations (d) parent involvement meant communication (e) always on my own and the need for knowledge (f) the missing native language; and (g) a difficult journey to success. The themes and the participants' stories were used to respond to the study's research question and are presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the data obtained from ten in-depth interviews conducted with parents, teachers and administrators who had an inter-connection with a student with dyslexia in the elementary years. I interviewed two parents, six teachers, and two administrators in two schools in the borderland area of Texas-New Mexico. I also conducted two teacher observations and examined artifacts that were provided by participants.

Seven emergent themes were derived from this study and aided in answering the research questions. The interplay of the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory and the Dyslexia Framework, which were used as the guiding lenses for this study, are discussed in this chapter. This chapter will conclude with recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

Summary of the Study

The goal of this study was to answer the question: How can educational leaders in elementary schools foster a learning environment that is culturally responsive in supporting the needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia? In order to examine and compare research participants' experiences and their perceptions about how they navigate and negotiate their cultural identities as ELLs with dyslexia in American schools in the borderlands, there were two sub-questions that illuminated the overarching research question. These sub-questions were listed as follows:

- 1) What experiences contribute to a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the elementary years?
- 2) What experiences impede a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the elementary years?

I used triangulation of the three methods: in-depth interviews, observations and artifacts to complete the data analysis. I identified seven emergent themes from this research: (a) a late and inefficient identification process (b) reading programs that are mandated, prescribed and unequal (c) more strategies and less accommodations (d) parent involvement meant communication (e) always on my own and the need for knowledge (f) the missing native language; and (g) a difficult journey to success. The themes and the participants' stories were used to respond to the study's research question.

Problem Statement

When the state of literacy skills among English Language Learners is examined, there resonates a historical and social perspective on the struggles that Mexican Americans have experienced in order to access equal education. Educational leaders who do not foster and create culturally responsive learning environments in elementary schools for ELLs with dyslexia will continue to put them at risk for not acquiring literacy skills and for their continued marginalization in the U.S. culture. The effects can become problematic as they contribute to the increased challenges faced by ELLs in American schools, workplaces, and society.

Methods

In order to examine this problem more in detail, I collected data from in-depth interviews, teacher observations and review of artifacts provided by teachers and one administrator. The in-depth interviews captured the experiences of ten participants from Golden Elementary School and Blue Elementary Schools located in the borderlands of Texas-New Mexico. The participants included a wide representation of two parents, Mari's and Tomás'; two administrators, Esperanza and Socorro; and six teachers, Dream, Hope, Costanza, Infinity, Paz and Felicia who all had an inter-connection with an English Language Learner with dyslexia.

Different questions (see appendix B) that shared common topics were used for parents, administrators and teachers. The parents were asked to share information about their child's identification of dyslexia, school and teacher/classroom supports, and their child's feelings and emotions when completing reading and writing tasks. The administrators were asked about their professional experiences and careers, identification of dyslexia, and information about school procedures and methods to involved parents. Teachers were asked to share information about their professional experiences and careers, identification of dyslexia, as well as the classroom methods and strategies used to support these learners. Finally, teachers were asked how they involved parents in their classrooms.

Two observations were conducted at Blue Elementary School. The observations were conducted in the teacher's classroom during their reading intervention time. An observation protocol (see appendix B) was used for the

observations and the purpose of the observation was to seek information about the classroom environment, teaching methods, and strategies utilized by the teacher to assign homework. Five teachers and one administrator provided the artifacts. These documents included sample reading materials and lessons, sample assessments used in the classroom, sample of accommodations used with students, as well as classroom activities that were employed in classroom.

After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed verbatim. I listened to each participant's complete conversation and also read the transcripts that helped me come up with a profile for each participant. After re-reading the transcripts, analyzing the observations and artifacts several times, themes began to emerge. I found a relationship between classroom observations and the artifacts that not only portrayed richer information but also they crosschecked the participants' stories that were shared.

Analysis of the Data

Overview of Emergent Themes

In order to accomplish a complete data analysis, I used three methods for triangulation: two observations, ten in-depth interviews, and examination of seven artifacts. Although the participants were somewhat different in their experiences and roles within the school environment, they all had an inter-connection with a student with dyslexia. Since the dissertation focused on creating responsive learning environments for ELLs with dyslexia, I focused not only on these factors but also on salient themes that relate to supporting the needs of these learners. I identified a sense

of importance in a topic of questions for at least two participants. After repeated reading of the transcripts and analysis of the different experiences the participants shared, seven emergent themes were identified: (a) a late and inefficient identification process (b) reading programs that are mandated, prescribed and unequal (c) more strategies and less accommodations (d) parent involvement meant communication (e) always on my own and the need for knowledge (f) the missing native language; and (g) a difficult journey to success

Emergent Theme One: A Late and Inefficient Identification Process

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the importance of early intervention may lead to the prevention of reading difficulties. While some children are at risk for developing dyslexia due to its genetic roots, providing early support for these readers may lessen the degree of difficulties they will encounter at a later age through their school years. Not identifying reading difficulties or dyslexia in an early and efficient way continues to contribute to illiteracy and reading problems in children. It was evident from my conversation with two participants that both had experienced an identification process that was lengthy, hectic, frustrating and unclear. These participants also experienced feelings of hopelessness and deceit.

Tomás parent recalled that Tomas had always been behind since kindergarten. She recalled Tomás was behind in many areas, especially reading and writing. She recounted the difficulties of the process of trying to find out why her son was having difficulty with reading and writing despite the fact he was very intelligent. She stated that he was diagnosed with dyslexia just last year in third grade.

We thought he had a learning disability or another type of disability like ADD [attention deficit disorder]. And he was diagnosed when he was really young with that. I didn't agree with the diagnosis. They wanted to put him on medication. This district has been kind of hard. I feel they weren't trained to notice children with dyslexia. In first grade, I knew there was something not quite right. Like the way he was reading. He's a smart kid but for some reason he can't and he wasn't performing to what he could. So then afterward, I told them it has to be something else. I want him tested for dyslexia because of the patterns he had and the way he read. And so after that I pressured, I wrote a note to the school and told them, 'You need to test him for dyslexia.' And they took a long time to respond. It wasn't right away. It was three years after. It was frustrating, very frustrating.

Like Tomás parent, Mari's parent had similar experiences about the identification process. Although Mother did not suspect dyslexia, she recounted her struggles through a long and challenging identification process.

I hadn't really noticed anything. Her third grade teacher said that perhaps she MAY [emphasizing] have dyslexia or it was maybe attention deficit or something to that regard. And that was pretty much it. I then decided to submit the paper work and, I guess to get her tested for dyslexia.

It was very long. And I guess simple in the fact that there wasn't a lot done. It took them quite a long time for them to identify her as dyslexic. It was about a year and a half. The process was hectic.

Within the conversations about identification, the dialogue also summarized that although the identification process was long and tedious, for other participants the process was unknown. In addition, the closer the inter-connection the participant had with the student with dyslexia, there was less familiarity with a process. Four participants reported being unsure of any process for identifying dyslexia and in one situation, a participant reported that one student was suspected of having dyslexia but had not been identified.

Paz was not familiar with the process for identifying dyslexia. In fact, she shared that these students had not been identified but there were many concerns about dyslexia. She had spoken with the school principal one time when one of her students had just enrolled at the school, she added, “I am unaware...I’m not sure what the process is.”

Felicia, just like Paz, was unaware of any process and even if a process was put into place, she expected that identifying dyslexia in ELLs would be a little different than for native English speakers, “It would be a little different just so they can sense it if it’s the language or not...just determine if that’s where they’re struggling in.”

Another participant, Costanza, commented that she was not aware of how her district identified dyslexia. She was aware that the reading program she used was to address dyslexia, but she could not think of how the identification begin, “the intervention that I do, I do work with students that they believe might have dyslexia

but as far as I know I don't think we have anything in our district that specifically test for dyslexia.”

Hope, like the previous participants, commented that although she suspected dyslexia for many of her students, she was not sure of any process, “honestly no one was ever told this particular student has dyslexia. Other than the code is usually Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) and sometimes within that SLD I would say students fall into the dyslexia, nobody has ever specifically said this student has dyslexia...I do not know, I've always been curious.”

Three participants described a process for identifying students who demonstrated a need for additional support in reading or any other areas; however, the process was not specific to identifying dyslexia. This process was conducted as a part of the daily and ongoing practices that were embedded at the school, were part of the RTI process, or mandated on going reading assessment and screening requirements. Additionally, whenever there was a process for identification, there was no consistency on whether this process should be similar or different for ELLs.

Dream shared when a teacher identifies dyslexia in a student, it will go to the RTI process and only after trying different interventions, it might be decided if student is tested for dyslexia. Dream agreed that the process for identification of dyslexia between English dominant and ELLs was the same.

Socorro discussed how at her school students who had difficulties with literacy or dyslexia were identified. Socorro was confident and knowledgeable about the different systems that were put in place at the school, “we use TPRI [Texas

Primary Reading Inventory] or Tejas Lee [Spanish instrument]...it's done at the beginning of the year, middle of year, and end of the year." Socorro indicated that all these assessment documentation was used to determine the needs of the students. In identifying dyslexia, Socorro did specifically state that the school diagnostician would provide that diagnosis, "we use all that documentation to see if kids are having difficulty...and if they are exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia, we have our diagnostician test them."

Infinity, similar to Socorro, knew that students identified with characteristics of dyslexia were part of a subjective process, "we write down our observations and give that information to the committee and they look at it and decided if the child needs to be tested for this...our diagnostician has instruments that she will use to find out whether they have symptoms of dyslexia." Infinity ended with concluding that the process for identifying dyslexia in ELLs consisted of the same process but may include Spanish assessments used by the school diagnostician, "dyslexia whether it is in English or Spanish is how one looks at the reading and how they do in spelling... I would think that it would be the same."

The observations and artifacts that were examined in this research did not reflect nor supported the findings for theme one.

Emergent Theme Two: Reading Programs that are Mandated, Prescribed and Unequal

The second emergent theme was the view that the programs that were available at the schools to enhance reading in ELLs were mandated by a state or

district, were prescriptive and not comparable to those used by monolingual English speakers. These programs also required on-going assessments that would produce scores to report back to the state or district. For the administrator and teacher participants, this resonated from their stories and the artifacts that they shared.

For Socorro, she identified that none of the reading programs used at her school during intervention time were specifically for dyslexia. She shared, “they’re basically just reading programs...the interventionist will give them some tests and it breaks down to what the student needs to work on.” She also indicated that the programs used by the school were state funded and required, “the I-station, the state decided and is paying for kids from third to 12 grade for I-station.” Other assessments embedded in programs were also funded by Title I and were requirements for the school. Socorro highlighted that team meetings and collaboration among teachers was a secondary focus to address the needs of students and assessments were primary, “we meet and determine if further testing was necessary or what other strategies we can use, but we rely on those tests.”

Esperanza, like Socorro, indicated that students who were not reading at grade level were taught by the reading intervention teacher, “the program we use is *Foundations*.” She continued to describe that these students participated in the Foundations program 30 minutes every day. She also identified that this intervention was the same intervention used throughout the district, “so the district handles the funding, buying all the materials, and making sure that teachers continue with the professional development.”

Another participant, Dream, also talked about programs that she used to address the needs of students in her classroom. To address reading fluency, she used a program called *Help*. She indicated using an array of program like *Reading A to Z*, *Raz Kids* and *Spelling City*. She did end by saying, “many are not available in Spanish.” Dream described that the administration offered a lot of support to ELLs through the bilingual programs, “The bilingual classes are given a lot of resources to use.” She concluded by acknowledging these resources were never enough, especially for monolingual Spanish speaking students. She concluded, “If I have a student who is truly Spanish speaking, there’s not STAR test that is accommodated in Spanish...so that’s a real minus...they have a real hard time finding books that are differentiated for the kids.”

Hope articulated that she uses a program called *Sonday*, a program specifically for dyslexia that is phonetic-based, repetitive and breaks down words into sounds. Hope also added that this program has helped her students make progress in their reading, she concluded, “they have to get through so many levels of the program before I finally see that they start taking off on their own.” She provided copies of the lessons that she followed which are scripted and outlined in her program book. She identified many other computer programs that she used to support these learners: *Lexia*, *My Reading Coach*, *Flirt* and *Word Cue*, which is a program to assist with writing. She said, it generates a list of words that a student might try to write and that way he can just choose from the list instead of struggling to spell out the whole word.” Hope also talked about interventions for ELLs with dyslexia. She identified

that *Aventuras* was Spanish program. Although she identified this program available for Spanish speaking students, she did acknowledge that many programs were only available in English. She concluded, “My colleagues who have used *Aventuras* say that is not equal...I wish there were computer programs as well as workbooks and hands on type of programs that were more like *Sonday* but in Spanish.”

Next, Costanza revealed that the reading intervention programs that she used at her school were *LLI* and *Wilson*. She described, “The Wilson is a Tier II, and if the students are not succeeding in the leveled literacy, we put them in Wilson to see if that will help them better.” Costanza was also aware that *Read 180* was another intervention program that available in her district, “the only program that I was trained in was the Wilson. I haven’t been doing it that long. I think I got trained last year and I’ve been doing it for the past two years.” In reviewing the program artifacts that Costanza provided me, it was evident that this program consisted of lessons plans, assessments and other materials that the teacher utilized to administer the recommended lessons with her students. Costanza explained that whenever she’s working with ELLs, she delivers her reading intervention only in English. She described, “I’m not fluent in Spanish so it’s hard for bilingual students...I feel I’m not completely effective with Spanish speaking students.”

Infinity, on the other hand, articulated that when working with ELLs who need reading support, she subscribes to *Reading A to Z*, which provides many Spanish reading materials. Infinity expressed feeling supported by administration when it came to buying materials for ELLs, “I am very, very happy of...materials and if

there's things that I need that will support the bilingual kids...I've never had any issues with that kind of support." However, other than the Spanish readers, I did not see other materials that were purchased or available in Spanish when supporting ELLs needing reading support.

The use of published programs continues to be a common practice in most schools today and is a primary component of delivering reading instruction in today's classrooms. Some participants expressed that these programs had positive effects on their student's progress. They also were had familiar with other resources that were available for use with their students. Others participants drew attention to resources not being available in Spanish.

The observations and artifacts confirmed and supported this theme. It was evident during the two observations that the reading instruction employed by both teachers consisted of implementing and teaching reading programs that were mandated by the school district. Both *Sonday* and *Foundations* were reading intervention programs that teachers are expected to use with students needing interventions. It was also evident that such programs were not available in Spanish. The artifacts provided by Hope and Costanza also reflected that programs were prescribed. The program lesson plans were very prescriptive and required teachers to abide to a particular scope and sequence all the time.

Emergent Theme Three: More Strategies versus Accommodations

The third theme highlights the different teaching practices and ways in which teachers support ELLs with dyslexia in their classrooms. Teacher participants

resonated using more strategies, while less reported providing accommodations or addressing both. Parent participants reported similar conditions occurring in the classrooms.

Dream's strategies in the classroom included the use of books with pictures and exposure to a lot of vocabulary to support ELLs with reading difficulties. She articulated the importance of developing vocabulary in her classroom, "I want them to develop their own meaning of words." Dream continued by describing that many of her students' difficulties were mostly with reading comprehension. She targeted their needs by providing pictures and audio books for these students.

Hope talked about many strategies that she used in her classroom to support ELLs with dyslexia. She described doing a lot of modeling, vocabulary building and discussions and mostly small group instruction and work at all times. To support reading comprehension, she and other fluent students always read aloud to non-fluent readers, while they listened. Then they had discussions about what was read. Hope felt that this method bridged many gaps. She said that students are also exposed to a lot of modeling for building vocabulary and differentiated the various different levels that the students needed. She reported that other teachers at her school used similar strategies such as small groups, peer tutoring, and teacher directed instruction.

For Costanza, the use of various hands on activities, the use of manipulatives and visuals to expand on new concepts were key in her classroom. She touched briefly on using cognates, "we use cognates and I have them look at the book." During my observation in her classroom during her intervention class, I observed that

she utilized multi-sensory methods as well as a lot of repetition and feedback with her students. Another strategy that I observed was that she provided instructions and information in small steps and with visuals. She always encouraged students to participate and respond but she never required them to participate. Some of the accommodations I observed in her classroom were limiting copying and providing words to a few students who were unable to write legibly. She also provided writing paper with many visual cues to support letter formation and prevent reversals with some students. She ended by describing, “The Wilson is really good about showing them how they need to write their letters from top to bottom.”

Infinity shared similar strategies. She indicated that she always began her daily routines using various hands-on activities. She explained that she begins by reviewing letters and sounds. She used many manipulatives and visuals like magnetic letters and sound boxes. She presented me with many charts, posters, informational boards and routine cards. It was evident that Infinity’s classroom was immersed with charts and visual procedures. Infinity concluded that strategies for ELLs and monolingual English students were always the same in the classroom.

The two general education teacher participants’ strategies included many of the strategies previously mentioned by the special education and intervention teachers. Paz talked about using visuals and providing small group instruction. She acknowledged that at times, she would work with students on an individual basis to provide additional support for reading and math. Paz identified re-teaching information as a common practice that was provided by an instructional assistant.

Felicia on the other hand included strategies that included visualization, building background knowledge, review information and group work. She articulated that organization was very important and essential for student success; therefore, she used notebooks for, “using composition notebooks where they write down any notes where we could go back and review....they do a lot of group work and peer to peer work.” In conclusion, Felicia shared the use of word banks and differentiated writing paper to support writing for students with dyslexia. Felicia yearned for learning more strategies to help students with dyslexia.

The two parent participants, Tomás’ parent and Mari’s parent, also summarized the use of accommodations in the classrooms to help their children. Tomás’ parent discussed that Tomás was placed under a 504 Plan at the school and he received accommodations like extended time, small group instruction and oral testing. She knew that her son saw the reading interventionist; however, she was unsure for how long or how often and these services were not specific for dyslexia. Tomás’ parent expressed “I’m not sure how he’s supported in his classroom...I ask him and he says he gets extra time to do stuff he doesn’t finish.” Just like Tomás, Mari was also under a 504 Plan. Her mother, however, reported to changes or adjustments in the classroom after Mari’s identification. She was not even aware of any accommodations or modifications that were taking place in the classroom. She said, I don’t think she gets any sort of accommodations or anything...I would say they’re not doing not, not a lot.” In addition, Mari’s parent knew that Mari did not see the

reading interventionist. She described, “She is supposed to go...she’s only gone once.”

For the above participants, implementing strategies to support student learning in their classrooms were part of their daily teaching routines. All the teacher participants shared and identified strategies and very few of them identified accommodations that were implemented in the classroom. For the parents, they were aware that their children were supposed to receive accommodations under a Section 504 Plan but only Tomás’ parent was able to identify these accommodations.

The two observations and the artifacts supported theme three. During the observations both teachers, Hope and Costanza were observed using many strategies to enhance student learning. Based on the observation protocol (see appendix B), both teachers achieve in the area of teaching methods. Both teachers employed many strategies like using multi-sensory methods, providing frequent feedback and reinforcing with visual aids. The use of accommodations was not evident other than the visual writing accommodation employed by Felicia. The artifacts also demonstrated that teachers were employing visual strategies during the lessons. The teacher made materials and daily focus calendar that was used by Paz indicated and supported the used of strategies to aid in organization and enhancing reading comprehension.

Emergent Theme Four: Parent Involvement Equals Communication

The fourth theme that became obvious through the conversations was the need for increased parent-school collaboration. Many of the participants highlighted

involving parents in various ways, but the focus was not always on improving literacy in students. Parent involvement took place as a form of communication about students' progress or as participation in common school functions during holiday events.

For the administrators, Esperanza and Socorro, parent involvement was important and they both identified similar school functions to promote involving parents. Esperanza shared that the focus of reading and math nights was not only to involve parents but also to ensure that parents understood how to work with their children at home. She described this function as being very successful, "the parents come into the classrooms and the teachers teach them the way they teach the kids. They teach them strategies that they're teaching the kids. That, way when the kids go home with homework, the parents know how to help them.

Socorro identified communication as being key in improving students' reading achievement. She indicated that strategies for parents to work at home with their students were presented, but she did not report when this happens. Socorro resonated that parent involvement was a problem at her school and parents only participated during special functions and field trips. She mentioned several efforts that had been made by the school and school district to increase parent involvement. She had tried things like breakfast with the principal. She explained, "I tried it...the superintendent tried to have something like that, but he got no parents...we only get maybe ten parents...that's for the entire district."

Teachers on the other hand reported involving parents through communication. Dream commented, “communication, communication, communication...let them know what’s happening. Dream described that keeping an open communication with parents of ELLs was important and that at the meetings her aide would translate the conversation. She described that the school involved parents through the various holiday functions that take place at the school: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Halloween, Easter, etc.

In reaching out the parents of ELLs, Hope’s parent involvement consisted of sending daily homework practice to reinforce students’ skills. She did acknowledge that sometimes parents were very limited in how they could help their children, “many times I find that most struggling readers have one parent who also struggles how to read...the parent doesn’t know how to read in English or is not a reader themselves.” Hope did reinforce what was previously mentioned by the administrator and concluded that during literacy nights or parent/teacher conferences she offers parents the opportunity to learn how to help their children but she wished she could find other ways to get them involved.

Costanza also identified parent involvement as a form of communication with parents. She described that she sends program reports with posttest information. Costanza indicated that she always encourages parents to contact her if they have questions. She stays in constant communication through the Wilson program newsletter. One of the drawbacks she identified was that these documents were not available in Spanish, “it’s hard, especially when a lot of the forms are not in Spanish.”

Costanza reported that parent-teacher conference was another opportunity to involve parents; however, her limited Spanish did not produce many parents to come see her. The students would say, “Miss, my Mom only speaks Spanish.” Costanza would reply, “Show your work...we’ll figure it out.”

For Infinity, parent involvement happened during parent-teacher conferences and their discussions were about students’ progress. She articulated that she communicated with parents through memos that were sent home with students. She described, “Parents don’t get involved...not too much...not in my classroom.” She expressed that the school administration also promoted parent involvement through school functions like coffee with the principal. She ended by sharing that the school had implemented an instant messenger to inform parents about school functions through telephone or e-mail.

Paz, similar to the other teachers, described parent involvement happened through phone calls, notes, students’ planners and parent conferences. Paz identified that parent conferences were done twice a year and more often if there were any other concerns. She described that parent involvement was something very difficult to accomplish and very few parents would participate in school functions. Paz stated, “For example last night during reading night, the same parent is always here and asks how his student is doing...is he showing growth?” Paz concluded that school administration used methods such as coffee with the principal and reading and math night but not comment was made on how successful these events were.

Felicia also acknowledged communication with parents was through notes, calling, e-mails and parent teacher conferences. She lamented that parent involvement was not very popular in her classroom and whenever parents demonstrated interest in improving their children's academic progress they would visit the classroom. She said, "They'll usually come and ask about their homework...is there anything they can work with them at home?" Felicia reassured that school administration also try to involvement parents through on-going school functions during the day.

Parents on the other hand did not identify any ways in which the school could assist them in improving their children's learning. Both parents shifted the concept of improving their child's learning by beginning with improvements at the school level. Tomás' mother claimed that services for students with dyslexia and training teachers was very much needed and could be improved at the school. Tomas mother concluded, "The administration can improve in getting teachers trained...I think training teachers to identify these characteristics earlier because none of this would have happened if I had not noticed it." For Mari's parent, she resonated that the school could improve by providing what was agreed on her 504 Plan.

It was evident that both administrators and teacher identified parent involvement as a key function of student improvement. For most participants, parent involvement consisted of communication through different written or electronic ways and usually face-to-face communication would happen during IEPs or parent-teacher conferences.

The artifacts supported this theme. The parent letters that were provided by Costanza and one administrator supported that communication always consisted of one-way communication. It was usually the teachers communicating information to the home. The letters sent home to parents did not provide opportunity for parents to engaged in some form of communication. Although, Paz daily lesson planner did required parents to initial and review planner every day, there was not much interchange between parents and teachers.

Emergent Theme Five: Always On My Own and the Need for Knowledge

As noted in chapter one, the purpose of this study was to examine how school leaders can improve the learning experiences of students with dyslexia and subsequently of all diverse learners. In exploring this topic, I asked participants what could help them increase their knowledge to better understand working with students with dyslexia and a majority of them felt that the need for more training was essential and need it. In addition, they were asked where they get information to support these learners. The six teacher participants stated they researched information on their own and they expressed the need for more training and information about dyslexia.

In understanding dyslexia, Hope discussed that she sought out a colleague who had gone through specific training for dyslexia. Hope expressed wishes for getting to participate in this training herself because she finds it very valuable. She expressed frustration in her knowledge, “it’s trial and error...this didn’t work, let me try that.” Hope resonated that it takes a lot of research on her own to find answers. Hope ended our interview by restating that she would like to see more training for all

teachers, especially herself. She describes, “If I felt like I knew more, I felt like I could have mini presentations for parents or at least give them information...I feel very insecure.” She described feeling uncomfortable whenever parents asked how they could help at home. She noted, “other than read with them more, or read with them more, the more they read the better they get...I didn’t have any specific strategies to give them.” Hope expressed certainty in that more training and knowledge could make her more resourceful to support more inclusive practices for her students. She was troubled and questioned her practices, “What is the best way to teach a child with dyslexia whose coming as a second language learner? What does the research say about how they need to be taught...in their native language...are they going to struggle in both languages? Should you start teaching them to read in English because they’re already going to be behind?”

Costanza realized that in improving supports for ELLs with dyslexia, it meant more training for teachers even for implementing reading programs. She explained that administration could support more by providing training because teachers have to learn on their own or train themselves on using certain programs. She indicated, “the only one [person] that received and went to district training was our reading teacher...when she brought back the leveled literacy books and I asked her how to use it...she said, “read the books, there, there, it’s easy, just read the books!” Costanza reported that knowledge about teaching reading was necessary. She reported that the computer teacher, art teacher and P.E. teacher would provide reading

intervention for students and she had to help them a lot, “we had to help them in how to teach the leveled literacy... a lot of them never had any type of training.”

Although Infinity possessed a lot of knowledge about reading, she claimed wanting training specific to dyslexia. In order to understand dyslexia more, Infinity thoughtfully shared, “the person in charge in our district has assured me...and because there’s a need.” She said, “Whenever there’s training, she would send me.” Infinity appeared excited to know that she had been selected to receive dyslexia training once it become available. She states, “they want a commitment from a teacher...I will be the one to serve...if there’s anything in the region or anywhere else, the general education teacher and such will be the ones to attend.” She concluded by stating that she does a lot of research on her own to learn about dyslexia, “ I found the dyslexia handbook...I have it close to me.”

For Paz, she knew that dyslexia needed to be further investigated, “I think dyslexia is a concern...the district should put a program in place to address these students...and to inform teachers how to address these issues with these type of learners.” Paz declared that more teacher training and information had to be provided at her school to improve in these areas. In order to improve working and understanding ELLs, Paz shared that she had decided to take coursework for two years that lead to her TESOL endorsement. Paz identified another teacher she seeks out to get assistance on how to support these learners, “I talk with Ms. Lorena...she’s highly qualified and has a master’s degree in reading...she’s very knowledgeable.”

Felicia comments resembled what previous teachers had already expressed: the need for more training. She stated, “Usually ELLs with dyslexia and students with dyslexia need more help with organization, specific help in instruction and directions...it would be nice to have an overview about each student.” Felicia agreed that in seeking how to support the needs of this population of students, she would network with other teachers, especially the special education and reading intervention teachers. Felicia did acknowledge that her school provided training on differentiation of instruction but teachers were on their own if they needed assistance on a specific topic. She concluded, “Training is done usually outside the school but it’s provided through the district...we can look on our own...I haven’t seen any teachers go to any training specific to dyslexia.”

In conclusion, Dream was clear and concise about how a lot of the information she obtained was self-guided. She described herself as doing a lot of reading and research on the Internet, “all of it has been through my reading and research.”

While for parents, the question was a little different and focused on what the school could do to help improve their child’s reading/writing skills. Their responses echoed the teachers’ responses. Tomás’ parent claimed, “The administration can improve in getting teachers trained. I think training teachers to identify some of these characteristics earlier because none of this would have happened if I hadn’t notice it.” As for Mari’s parent, she concluded, “I think they need to get more staff...we need more staff that are specialized or certified in that sort of area.”

In summary, many of the stories noted above reflect the eagerness of needing more training and more information about dyslexia. Both teacher and parents resonated that in order to improve the learning of children with dyslexia, more training needs to occur. Although teachers are researching on their own much of the information, they still concluded that more could be done in that regard.

The observation and artifacts did not reflect to support this theme.

Emergent Theme Six: The Missing Native Language

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, one of the most contested issues related to teaching young Spanish-speaking children to read are language of instruction and timing of transition from native language to English (Vaughn et al., 2006). This theme emerged as the conversations from parents, teachers and administrators portrayed ELLs who were taught in English only. It was apparent that both schools participating in the study served a high number of ELLs. For example Esperanza's school included a diverse student population that as 100% Hispanic with 70% being ELLs. Socorro, similar to Esperanza, shared that her school had a high number of Hispanic students who were ELLs. Student demographics were not congruent with language of instruction. Although the demographics at the schools outlined a high number ELLs, the students' language levels were unknown. What became evident was that participants in the study described ELL students whose language was English only, as well as their language of instruction.

Both parents, Tomás' and Mari's described the language of instruction as English only. The reason for this choice was only known for Tomás. His parent

described, “He is predominantly English and know very little Spanish. Since he had a speech delay, I did not want to confuse him and so I thought it would be better just to do one language...and so I chose English. For Mari, her parent reported that Mari communicated only in English at the school and with her friends. She admitted that Mari has never participated in bilingual classes nor speaks English.

Administrators did acknowledge that bilingual programs and classes were available at their schools; the bilingual models utilized were not reported. Esperanza commented that these students, whether in bilingual or in regular English classes, they were still labeled ELLs. In addition, she proclaimed that one of the school’s goals was to promote, bilingual, bi-literate students. She said, “When you look at the kinder population, I have two bilingual classrooms and two regular classrooms...in first grade I have two bilingual and one regular.” Esperanza acknowledged that many ELL students chose to be in regular classrooms even if their native language was Spanish. For Socorro, she described having at least one bilingual classroom at every grade level where students were taught both English and Spanish. She added that teachers in English only classrooms possessed bilingual certification or ESL certification. She ensured that this helped meet the needs of many students whose parents did not want to enroll their students in bilingual programs. She said, “I even have monolingual English teachers who teach only the English speaking students who are certified in bilingual or ESL because we have a lot of parent denials.”

For Dream, it was evident that her instruction with ELLs was only in English. She described the following, “for students whose English is not their first

language...they're learning the language and they're learning to read at the same time." Dream also reported that many of her students were bilingual denials.

Hope explicitly described that she had worked with ELLs for many years. Like Dream, she provided her instruction in English only. She reported, "what ends up happening a lot of time, an English Language Learner will learn how to read better in English before they learn how to read in Spanish or they might not ever truly learn how to read in their native language...they might be learning how to decode, but they might comprehend because they don't know what all those words mean." Hope admitted and expressed feeling responsible for permitting for this to happen but she wished there was equal access to programs in Spanish.

Costanza indicated working with ELLs and pulling them to provide reading intervention but her instruction was English. She expressed frustration and knew the challenges she faced when working with ELLs, "I'm not fluent in Spanish...it's hard for the bilingual students...I feel I'm not completely effective with Spanish speaking students.

Infinity worked with ELLs and her instruction included Spanish and English. She did not provide information on what determined the language of instruction in her classroom. She shared, "The strategies for ELLs look the same as for non ELLs." One of the resources she talked about using with ELLs was the TELPAS handbook. She described, "This is for working with ELL students...this covers the listening, speaking, reading and writing."

Paz differed in her experience working with ELLs, she described, “this is the first year that I’ve been exposed to two students with dyslexia.” It was evident that Paz’s instruction was only in English. She presented me with three sample lessons that students were required to complete and were available only in English. One lesson consisted of a daily writing activity where students had to write about attitude; another activity consisted of a reading passage on roller coasters along with comprehension questions to be answered by the student; the last activity consisted of a response journal where students answered questions about non-fiction passages.

For Felicia, she described her instruction as being English only. She reported having a couple of ELLs in her classroom and she described the following, “yes, is where they call it a parent denial...their parents want them in English.” She knew that when some of these students demonstrated difficulty in learning to read, it was difficult to determine whether it was a language issue. She noted, “I do have one student that does have attribute of dyslexia...I do not whether is the language where is difficult to understand or process of what they’re being taught.”

Most of these stories reflect the perception that the language of instruction in these classrooms and for these students was mostly English. Although some of the reasons were described as choice by parent, students’ levels of English proficiency were unknown as well as Spanish proficiency. It was evident through participants’ stories that ELLs were missing their native language during instruction.

Both observations and artifacts support this emergent theme. During the observation, it was evident that teachers provide information only in English. Even

the artifacts provided by teachers demonstrated English only materials. Costanza acknowledged that the program materials were only available in English and she often would send home like this. Infinity shared that rich assessments like Quick Phonics Screener was only available in English. Infinity expressed frustration when the assessments were not available in English.

Emergent Theme Seven: A difficulty journey to success

Similar to Theme Six, another theme that emerged addressed the focus of this study to explore factors that will contribute or impede positive culturally responsive learning environments for ELLs. In this theme, parents identified the many challenges that lie ahead but refocus their visions to promote student success. Parents also described the people involved in ensuring this process is maintained successful.

Tomás' parent reported experiencing many challenges already and reflected upon the unknown experiences that have yet to come. She described that many people are involved in assisting Tomas with school-related tasks. These people included herself, other relatives and friends, "it's always a struggle and it takes him a very long to do anything, especially anything that has to do with vocabulary." She continued, "I think it takes a normal kid probably 30 minutes to do homework after school...it would take Tomás more than one hour to do this." Then Tomas' parent described his emotions and feeling whenever he engaged in reading or writing homework. She also described Tomas a very sensitive child who was naturally anxious and who took a long time to complete reading and writing assignments. She continued describing him as easily frustrated, especially when he had difficulty reading through the words, "if

he's reading, his biting his nails...because like he'll read it very fast but he doesn't understand what he's reading." She continued, "If he goes slower, he'll have a hard time reading the words and he's comprehension is still not there...so it's frustrating trying to figure out what is best for him." Despite these difficulties, Tomás parent longed and assured that Tomas will go to college. She shared, "He's going to go to college. I already have everything lined up for him. Tomás will shadow his cousin who is a physical therapist and his sister is a doctor. He wants to follow what she's doing." Tomás' parent continued describing that Tomás is very intelligent, "he tells me he wants to do science, that's his thing...even if his grades don't show it...he's going to go far. Tomás parent reassured that she would do whatever it takes for him to succeed. She planned to continue supporting him by praising him the things he does well and staying actively involved in his education, "if he's doing a good job, letting him know."

Mari's parent reported different experiences from Tomás'. She concluded that Mari did not have a lot of homework this school year and she had not required additional help. She identified Mari as sometimes working independently and seeking help occasionally. In describing Mari's emotions, her parent described Mari as feeling exasperated and lacking motivation to complete reading and writing homework. Mari's parent described the made a comparison between Mari and another child who did not have dyslexia. She reported, "Well my other child is just, I don't know, very self motivated. The minute school's released or we go home, she's just ready to do her homework. She's even got a little timer on herself to remind her to do her

work...and for Mari; it takes a lot of prompting and redirection. She talked about Mari's plans after high school, "I want her to go to college. She wants to be a professional wrestler and become a WWW wrestler. But as long as he goes to college first, I don't have a problem with what she wants to be." Mari's parent concluded that in ensuring Mari's success, she would continue to help her with strategies and techniques for reading comprehension. She concluded, "just making sure she comprehends because I think a lot of times, she likes to read so quickly and I don't really think she fully comprehends."

In essence, both parent participants outlined the challenges that existed in their everyday lives and described how these would not impede their children's success. In fact, parents knew that their children would require additional supports; especially they would need to stay actively involved throughout their educational years.

Observations are artifacts did not relate to this theme.

Analysis of Themes and Frameworks

The seven themes identified in this study included: (a) a late and inefficient identification process (b) reading programs that are mandated, prescribed and unequal (c) more strategies and less accommodations (d) parent involvement meant communication (e) always on my own and the need for knowledge (f) the missing native language; and (g) a difficult journey to success.

In addition, the theoretical frameworks that guided this study were Critical Race Theory (CRT), Community Cultural Wealth, and the Dyslexia Framework (Dyslexia British Quality Mark). These frameworks were chosen because it allowed

for an examination of the practices in the schools that are not often centered on issues of race and racism, inequitable policies, and deficit thinking positions (Aleman, 2009; Yosso, 2005). In addition, it allowed for the use of Yosso's (2015) Community Cultural Wealth Model to shift these views from a deficit perspective to the asset that communities of color acquire and may draw from the experiences they bring with them from their homes and communities.

Critical race theory evolved as a result from criticism in the legal system that presented a two-dimensional discourse of discrimination: Black and white (Taylor, 1998). Over the years CRT branched and expanded and now articulates the voices of other groups such as women, Latino/as, Native American, Asian Americans, etc., who also have experienced different forms of oppression.

In education, CRT presents five tenets that inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum, and policy: (1) the centrality intersectionality of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches (Solórzano, 1998). Yosso (2005) reaffirms that these five themes identified in CRT can be a helpful lens to inform research, especially with Community of Color.

Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), evolved in an attempt to shift from the deficit perspective mindset to demonstrate that Communities of Color have a community of cultural wealth that may include six forms of capital that can be utilized to survive and resist oppressions. These include: (1) aspiration; (2)

navigational; (3) social; (4) linguistic; (5) familial; and (6) resistant. This study highlights the most evident forms of capital from the analysis of themes and participants stories.

The Dyslexia Framework described in their book, *Dyslexia Friendly Schools Good Practice Guide*, a framework named the BDA Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark which has received an international recognition and is built upon standards that cover four key areas: (1) Standard One: Leadership and Management; (2) Standard Two: What is the quality of learning? (3) Standard Three: Creating a climate for learning; (4) Standard Four: Partnership and Liaison with Parents, Carers, Governors and other concerned Parties.

These standards clearly outline the criteria for identifying whether schools are dyslexia friendly. Using these standards can assist educational leaders to evaluate whether or not the school meets the criteria or whether more development is needed in a particular area. This can enable schools to identify an action plan and carry out activities that need to take place in order to improve and support the learning differences of students with dyslexia (Cochrane et al., 2012)

The Interplay with CRT

As I consider the emergent themes from this research and the reflection and focus from the conceptual framework of CRT and Community Culture Wealth, I will draw on details from the most salient themes of CRT and its tenets. CRT's theme one, race and racism and its most common form of racism, the Deficit Thinking Model, drove the focus for this research. The basis of deficit thinking lies in that

students of color struggle under certain limitations because of their family structure, linguistic background, and other culture. These assumptions may place students at fault for their own poor academic performance.

Intersectionality of race and racism. The forms of racism in schools are not born from intentional practices or from wanting the worst for students of color, however it's usually subtle. Unintentional racism was evident through the every day practices that were voiced from the participants' stories. For example at Blue Elementary and Golden Elementary the majority of the students were ELLs. The student population was not reflected in the teachers standing in their classrooms. Even though some of the teacher participants spoke some Spanish, they were not fluent in the language. They lacked understanding about cultural issues and blamed their misunderstandings on a lack of parental involvement. Many teachers expressed that parent involvement was hard to accomplish and blamed parents for their lack of participation. Teachers never conversed about strategies to make the school or classrooms more accessible or welcoming to parents and caregivers. Teachers did not make comments or acknowledge possible barriers that were preventing parents from participating in their schools. Teachers at Blue Elementary School never touched on the information that had been provided by the administrator about single parent homes and parents incarcerated. It appeared as though this information was not in their toolbox or even part of the professional development they received. Another form of racism evident at Blue Elementary School was that dyslexia programs were

not available for ELLs and even when resources were available, like in Golden Elementary School, they were not equitable.

An integral part of any culture is its rich language. Another example of unintentional racism can be evident at Blue Elementary School when the communication with parents is not in their native language or when program newsletters are not available in Spanish, the home language of many of the families. The artifacts also supported this type of racism because student program materials were only available in English. One particular artifact consisted of a reading comprehension activity about the history of roller coasters found in the Pennsylvania, Disneyland and Six Flags. It was unknown how much background knowledge that teacher could have provided prior to this activity, however, students' lack of familiarity with the topic may lead teachers to have an interpretation that students may be experiencing difficulties with reading comprehension. Teachers can begin examining the materials that they employ in their classrooms to remove racism that continues to exist through mono-cultural materials and employ multicultural texts and materials.

Deficit thinking. It is important to acknowledge that cultural deficit thinking was not as evident at Blue Elementary or Golden Elementary. However, teacher participants may be framing a model of a different deficit perspective created to criticize and focus on student underachievement and failure due to their dyslexia or their difficulties. For example, when teacher participants acknowledged the need for professional development in understanding dyslexia, their mindsets could be looking

for solutions or answers to address students' difficulties rather than focus on their strengths. In addition, Hope indicated that most of her students with dyslexia spent the majority of the day in the special education classroom. This information supports that general education teachers may already have constructed deficit thinking views about students with dyslexia by focusing on their difficulties and their inability to participate in the general education classroom.

When teachers fail to address problems within their schools at large, they may continue to depress the performance of certain groups of students. It was not made known by teachers from both schools how they were addressing these concerns with the administration. Teachers expressed eagerness to learn and participate in opportunities to understand dyslexia at large, however, none of them commented on how these issues were discussed and addressed at the school level. Under this deficit model, schools and teachers may forget their dedication to educate all students appropriately, and this responsibility may be shifted entirely to students and their families. Although teachers were dedicated and attempted to involve parents, they had shifted the responsibility of parent involvement to the parents.

The challenge to dominant ideology. CRT challenges the view toward meritocracy, objectivity, color and gender blindness, and equal opportunity. This study challenges the dominant ideology that is faced by the participants at their respective schools in order to endure their learning difference in addition to other obstacles such as poverty, single parent homes and incarcerated parents. Meritocracy indicates that student come to school to learn and must be ready to achieve. They

must leave their problems behind because everyone has problems. Although the administrator from Blue Elementary School had acknowledged that students faced these challenges, she failed to mention how the school might be addressing these issues. It was unknown what supports or resources that school had available for parents who encountered these situations. At Golden Elementary the administrator indicated that their school came across students who were monolingual Spanish and even for those who were bilingual; it was not made known what supports were available to support their language differences. This premise supported the idea that schools continue to hold ideologies that students will endure and make it through school regardless of their challenge or differences.

The commitment to social justice. The recommendations for policy and practice reflect a commitment to social justice. These recommendations can support the promotion of social justice and specifically the ways in which elementary schools can support the learning needs of ELLs. Through this, schools can help address barriers that may prevent ELLs from achieving academically. This can aide teachers in becoming more proactive and committed to ensure social justice is reflected upon their daily practices and their schools' policies every day functions.

The centrality of experiential knowledge. The fourth tenet of CRT focuses on the premise that the experiences that people of color bring may be different and unique. Participants highlighted lack of parent and caregiver involvement at the schools. Experiential knowledge may serve to create an on-going collaboration between parents and the schools. When schools are more open to a true collaboration

and partnership with parents, it can refocus on how to begin acknowledging differences that exist and fostering that these can be assets to their respective schools.

The utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. This approach from CRT draws from interdisciplinary approaches that examine structures that may exist in elementary schools that negatively impact students of color. Through the themes and answers to the sub-questions and major question of the study, I have included the importance to facilitate and foster a culturally responsive environment. This may begin with simple steps such as hiring school staff who are bilingual and who speak Spanish to reflect more the population of the students Blue and Golden Elementary serve. Teachers who are able to reflect the population they serve, may serve as an aide to begin examining structures that may be preventing and impacting student achievement. Schools can expand from current processes that mirror those that are secured for non-ELLs and begin to imitate them for ELLs.

The Interplay with Community Cultural Wealth

Using Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model, it can allow the shifting from the deficit perspective to the asset that communities of color acquire and draw from the experiences they bring.

Aspirational capital. This form of capital is apparent in Tomás and Mari's stories. Although both students faced many barriers, parents maintained hopes and planned for a successful future. Parents have allowed for possibilities beyond their present challenges and are focused on attaining these goals. Both parents expressed that graduating from high school and attending college were on their children's

agenda. Parents had acknowledged that they their journeys were going to be difficult but they were not impossible. They realized that it wasn't going to be easy and that it was going to require many supports and they were an integral part of this formula.

Linguistic capital. Elementary schools need to draw attention to the linguistic skills students possess and bring with them in order to engage into the culture of ELLs and facilitate collaboration with parents. Both administrators acknowledged that their schools served high number of ELLS, however, building from the students' linguistic capital was not evident. Even when Costanza indicated that she couldn't communicate with parents because she did not speak Spanish, she never reflected on building on her students' linguistic capital to communicate with parents. She often looked at other teachers or colleagues to assists her to communicate with parents.

Familial capital. This form of capital is evident when parents share their stories about every day experiences. For example, parents discussed how they foster caring and have consciousness to cope with difficulties that are present daily in their child's experiences. Parents have created connections with their students' issues and they have a deep understanding that their roles are key in how they will support and strengthen their child's emotional challenges. It is evident that parents offer exceptional moral supports that commit to students not being alone in dealing with their problems.

Blue and Golden Elementary have failed to recognized that ELLs possessed familial capital that can assist them in support student achievement and promoting

success. When schools tap to familial capital, it facilitates and strengthens the current support mechanisms available in the schools.

Social capital. This form of capital is evident when teachers network and are willing to explore ways to support students with dyslexia. It was evident that administrators did not acknowledge this type of capital, which can serve as a gateway to promote and target professional development that is geared to teacher needs. All teachers possessed this form of capital and they can serve as a model to assist parents to tap into this type of capital. Expanding this form of capital to parents can offer opportunities for them to network so that it can facilitate finding and linking to many resources to support students. When parents network, it can also serve as a reassurance that they're not alone in this process.

Navigational capital. This form of capital may be evident from parents' and teachers' stories. Parents presented an ability to navigate the school systems in order to maneuver through the structures of inequality at the respective schools. For example, Tomas' parent demonstrated that she had to be persistent and needed to pressure the school to force them to identify her son with dyslexia. She knew that it required her to call the school every day and even write a letter to the administration. Teachers have also navigated through these unequal structures in order to support the needs of ELLs with dyslexia. They are networking and supporting each other to find answers in how to support students with dyslexia. For Hope and Paz, they knew it would require them to seek out to colleagues who were experts in these areas or who could reassure them that they were heading in the right directions.

Resistant capital. Although this form of cultural wealth was not obvious in this research, it should be explored to challenge structures of inequality that may exist in current practices. Parents demonstrated drawing from this capital as they challenged structures of inequality within the schools. Parents and teachers can be a voice to transform the oppressive structures of racism and motivation that exist to cultural knowledge at their schools.

The Interplay with Dyslexia Framework

This framework was used as an aid to enable schools to identify an action plan and carry out activities that need to take place in order to improve and support the learning differences of students with dyslexia

Standard one: Leadership and management. Blue Elementary and Golden Elementary had some embedded procedures and practices within their schools concerned with improving the reading outcomes of students. Schools can improve in this area by ensuring their practices also address the needs of ELLs with dyslexia in their day-to-day practices. For example, schools can employ more accommodations to level the learning needs of students with dyslexia, as well as root their strategies to ensure they support the language development needs of students.

Standard Two: What is the quality of learning? This standard focuses on the level of expertise and knowledge from school staff. Both schools need to improve in this area. Teachers do not have sufficient knowledge or training about dyslexia. There was limited evidence to the effective use of appropriate interventions for ELLs with dyslexia. The majority of the teacher had limited knowledge about who to

address the needs of students with dyslexia as well as how to begin with the identification process. Although Blue and Golden Elementary had practices that made evident a good quality of learning, improving the knowledge of teachers will ultimately lead to an increase in the quality of learning for their students.

Standard Three: Creating a climate for learning. Elementary schools can explore and improve in this area by providing training for school staff not only to understand dyslexia but also to learn how to focus on students' strengths and not their deficits. Blue and Golden Elementary have demonstrated that they want to create and improve a climate for learning and this is evident from their current identification processes and supports for students who are not meeting benchmarks in reading and math. They can expand and improve in this area by targeting professional development and acknowledging teacher needs to support student learning.

Standard Four: Partnership and liaison with parents, careers, governors and other concerned parties. Blue and Golden Elementary schools already have established communication with parents as one of their priorities. Schools can improve in this area by increasing collaboration between parents, schools and teachers. The majority of the teachers at Blue and Golden Elementary indicated that communication was essential. They were already employing numerous of communicating with parents. The administrators at both schools can expand on ways that teachers are communicating with parents by imitating these efforts to other members in their community. These partnerships can include community businesses and other community leaders like medical partners or churches.

Research Questions

The emergent themes played an important role in this research because they have explored participants' experiences that have been shaped through processes that were structured and unstructured, formal and informal in the organization of elementary schools and have highlighted the experiences that contributed or impeded a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia.

The emergent themes and the stories from the participants' interviews were used in order to respond the research questions. The sub-questions will be answered first, and then I will respond the principal overarching question of the study. The answers to these questions reflect the personal and shared stories from my participants and are not descriptive of other persons who may also have an inter-connection with ELLs with dyslexia and should not be interpreted as general responses that may be representative to other persons with similar experiences.

Sub-question 1

Research sub-question 1 asked: What experiences contribute to a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the elementary years? There were five major factors that emerged from the interviews that appear to contribute to a culturally responsive learning environment: (a) identification of students needing additional supports; (b) implementation of reading interventions; (c) targeted strategies for supporting ELLs; (d) motivation from

teachers to research on their own; and (e) inspiration from parents to succeed. Each of these topics is described in detail below.

Identification of students needing additional reading supports. The first factor that contributes to a culturally responsive learning environment is the identification of students who need additional reading support to increase reading proficiency. Both schools utilized assessments to identify students who were in need of extra reading help. Administrators from each school summarized a process that was used at their perspectives school to identify students who may need additional supports in reading to ensure that these students were provided with reading interventions. Esperanza and Socorro described the following,

The students are administered a developmentally reading assessment to identify students that are reading below grade level. Based on that, we develop the intervention list and those are the kids who go to the Foundations for 30 minutes every day.

We use TPRI and Tejas Lee, which are done, at the beginning of the year, middle of year and end of year. It is used with students kinder through second grade to identify students who have difficulties with literacy or dyslexia. All these assessments are used to determine what type of interventions we're going to provide for students, being through a pullout program. The interventionist will give the tests and it will break down what the students need to work on.

The teachers reaffirmed and discussed an identification process to provide interventions for students. The two intervention teachers, Infinity and Costanza shared the following,

We have a system called RTI and I get first-hand knowledge of what has occurred in the classroom. I have to look at the data and have to assess students again to determine what the child needs. Do they need more phonics? What is it that they need?

Our district has balance literacy and they [teachers] have to do DRAs as far as assessment to look at those tests and determine students' needs...are they having issues with fluency? And their [students'] teachers are supposed to be pulling them out for small group intervention within their classrooms.

The artifacts and observations supported this factor. Both Hope and Costanza provided reading intervention instruction during the observations. They employed assessments to guide their instruction and planning. The artifacts provided by these two teachers also demonstrated that they utilized assessment to target student interventions.

Implementation of reading interventions. In addition to an identification process that was evident at both schools and had been discussed by the administrators, interventions were also part of students' instruction whenever they who had been identified as needing additional reading support. Teachers shared and talked about reading interventions and specific programs that were used to provide this instruction to students their school. For example, Dream talked about various

programs used at her school during her instruction of interventions. She talked about *Reading A to Z*, which was utilized to target student's reading level and *Raz Kids* was used to providing pictures and audio support for ELLs. Lastly, she discussed a program called *Help* that addresses fluency and she informed me that interventions for phonics were provided using different sources.

Next, Costanza revealed that at her school, various interventions programs were used and included the following: *Level Literacy Intervention* and the *Wilson*. Costanza continued by informing me that *Wilson* was only used when student were not doing well with level literacy intervention. In addition, Costanza explained the following,

Instructional assistants and special teachers such as computer, art, music and physical education are required to provide and help with reading interventions...the administration is supportive by promoting and requiring small group instruction for interventions.

The general education teachers reassured that schools provided interventions to students who needed additional reading support. Paz described, "Students get pulled every day for 30 minutes a day...I'm not sure what they do...they do intervention for reading." In addition, Paz reported that she had seen a lot of improvement from the reading intervention for one of her students. She said, "Our reading intervention teacher is proactive...she does very well with the kids...she's an excellent reading teacher."

Felicia elaborated about interventions by reporting that the reading specialist offered more help to students through a pullout program to provide more reading instruction. She exclaimed, “They go about three times per week during reading time...they go and see her for that support.”

Tomás’ parent acknowledged that interventions were being provided for her son at the school. She described,

I know Ms. Silver is his reading teacher and she sees him. I’m not exactly sure how much she sees him but I’m thinking it’s at least three times per week. He gets picked up and she’s been really good at helping him with his reading, the words, and vocabulary.

The observations supported this factor. Both Hope and Costanza provided reading intervention instruction to students during the observations.

Targeted strategies to support ELLs with dyslexia. Although the majority of the teachers indicated limited knowledge about dyslexia and how to support these learners, the majority identified using strategies in their classrooms to support the language needs and instruction of ELLs and sometimes even ELLs with dyslexia. Some of the teachers’ stories are reflected below.

For example Dream talked extensively about her use of picture books and exposure of a lot of vocabulary for these students. She said, “I want them to develop their own meaning of words.” She continued by defining the use of English development standards as a guide to differentiate instruction.

Next, Costanza described supporting students in her classroom by using a lot of hands on activities and use of manipulatives to expand on concepts that were taught. She also touched briefly on using cognates in her classroom as a way to expose students about information in English and Spanish, especially for math concepts. She also named various visual strategies to provide writing strategies and prevent letter reversals.

Infinity also discussed many ways in which she supported ELLs. She talked about using various hands-on activities. She described using manipulatives, magnetic letters, and sound boxes for the teaching of the English language system. She added that she used Spanish readers. Infinity was sure that these strategies worked because she saw students making progress.

For Felicia, her daily practice included visualization, building background knowledge and reviewing information to support ELLs with dyslexia. She also knew that organization was essential for these students. She identified, "Using composition notebooks where students write down any notes that can help them go back and review." She also described some accommodations that she utilized with a specific student with dyslexia, "I use a different paper for him." This artifact provided by Felicia supported this factor. She employed visual strategies to support her students as an ELL but also visual accommodations to support him with his dyslexia.

Motivation from teachers to research on their own. All teachers talked about their eagerness to learn more about dyslexia in seeking a better understanding that would lead to better supporting students and their parents. The majority of the

teachers expressed a desire to research on their own, whether it was through attending trainings, or asking other colleagues or by doing Internet research, they all possessed an inner desire to learn more about how to support students learning or gain a better understanding about dyslexia.

Dream shared that the mentoring and supports to gain a better understanding about dyslexia was self-guided. She conducted a lot of research on the Internet and read a lot of material through the various classes that she had taken through the school's professional development, she claimed, "All of it has been through my reading and my research."

For Hope, she discussed that she seeks out assistance from a close colleague who was also a special education teacher but had undergone specific training for dyslexia. Hope expressed that it is a lot on her to look and research for these supports on her own.

Infinity indicated she reads and researches a lot on her own to learn about dyslexia and ELLs. She said, "I found the dyslexia handbook...I have it close to me for reference." Next, she discussed another handbook, the TELPAS, for ELLs. She added, "This is for working with ELLs..."

Paz had always looked for ways to improve in helping students. She had taken coursework for two years in a row in order to complete a TESOL endorsement in how to help second language learners. She also shared about collaboration among her colleagues at school in conjunction with their reading coach. She said, "We discuss reading strategies for students that are struggling." Whenever Paz needed assistance

about how to support students who were having difficulty with reading, she talked to other teachers and specifically, Ms. Lorena, who was highly qualified and had a master's in reading. She said, "She's very knowledgeable."

As for as Felicia, she described similar experiences in how she always looked for help on her own. She mentioned that whenever she needed help about how to address the needs of ELLs with dyslexia, she would network with the reading specialist and special education teachers at her school. Felicia indicated that her school provided training about differentiation of instruction but that she was on her own to find specific topics of interest. She ended, "Training is usually done outside the school but it's provided through the district...we can also look on our own." The artifacts and observations did not support this factor.

Inspiration from parents to succeed. One of the major factors and the most important was the parents' optimistic attitude that their children would go to college despite the challenges they faced. Both parents were in agreement that attending college was important for their children and they would continue to stay highly involved in their students' education to support this long journey.

For Mari's parent, she discussed how things would not be easy and would require a lot of supports for Mari as she continued advancing the educational pipeline. Nonetheless, Mari's parent held high expectations for Mari. She knew it would be a long, hard journey but Mari was still expected to attend college. She shared,

I want her to go to college. She wants to be a professional wrestler and actually become a WWE [word wrestling entertainment] wrestler. But as long

as she goes to college first, I don't have a problem with what she wants to be.

But for now, those are my goals, my goals for her.

Tomás' parents shared similar views about Tomás. She knew that Tomas would require many modification and accommodations to ensure that he would continue to do well in school, even in middle and high school. Mother planned to continue helping her son, especially keeping him motivated. Mom has described Tomás as a very intelligent boy who enjoyed science, could make great accomplishments. She indicated,

He's going to go to college. I already have everything for him. A physical therapist that he's going to shadow. She has an older sister who is going to be a doctor; so he wants to follow what she's doing. He's very kind and he's a very sensitive person and so I see him, he's intelligent, I think that would be a great career for him. He tells me he wants to do science, that's his thing...we're hoping he goes far.

Sub-question 2

The second research sub-question 2 asked: What experiences impede a culturally responsive learning environment for English Language Learners with dyslexia in the elementary years? Because sub-questions 1 and 2 are inter-related, the factors which were identified to answer this sub-question were also reflected from the participants shared stories and personal experiences. There were five factors that also emerged from these conversations that also appeared to impede to a culturally responsive learning environment: (a) an inefficient identification process; (b) the need

for more accommodations; (c) supporting the language development; (d) lack of dyslexia services and (e) parent collaboration. These factors will be described more in detailed in the next following section.

An inefficient identification process. One of the most important and salient factors that may impede supporting the learning environments of ELLs with dyslexia was the process to identify dyslexia. It was a fact that both schools had processes that were not effective. The process for identification of dyslexia was sometimes not known by many teachers.

For example, Hope exclaimed she was not aware of any process. She said, “No one has ever told me this particular student has dyslexia...other than the code of specific learning disability...but nobody has ever specifically said this student has dyslexia...I’ve always been curious.”

Costanza, just like Hope, indicated she was not aware of how her district identified dyslexia. She knew that the reading program she used was to address dyslexia, however, she could not even think about how this identification would even begin. She said, “I don’t think we have anything in our district that specifically tests for dyslexia.”

For Paz, she was not familiar with the process to identify dyslexia. In fact, she had shared that she had two students in her classroom that they were concerned about dyslexia. She discussed that she had spoken with the school principal who informed her there was not dyslexia program at their school. She finished by saying, “I am unaware...I’m not sure what the process is.”

Felicia on the other hand indicated that this was her first year she had a student with dyslexia but still reported she was not certain of any process. And when teachers identified a process, they were uncertain whether this process should be the same or different for ELLs. Felicia added, "I think it would be a little different for ELLs just so they can kind of sense if it's the language or not...just to determine if that's why they're struggling.

For Dream, she discussed that when a teacher identifies dyslexia in a student, it will go through the RTI process and only after trying different interventions, it might be decided if a student should be tested for dyslexia. It was unknown how long this might be. In addition, Dream agreed that the process for identification of dyslexia in English dominant students and ELLs was the same but no reasons were provided as to why it should be this way.

Next, Infinity talked about the process to identify dyslexia at her school. With hesitation she said,

We write down our observations and give that information to the committee and they look at it and decide if the child needs to be tested for this. Our diagnostician has instruments that she will use to find out whether they have symptoms of dyslexia.

Infinity commented and made an assumption that the identification process for ELLs with dyslexia was the same but would include Spanish assessments used by the school diagnostician. She concluded, "Dyslexia whether is in English or Spanish is

how one looks at the reading and how they do in spelling...I would think that it would be the same.”

In addition to teachers’ uncertainty about the process for identification, parents reaffirmed that this process was very long process, hectic and that took years. Tomas’ parent shared that the process to identify Tomas had been lengthy and frustrating. In addition, she had to put a lot of pressure to push the school to expedite the process. She discussed,

And so he barely was diagnosed with dyslexia last year in third grade. This district has been kind of hard. I feel they weren’t trained to notice children with dyslexia. In first grade, I knew there was something not quite right. The teacher would tell me, “Let me try my strategies first. I have to do my strategies first before we take him to get tested. That went on for a whole year. Then finally he was evaluated.

For Mari’s parent, the process was similar to Tomás’. She also described a difficult lengthy process,

It was very long. And I guess simple in the fact that there wasn’t a lot done. It took them a quite long time for them to identify her as dyslexic. It was about a year and a half. The process was hectic.

The need for more accommodations. In addition to the inefficient identification process, there was another factor that may impede a culturally responsive learning environment. Despite the fact that most teachers talked about numerous strategies that were employed in their classrooms to support ELLs with

dyslexia, only one teacher and one participant identified the use of accommodations to support students.

Mari's parent also confirmed this finding when she discussed that she was not even aware of any accommodations or modifications that were taking place in her classroom or at school. She stated, "I don't think she really gets any sort of accommodation or anything. Nonetheless, she did long for these supports. She reflected on the following when she was asked what Mari would need when she goes on to middle school and high school. She concluded, "I guess some basic accommodations. You know maybe a little extra time."

For Tomás, his experiences were not much different from Mari's. Tomás' parent was able to identify a few accommodations being provided in his classroom but was not exactly sure what they were. She concluded, "I'm not sure how he's supported in his classroom. I asked him and he says that she [teacher] does give him extra time to do stuff. She added, "They [school] determined that he had characteristics of dyslexia and that's the only way they were going to provide some accommodations."

Felicia was the only teacher that discussed using accommodations in the classroom with her student. She had shared that writing was very difficult for this student. As a result, she was employed the use of different paper to support him with his difficulty with handwriting. She said, "I do use a different paper for him...his writing looks like dysgraphia...he does get some accommodations and modifications...he can also use certain words to help with writing. She provided me

with a copy of this special paper. This artifact supported this finding. Felicia was the only teacher who appeared to be employing an accommodation. The rest of the teachers did not mention or provided information about student accommodations.

Supporting language development. Aside from identification and accommodations, very little discussion was provided about supporting the language development of ELLs with dyslexia. The administrators identified supporting the language needs of ELLs by providing access to bilingual classrooms and bilingual teachers at their respective schools. No specific information was available about the types of bilingual programs that were available or the methods or programs that were employed to support English language development.

Esperanza said, “When you look at kinder populations, I have two bilingual classrooms...in first grade I have two bilingual and one regular.”

For Socorro, she commented a little more than Esperanza. She described having dual language programs at her school. She identified that at least one bilingual teacher taught at every grade level English and Spanish was available. She concluded,

Even teachers in English only classrooms possess a bilingual certification or English as Second Language certification. This helps meet the needs of many students whose parents do not want their students enrolled in bilingual programs. I even have monolingual teachers who teach only the English speaking students that are certified in bilingual or ESL because we have a lot of parent denials.

Teachers talked about using teaching strategies; however, no discussion was made about English language development strategies. Only one teacher, Hope, expressed uncertainty about ELLs language development and language of instruction.

For Hope, she realized that learning to read was more difficult for second language learners and the language difference contributed to a very complex issue. She said, “With English Language Learners is even harder because they’re having to learn how to read in a second language so sometimes I’m not always sure if it’s the language or if it’s dyslexia.” She concluded,

What is the best way to teach a child with dyslexia whose coming as a second language learner? What does the research say about how they need to be taught in their native language? Are they going to struggle in both languages? Should you start teaching them to read in English because they are already going to be so far behind?

Both artifacts and observation supported these findings. Both schools, Blue Elementary and Golden Elementary did not demonstrated meeting the language needs of these students. All the materials and program curriculums were available in English only. In addition, the observations indicated that the instruction took place and was delivered in English only.

Lack of dyslexia services for all. Another contributing factor identified impeding the ability to create a culturally responsive environment was the lack of or limited dyslexia services available for all students. Although administrators and teachers discussed and provided information about different reading program that

were available to address the reading needs of students, only two participants identified using a program specifically to address dyslexia.

In addition, there was little discussion about Spanish dyslexia programs that were available. Reading programs that were used with ELLs, teachers reported incomparability to the English counterparts.

Both administrators concluded that reading interventions were provided to students who needed these supports at their respective schools. In addition, both administrators acknowledged that their schools did not provide dyslexia services. Socorro confirmed, “They’re basically just reading programs. The interventionist will give them some tests and it breaks down to what students need to work on.”

For Hope, her discussion focused on the program she used in her classroom. She shared that she used a reading program called *Sunday*, which was specifically for dyslexia. This program was phonetic-based, repetitive and broke down words into sounds. She described, “They [students] have to get through so many levels of that program before I finally see that they start taking off in their reading.”

Next, Hope talked about interventions specifically for ELLs with dyslexia. She identified that the special education teacher serving students in the primary grades had access to *Aventuras*, a program similar to *Sunday*. She commented, “My colleagues who have used it, they say it is not equal...I wish there were computer programs as well as workbooks and hands on program that were like *Sunday* but in Spanish.”

Costanza shared using *Wilson* as a Tier II intervention program and she identified this program as meeting the requirements to address dyslexia. She discussed, “With the *Wilson* we do a lot of writing showing them [students] how to write the words correctly. The *Wilson* is really good about showing them how they need to write their letters correctly from top to bottom.”

Infinity reaffirmed that she did not use a specific reading program to address dyslexia, but included employing different hands-on strategies. She concluded, I use manipulatives, magnetic letters and sound boxes for teaching the English phonetic system. It’s like letter and sound recognition. I use sound boxes so that they can hear each of the phonemes. We have chips to break words into sounds.

Both parents’ shared similar stories about this issue. For example, Tomás’ parent expressed concerns and said,

Is there a possibility of them providing him with dyslexia services? If they can, why aren’t they doing it? I know it’s a very small district and that is where I get caught up; they are a small district and that’s why they can’t do this. I don’t want to move him to go to a bigger district that does have these services because I don’t want to take him from where he’s comfortable and just take him out. That’s hard. We are trying to do the best for him and you’re just hoping that you’re doing the right thing.

For Mari’s parent, her experience resembled worry and frustration that Mari had never received *ANY* type of services whether for dyslexia or even reading interventions from the reading specialist. She concluded,

I would say, they're not doing a lot. She was supposed to get pulled out, it happened maybe like once or twice. I know we're in the process of developing and making our dyslexia program more accessible to more students so that could be why...so not much has been happening. Well, they need to do what we had agreed should happen on her 504 plan. She should get one-to-one instruction and the extra support that she's *supposed* [emphasis added] to be getting.

I think they need to get more staff. We need to hire more staff that are specialized or certified in that sort of area. That's what I see. Cause the schedule can only go so far. You know one teacher can only do so much. Well our reading specialist, she's overwhelmed with the population of students that need help. She just ran out of time [*pausing*], she ran out of time for my child.

Parent collaboration. In addition to limited dyslexia services for all students, another apparent factor impeding to create a culturally responsive environment to support the needs of ELLs with dyslexia was parent collaboration. Participants had been asked to share stories about they involve parents to improve literacy in their students. At both schools, the majority of the participants described parent involvement as a form of communication about student's progress or sending homework. The administrators were the two participants who indicated attempts to involve parents physically at their campus.

For Esperanza, she held strong beliefs that parent were partners in getting results to improve student achievement in all areas, especially reading. She described,

The parents come into the classrooms and the teachers teach the parents the way they teach the kids. They teach them strategies that they're teaching the kids. That way, when the kids go home with homework, the parents know how to help them.

Socorro described similar initiatives at her school. Some had been successful, while others had dissolved with little success. She explained,

We tried to have things like breakfast with the principal and only five parents would show up. I tried it...the superintendent tried to have something like that, but got no parents. Communication is important with all stakeholders, especially teachers. Parents are also presented with strategies to work at home with their students.

For teacher participants, their experiences to involve parents reflected different experiences. The majority described parent involvement in an attempt to keep an open communication about student's progress. Dream shared, "Communication, communication, communication [*laughing*]...let them [parents] know what's happening...let them know what's good." Dream talked about the importance of keeping an open communication with parents. It was essential that parents know exactly what would be recommended at an IEP. Whenever Dream communicated with parents of ELLs, the meetings would be held in Spanish and her aide translated; she felt confident this method worked well.

Hope communicated with parents through daily planners that went home with students. She indicated that some parents take this seriously and will write back to

her, while for others it's a struggle to get them involved with it. Hope reported using behavior charts and sharing these with parents to let them know how students did in her class. She also informed me that she explored different ways to stay in communication with parents, "I don't always want to be the bearer of bad news...I shared my personal cell phone number and some parents or students will call or text me. Hope also reported taking the opportunity to communicate with parents whenever they dropped or picked up their child from school.

One way that Costanza reported communication with parents was through program report printouts. She sent these reports home every 20 days and provided information on pre-tests and post-tests. She shared that she maintained in communication with parents through the newsletter from the *Wilson* reading program.

For Infinity, parent involvement happened during parent-teacher conferences but these were scheduled through the general education classroom teacher. She said, "The time I actually speak to them is at parent conferences...they see me and they know I'm their child's reading teacher and they thank me." Infinity reemphasized, "Parents only come to me if they have a concern but it's always communicated to me through their students' bilingual teacher."

Paz worked with parents through phone calls and communicated with them through students' planners, notes and parent conferences. Paz concluded that conferences were twice a year but more often if there were concerns.

For Felicia, parent involvement occurred through notes, calls, e-mails and parent conferences. She reported the same process to communicate with parents of

ELLs. Felicia reported that parent involvement was not very popular in her classroom. She claimed that parents who demonstrated interest in improving their children's academic progress, "They'll usually come and ask about their homework." Parent says, "Is there anything that we can work with at home?"

Research Question

After I examined the two sub-questions in the research, I was able to respond to the overarching research questions from this study. It asked: How can elementary schools foster a learning environment that is culturally responsive to support the needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia? The responses from the sub-questions were recalled and have been used to offer a conclusion that was reached based on perspectives from the participants. These practices answered the question of how elementary schools can foster a learning environment that is culturally responsive to the needs of English Language Learners with dyslexia:

- 1) Improving the identification process. Both schools identified systems in place to identify students needing additional interventions. These systems were efficient and linked students to reading interventions. Schools need to imitate this process to identify dyslexia or redefine their current process and be inclusive with identification of dyslexia and interventions to address dyslexia.
- 2) Communicating, tapping into familial capital and collaborating. It was evident that communication with parents was vital, especially in relation to students' progress. It was evident that parents wanted their children to

succeed and had established goals with future plans. Through collaboration, schools can step up their process of communication and work jointly with parents to ensure students improve their educational attainments.

- 3) Providing professional development. Teachers from both schools were motivated to learn more about dyslexia and to learn how to support these students. Schools should consider providing more opportunities for training about dyslexia.
- 4) Redefining available reading interventions. It was obvious that both schools provided numerous resources and programs to address supplemental reading instruction. Schools can redefine their current resources to target interventions that address the needs of students with dyslexia. In addition, schools must continuously examine the equity of resources that are available for ELLs and the effectiveness of such programs/methods.
- 5) Supporting language development. Teachers at both schools employed many strategies that supported learning outcomes for ELLs. Schools must take a closer look to determine if language needs are supported and being fostered through students' learning.
- 6) Improving strategies and accommodations. Again, both school identified many strategies that were implemented on a daily basis to support students in their learning. Beside strategies, schools need to revisit the use of

adopting accommodations to level the learning field for ELLs with dyslexia.

The conceptual frameworks of CRT and the Dyslexia Framework and findings and answers to the questions from the study have influenced the conclusions and considerations from this study. Recommendations for practice, policy and future research are provided to promote culturally responsive learning environments for all students, especially ELLs with dyslexia.

Recommendations for Practice, Policy and Future Research

The implication for policy, practice and research from this study closely relate to the original focus of this study. This study highlighted how elementary schools can create culturally responsive learning environments for ELLs with dyslexia. Ten participants shared the stories they encountered or perceived as a result of an inter-connection with a student with dyslexia.

Mari's and to Tomás' parents recounted experiences about lengthy and frustrating identification process, the need for more teacher training, as well as the school's responsibility to provide dyslexia services and accommodations to their children. For Esperanza and Socorro, their stories focused on school processes for identifying students in need of interventions, supporting reading programs, faced barriers, and increasing parent involvement. For Hope, Dream, Costanza, Infinity, Paz and Felicia their stories centered on a needed identification process, the need for comparable resources for ELLs, strategies in their classrooms, and the need for more teacher training.

These experiences and the integration of CRT and Dyslexia Framework have identified factors that impede or promote creating culturally responsive learning environments for ELLs, which will aid elementary schools to support learning environments for ELLs with dyslexia. Recommendations for practice, policy and research follow in the next sections.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the participants' experiences and analysis of data, the following recommendations for practice are suggested:

1) The need to improve the knowledge of all teachers in schools is critical. Teachers of beginner readers should have at least universal knowledge of what to look for that suggest that a child may be at risk of dyslexia and know where to seek advice on what steps are needed to help them. This knowledge should be an essential component of initial teacher training, especially those who teach beginner readers.

2) Educators must critically understand that students who are identified or suspected of having dyslexia have unique needs that vary from individual to individual. There is a need to make distinctions and come to recognize that all those with literacy difficulties will NOT respond to the same kind of support. Not all students with literacy difficulties will respond to the same approaches and programs equally. When it comes to reading support, it is critical to provide a comprehensive form of teaching that we know works for ELLs with dyslexia.

3) Educators may become discouraged when they come face-to-face with

unquestioned practices and conditions because they know that they cannot eliminate these practices on their own. It becomes important to acknowledge deficit explanations and examine them critically. This can illuminate possibilities that have eluded us, including strategies that focus on student strengths. It can be possible for teachers to design and carry out interventions in their classrooms that have proven remarkably effective in disrupting the deficit paradigm.

4) Organizing learning within a classroom and across the whole school can produce differences to improve learning outcomes for all students. Effective learning for ELL with dyslexia will depend on respecting individuals' differences, acknowledging language proficiency levels, maintaining high expectations for all and promoting excellent communication between teachers, parents, and students.

Recommendations for Policy

Analysis and finding from this study suggest that dyslexia is now clearly “on the radar” of many individuals, however, there is obvious evidence that parents and teachers are still reporting that it is a struggle to get their students identified with dyslexia at their schools. It is still a struggle to access equitable resources to support students with dyslexia. Teachers are still reporting that they have little or no knowledge about what dyslexia is and many feel insecure in their abilities to respond to the needs of ELLs with dyslexia and engage in critically conversations with parents about this social issue at large. The following recommendations for policy may help improve in this regard:

1) Providing a framework that outlines the knowledge, methodology, and continuing professional development that teachers need to address the needs of ELLs with dyslexia and reading related difficulties aligned with a multi-tier instructional approach that support student learning.

2) Providing a protocol that disseminates and makes available effective, evidence-based interventions, accommodations in the classroom, and supports for ELLs with dyslexia that enables them to learn side by side with their grade level peers.

3) States and local school districts need to provide flexibility on funding and spending for schools that reflects on developing a plan that draws on the unique targeted needs of each school to prevent a “one size fits all” plan.

Recommendation for Future Research

Educational leaders should continue to move forward advancing the needs of English Language Learners and closing the academic gaps under the current contexts that have led to unintended negative effects. Analyzing these issues through cultural, social, and linguistic terms holds strong promises (Valencia, 2008). Educating English Language Learners with dyslexia continues to be a complex issue at large in K-12 schools. Research about English Language Learners with dyslexia continues to be limited and there is much discussion about how to best meet the needs of these learners. Based on the information, analysis of data, and findings from this study, the following recommendations are made for future research:

1) Transferability of this study can be considered by including interviews

with middle school or high school students. Students entering middle school and high school are required to master more complex coursework. This would provide a larger scope of factors that promote or impede the learning outcomes that students with dyslexia face as the move through the educational pipeline.

2) Transferability of this study with English Language Learners who are at various levels of English language proficiency should be considered. Students' linguistic competency defines their pathway to learning content. This may provide a more affluent understanding of how to support their language needs.

3) Transferability of this study with English Language Learners who have different or more limited socioeconomic levels or whose parents are not educated should be considered. Understanding that barriers to reduce academic gaps are large, have roots causes that are very complex, and are intertwined with many other socio-cultural factors can lead to promote a systematic transformation process (Valencia, 2008; Marshall & Olivia, 2010). This information can lead to integral ideas that can aid to overcome current social issues.

Closing Thoughts

As I come to the end of this research, I will highlight the original motivations that led to this study. As I mentioned in Chapter One, I came to this country at the age of 10. I received a label that identified me by my "limitations" and experiences with the American culture and English Language. I had to transition very quickly into the dominant culture in the neighborhoods, school community and English language to prevent the mindset of deficit thinking to conquer the goals I wanted to achieve. Later

in life, I become the parent of daughter with dyslexia. I also bring with me the experiences of teaching and working with children with dyslexia. I do admit that all my experiences have shaped the perspectives and considerations throughout this research. I always reflected upon my own personal experiences, opportunities and outcomes. I was disappointed when I came to the conclusion that not many things have changed and parents and students continue to struggle to identify, understand, and support the needs of students with dyslexia.

When I initiated this study, I wondered whether my personal emotions and feelings resembled the experiences of my participants. Through this dissertation, its analysis and findings, I hope that all stakeholders, educational leaders at the local, district and state level, engage in critical dialogues that will continue to promote the advancement of ELLs with dyslexia and will focus on closing the achievement gap that historically has left these students marginalized and oppressed in the systematic practices that are employed at their schools.

It has become important to acknowledge that leadership will continue to be at the forefront of education. Researchers, policyholders and practitioners continue to recognize that the role of school leaders is pivotal to improve academic achievement for all. School leaders have become central to the task of building schools that promote powerful teaching and learning, respect, and at the same time hold the promise in the advancement of the most marginalized students. It becomes critical to understand the scope of the challenges faced by many educational leaders today and the need to renovate their current practices. Therefore, knowing and having an

understanding that leadership does matter in schools, the task of leadership development should continue to be priority for policy makers, school boards, and schools. This research has been based on the knowledge that supporting the needs of ELL with dyslexia continues to be a critical issue that must be examined through social, cultural and linguistic contexts.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long you have been an administrator at this school? And prior to working in this role? What roles have you played in administration and/or teaching etc. (get levels and years of experience)? How long have you been working at this school? What is your experience working with students who demonstrate difficulty with literacy such as dyslexia? What about with English Language Learners (ELLs) in your school or other schools? What about ELLs with dyslexia or with reading disabilities that may be attributed to dyslexia?
2. How does the school administration ensure that systems and assessments are in place to identify students with literacy difficulties throughout their elementary education, including dyslexia? Are these school-wide and for all grades?
When a student(s) is identified with literacy difficulties, including dyslexia, how does school/administration support these learners? (i.e. funding, resources, staffing, school policies, procedural manuals, professional development, etc.)?
3. Can you tell me a bit about all initiatives (i.e., programs, interventions and methods) utilized to address students' literacy difficulties, including dyslexia? How does the administration allocate resources to ensure effective implementation of these initiatives have measurable outcomes? How do you know if these initiatives are reducing the level of incidence of literacy difficulties at the school level? What changes usually take place when they are not?
4. How do you involve stakeholders (including parents/caregivers, teachers, instructional assistants, community, etc.) to understand the role they play to improve literacy outcomes for all students? What expectations are set by the administration to improve literacy outcomes for all students? How do you obtain feedback from parents, teachers, etc. about how the school is meeting students' needs?
5. How does the school meet the needs of diverse learners and overcome any potential barriers to literacy achievement (high-stake testing, language testing, bilingual programs, bilingual staff, external factors, etc.)? What barriers are easily overcome? What barriers are difficult to overcome? How do you create a balance to make decisions that continue to meet the needs of all diverse learners, including students with limited literacy skills?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share?

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about you. How long you have been teaching? What subjects/grades have you taught? How long have you been working at this school? Tell me about working with English Language Learners (ELLs) in your school. What about ELLs with dyslexia or reading disabilities that may be attributed to dyslexia?
2. How do you identify dyslexia in this school? Walk me through the process or steps that you take for identification of a student with dyslexia. What about for identification of ELLs with dyslexia? Is it different for students who speak only English than for ELLs with dyslexia? (If previous experience, ask about whether process for identification from the past).
3. Tell me about the daily practices in your classroom that support ELLs with dyslexia. What kind of strategies or methods do you use on a day-to-day to support these learners? Do you know what other teachers do to support these students? What about instructional assistants?
4. What does the administration do to support these learners? What would you suggest they could do that may be helpful? Is there anything that could be improved in this regard?
5. What are some of the intervention strategies that you and other teachers in the school utilize to address dyslexia? Are these different for English Language Learners with dyslexia? How do you work these children's parents? (i.e. meetings, IEPs, etc.). What programs do you have in the school that you feel are helpful and effective for these learners regardless of whether they are specifically geared for ELLs with dyslexia or not?
6. What training or mentoring in the school or outside the school do you have that helps you better understand working with students with dyslexia? Are there opportunities to further your learning (i.e. conferences, on-site trainings, mentorships, etc.)? Where do you get the most help that supports how you work with these learners (networks, other teachers, administrators, other schools, family, friends, etc.)?
7. How do you communicate with parents? What about with parents of ELLs? Do parents of ELLs get involved with what goes on in the school and in your classroom? In what ways do they get involved? What do other teachers do to get parents involved? How does administration get parents involved? What would you change about how the school works with this population of students?

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me a bit about your child's schools? How long has your child been at this school? Has he/she attended other schools? What language(s) are spoken in the home? How do your child/children do in school? Tell me about your child/children with dyslexia.
2. How did the school identify dyslexia? Was it a long, a difficult or simple process? How old was your child when he/she was identified? Was this process long or not long? Was the process smooth or hectic? Who was involved at the school with the identification process? Do you have any other children with dyslexia? (If previous children with dyslexia ask about whether the process has changed, improved, same, worst, etc.)?
3. How do you help your child with school-related tasks? How about at home with regards to reading/spelling or writing assignments? Are there any other people who help your child with school (relatives, friends, neighbors, community, church, etc.)? How do they help? How does the school and teachers help your child (before, during or after school)? (Familial/Social capital)
4. What do the teacher(s) do to help your child at school? How about the administration of the school? Do you feel welcomed and supported at school? What could the administration and/or school leader(s) do to better assist your child's learning?
5. Share your child's emotions/feelings when he/she is working on reading or writing homework (happy, frustrated, angry, excited, etc.). Does it take a long to get him/her to start/finish his/her homework? Is it different than from your other children who do not have problems with reading/writing/dyslexia (if applicable)?
6. Does your child participate in special programs or special classes at the school to help with the dyslexia? Are these classes in English, Spanish or both languages? Has this helped your child with his reading? If yes, can you talk about how it has helped your child (reads/writes more, can now read, etc.)? If no, why do you think it has not helped? What could the school do to help improve your child's reading/writing?
7. What languages does your child use to communicate at home? At school? With friends? Does your child participate in bilingual classes? If so, for how long? Is learning multiple languages important? Why or why not? How will this help your child in school or in the future? (Linguistic capital)
8. What modifications/accommodations (i.e. changes, adjustments, different, etc.) do you think your child with dyslexia will need to make sure he/she does well in middle school? For example, what supports will he/she need for his difficulties with reading/writing? How will you ensure that the school continues to support his/her needs? What plans do you have for your child after high school? Where do you see your child going in the future? How will

you help your child accomplish his goals and stay motivated despite his difficulties with reading/spelling? (Navigational/Resistant capital)

PREGUNTAS DE LA ENTREVISTA

(PADRES/TUTORES)

1. Dígame acerca de la escuela de su hijo(a). Cuanto tiempo tiene su hijo(a) en esta escuela? El/Ella ha asistido otras escuelas? Que idiomas se hablan en su casa? Tiene otros hijo(a)s en el escuela? Hábleme de su hijo(a)s con dislexia.
2. La escuela, como identifico la dislexia. El proceso fue largo, difícil o simple? Que edad tenia su hijo(a) cuando le identificaron la dislexia. El proceso fue largo o corto? El proceso fue suave o agitado? Quienes fueron las personas involucradas en el proceso? Tiene otros hijo(a)s con dislexia? (Si tiene otros hijos identificados previamente, pregunte si el proceso ha cambiado, mejorado, es igual o peor, etc.)
3. Como le ayuda a su hijo(a) con trabajos escolares? Como le ayuda en casa con tareas o trabajos de lectura/ortografía o trabajos escritos? Hay otras personas que le ayudan a su hijo(a) con trabajos escolares (amigos, familiares, vecinos, miembros de la comunidad o iglesia, etc.). Como le ayudan? Como le ayudan la escuela y los maestros de su hijo(a) (antes, durante, o después de escuela)? (Capital Social/Familiar)
4. De que manera el ayudan los maestros en la escuela a su hijo(a)? Como le ayudan la administración escolar? Se siente bienvenida y apoyada en la escuela de su hijo(a)? Que pudieran hacer la administración y lideres escolares para ayudarle mejor con el aprendizaje de su hijo(a)?
5. Comparta que son las emociones y sentimientos de su hijo(a) cuando esta trabajando en tareas de lectura/escritura (contento(a), frustrado(a)/enojado(a), agitado(a), etc.). Cuanto tiempo le toma para empezar/terminar trabajos escolares en casa? Hay diferencias cuando al compararlo con sus otros hijo(a)s que no tiene problemas de la lectura/escritura/dislexia (si aplica)?
6. Su hijo(a) participa en programas o clases especiales en la escuela para ayudarle con la dislexia? Las clases son en Ingles o Español o en los dos idiomas? Esto le a ayudado a su hijo(a) con la lectura? Si le a ayudado, dígame como le a ayudado (leer/escribir mas mejor etc.)? Si no le a ayudado, por que cree usted que no le a ayudado? Que pudiera hacer la escuela para mejorar le lectura/escritura de su hijo(a)?
7. En que idiomas se comunica su hijo en casa? En la escuela? Con amigos? Participa su hijo(a) en clases/programas bilingües? Por cuanto tiempo ha participado (si participa)? Usted cree que es importante aprender mas de un idioma? Por que si? Por que no? Como le ayudaría esto a su hijo(a) en la escuela o en un futuro? (Capital Lingüística)
8. Que modificaciones y adaptaciones (ajustes, diferencias, cambios, etc.) cree usted que su hijo(a) con dislexia necesitara para que le vaya bien el la escuela secundaria? Por ejemplo, que apoyos necesitara para las dificultades con la lectura/escritura? Como se asegura usted que la escuela continúe

apoyándolo(a). Cuales son los planes para su hijo(a) cuando termine la preparatoria? Hacia donde ve que su hijo(a) va en un futuro? Como le ayudara a su hijo(a) lograr las metas y que siempre este motivado(a) a pesar de las dificultades con la lectura/escritura? (Capital Resistente/Navegación)

APPENDIX B
OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Observation Protocol*

	ENVIRONMENT	Achieved Y/N	Comments
1	Student sits near front during lesson.		
2	Student sits along “study buddy” who they can ask to clarify information.		
3	Classroom materials are organized and found easily.		
4	Student has access to technology.		
5	Computers have access to read text aloud.		
6	Room is well ventilated and at appropriate temperature		
7	Room is quiet and noise levels are kept to a minimum.		
	TEACHING METHODS		
1	Objectives are clearly stated at the start of the lesson.		
2	There is a minimum requirement for record/copy information from board or from books.		
3	Uses multi-sensory methods of learning, where possible.		
4	Student is not made to read or write in front of class.		
5	Student is encouraged to make verbal contributions and take part in discussions.		
6	Frequent feedback and checking for understanding.		
7	Additional time is allowed to process information and that of reading and writing.		
8	Key points are reinforced with visual aids, cues.		
9	Instructions and information are broken down into small steps (no more than 3 clear pieces of information).		
	PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNMENTS/HOMEWORK		
1	Appropriate for individual student, differentiated if necessary.		
2	Marked for content rather than penalized for spelling.		
3	Clear indication of time to be spent on homework is given.		
4	Clear indication of how to access additional support if required to complete assignments/homework.		
5	Reminders, such as notebooks, personal checklists, etc. used to help students remember specific information.		

*Document developed from the British Dyslexia Association Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark

APPENDIX C
INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

(Teacher/Administrator)

Date

Dear Prospective Research Participant,

My name is Victoria S. Pando. I am a doctoral student at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. I am working on a dissertation titled, "Creating Culturally Responsive Learning Environments in the Elementary Years to support the Needs of English Language Learners with Dyslexia."

I am very interested in interviewing individuals who work with English Language Learner students(s) with dyslexia at the elementary school level.

I would like to ask for your support as a research participant in an individual interview, observation and providing artifacts. The interview will cover questions about your professional career, school/classroom procedures, school/classroom methodologies or strategies for parent involvement. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will be audio recorder. The date and time of the interview will be scheduled at your convenience. The place of the interview will be the school or in a public venue that is convenient to you.

A checklist will be utilized for the observation to examine the student's classroom environment, teaching methods or procedures used for assignment, homework or presenting information to the student. The artifacts will include school handbooks or newsletters, student's handbooks, as well as classroom newsletters or announcements, classroom procedures, policies or rules, reading program materials, sample lessons, assessments or activities.

Thank you for considering participating in this important study. Your participation is voluntary and there are no known risks or benefits to you for participating in the study. The results of this study are to better understand students with dyslexia and how to improve their educational experiences. Please let me know if you are interesting in sharing your experiences of working with elementary students who are English Language Learners with dyslexia by signing the form below.

I will follow up with you in two weeks by _____. If you have any questions regarding this invitation, I can be reached at _____.

Sincerely,

Victoria S. Pando

Signature of Participant _____ **Date** _____

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

(Parent)

Date

Dear Prospective Research Participant,

My name is Victoria S. Pando. I am a doctoral student at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. I am working on a dissertation titled, "Creating Culturally Responsive Learning Environments in the Elementary Years to support the Needs of English Language Learners with Dyslexia."

I am very interested in interviewing parents or guardians of English Language Learner students(s) with dyslexia at the elementary school level.

I would like to ask you to participate in this study by giving me the opportunity to conduct an interview with you. The interview will ask you questions about your child's feelings toward school. It will also ask you about his teacher, school and how they help your child. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will be audio recorder. The date and time of the interview will be scheduled at your convenience. The place of the interview will be the school or in a public place that is convenient to you. I will also conduct an observation in your child's classroom. I will use a checklist for the observation to find out information about the classroom environment, the teacher's methods or procedures used in the classroom. Your child will not be observed directly, only his/her teacher and classroom.

I hope you consider participating in this important study. Your participation is voluntary and there are no known risks or benefits to you for participating in the study. The results of this study can help understand students with dyslexia and how to improve their experiences in school. Please let me know if you are interesting in sharing your experiences by signing the form below.

I will follow up with you in two weeks to answer any questions regarding this invitation or I can be reached at _____.

Sincerely,

Victoria S. Pando

Signature of Participant _____ **Date** _____

INVITACION PARA PARTICIPAR EN UNA INVESTIGACIÓN

(Padres)

Fecha

Estimado Participante Prospecto,

Mi nombre es Victoria S. Pando. Soy una estudiante doctoral en la Universidad Estatal de Nuevo México en Las Cruces. Estoy trabajando en mi tesis titulado, “Creando un Ambiente Educacional Responsivo y Cultural para apoyar a los estudiantes con dislexia que son principiantes del lenguaje Inglés durante los años en la primaria.”

Estoy muy interesada en entrevistar a padres/tutores de hijo(a)s en la primaria, que son principiantes del lenguaje Inglés y tienen dislexia.

Le pido su apoyo para que participe en esta investigación y me conceda una entrevista. Durante la entrevista le hare preguntas sobre los sentimientos de su hijo(a)s hacia la escuela. La entrevista durara aproximadamente de 45 minutos ha 1 hora y será grabada. La fecha y hora de la entrevista será programada y se puede llevar acabo en la escuela o en un lugar publico conveniente a usted. También hare un observación en el salón de clases de su hijo(a) y usare una lista para observar los métodos o procedimiento que la maestra usa para presentar trabajos o tareas. Su hijo(a) no será observado directamente, solo la maestra.

Me gustaría que participara en esta investigación tan importante para mi. Su participación es voluntaria y no se conoce algún riesgo o beneficio directo a usted si participa. Los resultados de esta investigación son para tener una mejor comprensión hacia los estudiantes con dislexia y para mejoras en las experiencias educacionales de ellos. Por favor déjeme saber si se interesa en participar firmando esta hoja.

Tendré seguimiento con usted en dos semanas para contestar preguntas acerca de esta invitación o me puede llamar al _____.

Sinceramente,

Victoria S. Pando

Firma del Participante _____ **Fecha** _____

APPENDIX D
TELEPHONE SCRIPTS

TELEPHONE SCRIPT-Teacher

(FOLLOW-UP IF NECESSARY)

My name is Victoria Pando. I am a doctoral student at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. I am working on a dissertation titled, "Creating Culturally Responsive Learning Environments in the Elementary Years to support the Needs of English Language Learners with Dyslexia."

I am very interested in interviewing teachers who work English Language Learner student(s) with dyslexia at the elementary level.

I would love to schedule an interview with you. During the interview, I will ask you questions about your professional career, school/classroom procedures, school/classroom methodologies or strategies for parent involvement. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour and will be audio recorded. The place of the interview will be at the school or in a public place that is more convenient to you. I will also conduct an observation in your classroom and I will use a checklist. The purpose of the observation will be to find out information about the classroom environment and the methods/procedures used in the classroom.

I hope you consider participating in this important study. Your participation is voluntary and there are no known risks or benefits to you for participating in the study. The result of this study will help understand students with dyslexia and how to improve their experiences in school.

TELEPHONE SCRIPT-Parent

(FOLLOW-UP IF NECESSARY)

My name is Victoria Pando. I am a doctoral student at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. I am working on a dissertation titled, "Creating Culturally Responsive Learning Environments in the Elementary Years to support the Needs of English Language Learners with Dyslexia."

I am very interested in interviewing parents or guardians of English Language Learner student(s) with dyslexia at the elementary level.

I would love to schedule an interview with you. During the interview, I will ask you questions about your child's feelings toward school. I will also ask you about his teacher, school and how they help your child. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour and will be audio recorded. The place of the interview will be at the school or in a public place that is more convenient to you. I will also conduct an observation in your child's classroom and I will use a checklist. The purpose of the observation will be to find out information about the classroom environment and the methods/procedures used in the classroom. Your child will not be observed directly only his/her teacher.

I hope you consider participating in this important study. Your participation is voluntary and there are no known risks or benefits to you for participating in the study. The result of this study will help understand students with dyslexia and how to improve their experiences in school.

GUIÓN TELEFONICO-Padres

(SI SE NECESITA)

Mi nombre es Victoria Pando. Soy una estudiante doctoral en la Universidad Estatal de Nuevo México en Las Cruces, Nuevo México. Estoy trabajando en mi tesis titulado, "Creando un Ambiente Educativo, Responsivo y Cultural para Apoyar a los Estudiantes con Dislexia durante los Años en la Primaria.

Me interesa aprender acerca de los estudiantes con dislexia que están en la escuela primaria y que son principiantes del lenguaje Inglés. Me gustaría escuchar sus experiencias como padre/tutor de un hijo(a) con dislexia.

Me encantaría hacerle una entrevista donde le hare preguntas sobre la escuela, maestro(a) y como le apoyan a su hijo(a). También le hare preguntas sobre los sentimientos de sus hijo(a) acerca de la escuela. La entrevista durara aproximadamente 45 minutos a 1 hora y será grabada. La información que obtenga de su entrevista me ayudara en esta investigación para darnos ideas de como tener una mejor comprensión hacia los estudiantes con dislexia y también para mejoras en las experiencias escolares de ellos.

Me encantaría escuchar de usted muy pronto. Le llamara otra vez para saber que esta muy interesado(a) en participar en esta investigación o responder preguntas que tal vez tenga. Su participación es totalmente voluntaria y no se conoce algún riesgo si participa.

APPENDIX E
CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

INFORMED CONSENT

(TEACHER/ADMINISTRATOR)

DISSERTATION TITLE: CREATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY YEARS TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

RESEARCHER:

Victoria S. Pando, Doctoral Student
Department of Educational Development and Management
New Mexico State University
(575) 649-5367

DESCRIPTION:

I am interested in examining factors that may promote or impede the educational experiences of English Language Learners (ELL) with dyslexia in the elementary years as part of my dissertation at New Mexico State University. This study will examine the experiences, thoughts and feelings of individuals who have work with an ELLs with dyslexia.

PROCEDURES:

This study will use three primary sources to gather data: interviews, observations, and artifacts. The purpose of the observation is to gather information about the student's classroom environment, teaching methodology and procedures for student's assignments and/homework. An observation protocol will be utilized. The artifacts gathered may include documents such as school policy handbooks, school newsletters, student handbooks, as well as classroom newsletters or announcements or classroom procedures, policies or rules, reading program materials, sample lessons, assessments or activities.

The interview will cover questions about your professional career, school/classroom procedures, school/classroom methodologies or strategies for parent involvement. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will be audio recorded. The recorded interview will be transcribed word-for-word on a transcript. A reputable discreet transcriber or myself will complete interview transcripts. The transcripts will remain in my direct physical possession.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Every step will be taken to adequately disguise the participant's identify and working location. Pseudonyms will be substituted in the transcripts for all names of persons, schools, school districts, cities, town and counties. With the exception of the

dissertation committee chairperson, I will not discuss any names, teaching locations, or identifying particulars of the participants. All audio recordings consent forms and protocols will be kept in a locked location. Audio recordings will be destroyed or erased upon acceptance of the dissertation.

BENEFITS:

The results of this study are to better understand students with dyslexia and how to improve the educational experiences they encounter. There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study.

RISKS:

It is possible that the discussion of experiences, thoughts, and feelings may cause emotional discomfort at times but every effort will be made to minimize such occasion. However, there are no known risks to you.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, or would like to end your participation in this research study, there will be no penalty or loss for benefits to you to which you are otherwise entitled. In other words, you are free to make your own choice about being in this study or not, and may quit at any time without penalty.

CONTACT PEOPLE:

If you have any questions about this research you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Kristin Kew @ kew@nmsu.edu or me at vpando@gmail.com or (575) 649-5367. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, through the Office of Compliance at New Mexico State University at (575) 646-7177 or at ovpr@nmsu.edu

SIGNATURE:

Your signature on this consent form indicates that you fully understand the above research study, what is being asked of you in this study, and that you are signing this voluntarily. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to ask them now or any time throughout the study.

Signature _____ Date _____

***A copy of this consent form can be made available for you to keep upon request.**

INFORMED CONSENT

(PARENT)

DISSERTATION TITLE: CREATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY YEARS TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

RESEARCHER:

Victoria S. Pando, Doctoral Student
Department of Educational Development and Management
New Mexico State University
(575) 649-5367

DESCRIPTION:

I am interested in learning about students who are in the elementary school and have been identified as learning the English language (ELL) and have dyslexia. I would like to learn what things might help or hinder the school experiences for these students. The information from this research will be used for my dissertation at New Mexico State University. This study will look at the experiences, thoughts and feelings of care providers (guardians or parents) who have a child with dyslexia.

PROCEDURES:

This study will obtain information in three different ways: 1) interviews; 2) observations, and 3) artifacts. The observation will try to find out information about your child's classroom environment, teaching methods used by his/her teacher and procedures that his/her teacher uses for your child's assignments or homework. Your child will not be observed directly, only his/her classroom and teacher. A checklist for the observation will be used. The artifacts gathered will include documents from the school and the classroom. These documents will include school handbooks or newsletters, student handbooks, as well as classroom newsletters or announcements or classroom procedures, policies or rules, reading program materials, sample lessons, assessments, or activities.

During the interview, I will ask you questions about your child's school, your child's teacher, your child's feelings and how the school or teacher help your child. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will be audio recorded. The recorded interview will be transcribed word-for-word on a transcript. A reputable discreet transcriber or myself will complete interview transcripts. The transcripts will remain in my direct physical possession.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Every step will be taken to protect your and your child's identity. A false name will be substituted in the transcripts for all names of persons, schools, school districts, cities, town and counties. I will not discuss any names, teaching locations, or identifying particulars of the participants with anyone but my dissertation chairperson. All audio recordings consent forms, and checklists will be kept in a locked location. Audio recordings will be destroyed or erased when my dissertation is complete.

BENEFITS:

The results of this study are to better understand students with dyslexia and how to improve the educational experiences these students encounter. There is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study.

RISKS:

It is possible that during the interview and our discussion of your experiences, thoughts, and feelings you may feel uncomfortable. Every effort will be made so that this does not happen or is minimal. There are no risks known if you participate in the study. The following on-line resources are available to you free of charge should you feel the need to seek support groups and organizations for parents or guardians living, coping, and/or parenting a child with dyslexia:

www.thebigpicturemovie.com

www.southwestida.com

<http://www.tsrhc.org/dyslexia-parent-center>

www.dyslexiala.org/adult-support/parent-support-group

www.colorincolorado.org

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, or would like to end your participation in this research study, you may do so at any time. You will not be reprimanded or will face any consequences at the school. In other words, you are free to make your own choice about being in this study or not, and you may quit at any time.

CONTACT PEOPLE:

If you have any questions about this research you may contact the chairperson for my research, Dr. Kristin Kew @ kew@nmsu.edu or me at vpando@gmail.com or (575) 649-5367. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, through the Office of Compliance at New Mexico State University at (575) 646-7177 or at ovpr@nmsu.edu

SIGNATURE:

By signing this form you agree that you understand the above research study and what is being asked of you in this study, and that you are signing voluntarily. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to ask them now or any time throughout the study.

Signature _____ Date _____

***A copy of this consent form can be made available for you to keep upon request.**

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

(PADRES)

TITULO DE TESIS: CREANDO UN AMBIENTE EDUCACIONAL, RESPONSIVO Y CULTURAL PARA APOYAR A LOS ESTUDIANTES CON DISLEXIA QUE SON PRINCIPIANTES DEL LENGUAJE INGLÉS DURANTE LOS AÑOS EN LA PRIMARIA

INVESTIGADORA:

Victoria S. Pando, Estudiante Doctoral
Departamento de Liderazgo y Desarrollo Educacional
Universidad Estatal de Nuevo México
(575)649-5367

DESCRIPCIÓN:

Me interesa aprender acerca los estudiantes con dislexia que están en la escuela primaria y que son principiantes del lenguaje Ingles. Me gustaría aprender que cosas ayudan o impiden en las experiencias escolares de estos estudiantes. La información será utilizada para mi tesis doctoral en la universidad estatal de Nuevo México. Esta investigación examinara las experiencias, pensamientos y sentimientos de los padres o tutores que tienen un hijo(a)s con dislexia.

PROCEDIMIENTOS:

Esta investigación usara tres fuentes para obtener datos: entrevistas, observaciones y artefactos. La observación será para obtener información acerca de los métodos o procedimientos para la tarea o trabajos que la maestra utiliza en el salón. Su hijo(a) no será observado(a) solo la maestra y utilizare una lista. Los artefactos que se obtendrán serán documentos de la escuela o salón. Estos documentos serán manuales estudiantiles, pólizas escolares o pólizas estudiantiles. También anuncios y folletos con información acerca de normas escolares, materiales de lectura como muestras de ejercicios, evaluaciones o tareas de practica.

Durante la entrevista, le hare preguntas sobre la escuela, maestro(a) y como le apoyan a su hijo(a). También le hare preguntas sobre los sentimientos de su hijo(a) hacia la escuela. La entrevista durara aproximadamente 45 minutos ha 1 hora y será grabada. La grabación será transcrita palabra por palabra en una transcripción. Un transcriptor o yo haremos la transcripción. Yo tendré en mi posición las transcripción.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD

Se tomaran medidas para asegurar la protección de su identidad y la de su hijo(a). Se utilizaran nombres falsos en la transcripción para proteger todos los nombres de las personas, escuela, distrito escolar, ciudad, y condado. No voy a discutir con nadie nombres de personas, localidad de enseñanza o información general de los participantes solo con mi cátedra universitaria. Todas las grabaciones, hoja de consentimiento informado y listas se mantendrán en un lugar bajo llave. Las grabaciones serán destruidas o borradas cuando termine mi tesis.

BENEFICIOS:

Los resultados de esta investigación son para tener una mejor comprensión hacia los estudiantes con dislexia y también para mejoras en las experiencias educacionales de ellos. Usted no tendrá ningún beneficio directo si participa en este estudio.

RIESGOS:

Es muy posible que durante la entrevista y con nuestras discusiones acerca de sus experiencias, pensamientos y sentimientos, usted se sienta incomodo(a). Tratare de que esto no suceda o que sea mínimo. No se conoce algún riesgo para usted si participa en esta investigación. Los siguientes recursos en línea están disponible en Internet para usted sin costo alguno para buscar grupos de apoyo o organizaciones para padres o guardianes que viven, se enfrentan o crían un hijo(a) con dislexia:

www.thebigpicturemovie.com

www.southwestida.com

<http://www.tsrhc.org/dyslexia-parent-center>

www.dyslexiala.org/adult-support/parent-support-group

www.colorincolorado.org

PARTICIPACION VOLUNTARIA:

Su participación en esta investigación es voluntaria. Si usted no desea participar, o decide terminar su participación en esta investigación, puede hacerlo ha cualquier hora. Usted no será reprendido o enfrentara alguna consecuencia. En otras palabras, usted es libre y puede elegir participar o no participar en esta investigación y terminar su participación ha cualquier momento.

PERSONAS DE CONTACTO

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de esta investigación, puede comunicarse conmigo o con mi cátedra universitaria, Dra. Kristin Kew al kew@nmsu.edu. Si tiene

preguntas acerca de sus derechos como participante en esta investigación, puede comunicarse con la Junta Institucional de Revisión por medio de la oficina de cumplimiento en la Universidad Estatal de Nuevo México al (575) 646-7177 o por correo electrónico al ovpr@nmsu.edu

FIRMA

Por medio de su firma en este documento de consentimiento informado, usted indica que entiende la información de esta investigación y lo que se le pide a usted y que su participación es voluntaria. Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de esta investigación hágame saber o por favor comuníquese conmigo a cualquier hora o durante la investigación.

Firma _____ Fecha _____

*** Si usted lo desea, una copia de este consentimiento será disponible a usted al solicitarla.**

APPENDIX F
NMSU IRB APPROVAL LETTER



Office of the Vice President for Research

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
Dr. Wanda A. Eastman, Chair**

MSC 3 RES-PSL
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 3001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
Phone: 575-646-7177 Fax: 575-646-2480
Email: ovpr@nmsu.edu

DATE: November 20, 2014
FROM: The Office of Research Compliance
TO: Victoria Pando
Department Head: Mary Prentice
Faculty Advisor: Kristin Kew
SUBJECT: Decision Memo for Application 11399
Project Title: (11399-A) CREATING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM
Application Type: Expedited
Review Type: Expedited
Approval Period: November 20, 2014 - November 20, 2015
Category: 7

The NMSU Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Wanda A. Eastman, has reviewed and approved the above application for the conduct of research involving human subjects.

The application was reviewed in accordance with the review process outlined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) - Category 7.

The research must be conducted according to the proposal/protocol that was approved by the IRB. Any changes in the research, instruments, or the consent document(s) must be submitted to the IRB prior to implementation. Additionally, any unexpected hazards or adverse events involving risk to the subjects or others must be reported immediately to the IRB, using the appropriate form, within the time frame specified in the NMSU Principles and Procedures for the Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects.

Please note that the IRB approval is valid for only one (1) year. Pursuant to federal regulations, the IRB must review and approve all research protocols involving human subjects at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but no less than once per year. Therefore, in order to continue your project after the above approved period, you must submit a request for continuation 45 days prior to the above referenced expiration date.

Note: Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can never be reported or published as research data.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 546-7177 or via e-mail at ovpr@nmsu.edu.

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