An Examination of School Success Factors as Perceived by Parents of Latino English Language Learners

By

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study aimed to examine English language learner academic and social success in schools as perceived by Latino ELL parents of elementary students within a school district in East Tennessee. The study also sought to identify factors for successful integration into schools as perceived by these parents and the ESL elementary educators within the district. The research was guided by three research questions and the data were collected using focus groups and individual interviews to determine the perceptions of ELL parents and ESL teachers. The data collected revealed ELL parents perceive successful integration into schools as occurring when parent and school goals and are aligned, parents are actively participating in the educational process, and ELL students possess positive traits and behaviors to support their integration into schools. Factors contributing to ELL support as perceived by the participants included schools proactively focusing on the unique needs of ELLs, ELLs developing strong social connections with adults and peers, high quality teachers addressing the unique needs of ELLs, and ELLs taking ownership of their learning. The research revealed when students successfully assimilate into U.S. schools, families gain expertise and ELLs develop positive attitudes and improve work habits. Conversely, participants perceived unsuccessful assimilation into schools lead to ELLs becoming complacent about school and falling behind academically and socially. A major conclusion of the research was that ELL parents have high educational expectations and goals for their children and want them to succeed in school but lack resources and language to support their children. Parents want to understand their new culture and learn strategies to support integration into the school system. With proactive attention to the identification of the unique needs of ELLs and application of targeted strategies, schools,

educators, and parents can work together in reciprocity to create a positive learning environment for ELLs to assimilate and succeed academically and socially in schools.

Keywords: English as a second language (ESL), English language learner (ELL), English learner (EL), Latino parent expectations, Latino parents

DEDICATION

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the son. ~John 14:13

This research study is dedicated….

To my husband, Mike: From the beginning you have always encouraged me to follow my dreams and supported me in every new endeavor I wanted to pursue, both personally and professionally. I cannot know the many sacrifices you made as I went down this road. For the times you told me that this dream was possible, I am so very thankful! You have loved me unconditionally and encouraged me when I did not think I could handle the responsibilities I was juggling over the last couple of years. I am forever grateful to you for believing in me! You are a wonderful husband, father, and son-in-law!

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Educating English Language Learners (ELLs) has always been a challenge for the public education system in the United States. With the re-authorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, states are even more accountable for the education of ELLs (United States Department of Education, 2015a). This added accountability allows each state and their public school districts to review current programming and levels of support provided ELLs to re-evaluate the specific learning needs of this population of students. From 2007 – 2017, ELLs became the most rapidly growing subgroup of students in public schools, having increased by approximately sixty percent during those ten-years (Quintero & Hansen, 2017; United States Department of Education, 2020).

The number of English Learners (ELs) has altered the demographic composition of public classrooms, composing ten percent (10%) of the student population in U. S. public schools (Quintero & Hansen, 2017). With this subpopulation has come increasing demand for programming and instructional strategies that will appropriately serve the needs of English learners. Research indicates that ELLs have several academic gaps where they fall behind their English-speaking peers. Quintero & Hansen (2017) found that the graduation rate of ELLs is fifty-nine percent (59%) when graduating in four years, and they are less likely to enroll in advanced courses in high school. In addition, the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs is about forty percent (40%) when comparing fourth-grade reading scores and eighth-grade math achievement scores. Since the early 2000s, instruction for ELLs has moved from the historically sheltered classroom where learning English was prioritized over learning content to the placement of ELLs into mainstream classrooms, emphasizing a more integrated instruction

approach to support the development of English skills students. Additionally, the demands of the Common Core Standards that require students to engage with complex texts and engage at deeper levels across content areas are especially challenging for English Language Learners (Santos, Darling-Hammond & Cheuk, 2012). Quintero and Hansen (2017) found that federal and state policies and district professional development and teacher preparation programs, have not prioritized the proper training for educators to address the needs of ELLs. Because of this lack of prioritization, these students have academic and social needs not being met in the classroom.

English Language Learners are defined as students who do not speak English as a first language at home (Quintero & Hansen, 2017). The term English Language Learner (ELL) and English Learner (EL) will be used interchangeably for this study. Schools historically have identified ELLs as those students who are learning the English language and exclude students who have already successfully gained command of English as their second language. The label of an ELL applies only to students who are still learning English and excludes students who still speak a second language at home but have successfully achieved mastery of ELL programming provided by the schools (Quintero & Hansen, 2017). When considering ELLs who are enrolled in English language acquisition instruction and the students who have successfully moved forward through the programming, the proportion of public school students from non-English speaking backgrounds is doubled (Quintero & Hansen, 2017). Geographically, families of ELs have dispersed throughout the United States so that more than half of these students live in areas outside of major cities (Quintero & Hansen, 2017).

Genesee et al. (2005) conducted a review of findings from scientific research on the educational outcomes of ELLs. A major conclusion of this review indicated that ELLs who participate in language acquisition and proficiency programs in schools were associated with

improved academic outcomes since the programming ensured that English proficiency led to meeting academic content standards that all students are expected to meet. Research studies conducted by Decapua & Marshall (2010), Quintero & Marshall (2017), and Dolan (2009) all indicated that parents of ELLs value education and have a desire for their children to gain access to quality education.

Statement of the Problem

Research published about Latino parent attitudes toward the goals and aspirations they have for their children indicate having high aspirations for child's success, and parents look to the public education system to provide opportunities for their children. However, research also indicates that some Latino families distrust the American education system based on their own experiences and fear of being perceived as underserving (Araque et al., 2017). This distrust results in the hesitancy of these parents to advocate for their children whenever they perceive certain services are ineffective or absent from the school programming.

Zarate (2007) identified Latino parents' perceptions of what constituted success regarding their children's education. Parents of ELLs defined success as being undergirded by their involvement with academic activities at school and being aware of what is going on in their interactions with teachers, friends, and others outside of school. Parents of ELLs indicated that they might not have the academic background to help their child with homework and feel uneasy about supporting their children academically from home. One parent is quoted in Zarate's (2007) study as saying, "When they give a project, I sometimes feel they're trying to find out what kind of parents we are….they are advanced….(The homework) is not for the education of the child, it is to test the parents." (Zarate, 2007, p. 9). Zarate (2007) also found parents consider clear communication, policies that encourage parent participation, and ways to address language

barriers as factors that pave the way to success, not only for their children but also for themselves as a support system for their children outside of the school.

Research also indicates barriers to ELL achievement within the Latino community as perceived by parents and teachers (Good, Masewicz & Vogel, 2010). These included barriers associated with cultural understandings, communication, implementation and communication of ELL plans and instructional strategies, preparation of classroom teachers in teaching ELLs, and support for families as they assimilate into new educational environments with a different culture. This subgroup within the public education system continues to face barriers to academic success and struggles to participate effectively in U. S. schools with embedded cultural assumptions much different from this subpopulation of ELLs.

The key question of this study will focus on what ELL parents perceive as factors that determine the success of their children, both academically and socially, and whether those factors are in place in the educational system where their children attend. ELL parents will also be asked to identify any obstacles that prevent their children from experiencing academic success.

Purpose of the Study

Research has indicated funding and implementation of programming have helped ELLs achieve academically and ensure student success in school. Making investments beginning with young EL children has provided the support necessary to provide an equitable educational career. Dolan (2009) found that programming involving early intervention, parental involvement, and language assistance offered positive support systems not only for the ELL students themselves but provided opportunities for supporting the families of these students. In addition, improved

accountability and assessment systems required by the recent Every Student Succeeds Act has been shown to ensure the success of ELs. Botello et al. (2017) reviewed vital practices that can be applied within schools to provide a culturally responsive approach to supporting ELLs and their families. These practices included making instruction relevant so that the culture of ELLs is reflected in the curriculum, providing social inclusion for ELLs so they learn the culture of their new community, and deliberately planning communication with families so that it is clear, understandable, and positive (Botello, et al., 2017). Botello, et al. (2007) maintained that the purpose of their research was to identify the strategies and best practices teachers can implement to support the academic and social success of English Language Learners and their families.

This qualitative study aimed to investigate the factors that contribute to ELL student success as perceived by parents of ELL students, identify barriers to student success based on parent perceptions, and provide a definition of student success from the ELL parent's perspective. An additional purpose was to determine whether the success factors identified by the ELL parents are in place in schools and determine the impact of the existence or non-existence of these factors have on the ELLs. This study also sought to assess how ELL educators interpret the success factors perceived by ELL parents and whether those factors are not in place within the educational system.

Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated in this study through individual parent interviews and ELL educator focus groups.

1. What does successful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner? What does unsuccessful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner?
2. What factors are in place that provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system? What factors are absent that could provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system?
3. What is the impact of successful integration into the school system on the English Language Learner? What is the impact of unsuccessful assimilation into the school system on the English Language Learner?

Rationale of the Study

Effectively providing an equitable education to ELL students has been a challenge in the United States and has become even more of a challenge since the population of this group of students has increased dramatically over the last decade. According to Quintero and Hansen (2017), the immigrant population of the United States has doubled since 1990 making English Learners the most rapidly growing subgroup in our public schools. Because of cultural and language barriers, these students lag behind their English-speaking peers, creating an opportunity for state and local education agencies to determine how to effectively educate and serve these students (United States Department of Education, 2015b). This study will identify the ELL parent's perception of success factors that are and are not present in their child's educational experience and determine the impact of these factors on the ELL students' education. The study will also seek to determine the perception of ELL teachers as to what parents perceive as success factors regarding services offered to ELLs. With the continued influx of immigrant families, knowing the impact of such factors that promote equity and success in education will help

educators make informed decisions when planning programming and offering support services for ELLs and their families.

Definition of Terms

English Language Learners (ELLs or ELs) – children who are learning English as a second language. This term applies to those who are at various levels of English Language proficiency. Non-English Speaking (NES) and limited English proficient (LEP) are also terms used to refer to ELLs (Echeverria, Vogt & Short, 2004; Tennessee Department of Education, 2016).

English as a Second Language Program (ESL) – acronym used to refer to programming to teach students English as a second language. (Echeverria et al., 2004; Tennessee Department of Education, 2016).

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – term used to refer to students with restricted understanding and use of written and spoken English; a learner who is still developing competence in becoming English language proficient (Echeverria et al., 2004; Tennessee Department of Education, 2016).

Native Language – the first, primary or home language of an individual; referred to as L1 (Echeverria et al., 2004).

ESL Pullout – programming model where the ESL educator pulls a student out of class to deliver English as a second language instruction (Echeverria et al., 2004).

ESL Push in or Inclusion – programming model in which the ESL educator provides English as a second language instruction to the ELLs within the general education classroom (Echeverria et al., 2004).

Limitations of the Study

Conducting in-person focus groups were limited due to the COVID-19 protocol requirements in place by the school system and local health departments at the time of the study. Focus groups were held via a virtual platform to adhere to COVID-19 protocols. Parent interviews were held in person since they were limited to two or three people. COVID-19 protocols were adhered to, including social distancing and mask-wearing. Parents who were not fluent in English were offered the services of an interpreter during the interview. The researcher minimized the level of willingness on the part of the participants to be forthcoming in their own personal experiences, particularly the ELL population. by establishing trust through transparency and credibility with the participants. Providing an interpreter for parents with limited English encouraged parents to be willing and open to share their thoughts during the interviews. It was beyond the ability of the researcher to determine how many parents or teachers chose to participate or withdraw from the study before completion. While the qualitative research obtained from gathering parent perceptions during this study was insightful and valuable, the issue of generalizability was limited to the sample size.

Potential Contributions of the Research

Rights to public education have been guaranteed through legislative action and judicial rulings for ELL students (United States Department of Education, 2015a; Daly, 2018). Daly (2018) estimates that in forty years, nearly one-fourth of all Americans will be Latino,

emphasizing the importance of focusing on the education needs of ELL students now. English Language Learners enter our schools at various levels, some do not read or speak English and have had little exposure to education at a young age. Botello et al. (2017) determined that school leaders ensure that the voices and concerns of ELL students and families are heard since this input is critical to providing the means of support these students require to become successful in school both academically and socially. Considering the insights and concerns shared by ELL parents will allow school administrators to plan and provide a balanced and equitable education for this subpopulation with the specific programming and services that fit their unique educational needs.

While some research regarding the educational expectations of ELL families has been conducted, there is not a prolific amount. This study offers insights into Latino parents' perception of the level of support their children have experienced in public elementary schools and identified factors perpetuating success and factors that hindered their child's success in school. Understanding the previously unknown perceptions and experiences of the parents of the ELL population will provide the school district with additional information from this stakeholder group. Having this data may lead the district toward making more informed choices about funding, programming, communication, and inclusion of cultural curriculum. In addition, the findings from this research study highlighted areas in which the schools are providing adequate supports to the ELL Latino population which should be continued to be offered within the school community.

Organization of the Study

This research study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study including the statement of the problem, the purpose and rationale of the study, research

questions, an explanation of the study's limitations, and a definition of terms used in the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and research related to the perceptions of ELL parents regarding the academic and social success factors present in schools and the barriers that may prevent their children from being successful within their educational experience. Chapter 3 presents and outlines the methodology and procedures used to conduct the research and gather data for the study. Chapter 4 contains the results of analyses and findings that emerged from the study. Chapter 5 summarizes conclusions drawn from the findings, a discussion of the findings that may be considered for adaptation within the current programming for ELLs, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Within the context of the influx of Latino immigration and the high-stakes state and federal requirements for meeting the needs of ELL students, schools must understand the unique needs of this population of students and include families in educational goal setting to deliver a high-quality, equitable, and accessible education to these students. Public schools and districts across the nation are challenged to meet the academic needs of students as they seek to educate children and meet the accountability requirements in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA, which was the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, seeks to advance equitable academic opportunities for America's disadvantaged and high-needs students by requiring all students be taught to high academic standards to prepare them for post-secondary and career opportunities (United States Department of Education, 2015a). The ESSA legislation includes specific new provisions that are intended to offer states flexibility to meet the challenges and disparities in providing equal and accessible educational opportunities to the ELL high-risk population of students. It also designates uniform requirements for the identification of ELLs and the services that move these students through levels of services which eventually transfers them into the general education classroom (United States Department of Education, 2015b). In addition, ESSA moved the accountability piece of English language proficiency from Title III to Title I, providing a larger funding base for schools, supporting ELLs more broadly (Mathewson, 2016). For ELLs in their first two years in the country, ESSA allows districts to use the growth measure of standardized testing as a measure of academic progress for accountability purposes for the students. In the third year of residence, ELLs are assessed similarly as their peers (Mathewson, 2016).

For ELLs to experience successful integration into the public school system during their first years of elementary education in the U.S., their unique needs, including language acquisition, cultural assimilation, and social integration, must be identified and addressed in the school's academic educational plan. Gaining an understanding of their needs can be accomplished by fostering open communication with ELL families, offering families the means of sharing expectations for their children, and an opportunity for schools to explain the context and requirements of the American public school system. By increasing the understanding of ELL student needs, ELL parent expectations, and sharing academic responsibilities of the education system, schools can offer a high-quality, accessible, and attainable education support system in a positive approach for ELLs. Furthermore, when the voices of ELL parents are obtained for inclusion in the educational services plan, this marginalized population is elevated within the school, creating stronger connections, commitment, and increased understandings on the part of teachers, administrators, and ELL families.

A survey of the current literature depicts the importance of addressing the needs of the Latino population of ELLs in public school due to the rapid increase of these students within the last decade, the changes in academic responsibility legislated in ESSA, and the opportunities for involving ELL families in their children's educational experiences. The literature reviewed also offered evidence that establishing positive relationships with ELL families, respecting and incorporating culturally inclusive instruction, and removing barriers for parents to participate in their child's education were all factors contributing to the success of ELLs in school. Identifying the elements of successful assimilation into the school system, as well as obstacles to ELL student assimilation and parent expectations of schooling, has been the subject of many research studies (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Decaupa & Marshall, 2010; Dolan, 2009; Durand &

Perez, 2013; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese & Garnier, 2001; Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Kagan & Neuman 1998; Medina, Guzman, & Wong-Ratcliff, 2015; Mena, 2013; Montoya-Avila, Ghebreab & Galindo, 2018).

Characteristics of the ELL Population

The last two decades have seen significant growth in the ELL population in schools, dramatically changing the demographics of schools and classrooms. Daly (2018) states that immigrant households comprised seven percent (7%) of the students enrolled in America's schools in 1980, and high immigration rates increased that number to twenty-three percent (23%) in 2016. States with high immigration have seen those percentages as high as thirty-four percent (34%), and even non-traditional immigration states have one out of seven students representing an immigrant household. Daly (2018) quoted a Tufts University professor in his research who shared his concern about a California statistic that Latino families who are "fourth and fifth-generation" (p.3) immigrants are settling in Latino communities, continuing to speak only their home language and often resist assimilation into our country's culture, thus causing continued problems in acquisition of the English language within the school system. About one-fifth of U.S. school children are Latino which represents about one-third of the country's Latino population. Ninety-one percent (91%) of Latinos under the age of 18 are citizens of the United States, making them first-generation American born citizens within their families (Dolan, 2009).

These native-born, Spanish-speaking students are but one segment of the current Latino student population. The massive influx of Mexican and Central American families in the last decade has had devastating effects on school systems trying to accommodate the needs of these newcomer students without additional funding from the federal government. The rapid influx increased the numbers of Latino students enrolling in schools which stretched state and local

funding for the education of ELLs who come speaking little or no English and some with very little proficiency in their language (Daly, 2018). Often these children enter the country with limited or interrupted formal schooling due to war, civil unrest, migration, and other factors meaning they have had little education with exposure to trained teachers and sufficient resources (Decapua & Marshall, 2010). According to Arias & Morillo-Campbell (2008), approximately eighty percent (80%) of the U. S. ELL population is Spanish-speaking. The growth of the Latino student population significantly outpaces the growth of other racial groups. These researchers also point out that policymakers in four states have enacted anti-bilingual legislation to maintain English-speaking educational institutions giving the perception of low tolerance of non-English speaking students.

The dramatic surge in the ELL population has increased the educational monetary outlay per child since it costs nearly twice as much to educate a non-English speaking student than an English-speaking student. When federal funding is not increasing to meet these educational needs, states and local districts are searching for additional funding to provide educational supports for the growing population of ELLs. America's school districts are challenged with identifying the needs of these increasing numbers of Latino learners to ensure their academic success and create an educated workforce (Araque, Wietstock, Cova & Zepeda, 2017). Unfortunately, the Latino student population is characterized by low educational attainment, a high drop-out rate, and low post-secondary enrollments which only exacerbate the achievement gap between Latino students and native English-speaking students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The high school dropout rate has improved by nearly 20% during the 2000 – 2012 tie period resulting in a graduation rate of 87% for ELLs in 2012 (Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun & Kristapovich, 2014). Furthermore, the achievement gap

experienced by the Latino students becomes more prominent with risk factors existing within their families, such as poverty, language barriers, and parent lack of education (Araque et al., 2017). Although ESSA provides additional funding through Title 1, the added academic requirements established in this federal legislation increases pressure on state and local school systems to educate ELLs in language proficiency and content-specific areas (Daly, 2018).

The growth rate of foreign-born individuals in Tennessee between the years 2000-2019 was one-hundred thirty-four and nine-tenths percent (134.9%), which outpaces the growth rate of the native-born population (Sugarman & Geary, 2018). English learners in the state designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP) in the school year 2016-2017 comprised five percent (5%) of students in grades PreK-12 for a total of 52,912 students with projections of a total of 60,000 by the school year 2020-2021 (Sugarman & Geary, 2018). Of the students who speak a language at home other than English, three-quarters of them speak Spanish. Data collected by the Tennessee Department of Education (2018), indicates six counties within the state had ELL populations of over 1,000 students ranging from 1,364 students (13.1% of the total student population) in Hamblen County to 16,165 students (18.9% of the total student population) in Davidson County (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). This increasing number of ELL students follow the national trend of a growing population. States must adhere to their duty of assuring these students successfully acquire language proficiency and remain accountable for their academic progress. Schools must ensure mastery of language proficiency and success in content areas as they participate in ELL programming. They must monitor student proficiency levels in content areas during a four-year period after students exit ELL programming. This four-year timeframe is designated as the transitional period when students have moved solely into general education

classrooms. ELLs are monitored during this four-year timeframe and receive services as needed (Sugarman & Geary, 2018).

Legislative Implications on ELL Programming

In 2015, Federal legislators re-authorized the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act with the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (Migration Policy Institute, n.d.) which was intended to extend the purpose of the original 1965 education legislation of providing high-quality, equal access to all students in the United States. ESSA is the key legislative act funding K-12 education. It contains major changes in how non-English speaking students receive educational services and the structure of the accountability system states must follow whereby states report the impact of educational programming delivered to all identified ELL students (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2021). Regarding ELL students, ESSA extends policy in academic standards, teacher qualifications, assessment and accountability, and program innovations. Specifically, ESSA requires that ELL programming establishes standardized criteria be followed in identifying ELL students within the district within their first 30 days of entry into the school system and a measure of the EL students' English language proficiency be utilized as a measure of the quality of the school's educational programming (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016). ESSA ties funding of ELL programming to Title III, by designating an increased stream of monetary support dedicated to the education of ELLs which indicates policymakers' recognition of the influx of non-English speaking students entering American schools (American Federation of Teachers, n.d.) and moves the accountability of language proficiency requirements from Title III of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policies to Title I (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016). The increased designation of funding signifies the importance placed on instruction of ELLs so they

attain English language proficiency which is closely tied to their success in the development of mastery of the high standards of content areas. It also underscores ESSA's expectation for states to emphasize and allocate more resources supporting ELL programming, assuring the successful development of language acquisition (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016).

A key shift in policy from the No Child Left Behind Act, was the change ESSA made in moving the responsibility and decision-making regarding how quickly schools improve the quality of ELL educational programming from the national to the state level. ESSA also shifted the responsibility of intervening with schools having difficulty making those improvements from the federal level to the state level (Migration Policy Institute, n.d.; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016). While this built-in flexibility allows states to adapt their ELL programming to the specific needs of EL learners in their state, it also results in a variation in the definition of success and progress of ELL programming among states. Additionally, the changes in accountability requirements for ELLs included in ESSA allow states to monitor the progress of English language proficiency of these students without requiring these non-English speaking students to take the state standardized tests during their first years in school. Affording states these options while ELLs are learning the English language allows states to monitor the growth of these students without including the results in the school and district accountability system and offers a fair accountability practice for the students in this subpopulation (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016; American Federation of Teachers, n.d.). Because ESSA shifts emphasis in school and district accountability to the aspect of English language acquisition on the part of ELLs, the educational needs of non-English speaking students

has become a strong focus of schools as they seek to improve the progress ELLs make as a result of their program delivery (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016).

Another major area of change related to ELLs' education falls within the area of state standards and the requirement for states to develop English speaking proficiency standards that align with the content area standards. While requiring proficiency of the English language is not different from the legislative requisites of NCLB, ESSA specifies English language proficiency standards must address four domains of language including speaking, listening, reading, and writing and contain a variety of proficiency levels as opposed to a single measure of proficiency (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016). ESSA requires states to establish interim and long-term goals to measure the mastery of language acquisition and English language arts and math, so states can report the percentage of ELLs who make progress in English proficiency within a certain timeline established by the state (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016). This further indicates the importance ESSA puts on states and districts in developing and delivering effective language acquisition instruction and services, since state performance indicators must "include an indicator of the extent to which all ELs in the state are making progress" (p. 27) toward proficiency of the English language (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2016).

Sugarman & Geary (2018) maintain that ELLs who remain at low performance levels, thus not exiting EL programming, may have led policymakers to strengthen ESSA's accountability requirements for schools regarding ELL progress and mastery of language acquisition. As ELLs gain proficiency, they exit the EL subgroup. At the same time, new EL students are identified and placed in the subgroup creating a dynamic population unlike other student subgroups. Like all states, Tennessee submitted plans for adhering to ESSA

requirements, including how the state identifies ELLs and develops a proficiency of English language indicator for measuring progress toward mastery. This state plan contains a consistent method for identifying students as English language learners, including a home-language survey and a single instrument used as an EL screener. Students scoring below proficient on this screener are designated as ELLs and parents are informed of the initial scores in proficiency and the school supports in place. Parents have the choice of opting out of EL services for their child but cannot decline EL status (Sugarman & Geary, 2018). In the spring of each academic year, ELLs are assessed as to their current level of language proficiency. When their scores indicate proficiency, they are reclassified and exit the EL programming allowing them fully to participate in the general academic curriculum and achievement along with their English-speaking peers. ESSA permits former ELLs to remain in the EL subgroup for reporting purposes for up to four years after their exit from EL programming allowing states to include ELL reading and math scores from state assessments in accountability measures. Tennessee complies with this practice, so measures will reflect former ELLs' progress make during this four-year period in the general education program. Tennessee allows a maximum of six years for students to become English language proficient and has set a long-term goal of two to three percent (2-3%) of ELLs making the expected amount of progress through the set proficiency levels (Sugarman & Geary, 2018). The state plan regarding exemption of newly arrived ELs on state tests requires students take both the ELA and math assessments during their first year. These scores are used for benchmarking and progress reporting but are not included in the school's accountability measures. ELL test scores are reported as a growth score from their year one performance during the second year. Beginning with year three, ELL standardized test scores are included in the school's accountability measures students (Sugarman & Geary, 2018).

Finally, Lhamon & Gupta (2015), acting as representatives of the Department of Justice and the Department of Education, emphasized the importance of ELLs having full access to a high-quality education leading to their opportunity in reaching full academic potential. Within the educational context, Lhamon & Gupta (2015) point out that with ELL students being enrolled in three out of every four public schools, districts must be equipped with tools and resources to meet their legal obligations to "ensure that EL students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and services" (pg. 2) in accordance with Title VI of civil rights laws. The guidance detailed in Lhamon & Gupta's (2015) Dear Colleague letter emphasized the importance of considering the civil rights of English language learners and aligning those rights when allocating Title III funding for the education of ELLs. Lhamon & Gupta (2015) emphasize that not only should states uphold their legal obligation for educating EL students, but they have a responsibility to parents and guardians of ELLs by providing school and district information, in addition to recognizing the cultural heritage and language of families as assets to preserve within the school community. By taking affirmative steps to implement ESSA requirements, particularly in language acquisition, Lhamon & Gupta (2015) state schools and districts will adhere to the basic civil rights of ELs and eliminate discrimination based on race within the educational context.

Educational Expectations of Latino Parents

A review of the research examining the expectations and goals Latino parents have for their children indicated researchers have examined the attitudes and hopes these parents have for their children over the last thirty years. Much of the published research studying Latino parents' expectations for their children's schooling has focused on the level of parental involvement this population of parents has displayed over time, the barriers they face in becoming involved in the

educational process, the perception educators have of the interest parents have in their children's education, and how a lack of involvement impacts the academic achievement of their children. In a study of two California schools, Quiocho and Daoud (2006) studied the perceptions and expectations of school personnel. They found their views contrasted with the reality of what Latino parents want for their children and how parents support the academic development of their children. The assumed negative perceptions teachers and school personnel held about Latino parent expectations and involvement at school were challenged by Quiocho & Daoud's (2006) study. Examples of negative dispositions about Latino parents on the part of educators challenged in the study included the perception that declining student performance and low test scores throughout the school were the results of an increased number of Latino families having moved within the school zone. Latino parents do not positively contribute to the school since they are not involved in school life. Both perceptions led to the overall opinion of school personnel that immigrant and migrant Latino parents do not have high academic standards and expectations for their children (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006).

Parents of immigrant students have high hopes for their children as they enter a new country and want to participate in their children's education. They expressed an interest in cooperating with school personnel to contribute to the academic success of their children (Ada & Zubizarreta, 2001). While Latino parents desire their children to learn English, they also want them to maintain their native culture and home language to retain their cultural heritage. Educators and school administrators often interpret this desire as families not wanting to assimilate into American culture (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Through interviews of educators and Latino parents, Quiocho & Daoud (2006) found teacher perceptions about the desires and expectations parents had for their children and the level of involvement on the part of

these parents were connected. Teachers interpreted the lack of involvement as parents not caring about their child's education. The researchers also found Latino parents wanted their children to receive the same academic content that English-speaking children had access to and wanted teachers to have the same high expectations for all students, including their immigrant children (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006).

Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, and Garnier (2001) conducted a longitudinal study investigating the expectations and aspirations of 121 Latino families in a Southern California school district. The researchers conducted interviews with and administered surveys to these families for six years, tracking the parents' aspirations and expectations of their children during the elementary years. Goldenberg et al. (2001) distinguished aspirations as asking parents "How far do you want your child to go in his/her formal schooling?" (p. 555-556), and distinguished expectations with the question, "How far do you think your child will go in his/her formal schooling?" (p.556) during interviews with parents. Aspirations of their children completing high school and attending a university remained consistent from when their children began kindergarten through the course of completing sixth grade of elementary education. Ninety percent (90%) of parents continued to indicate that they wanted their children to attend or complete a university program following graduation from high school (Goldenberg et al., 2001). However, the results of parents expecting their children to participate in a university following the completion of high school were not consistent over the same period of study fluctuating between a high of sixty percent (60%) at the beginning of kindergarten to a low of approximately thirty-five percent (35%) during grade 4 of the longitudinal study of the cohort (Goldenberg et al. 2001). The researchers synopsized results as follows:

In sum, parents' educational aspirations are stable, high, and certain over elementary

> school, reflecting a consistent desire that children attain high levels of formal schooling. Expectations, however, are lower, less stable, and subject to considerably more uncertainty during the elementary years. (p. 560)

Goldenberg et al. (2001) found as children progressed through the elementary grades, expectations were more closely related to how well the students were performing academically in school than aspirations parents had for their children. As actual performance data became available to parents as children progressed from kindergarten to grade six, parents were less sure or even not sure whether their child would attend a post-secondary institution. One mother quoted in Goldenberg et al. (2001) study explained, "although one wants them to study, they have to decide" (p. 561). Goldenberg et al. (2001) suggest that while parents may have certain dreams and goals for their children, the child ultimately makes their own decisions about behaviors leading to their academic success.

Do & Mancillas (2006) maintain Latino parents' academic expectations of their children influence their child's academic success. Parents who expect their children to graduate from high school and pursue a post-secondary program of study have children who achieve higher rates than parents with lower expectations. Furthermore, when parents communicate high expectations to their children and the children understand they are to attend to this expected academic level, the children believe in themselves. They are more confident in achieving success in academic work (Do & Mancillas, 2006). Previous research studies indicated the socio-economic status of families had an influence on the level of expectations Latino parents have for their children. Parents of Latino children having a lower socio-economic status often depend on educators to determine the academic goals for their children, as compared to parents of Latino children with

higher socio-economic status who set high expectations and communicate those expectations to their children and teachers (Do & Mancillas, 2006). The children's perceptions of their own abilities in school performance are based on what has been communicated to them. These perceptions influence the level of self-confidence and expectations the children have for their academic capabilities. Behnke, Piercy, & Diversi (2004) explain that the likelihood of remaining or not remaining in school and academic achievement results from parent expectations and children's estimation of their academic abilities. Do & Mancillas (2006) agree while all parents of Latino children in their study had high expectations, those parents with the highest socio-economic status had higher academic expectations for their children, indicating consistency with previous research studies conducted. Additionally, Do & Mancillas (2006) found even low scoring children from lower socio-economic levels, parents were satisfied with the scores, indicating the children "were performing at the level their parents expected of them" (p. 200). One of the implications from this research was that parental expectations strongly influence the academic achievement of a child coming from a family with a low socio-economic status.

Do & Mancillas (2006) explain that high expectations influence the self-concept Latino children have of their own academic abilities. Therefore, they need adults who raise their expectations of the children and communicate those expectations regularly to the child. The impact of communicating and being involved in their child's education influences the child's self-confidence and the belief they are academically capable. Do & Mancillas (2006) state, especially regarding lower socio-economic children, parents, and educators, should communicate and maintain high expectations of these students since the results of their research indicates this action provides improved confidence levels and academic performance of children who often are

"stereotyped as less academically capable than other children" (p. 201) who come from families with a higher socio-economic status.

One factor identified by researchers as influencing on education expectations of Latino children and their academic achievement is the mother's educational level (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). The education level of this sub-population of mothers tends to be lower than other ethnic groups, therefore impacting their children's performance levels. This factor continues to influence students and their achievement levels as they move through the U. S. educational system (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Many Latino mothers' own educational experiences did not include a preschool education which has come to be viewed as an influential component of low-income students, of which many Latino children are a part. As such, Latino children who do not attend preschool remain at a disadvantage. (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Fuller and Kim (2011) explained Latino children were half as likely to participate in preschool as four-year-old African American or white children. In 2009, Fuller and Kim (2011) found approximately forty-eight percent (48%) of Latino youngsters were enrolled in a preschool program indicating an increase in the number of Latino youngsters enrolled in preschool which was thirty-five percent (35%) in the early 1990's.

Factors Related to Positive Support Systems for ELLs

Research has indicated that parental involvement is a positive factor in a child's academic and social success (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryals, Nero, 2010). Ryan et al. (2010) examined the level of involvement of Latino parents as compared to non-Latino and White parents and whether the level of involvement in schools could be predicted by ethnicity and culture. Their research found Latino parents "valued academic and social success equally and more strongly than did Whites" (p. 391), and within Latino families, it was more likely both parents were

involved in their child's educational experiences than Whites. It seems probable when schools and districts establish culturally responsive education programming and practices including both parents, that academic success is improved (Ryan, et al., 2010).

Petrone (2016) examined the factors that effectively supported Latino learners in Mexican schools and contrasted these practices with supports in American schools through a qualitative study of families who moved to the U. S. in search of improved economic and educational opportunities for their families. The study focused heavily on the parental involvement experiences in Mexico and the United States to gain insights into the perception that Latino parents are less involved than other ethnic groups. Parents described their level of parental involvement in Mexican schools as a more holistic nature where academic and social goals were more blended in nature as opposed to parental involvement being more compartmentalized in U. S. schools. Frequent meetings with teachers and other school personnel served as connections between family and school to discuss academic and social performance. Mexican parents defined these types of connections as parental involvement, which contrasted greatly with their definition in American schools. Petrone (2016) found Latino parents consider ensuring their children are punctual, well-groomed, and mannerly as supports for their child's "educacion" (p. 78) and thus being involved in their child's education. The Mexican concept of involvement in the school and in their children's education as much broader than in the United States where the focus is to provide students with skills to financially support themselves and a family (Petrone, 2016). According to the findings of Petrone (2016):

> The Mexican concept of education is much broader in scope; it entails moral, social, and relational aspects that are more concerned with one's conduct in the world than the

> acquisition of marketable skills. To be *bien educado* (well educated) is to be a highly moral individual who exhibits family loyalty and preserves cultural values. (p. 78)

Petrone (2016) goes on to suggest that because of these differences in expectations of parental involvement, Latino parents did not feel welcome in U. S. schools creating opportunities for educators in our country to step up efforts to explain opportunities for involvement to EL parents assisting them in understanding how they can expand the support of their child's academic and social success in American schools. ELL parents want to participate in the school community and felt that with increased proficiency of the English language, they would be able to participate within the American education system and understand the expectations of schools in this country (Petrone, 2016). Furthermore, by altering or adding school practices, such as the addition of bilingual personnel, the inclusion of more culturally responsive curriculum, provision of ESL classes to parents, and facilitation of Latino parent projects, schools and districts might bridge the gap between parents and the school community (Petrone, 2016).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2013) indicated Latino students are three times more likely to drop out of school than white peers. With the influx of Latino students in recent years, the continued population growth estimations, and the educational supports this population necessitates fostering their academic and social achievement, public educators must come to understand the sociocultural factors influencing the educational success of ELL students (NCES, 2013; Marrero, 2016). Collaboration of schools with communities of Latino families to develop relationships and plan for actions to define expectations, behaviors, and policies will impact the success of Latino students academically and socially (Marrero, 2016). Marrero (2016) explains that educational success depends on learning within a societal context based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Following Vygotsky's theory, Marrero (2016) suggests:

> In education, this (Vygotsky's theory) is demonstrated in the experiences, interactions, and relationships of students with their teachers, mentors, community, and family. The specific type of support, communication between home and school, extracurricular activities, and assistance with homework can be factored into the outcomes of a students to gauge achievement. In addition, the quality of curriculum, teacher preparedness and commitment, school and family relations, and the interest that the community has in the individual student's success can also impact success (p. 180).

Mena (2013) established the idea of Latino parents influencing the academic achievement of their children not only through the support of activities at school, but through "home-based parental involvement activities" (p. 491). Among the Latino parent behaviors thought to support student success measured in Mena's (2013) study included providing encouragement, setting, communicating expectations, monitoring homework completion and academic progress. When Latino parents shared their expectations for their children to complete their education and demonstrate interest in their child's schoolwork, students understood the importance of completing schoolwork, forming good study habits, and developing self-discipline to persevere with their assignments. Additionally, Mena (2013) suggests educators can offer community supports, improve communication with Latino parents, and demonstrate a cultural appreciation to help Latino families feel welcomed into the school community leading to increased family involvement and student achievement.

Stepanek & Raphael (2010) explain how research conducted by Education Northwest resulted in the development of new programs and practices by district leaders to support the growing numbers of EL students who were entering school systems in the Pacific Northwest between 2002 and 2008. District leaders utilized research to improve the English proficiency and

academic content levels of mastery to remove barriers and provide improved "evidence-based instruction practices" (p.1) and support systems to teachers of ELLs. Specific strategies introduced included developing a unified vision creating an increased focus and advocacy for the district's commitment to the educational success of ELL students and adopting an appropriate program model to serve English language learners (Stepanek & Raphael, 2010). District leaders also developed a consistent process for identifying and placing ELLs into the program comprised of research-based instructional strategies. Additionally, leaders improved the school community by creating a respect for the languages and cultures represented by the English language students, forming pathways for families of ELLs to provide input into school decisions, and supplying information about school events in a format and language families could understand (Stepanek & Raphael, 2010). Finally, strategies implemented to bring parents and the school community together included outreach activities such as family literacy programs and English as second language classes. Planning these events around parent schedules, offering childcare and supplying transportation services indicated the school system's commitment to ELL family needs. Such commitment helped families feel a part of the school community and gave parents the benefit of becoming more engaged in their child's schoolwork and feeling more comfortable inside the school buildings (Stepanek & Raphael, 2010).

Quiocho & Daoud (2006) focused their research on teacher and parent perceptions of ELL parent participation in schools and the barriers existing hindering student achievement. Results from interviews with teachers indicated educators and school staff felt Latino parents participated at a minimal level in their children's education. Teachers mentioned lack of speaking English as a barrier to parent involvement, and Latino parents did not help with homework which led educators to believe the parents did not "care about schooling" (p. 260).

Teachers also perceived Latino parents as having few skills and seemed unprofessional, implying their children came to school with inadequate academic abilities (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). When parents were asked for their perception about what schools could do to increase parental participation in their child's education, participants suggested communications between teachers and parents could be enhanced, workshops explaining school assignments and expectations should be held, and accessibility and friendliness of teachers could be improved (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Themes that emerged from parent responses about barriers to school success for their children included lack of academic help for children and themselves along with a clear understanding of the academic content being taught, timely sharing of communications about academic progress, teachers valuing the cultural aspects and ethnic backgrounds of their children, and the existence of supportive partnerships with schools to support student learning (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006).

The qualitative research conducted by Good, et al. (2010) focused on the cultural gaps impacting the academic achievement of Latino English Language Learners. The study was conducted in a school district in the Rocky Mountains. It included identifying barriers to academic achievement for Latino students, one of which was the lack of support systems for families as they transition into Western educational cultures. To gain a deeper understanding of Latino perceptions of academic achievement and identify barriers to student achievement, the researchers gathered data from focus groups comprised of parents and teachers. The researchers found Latino culture values relationships in contrast to achievement, which is valued by American culture, explaining the contrast between parental involvement levels and composition between the two groups. A review of the research literature by Good et al. (2010) indicated more study had been conducted investigating the barriers to academic achievement of ELLs, and less

research has been conducted concerning parental involvement and the cultural and relationship capital Latino have to offer. Suppose schools want to close the achievement gap. In that case, they must move beyond the elements they can control (curriculum, class size, funding, etc.) and tap into the resource of parental engagement of Latino families (Good et al., 2010). The perceptions and experiences of families as they transitioned into the American school system collected during this study indicated Latino parents undergo certain levels of stress and anxiety as they seek to find a better life for their family in our country. This research found the "lack of support systems for families transitioning to a new environment and new culture" (p. 327). Teachers in the study felt frustrated in helping students transition into a new educational environment and were not prepared to support students as they assimilated into the American academic structure. Understanding the cultural adaptation Latino families must make will aid the alignment of each culture's perspective of parental engagement in schools (Good, et al., 2010).

Parents of children in non-English speaking households expect their children to receive the same level of instruction and services delivered to children from English-speaking homes (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). When asked questions about curriculum, Latino parents made clear that in addition to schools offering a curriculum focusing on the literacy and acquisition of the English language, their children receive "access to grade-level curriculum" (p. 261) just as other children in the school received. As the segment of children from ELL families continues to grow in our country, the more the demand there will be for classroom teachers to be prepared to serve these students and families (Quintero & Hansen, 2017). These researchers suggest general education teachers need English language training to learn strategies that will support these learners. Since ESSA requires ELL progress reporting in both English proficiency and content subject areas Quintero & Hansen (2017) argue that English language training is crucial to include

in teacher training programs. The inclusion of EL training by districts will indicate the prioritization of the needs of ELL students and the expectations of ELL parents on the part of the education community.

ELLs' academic and social success in schools depends upon effective communication between school and home since it provides a pathway for parents to become involved in their child's education (Botello, Lindberg, Mascarenaz, Phillips & van der Valk (2017). Connecting with families through home visits and inviting them to share their expectations, cultures, and experiences will build a strong relationship with the school community. Botello et al. (2017) suggest schools and districts "make sure the voices and concerns of ELL students and families are heard at the school leadership and district levels" (p. 6). Initiating conversations with families allow administrators and teachers to understand the perspectives, concerns, and issues non-English speaking families have and will influence decision-making regarding school policies and programming creating a culturally enhanced, respectful community. The strategies for ensuring ELLs and their families experience equitable and accessible education suggested by the researchers are based on best practices and were developed through the Teaching Tolerance organization's *Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education.* Educational practices suggested both inside and outside of the classroom included delivering culturally responsive instruction reflective of the immigrant subpopulations represented in the school community, creating opportunities throughout the school for ELLs to be included socially, seeking to understand the life of an ELL student outside of school by establishing strong relationships with families (including access to English-language acquisition for families), and establishing a periodic review of school administrative policies to ensure a welcoming climate and adherence to legislative requirements as it relates to ELL students (Botello, et al., 2017).

Chapter Summary

Research studies have indicated that regardless of obstacles such as the language barrier and different cultural interpretations of educational expectations, Latino parents have high aspirations and dreams for the success of their children in U. S. schools (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Araque et al., 2017; Do & Mancillas, 2006). Many Latino families immigrate to our country to flee poverty and unsafe conditions, seeking new employment for themselves and improved educational opportunities for their children. Studies have dispelled the fact that while many teachers and administrators assume Latino families do not care much about the education of their children, this cultural group does have the desire for their children to learn and prosper to provide for themselves and their families (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Because the definition of parent involvement and support of education is defined differently in Latino culture than in our Western culture, Latino families misunderstand their role in American education, and American educators perceived a lack of interest of these families. Establishing relationships with ELL parents of Latino students and seeking their perceptions about involvement and their goals and dreams for their children will bridge the gap between what is currently understood about the expectations of ELL parents and the reality of their desires for academic and social success for their children in school. The projected increase of immigrants into the United States is expected to raise the level of the Latino population in America to about twenty-five (25%) of the population, continuing the pressure to provide equal access to education to this large population of non-English speaking students (Daly, 2018). With the high stakes of accountability in closing the achievement gaps and the legislative shifts in serving the sub-populations of students within schools, educators are challenged to meet the unique needs of these students and align the goals

of the school system with the desires and expectations of Latino families for the academic and social educational success.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The numbers of English Language Learners are growing at increasing rates in school districts in the United States (Daly, 2018; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016; Sugarman & Geary, 2018). With this influx of ELLs, schools and districts are challenged with identifying the needs of these mounting numbers of Latino learners to ensure their academic success and develop an educated workforce to meet the needs of this subpopulation (Araque, Wietstock, Cova & Zepeda, 2017). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted in 2015, requires yearly progress English language acquisition for all identified ELLs being served in schools. Added pressure to provide quality ELL programming assuring the progress of ELLs in language acquisition, and academic areas requires that schools pinpoint the unique needs of these students and provide high-quality instructors and programming. Research has presented the argument that including parents in the educational process impacts student achievement positively (Botello et al., 2017). Studies have indicated that regardless of obstacles such as the language barrier and different cultural interpretations of educational expectations, Latino parents have high aspirations and dreams for the success of their children in U. S. schools (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Araque et al., 2017; Do & Mancillas, 2006). As numbers of ELLs increase and pressure for academic achievement continues, schools must seek to partner with parents of ELLs to build collaborative relationships. When school administrators create ELL programming based on state and federal requirements, they should align the expectations from ELL parents thus engaging parents as partners in the education of their children. This study aims to investigate parent and ELL educator perceptions of successful integration into the school system on the part

of English language learners and identify the factors in place that support a positive learning experience for ELLs. The study also seeks to determine the impact of successful integration into the educational system as perceived by parents and teachers of ELLs.

Research Questions

1. What does successful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner? What does unsuccessful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner?
2. What factors are in place that provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system? What factors are absent that could provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system?
3. What is the impact of successful integration into the school system on the English Language Learner? What is the impact of unsuccessful assimilation into the school system on the English Language Learner?

Research Design

A key purpose of qualitative research, according to Merriam & Tisdell (2016) in *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* is seeking to understand the "phenomenon of interest" (p. 16) from the perspective of the research study participants. Since the focus of this research study is to understand the factors supporting the successful academic and social progress and experiences of ELL elementary students from the perspectives of their parents and educators, a general qualitative research study was selected for this research study. The study included aspects of various designs, including ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry. Using basic qualitative research methodology offers an opportunity for parents

and educators to share experiences and meaningful insights as they support and serve ELLs throughout the elementary grades. Data were gathered through the collection of participant stories and experiences and using focus groups and one-on-one interviews. Since the qualitative study used data derived through open-ended questions to gather words and stories shared by participants, the researcher could richly describe the expectations that parents had for their child's educational experiences and identified cultural influencers upon their expectations. Data collected during the focus group of English as a Second Language (ESL) educators provided the researcher with insight into the success factors of ELLs and the impact these factors have on their academic and social development.

The six-step process for analyzing and interpreting data resulting from qualitative research designed by Creswell (2013) were used to organize the data and identify emerging ideas and themes across the data. This process included the following steps:

(1) Transcribe the data obtained from focus groups and interviews, organizing the data based on sources of information.
(2) Read the transcribed data, reflecting upon the overall meaning of the data.
(3) Code the data with keywords to develop categories of meaning.
(4) Generate descriptions of the coded data categories based on recurring themes found within the data.
(5) Convey the findings of the analysis through a descriptive qualitative narrative.
(6) Interpret the findings of the analysis.

Following Creswell's (2013) process enabled the researcher to utilize a systematic approach for examining the perspectives of the parents and educators and determine meaningful insights to improve ELL programming and supports within the school system.

Site Selection

The study was conducted within a school district in Northeast Tennessee comprised of 8,098 students enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grades during the school year 2020-2021 (Tennessee Department of Education, 2020). Of the total district student population, 12.2% were classified as Latino, and 4.1% were identified as English language learners. The school sites within the district for inclusion in this study included eight elementary schools serving 3,409 students in kindergarten through fourth grade since this study focused on elementary-age ELL students' experiences. Of the elementary student population, two-hundred twenty-one (221) students were classified as English language learners in the school year 2020-2021 based on the home language survey completed by parents upon enrollment of their child into the district. The district provided English language learner programming to these students according to federal and state requirements delivered by eleven (11) certified ESL instructors in the elementary schools.

Participants in the Study

Before the commencement of this research study, the initial step of obtaining permission from Milligan University via the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was completed. Following Milligan's IRB approval, permission was requested and granted by the school district IRB and school administrators of the eight elementary schools in the district where the study was conducted. See Appendix A for a copy of the approval letters.

The participants were given an opportunity to volunteer for the study through a purposeful process as parents and educators of English language learners in the district's

elementary schools. All ESL instructors at the eight elementary schools were contacted and invited to participate in one of two focus groups to be held virtually.

Parents with elementary-age children who were receiving in-person ELL programming delivered by an ESL instructor during the 2020-2021 school year were eligible as parent participants in this study. The researcher provided all ESL instructors who participated in the focus groups with copies of a prepared parent invitation seeking parent participants for the study. The parent invitation was written in English and translated into Spanish (Appendix B). The invitation briefly explained the study and asked interested parents to return the letter, which included a form for parents to supply their contact information. The form also asked parents to indicate whether an interpreter would be needed during the interviews. Parents returned the form with their contact information to the ESL instructor, who forwarded it to the researcher. The researcher contacted parents to schedule the interviews, using an interpreter if necessary.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher was a classroom teacher in the school district at an elementary school included in the study. The researcher conducted focus groups and the individual parent interviews. The interview questions for the focus groups and the parent interviews were open-ended allowing the parent and educator participants to share their own experiences. This type of questioning allowed the researcher to probe more deeply into information as it was shared during the interviews and focus groups. Interview questions for the ESL educator focus group are listed in the interview guide (Appendix C). Interview questions for the one-on-one parent interviews are listed in the interview guide (Appendix D). No parents of ELL students under the direct instruction of the researcher were part of the study.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

This qualitative study included the collection of data from two focus groups and eight one-on-one interviews. Parents interviewed were had children in elementary grades in kindergarten through fourth grade who participated in ELL programming in-person during the 2020-2021 school year. Focus group participants were English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers assigned to the eight district elementary schools participating in the study and responsible for the delivery of the district ELL programming. Member checking was utilized to assure the validity and reliability of the focus groups and interviews. Accuracy of the data collected was ascertained by providing a summary of the focus group data to participants following each session and summarizing key data and clarifying experiences with parents at the end of each interview. The researcher posed open-ended questions during the focus groups and interviews, allowing for inquiry-based questioning to further understand experiences and perceptions.

Before the Study

Before the initiation of the study, approvals from both Milligan University and the school district were obtained. Milligan University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study after a thorough IRB process (Appendix A). Permission for completion of the study was obtained from the district administrators of the school district and from administrators at each elementary school site (Appendix A).

Participating Schools

The eight elementary school sites included in this study comprised all the elementary schools within the rural school district and serve students in grades kindergarten through fourth

grade. Two of the eight schools were non-Title schools, and the remaining six were Title 1 schools based on student demographics. The number of identified ELLs in the eight elementary schools in the 2020-2021 school year was 221 (F. DeSousa-Pereira, personal communication, March 9, 2021). Of these 221 identified ELLs, three families waived eligibility for ELL programming, 149 actively participated in ELL programming, and 69 students were in the ELL transitional stages 1-4 (F. DeSousa-Pereira, personal communication, March 9, 2021). ELL students categorized in transitional stages have demonstrated academic mastery of ELL programming and, while not participating directly in ELL services, were monitored by the ESL instructor and received services as needed. The researcher aimed to obtain a representative sample of educator and parent participants from the schools included in the study.

Selection of the Participants

The participants in the study included elementary ESL instructors and parents of English language learners who participated in ELL programming in person during the 2020-2021 school year. The researcher contacted all the elementary ESL instructors via email and invited them to participate in the study with a goal of at least five educators agreeing to participate (Appendix E). ESL educators who responded to the researcher's email invitation, selected from two different dates to participate in a focus group. ESL educators participated in only one focus group. A copy of the consent form (Appendix F) was sent to each educator who signed and returned it to the researcher before the focus group session. At the beginning of each focus group, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and responded to any questions the educators had about the study or consent form conditions.

The researcher sent copies of the parent invitation to participate in the study (Appendix B) to each ESL instructor who chose to participate in a focus group. ESL instructors selected six

ELL students who received direct in-person services during the 2020-2021 school year and sent the parent invitation home with these students. The parent letter briefly explained the nature of the study and asked parents willing to participate in returning the letter with their contact information to the ESL teacher, who forwarded the volunteer's contact information to the researcher. The researcher contacted each volunteer parent participant and scheduled an interpreter. The interpreter was used to translate the scheduling of the interview if the parent indicated the need for interpretive services. At the beginning of each interview, a copy of the consent form was given to the parent. The interviewer read and explained the parameters of participation as described in the consent form, using an interpreter if required (Appendix G). The form was written in both English and Spanish. Additionally, the parent was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and their participation, and then indicated their willingness to participate by signing the consent form.

Implementation of the Study

Following approval by Milligan's Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and the school district, ESL educators were invited via email to participate in a focus group (Appendix E). Focus group participants chose between one of two dates for the virtual session which was held via Zoom. Before each session, the researcher sent consent forms to each willing participant who signed and returned the form to the researcher before the scheduled focus group date indicating their agreement to participate. The researcher initiated each focus group session by briefly reviewing the consent form and the context of the study and addressed questions the participants posed. It was planned for each focus group to last approximately forty-five (45) minutes. It was structured using the interview guide developed for educators (Appendix C) which included semi-structured, open-ended questions. Each focus group session, conducted using the virtual meeting

platform Zoom, was recorded and saved to the researcher's jump drive. The recording was then uploaded into a transcription software application, Sonix (www.sonix.ai), for translation and transcription. The researcher used the transcriptions to carefully review for accuracy using the recorded sessions as a cross-check. Corrections were made to individual sessions, ensuring the accuracy of information. The researcher compiled a summary of each focus group session and shared with educator participants for review and clarification.

After each focus group, the researcher requested that ESL teachers consider potential participants for the parent interviews and explained the research study requirements for parent participants: (1) the ethnicity of the parents and children must be Latino, (2) children must be fully participating in the school's ELL program as non-transitional students, and (3) children must have attended the ELL programming in-person as opposed to virtually. The researcher sent six copies of the parent invitation, written in English and Spanish (Appendix B) to the ESL teachers who sent the invitations home with the selected families. Parents who chose to participate returned the invitation with their written contact information to the ESL teacher. The ESL teacher forwarded this contact information to the researcher. The researcher contacted the parents (using an interpreter if requested) and scheduled individual interviews over three-weeks. Parents were given the option of attending the interview at their child's home school or their place of residence. An interpreter attended the interview to assist with translation if the parent requested interpretive services. Prior to any interview, the interpreter signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix H) to indicate their commitment to conducting the interviews with accuracy and completeness, showing no partiality to any participant, and maintaining the confidentiality of information translated during the interviews.

The parent interviews were recorded using the researcher's iPhone. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher reviewed the consent form and answered any parents' questions regarding their participation. Interviews were scheduled to last forty-five to fifty minutes and were designed to follow the interview guide for parents developed by the researcher (Appendix D). Questions were semi-structured and designed to be open-ended, allowing parents to share their experiences in a narrative format. The researcher posed additional questions based on insights conveyed by parents during the interview to clarify the information shared by parents and give parents the opportunity to elaborate further on the information they offered. Following each interview, the recorded session was saved to the researcher's jump drive. The recording was then uploaded into a transcription software application, Sonix (www.sonix.ai), and the researcher carefully reviewed the transcription for accuracy comparing it to the recorded session. Corrections were made to the interview transcriptions to assure the accuracy of information.

Data Management

All data from the educator focus groups were collected using the Zoom virtual application and each recorded session was downloaded to a digital memory storage device belonging to the researcher. Recordings were transcribed using the Sonix (www.sonix.ai) transcription application. Recordings and transcriptions were retained in a secure location. They will remain in that secured location for five years following the conclusion of the research study and the successful defense of the dissertation. The security combination of the secure storage is known only to the researcher. At the end of the five years, paper transcriptions of interviews, the focus groups, and notes shall be shredded using the researcher's shredding machine and the electronic data will be deleted from the flash drive.

Data Analysis

Merriam & Tisdell (2016) clearly state that the goal of data analysis in a qualitative study is for the researcher to answer the research questions. Furthermore, Merriam & Tisdell (2016) explain that the data collected through a qualitative design study must undergo a thorough data analysis so the researcher can make sense of the data. Data analysis entails "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting" (p. 202) the information shared during personal interviews with the participants, creating a cognitive process of moving between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ultimately finding meaning in the bits and pieces of data by applying inductive and deductive reasoning helped the researcher determine key themes and concepts derived from the data.

Following the completion of the data collection phase of this study, the researcher followed Creswell's (2013) six-step process for analyzing and interpreting the qualitative data to assist in making meaning of the data. This process included:

(1) organization of the transcribed interviews
(2) reading the transcribed interviews, searching for broad themes
(3) coding and categorizing the data
(4) describing categories and themes
(5) representing qualitative narrative
(6) interpreting the findings

Initially, the transcriptions from the focus groups and the interviews were read, annotated, highlighted, and categorized to determine emerging themes. This process was repeated several times to investigate the data at its most granular level. Further analysis aided the researcher in

determining broader themes and coded categories that cut across data collected from all participants, which helped determine meaning, understandings, and insights. Narrative constructions supported the broader themes and formed the basis of determining the prominent thinking of participants. Repetition of Creswell's (2013) process was performed numerous times to assure that all major themes were identified. The findings of the study will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative studies must be trustworthy to enhance the validity and reliability of the study. This qualitative study offered parents of ELL elementary students a voice to communicate their children's school experiences in an interview format. Parents were reassured that they would not be identified by name, nor would their individual contact information be shared beyond the framework of this study. The researcher also assured parents that any information disclosed would not impact their child negatively manner and that their perceptions and experiences would only be used to enhance communication, relationships, and ELL services. If a parent had health concerns regarding COVID-19, a telephone interview was arranged. COVID-19 protocols in place at the time of the in-person interviews were adhered to during the interviews. Parents also had the choice of participating in the interview at their child's school or at their place of residence. During the parent interviews, the researcher asked for clarification of responses, providing parents the chance to elaborate or clarify their responses to questions asked by the researcher. The study's credibility was dependent upon the willingness of the parents to share their perceptions and child's educational experiences honestly. Member checking was conducted at the end of each parent interview by summarizing information discussed during the

interview giving each parent the opportunity to clarify their ideas or correct any misconstrued information.

The ESL teacher focus groups enabled instructors to share their views concerning parent expectations and to describe the impact that school experiences and ELL programming had on ELL student achievement. Focus groups were held using an on-line virtual program, and a summary of the session was sent to participants to ensure the process of member checking. The utilization of open-ended and inquiry-based questioning during the focus groups served to clarify the information revealed by educator participants, validating their perceptions and meanings and engaging the participants in a dynamic, interactive discussion. This validation allowed the researcher to tell the story of the parent and ESL instructors as perceived through their experiences. The researcher added validity to the study by collecting perceptions and describing the experiences shared by all participants with as much accuracy as possible, using the recorded sessions and written transcripts as references.

The recorded sessions and transcription notes are to be maintained for five years after the dissertation defense providing dependability of data. Additionally, transparency of the research study's purpose was achieved by explaining the consent forms to participants so that all participants understood the extent of anonymity and data collection methods. The utilization of Creswell's (2013) six-step process for conducting a qualitative study ensured the accuracy of data representation. Emerging themes were validated and confirmed by cross-referencing the responses from the interviews and focus groups, which assisted in eliminating bias, resulting in objective findings on the part of the researcher. Transferability was confirmed using detailed, thick descriptions of the experiences of ELLs as disclosed by all participants during the

interviews and focus groups and by sharing the findings of the research study with district administration.

Ethical Considerations

Multiple layers of protection addressed ethical issues that could have manifested themselves during this study. At the beginning of each focus group and each interview, the researcher explained that no one would be identified according to their viewpoints, nor would the researcher divulge personal information discussed during interviews or the focus groups. To protect the rights of the participants, the researcher supplied a consent form before the focus groups and at the beginning of the interviews for the participants to review and sign, indicating their understanding of the study parameters and consent to participate. Each consent form, one for parent participants (Appendix G) and another for ESL teachers (Appendix F), included details about the study's purpose, parameters, and confidentiality. The consent form clearly stated that the participants sign with the understanding they are joining the study voluntarily, could withdraw from the study at any time, and non-participation or withdrawal would not result in loss of services or loss of educational rights of the students. Participants had the assurance that data collected during interviews and focus groups would be kept confidential and secure for five years following the successful defense of the dissertation. All transcriptions and records of interviews and focus groups identified participants with pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality of the records and assure participants of their anonymity. Pseudonyms were used in all published papers, ensuring further confidentiality. In addition, the offer to provide the services of a translator proved beneficial, as it reduced the anxiety of most parent participants.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative study sought to gather the perceptions and expectations of ELL parents, identify the factors of ELL student success, and determine the impact on ELL academic and social development in elementary school. Data were collected via ESL educator focus groups and parent interviews using virtual conferencing and individual interviews. ESL educators assisted in identifying potential parent volunteers, and an interpreter was utilized when requested by the parents. Secure digital storage was used to retain the interviews, and an artificial intelligence program was utilized to transcribe the interviews and focus groups. The researcher followed a specific process to assure confidentiality to the participants and the accuracy of the data collected. Data analysis procedures aligned to Creswell's (2013) six-step data analysis process to assure complete analysis of the data. The findings of this qualitative research study are detailed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Findings

Introduction

Nationwide the number of EL students in public schools has increased by sixty percent (60%) from 2007-2017 (Quintero & Hansen, 2017; United States Department of Education, 2020). Tennessee experienced the same nationwide trend over the last decade. According to the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) (n. d.) the number of English Learners grew significantly from 2011 - 2017, increasing by forty-five (45%). Based on this rate of increase in the EL population, the state department estimated the EL population would exceed 60,000 students enrolled throughout 132 districts across the state by the year 2020. ELLs should have equal access to a high-quality education leading to their opportunity in reaching their full academic potential, including post-secondary opportunities (Lhamon & Gupta 2015). ELs attending Tennessee schools have a major impact on the delivery of instruction in the general classroom and EL programming. It is critical to ensure these students have high-quality academic and English language acquisition educational experiences.

According to research, an important positive factor of a child's academic and social success in school is parental involvement (Ryan, et al., 2010). Parents of immigrant students expressed an interest in collaborating with school personnel to contribute to their children's academic success (Ada & Zubizarreta, 2001). Latino parents have high hopes for their children as they enter American public schools, and the academic expectations Latino parents have of their children influences the child's academic success (Do & Mancillas, 2006). This study aimed to define the perceptions of ELL parents and ELL educators regarding the impact of successful

integration of EL students into the public school system and to identify the factors in place that supported a positive learning experience for ELLs. The study also strived to define successful integration into the educational system as perceived by ELL parents and ESL teachers.

The six-step process designed by Creswell (2013) was used to analyze the data collected from the focus groups and interviews. The first step involved preparing and organizing the data through transcription of the focus groups and interviews. The second step included reading and reflecting on the data to determine overall meaning. Coding the data with keywords to develop categories of meaning was the third step of the process. Step four involved generating descriptions of the coded data categories based on recurring themes found within the data. The fifth step included conveying the findings of the analysis through a descriptive qualitative narrative. Finally, the sixth step concerned the interpretation of the findings of the analysis.

Analysis of Data

The data used in this qualitative study were collected from focus groups comprised of ESL instructors and from personal interviews of ELL parents from a school district in Northeast Tennessee, all conducted by the primary researcher. The researcher determined every elementary school served Latino ELLs which meant all schools could be represented by the targeted ELL parent population in this study. Table 1 shows a breakdown of EL students served in elementary schools in the district.

Table 1

ELLs Within the District

	Total # of students
Students enrolled in elementary schools	3,409
Students identified as ELLs in elementary schools	221
ELLs actively receiving EL services	149
ELLs in transitional stages of EL programming	69
ELLs whose parents waived EL services	3

Focus groups were selected as the best method to collect data from the ESL instructors since, as Merriam & Tisdell (2016) explain, "a constructivist perspective underlies this data collection procedure" (p. 114). The researcher was interested in creating a situation where interactive discussion would produce refined viewpoints based on the conversation. Since the ESL educators knew the most about ELL students, this population of participants was invited to the focus groups. The researcher chose to interview parents of ELL students as the best method to discover their thoughts and ideas, which cannot be observed directly (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since the primary purpose of interviewing is "to allow us to enter into the other person's mind" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 108), the researcher was able to collect individual perspectives and experiences as described by the interview participants providing data to answer the research questions.

Eleven elementary ESL educators were invited to participate in the focus groups with a goal of at least five agreeing to join the study as an educator participant. Focus groups were scheduled ten days apart and were held via virtual conferencing since COVID-19 protocols were in place at the time of the focus groups. The composition of focus groups was five ESL educators

in group 1 and four in group 2, for a combined nine ESL educator participants. These ESL educators represented six different elementary schools which was eighty-two percent (82%) of the elementary ESL educator staff in the district. Demographic profiles of the ESL educators can be found in Tables 2 - 4.

Table 2

ESL Educator School Placement

Title 1 School	Non-Title School
9*	1*

*One ESL teacher serves two schools: one Title 1 and the other non-Title.

Table 3

# of Students Served by ESL Educators Within Each School

1 – 10	11 – 20	21 – 30	More than 30
1	3	4	1

Table 4

Number of ESL Educators Delivering EL Programming by Grade Level

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
5	4	6	5	6

ESL educators were asked to send parent invitations to participate in this study to six Latino parents whose children actively participated in EL programming in person during the

2020-2021 school year. The goal for the number of parents willing to participate in the study was 8 – 10 parent participants. Eleven parents returned the form indicating their willingness to participate, and nine parents agreed to be part of the study and were interviewed by the researcher. Interviews were scheduled within three weeks and included an interpreter if the parent indicated a translator would be needed. Interviews averaged 40-45 minutes each, and all but two were held in person at the school where the ELL child attended. One interview was held at the parent's home due to transportation limitations and one interview was conducted via telephone due to COVID-19 concerns of the parent. Two parents, who are sisters-in-law, were interviewed together as requested. All parent participants represented children who attended Title 1 schools. Table 5 shows data of the educational demographics of the families represented.

Table 5

ELL Family Educational Demographics

	# children younger than 5	# children in grades K-4	# children in grades 5-12	# years in U. S. schools	Earliest grade oldest child entered U.S. schools
Parent 1 (P1)	0	2	4	8	Kindergarten
Parent 2 (P2)	0	5	0	5	First grade
Parent 3 (P3)	1	2	0	3	Kindergarten
Parent 4 (P4)	0	1	0	2	Kindergarten
Parent 5 (P5)	0	1	0	1	Kindergarten
Parent 6 (P6)	2	2	0	2	Third grade
Parent 7 (P7)	0	2	0	4	Kindergarten
Parent 8 (P8)	0	3	0	4	First grade
Parent 9 (P9)	1	3	0	3	First grade

Research Questions

1. What does successful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner? What does unsuccessful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner?
2. What factors are in place that provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system? (2a) What factors are absent that could provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system? (2b)
3. What is the impact of successful integration into the school system on the English Language Learner? What is the impact of unsuccessful assimilation into the school system on the English Language Learner?

The data for this study were analyzed using inductive qualitative analysis. After the collection of data from focus groups and interviews, the researcher employed two types of inductive qualitative analysis: Thematic content analysis and narrative analysis. Thematic content analysis permitted the researcher to generate insights and key features from the perspectives of the study participants, examining the similarities and differences of information shared during the interviews and focus groups. Nowell, Norris, White & Moules (2017) support the use of thematic content analysis since it allows the researcher to interpret and represent textual data with rigor and trustworthiness. Narrative analysis aids the researcher in focusing "more on conducting a categorical analysis" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 232) where coding the data results in key categories and major themes.

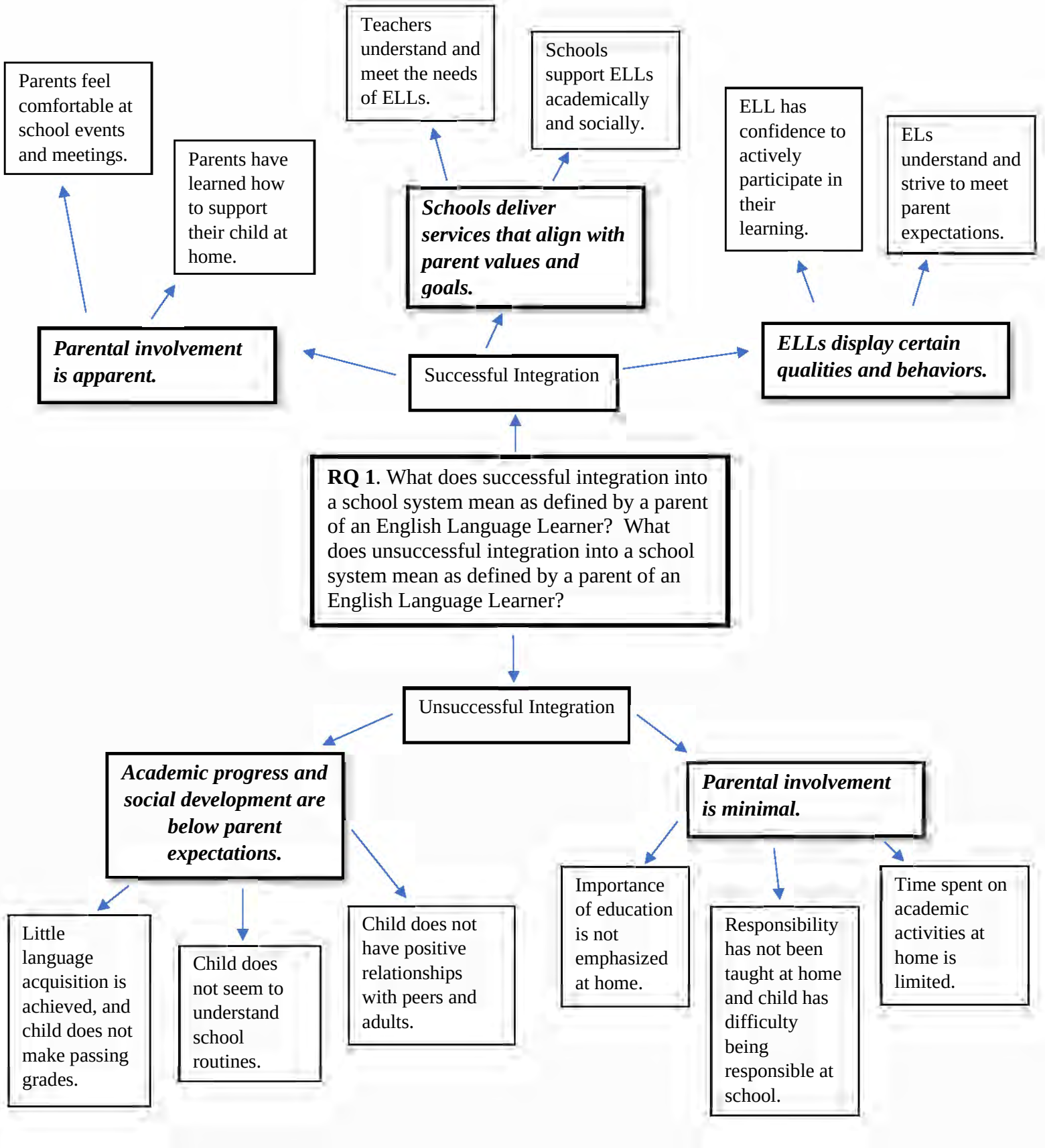
In using both types, the researcher developed insights from the patterns and regularities that surfaced from analyzing the participants' experiences. This inductive analytical process produced findings that answered the three research questions. Supporting data for Research

Question 2 was separated into two distinct sections, designated as 2a and 2b to accommodate the large amount of data that supported the factors that are in place to support ELLs (2a) and the factors absent from the school district that could support ELLs (2b). Data from the analysis are categorized and coded as shown in a figure for each research question. Following each figure, a thorough discussion of the themes, categories, and findings is explained.

Research Question 1 Findings

Research Question 1 asked ELL parents to share their perception of successful and unsuccessful integration into the school system considering their own expectations and their children's experiences. After analyzing the data obtained from interviews with ELL parents, five themes emerged from the data. The findings related to successful integration into the school system generated themes concerning parental involvement, school delivery of instruction, qualities and behaviors of ELL children, and academic and social progress. Following is a discussion of the findings derived from the data. Themes and supporting statements are displayed in Figure 1.

Research Question 1 – Figure 1 – Themes and Supporting Statements



RQ1 Finding #1: Parental involvement is apparent.

ELL parents defined successful integration as knowing how to interact with the school system and understand the school requirements and structure their children experienced. Parents who feel comfortable attending meetings at the school or initiating contact with teachers to ask questions feel that they are successfully participating in their child's education experience. P4 stated:

> Things go well when I understand what to do. Like if I get note from the teacher that tells me something he did in school that was not good. I know she wants me to know and wants me to talk to him about it. I can help that way at home.

P1 also elaborated on understanding the structure of American schools:

> I understand that when I get that letter to come to the school and meet with the teacher it is important for me to go and find out what is happening. In Mexico parents let the teachers make decisions about the academic part. Parents know they do the manners part. Teachers, they are the ones who take care of the book learning. Now I see how I can help with at home.

P3 shared:

> Her Kindergarten teacher sends lots of books at home. I like that I can help my girl. We read together at night. The teacher, she told me when I talk to her that I should ask about what she reads and that will help her understand. I like how that teacher told me how to help my child.

Parents also mentioned when their children first started school, they were worried about why they were asked to attend meetings with teachers and support staff at school. According to the information shared, parents indicated that in their home countries, parents are involved at home with their children and not so much in the schools. P9 explained how she became more accustomed to feeling comfortable attending events and meetings at the school:

> My sister-in-law brought me to the school the first time. She told me how welcoming the teacher was. She was right. I saw that it was okay for me to come to the school. I brought my children to the Book Fair when it was here. All was okay and I like to see what happens at the school.

Parent 1 defined successful integration as being dependent not only on the school but on the ELL parent population themselves:

> My husband and I work together. We tell the children school is important and they need their education to make something more of themselves. We help make them successful because we do things at home.

When asked to elaborate on how she and her husband support the children at home, she described routines and expectations she and her husband initiate when the children are infants.

> We start when they are babies. We have routines. They get up at same time, go to bed at same time and that helps build structure. I know that helps my children. They have structure at school, so I want them to already have that when they start. We assign chores at home, sometimes they do not want to do them, but they know it is something we all do. A big thing is getting them to school every day. They need to be on time. If they not in

> school, they cannot learn, right? That all helps them be easy when they start school. Not all parents do this, but husband and I, we know it is important to teach them.

RQ1 Finding #2: Schools deliver services that align with ELL parent values and goals.

All ELL parents interviewed had immediate answers for the question the researcher asked about expectations and goals. While the expectations and goals varied, every parent had specific ones for their children. Four parents said they often talk to their children about expectations and goals to remember why school is important. P6 portrayed a conversation with her son this way:

> I told him, I did not complete past third grade. You are already there. If you have things you want to do in life, you have to get this education first to do it.

When their children started school, all parents said their first goal for their children was to learn English. Children represented by the parents in this study entered district elementary schools at varying levels of language proficiency. The children who had participated in a pre-school program, such as Head Start, had some understanding of the language before enrollment in school. Parents stated their children appeared to function better than their peers who had not participated in a pre-school program. Alignment of parent values with the ELL programming at schools was evident based on parent comments. P4 shared:

> My daughter, when she started knew nothing about English. I was happy to know that a teacher comes to get her, and they work on letters and words. Now she can write her name, she can tell me letter sounds. I know that is helping her. That's what I want for her.

Parent 6 elaborated on academic goals she has for her child:

> He is advanced in math, not so good in English now. His teacher knows he is smart in math. She gives him some problems that he can work. It makes him think. I know she sees how smart he is. She did not give up on him just because he knows little English now.

Parent 5 shared how she appreciated the support her child gets from the ESL teacher:

> She is shy (her daughter) and didn't like to talk much. She knows her English is not very good. That teacher told her she could do it. My child needs encouragement, then she will try. Sometimes she tries more at school than at home. That's okay. She is learning when she tries at school. That teacher knows how to get her to do it.

Parent 2 emphasized the importance of teachers displaying respect:

> Teachers here respect my child. They respect me. They give equal teaching to my child just like all the others. That is something I want.

RQ1 Finding #3: ELLs display certain qualities and behaviors.

Parents were forthcoming in explaining that success happens when their children exhibit certain behaviors and characteristics. When a child has the confidence to actively participate in their learning, it impacts the child's success rate in academic and social progress. Parent 4 explained active participation in the classroom.

> I tell him, it's okay to ask a question. The teacher needs to know when to help you. She always helps you when you don't understand. He does it, too.

Parent 6 explained how her son knows a little English and perseveres at home and at school to practice the English that he knows:

> He wants to talk to me all the time in English. I don't understand him, and I hear English and Spanish mixed together. His teacher tells me he does that school a lot. I am glad he will talk. My other one did not like to talk English. Sometimes others made fun because he doesn't say it right. The more he talks English the better he is.

Parents also mentioned when their children are organized, they can locate papers, homework, and supplies at home to complete projects and homework. Organization helped P5's daughter:

> She likes to have her papers in the folder in a certain way. She shows me what I need to see. She knows where her homework is.

Parents who share their expectations with children help the children set goals for themselves. Setting goals requires that children connect what they do each day in school leads to accomplishing their goals. P6 explained:

> He likes sports, soccer. He can play good and wants to play on the team we know. I told him, he can, but school comes first. He likes school too. He said he is going to do good in school. Every day he comes home and does his work. He knows what to do.

Parent 1 described a situation where her child came home from school upset and did not seem to understand why the teacher wrote a note to his mother about an issue that happened at school. The parent explained how the child eventually understood that her expectations of following directions was important, not only at home, but at school:

> I told him that the teacher wants him to learn well. He said he really didn't understand what to do, so he just didn't do anything. He said even when another child told him that he couldn't because he was sad. He never did it. When I talked to him, and he finished

> crying, he told me he really knew what to do, he just didn't want to do it. He knows now. He apologized to his teacher and then work gets done like it should.

Findings for how parents defined unsuccessful integration into a school system are discussed in the following section.

RQ1 Finding #4: Academic progress and social development are below parent expectations.

Parents defined the lack of academic progress and social development as their child is not successfully integrating into the school system. Every parent shared that becoming English language proficient was the main priority for their child. Parents explained how mastering the language was the most significant expectation they had for their child and mastering English was the key to helping their children succeed in this country. P2 said:

> All my children get a lot of practice talking English. They all talk together. They have good talks. It is going to help them the more they talk together. I tell them it is important for them.

Parent 4 compared the experiences of her older child with her younger child about becoming English language proficient:

> My older one, she didn't know a word. Did not know what anyone was saying and couldn't speak it either. She had a hard time in Kindergarten. Even at the end she did not know much. I was worried. Then through the years, she learns more English. That helped her a lot. When she got good, she knew more about what she was supposed to be learning. With my younger one, it was easier. She heard her sister talk. And she sent to Head Start. All that helped her speak English.

Parents also stated low grades as an indicator of unsuccessful integration into the school system. Most parents mentioned grades when discussing how they defined unsuccessful integration compared to the discussions about successful integration during the interviews. Grade cards (report cards) are sent home in both English and Spanish in this district. Parents use the grades reported on these quarterly progress reports to gauge how successful their child is mastering academic content and integrating socially within the confines of the school. P3 said:

> I look at the grades and know how they are doing. It tells me A, B, D. I know the D is not good. Sometimes the grade is when they are not so much liking school. I want them to try harder and I tell them that.

Two parents described that their children did not seem to understand much about routines at school and were worried that it would impact their success in the classroom. P8 elaborated on this point:

> He cannot tell me how they get the work done. I know the teacher has a way of doing things, how to get the homework done, and like what the project means. I wonder if he is missing learning if he doesn't know what to do.

The second parent who mentioned the topic of their child not appearing to understand the school routines said this (P5):

> She goes to another class to learn; you know with another teacher. I ask her what they do. She does this (parent shrugs her shoulders and holds up her hands). I ask if they read, if they play, if they do the numbers. She says sometimes.

Unsuccessful integration into school is manifested in the ELL child experiencing a lack of social interaction, having conflicts with teachers, or not making friends over time. Parents

described situations where their child became quiet at home and did not seem to have many friends at school. Parents worried that their child would not want to be at school if they did not have friends. P9 said:

> They always have friends here to play with. When I ask about friends at school, she cries and says no one will talk to her. I worry she does not like school because she says there is no one to play with her. I tell her, go, go ask another one to play. They want to.

Parent 7 described a situation where her son had a conflict on the playground with another child. She explained how the child was nervous about how the teacher handled the situation. She explained:

> His friend said he said a bad word. He ran and told the teacher. My son spoke no English then. He could not tell the teacher what happened. The teacher asked the other child to tell her (the other child could speak English and Spanish). The teacher used that child to tell her what my son said. I don't like that. No one told me about it. I wanted to call the school, but I cannot speak English. I will have to wait on the interpreter. He maybe can help. My son doesn't want to be in the teacher's room anymore. She only took the other side.

As a result of this event, the parent explained that her son quickly became uninterested in completing homework or reading like he often did at home. She believed that the relationship between her son and the teacher had impacted his success in the classroom negatively.

RQ1 Finding #5: Parental involvement is minimal.

Parents who defined successful integration as partly their responsibility also defined the unsuccessful integration into school for their ELL children as minimal parent involvement in

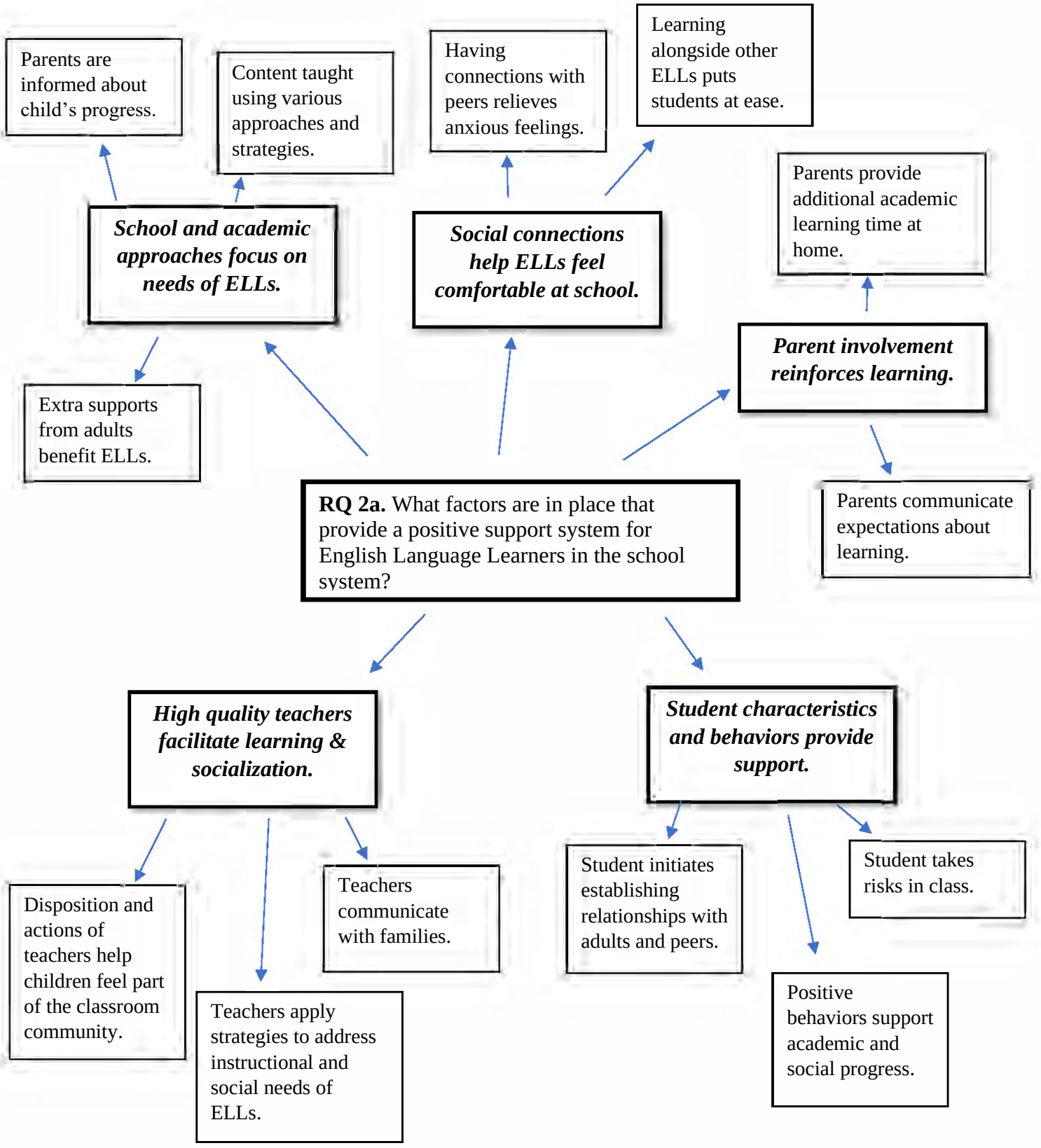
their child's school experience. ELL parents explained when they do not emphasize the importance of education at home, clearly stating expectations, their children will not apply themselves in the classroom. Parents also defined a lack of time ELLs spend at home completing homework, reading, or practicing English is due to parent lack of emphasis on continued learning in the home after school hours. Parent 1 explained how she would help this situation:

> I see all the time parents who do not help their children at home after school. I know their children will struggle. In our country, it is not up to the parents to help with schoolwork at home. It is up to us, though, here in America, I tell them. They will have a hard time (ELL children) if they do the work at home. I want to tell the parents that. They don't understand it is important. I do it at my home. I want to tell the others (ELL parents) that they need to do it. I don't want to make anyone mad, but it is important so children will learn. That is what it takes her. I would like to get them together talking about this. I could tell them what I do. You know like a group of us working together, we could help each other learn what to do. How to make it better for our kids. I don't know….I don't think they would like me to tell them how to treat their kids.

Research Question 2a Findings

Research Question 2a sought to determine the factors that support ELL learning that are currently in place as perceived by ELL parents and ESL teachers. Once analyzed, the data from the interviews and focus groups emerged into five themes: parental involvement, special school services, high-quality teachers, positive social connections, and characteristics of the EL students themselves. Following is a discussion of the findings derived from the data. Themes and supporting statements are displayed in Figure 2a.

Research Question 2 – Figure 2a – Themes and Supporting Statements



RQ2a Finding #1: School and academic approaches focus on needs of ELLs.

When parents were asked how they knew their children were making progress, all mentioned they look at the work their students are bringing home. Two parents shared how the report card is helpful to them in understanding the level of progress their child is making at school. P1 explained how she reviews weekly work and talks to her children about what they are learning:

> That report card lets me know how they are doing, but I really already know that because I look through their folder papers they bring home. The papers, you know, that my child has done at school. That way I know what they know and understand. I sit with them and ask, "What is this you are working on?" and if they can tell me, I know they are good.

ESL instructors also mentioned how important it is for parents to review weekly progress reports that are sent home and for parents to look at schoolwork coming home. ESL teacher 1 stated:

> Some parents are only looking for how their child is behaving and not really looking at daily work and academic progress. If they could understand how important it is for reviewing work coming home, parents would understand better what is happening at school. I mean, they would understand more about the details of what their child is learning rather than just a grade on a report card.

Parents shared they liked it when their child learned in small groups. When pressed further to explain why, parents expounded that their child may be shy about asking questions in front of all students in the class. Parents said their child feels less anxious when they are only working in a small group comprised of three or four children. Other strategies parents mentioned that appear to support their child's learning are one-on-one time with a teacher and having a

teacher spend extra time with them to help them understand academic content. ESL instructors explained that students have mentioned that they like to come to ESL classes because they are "small and have my Spanish friends here". Additionally, ESL instructors explained that having other supports such as the school counselor, Frontier Health counselors, and the principal all help contribute to the success of English learners.

P2, P3, P4 and P5 all shared their child's experience in the Head Start program was a strong support for their child in terms of helping them gain some English before they started Kindergarten. The program also gave the children opportunities to learn numbers and letters before they started school. P5 expounded on this:

> My daughter went to Head Start. It was not at this school. She heard English for the first time and began to understand a little. When she started Kindergarten the next year, she knew some English, listen and talk. That was not like my older child. That one didn't go to Head Start. She knew nothing when she began school. This second one, she knew more than her (first child).

Related to this additional instructional opportunity, the availability of summer school was also mentioned by parents. Having additional time to hear and speak English was the most frequent reason why the parents thought this was a valuable service. Two parents, who currently have their children in summer school, felt that the additional time in school might help their children become more proficient in English.

Lastly, all parents and ESL instructors offered that one school service of major benefit was the availability of a district interpreter. The district interpreter works with families to help them register for school translating forms that need to be completed for enrolling in school. The

interpreter is also available for providing translation services during teacher/parent conferences or contacting teachers when parents need clarification about other communications from school or teachers. P9 offered:

> That was the only way I knew what was happening. He helped me to understand why my son was having trouble in maths. I talked to him, then he talked to the teacher, then he call me back and tell me what is going on. Then I knew how to help.

ESL teachers also emphasized the value of having the Spanish interpreter available for meetings and communicating with parents. E6 explained:

> The interpreter is so helpful, like, when we have parent conferences and parent meetings. He is hugely beneficial for families and kids just to have someone to go talk to in a Spanish voice if they're having an issue with something.

RQ2a Finding #2: Social connections help ELLs feel comfortable at school.

All parents said their children are happier and more comfortable at school when they have positive relationships with peers. Several parents mentioned that before their child started school, they were worried about knowing or talking with anyone. P6 shared it was much more comfortable for her children in the classroom when other Spanish speakers are there.

> They said that it is better for them when there is a friend who can speak like me. They stick together and know it will be okay.

Even making friends with English-speaking children was a help in making their child feel comfortable in school. When English speakers worked with ELLs, it boosted the ELL's confidence and became more a part of the classroom community. Being included in playground

games was also a source of making the child feel less anxious and different according to several parents. Learning alongside other ELLs in the ESL programming classroom and with the general education classroom was a positive experience according to the viewpoints of the ESL instructors.

> These students need a place where they can learn and not be afraid of getting embarrassed about how they talk. When I pushed in to work with an EL in the classroom, she was so quiet, really shy. I asked her about it when she came to my classroom the next day. She said she only likes to talk English to her friends and me when she comes to ESL. The kids are trying just like her to speak English in the right way.

RQ2a Finding #3: Parent involvement reinforces learning.

During the interviews, several parents explained how they will sit with their children while they read a book from school. Although most of them have little English proficiency barring them from understanding what their child is reading, parents think the time that they spend sitting with their child while they read is important and adds to the closeness parents desire to develop with their children. P3 shared:

> I don't know what the words always are, or if they are reading it right, but I want him to know that reading at home is what we do.

Parents who had more than one child at home described how they wanted their children practicing English at home among themselves. Parents encourage children to speak English with one another to get more practice using English beyond what they use at school. P4, who has an only child having just completed Kindergarten, shared how she gives an opportunity for her daughter to be exposed to more English at home since neither parent speaks English:

> She is not getting any English from me so I want her to have more practice. When she watches cartoons on the TV or phone, I let her watch only the ones in English. No Spanish. This gives her more practice.

Parent 6 explained that her husband does speak some English and wants their son to learn it, speak it and write it. When the researcher asked the parent for further details about how they help their child with these skills, she explained:

> So my husband, he got child a notebook and some pencils. So, he left him some work to do in English because my husband he knows a little bit more, much more than me. And in the afternoon when my husband got home from work, he checked with child to see if he is writing in English. That's how we practice.

Five of the nine parents interviewed revealed they also talk to their children about the importance of finishing school. Parents explained they know it will benefit the child if their child completes high school and goes on to some type of post-secondary school. They want their children to form good study habits, become proficient in English, and make good grades so they will make it through school. P6 said:

> He really likes to study. He really wants to do sports, too. I always tell him that he must go all the way through school because that's going to be his future.

Another parent described how she shares the goals and expectations she has for her children. P1 explained that making sure her children understand the importance of getting an education will help them be successful in life. P1 explains:

> We, my husband and I want them to be successful in school and we always have a goal for them. I want them to know how to be successful, what they are good at doing and

> what they need to work on. They know we expect them to complete their studies and to go on and do something good with their lives. This education will be how they do it.

One parent explained she teaches manners at home, and her children have responsibilities at home. She felt teaching children these skills at home helps the children understand what it means to work hard and do things for themselves. P8 elaborated:

> When they are babies, we start routines. I want my house to run with structure, you know, the children eat at a certain time, they wake up and go to bed at a certain time. They know that they should listen to me. They get only one hour of video games, but we are always checking on them. And those games come at the end of the week once all schoolwork is done. It is all about responsibility.

This parent elaborated that there are certain expectations of the home within the Spanish culture and what parents are responsible for teaching children compared to the responsibilities of teachers and schools and what they should be teaching children. Within the Latino culture, she explained, an "educacion" is the responsibility of parents. These parental responsibilities include teaching their children manners, proper behavior, following routines, and learning how to be responsible. On the other hand, an "education" is the responsibility of the teachers and staff at school. P8 expanded on this understanding:

> All academics are taught in schools. Parents do the manners and how to behave.

Understanding this distinction sometimes is difficult for parents, according to P8. She has learned that helping at home means helping with schoolwork. She makes sure she knows what is happening at school. The parent reviews her children's work, to understand how well they are

mastering academic content and identifies the concepts where the children need additional practice.

RQ2a Finding #4: High quality teachers facilitate learning and socialization.

All parents said that having a "good" teacher makes a difference in how much their child likes school and how much they persevere with completing schoolwork. When asked what teachers do to help their children like and remain happy at school, parents mentioned that teachers who have a good attitude, are welcoming and friendly, and respect not only their child, but the parents, are ones who seem helpful. P6 explained how her child felt about her teacher:

> When she comes home all she does is talk about the teacher. I ask her why she likes her. She says that her teacher is always happy to see her, smiles a lot at her, and she works to help her understand. She says the teacher never gets mad when she doesn't understand something. She says her teacher tells her that it's okay to make a mistake, but not okay to not try.

P2 described that her child was timid on the playground and the teacher helped her make friends:

> I like the teachers who help them play. My children, they always play together, there are a lot of them, but at school those kids are not together. I tell them to go play with others, but my girl she doesn't want to be the first one. The teacher took her to a girl and gave them a chalk, to draw, you know. They had fun and my girl, she made a friend. I like that the teacher did that.

Teachers who know what their child needs to work on and find resources and work with the child individually was mentioned by eight parents. Parents want to know that their child is important to the teacher and when teachers dedicate extra time to help their child learn what they

are not understanding parents expressed appreciation. Lastly, seven of nine parents mentioned that having the Talking Points application to communicate with teachers was helpful since it translates text messages from English to Spanish and back again, so both the teacher and the parent send and receive text messages in their primary language. ESL instructors agreed that this application has been helpful in communicating with parents in a comprehensible and timely fashion. The district recommends the use of a communication application for parent communication that does have translation features. However, there is a monthly charge for the transcription of messages which is not feasible for some ELL families. Talking Points is a free application, seamlessly translates, and parents like that it comes straight to their cell phones. All the parents who mentioned this app, showed me how it works. Following is how P4 explained the ease of its use:

> See this here, I can just use Espanol, Spanish, to text her. I text in Spanish, and the teacher sees it in English. Then she texts me in English, and me, I get it in Spanish. It works very quick. I don't have to wait to talk to the interpreter to find out something. It's quick. I wanted to see how my nina was improving. I texted the teacher, she texts me back, then I know.

ESL teachers explained how this app has enhanced communications with parents:

> So, this year we started using the Talking Points app, which is free, and parents do not have to download anything. And I have seen a wonderful reaction in my parents. I am able to communicate just little things like when I send something home, like, "There's an IEP thing for you to sign, check your child's backpack. Return it tomorrow". I have several parents respond because it's a text to their phone and it's in their language and they can type in their language. It comes to me in English. So that's been positive, such a

> great tool. I don't have to worry that they won't see the papers and I really wouldn't contact the interpreter to call the parent. I know he is too busy for little things like that.

RQ2a Finding #5: Student characteristics and behaviors provide support.

Parents and ESL educators shared how specific characteristics and behaviors of students serve as additional supports to the student. For instance, an EL who pays attention in class and shows respect for the school's rules was described by the ESL instructors as a child who is more invested in their learning. Other positive characteristics that contribute to the success that were mentioned by the ESL teachers in the focus groups were children who are willing to take risks and initiate relationships with other children and adults. Educator 5 explained:

> Students who are resilient, willing to take risks, is teachable. I have a few of these types of kids in my classes and it makes them successful. They want to form relationships and are open to forming relationships with teachers as well as with fellow students. These children stick with what they are doing, they are perseverant. They don't give up and they have energy and want to learn. They're interested in learning and bettering themselves education wise.

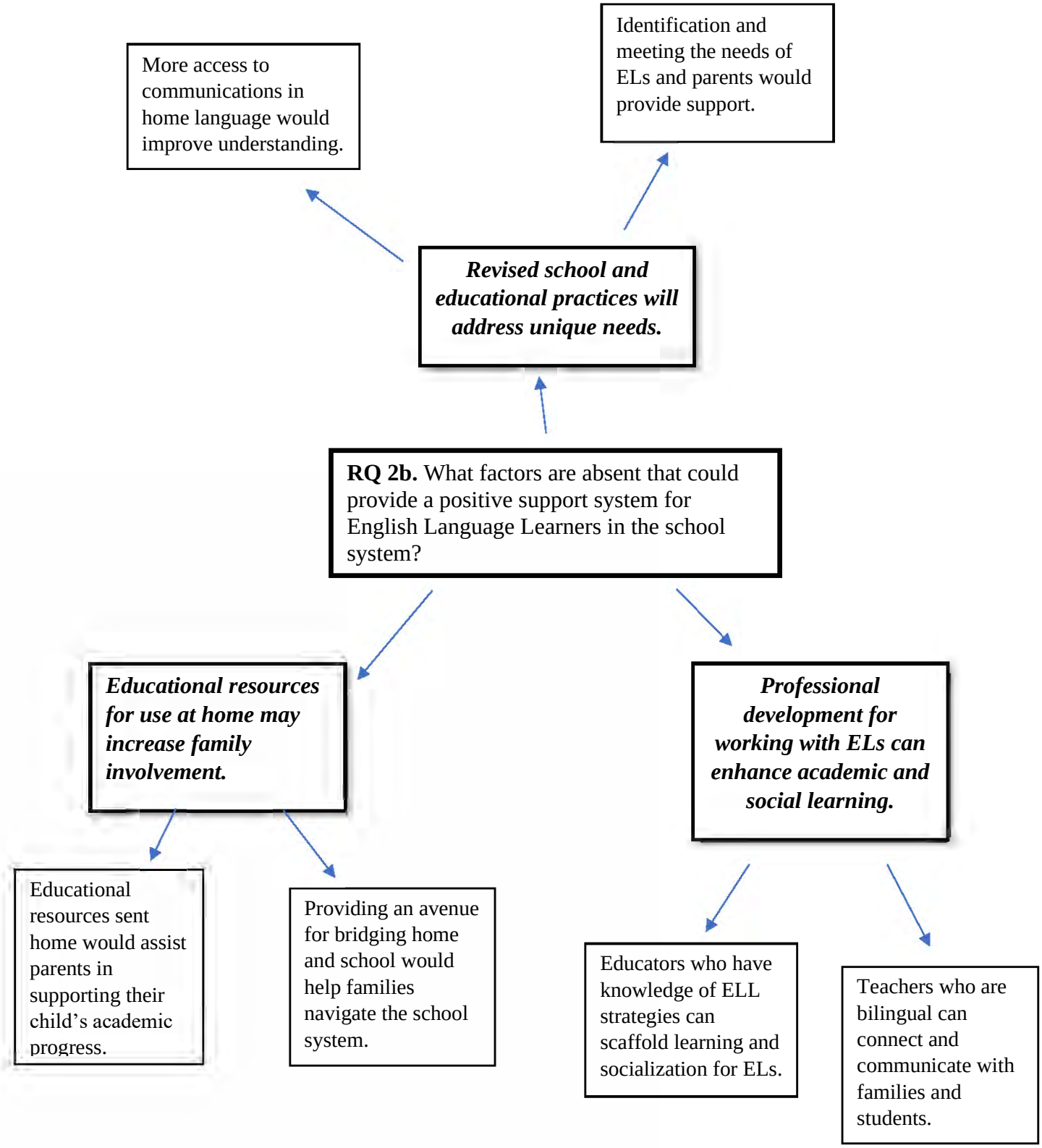
Most parents mentioned they taught their children to behave in school, and they wanted them to respect the teachers. These parents shared they teach manners at home and hope their child used them at school.

Research Question 2b Findings

Research Question 2b of the study asked ELL parents and ESL educators to identify supporting factors that were absent and could provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system. The data obtained during the interviews with ELL

parents and ESL educators emerged into three themes related to school policies and practices, ELL family educational resources, and educator professional development for working with ELLs. Themes and supporting statements are displayed in Figure 2b. An explanation of each theme is supported by participants' quotes in the following discussion.

Research Question 2 – Figure 2b – Themes and Supporting Statements



RQ2b Finding #1: Revised school and educational practices will address unique needs

Both parents and ESL educators mentioned certain school and educational practices as being absent or in need of revision to address the unique needs of EL students and families. All parents signified that they would be more informed of school events and classroom learning if the communications would be provided in their primary language. Some forms, parents said, do come home in Spanish but in their view very few. Often the parents would call the district interpreter to translate documents, emails, or other communications from the school. Just as often, parents did not take time to contact the interpreter and so they feel they may be missing important information as perceived by parents. P5 elaborates:

> I want to know more about what is happening in the classroom. Like I want to know what my daughter is learning. Maybe if I know that I can help her better. If the teacher could send it in Spanish, I would know what she (her daughter) is learning.

P7 also shared:

> I wish I could get the interpreter to come. I must call him, then he finds out what I want to read. Sometimes it is a form I need to read and fill out. It is hard to get in touch with him. I know he is very busy with everyone. My child can sometimes tell me what the form is, but I want to read it for myself.

The district interpreter is available to help parents assimilate into the school system. He works with families new to the community and with families who may have been in the community for a while but need help registering students in a school. The interpreter is also available for meeting with teachers and principals for school conferences such as parent-teacher conferences and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. He serves all schools in the

district. ESL educators in both focus groups discussed the value of having the interpreter available for meetings. All agreed that he is a valuable resource and ESL educators feel that the services provided to ELs, and families would be enhanced if an additional interpreter was hired in the district. E4 and E7 explained the need:

> (E4) Many times we have to hold meetings without the interpreter because he is in other meetings with other parents. I like the idea of having a second interpreter like you suggested. It would help if one would be available for younger grades and another for older grades.
>
> (E7) Or what they could do is be assigned one to half of the elementary schools and one to the other half and follow the families all the way from K to twelfth grade. That way the person would really know the families.

ESL educators also felt that some documents sent home with ELL students could be simplified. Creating simplified documents for ELL families would take extra resources, they agreed, but would enhance the understanding of these documents by the Latino families. Documents mentioned by ESL educators included school and classroom newsletters, field trip permission forms, school event flyers, beginning of the year forms, and program of study applications (these are forms completed in middle school for high school courses).

Parents expressed an interest in knowing more about how their child is doing in school. Four parents mentioned they understood the report card. Still, they would like to know more details about what their child is learning, specifically what academic content their children were learning. They also expressed an interest in knowing the activities students were assigned to support mastery of this content. Parents' perception was if they knew more specifics about their

child's progress beyond just seeing a "C" in math on the report card, they might be able to work on certain math concepts at home to help their child gain mastery in math.

In the interviews, it was often apparent that parents were not sure about the difference in what their child was learning in the general education classroom delivered by the general education teacher compared to content delivered through ELL programming (sometimes in the general education classroom and sometimes in the ESL classroom) by the ESL teacher. All parents were aware that their child received extra help, especially in language acquisition instruction. When asked to share more about how they learned about what their child was learning at school, several parents could not clearly explain what their child was learning beyond just stating in general terms that their children were learning reading and math. ESL educators also felt that parents had an unclear understanding of the connection between the general education classroom and ELL programming. Educators in both focus groups made this observation and suggested that efforts be made to help EL parents fully understand the variety of services and instruction their children were learning in school. E3 suggested:

> I think maybe a workshop, just a short one, maybe an hour, that explained to parents what happens in my class compared to what happens in the other regular class would help them understand what we are teaching and who is teaching it. If I showed them activities I do, the classroom teacher could show some things they do, then that might help.

Two parents expressed concern their children are missing related arts classes to go to ESL classes and wished they could get the instruction at different periods during the day. P9 said:

> I don't want him to miss those times. He gets to relax and enjoy the time talking English to his friends. He really likes music and wants more of it.

Three different parents expressed a desire for after-school help, describing a situation where their children could receive support after school on completing schoolwork or reading to someone who knows English. P8 mentioned:

> I sit and read with her, but don't know the words. When I ask her (in Spanish) what the story is about, I don't know if she's right or not. I would like her to have extra time after school for an English person to work with her. I know other schools have that. Having that plus a bus to bring her home would be a big help. My husband works and takes the car so I couldn't come and get her at the end.

ESL teachers expressed a desire to hold after-school programming for their students. They mentioned other programs are available, some at a cost, but these do not specifically target the needs of the Latino learners. E8 said:

> I just would love to have a school-based program where we can actually make sure their homework is done. We can coordinate with the classroom teacher. And then you would have certified teachers working with them.

ESL educators also mentioned the need for providing social and emotional support to ELs. E5 said:

> Many of these children don't know how to socialize, they are scared, and don't know how to make a friend. They get upset and cannot express themselves. Often, they have problems with a classmate, or even a teacher and don't know what to do. Latino culture gives lots of respect to teachers and so the children don't know what to do if they have a conflict with a teacher. It bothers them.

RQ2b Finding #2: Educational resources for use at home may increase family involvement

Parents and ESL educators indicated additional resources could be sent and used at home by ELL parents and would benefit EL students. All parents mentioned the need for books in the home. Parents shared that they like to sit and read with their children even though they do not understand English words. A parent pictured this scene as sitting cross-legged with her child in a bean bag chair listening to her child read in English. Three parents desired more books be provided by the school for the children to keep at home. Two parents expressed a desire to borrow books in Spanish from the school. P7 said:

> I know how to read the books in Spanish. It would be a fun family activity to do together. I just don't have any in Spanish. They bring home ones in English, but that's no good for me to be part of the reading.

Several parents stated they longed to help their children with math but needed tools and supplies. Supplies mentioned by parents for this task were objects to count with and books that showed how to complete math problems. ESL teachers mentioned offering take-home kits or family literacy activities to families would extend learning outside of school and into the home. This had been a desire expressed by parents as well. E4 described her experience in a previous district:

> I would love to have parent kits. In my other district, we were in an inner-city school, in kindergarten and first grade, there were these parent kits that were sent home with them at the beginning of each week. They had manipulatives in them, like bears that were counters. There were alphabet cards that were laminated. And you would make words or go over words. And we were trying to show parents how to use the manipulatives to help

> their children add and subtract. It was amazing and the parents really liked knowing how to help their children. They just need the tools. We could have these kits and train parents in a short workshop how to use them.

When asked about other community services supportive of families, parents replied their church was a source of support. However, parents went on to say the church did not support academic learning, yet a few did have some English services. Parents also mentioned how the district interpreter and other school support personnel helped secure housing or food for the family. The parents were most appreciative of this service, particularly during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. P1 described how she would like to see a community group formed that would support families of her culture:

> I think that having a group get together and talk about how they do the school would help many families. You know, one person could tell how they did this, and another person would say, oh, okay now I know what that is. I am a very strong believer in helping each other.

ESL educators also agreed that having a parent support group, especially for newcomers to the country would support the parents and children as they assimilate into the Western culture. ESL educators perceived that a community group would speed up the progression of integration into society quicker since families who have been in the country longer could assist new immigrants in registering their children for school, completing forms, and understanding how school transportation functions. Educator 1 suggested:

> I know our district translator is overworked. He does this for our kids. I would also say it would be nice if each school had like a parent liaison who would kind of head up

> communication for families or someone that could be a point of contact for them. You know like if they had to communicate with a school and needed to know what the procedure is and what to do. It would give them an avenue for help when they needed it.

Seven of ten parents expressed a desire for English classes for themselves. All parents shared they want to help their children but are frustrated they cannot read or understand what their children are reading because of the language barrier. P5 stated:

> I want to learn English. Can you find a place? I don't work and so never hear English except my child when she is home. I want to know English so I can help my child. There are a lot of parents who are interested to see how to speak English. I have a sister who wants to learn.

RQ2b Finding #3: Professional development for working with ELs can enhance academic and social learning

Educators who know specific strategies to apply when teaching English language learners can scaffold learning for ELs based on the feedback ESL educators gave in the focus groups. ESL teachers explained they share strategies with teachers and would like to have more time to share and explain simple ideas that work well with all EL learners. E4 mentioned:

> I told my principal that it would be helpful to have some professional development where I show teachers in regular classroom what works, and even what doesn't work well with ELs. I think we might do it next year. This would be so helpful. You know this population is one we need to target to help improve their level of mastery and if we could just help them learn a few simple things to do, it may make a difference.

Four parents expressed a desire for districts to place more teachers who could speak their home language in classrooms. Their wish for more bilingual teachers in the classroom would mean their children would communicate with the teacher easily without using another child, a translation application, or waiting for the interpreter to be available. Also, parents said it would be beneficial for their children to see a teacher from their culture. P4 said:

> I want my daughter to go all the way through school and beyond. She is very smart. She can do it. If she sees other people like her are already doing it, she will believe she can too.

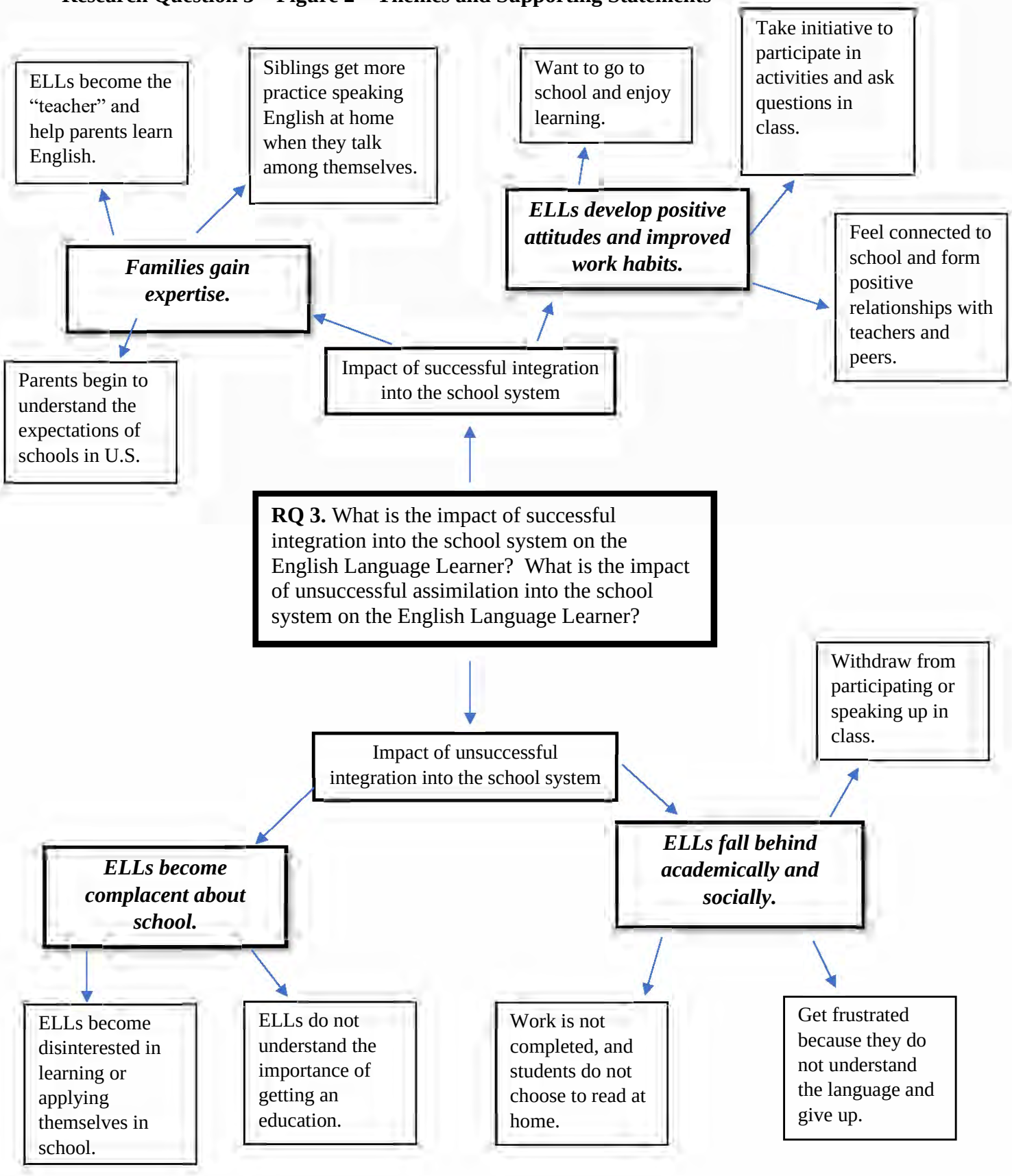
Lastly, one parent who shared the idea of having bilingual teachers said she thought it would encourage her child if the teacher could speak to the child in his home language. P6 shared:

> When he started the grade here, he didn't know any English. It was scary for him. He couldn't understand at all what the teacher was saying. She used another student to interpret for him. I didn't like that. What if that kid didn't tell her the right thing my child said. No, I think it would be good for a teacher to know Spanish too.

Research Question 3 Findings

Four themes emerged from the analysis of data that answered Question 3. Research Question 3 asked about the impact of successful and unsuccessful integration into the school system on the English Language Learner. Based on the data collected from ELL parents and ESL educators, the researcher found four themes that emerged from the data. Two of these themes were related to successful integration and two themes were related to unsuccessful assimilation into schools. Themes and supporting statements are displayed in Figure 3. A discussion of the findings follows Figure 3.

Research Question 3 – Figure 2 – Themes and Supporting Statements



RQ3 Finding #1: Families gain expertise.

All parents who were interviewed described how their family gained new knowledge and skills when their child was successful academically and socially at school. Parents described how the children become the "teacher" at home as the child practiced English with the parent, helping the parent to learn English. Children bring books home from school and read aloud to parents, exposing parents and younger siblings to English. P2 described it this way:

> My child is reading out loud in English at home and she knows all the words. I listen and learn. Sometimes I try the words and my son says it is not right. My children laugh and help me try again.

Parents with younger children at home described how the younger children learn English from their older siblings by listening to them talk which parents said was beneficial when the younger child started school. Knowing a few words in English or just having an auditory understanding of the language supported their child upon entry into school. Parents with more than one child in school expressed satisfaction when they speak to one another at home in English they are getting even more practice using their new language. One parent mentioned she encourages her children to only speak English to one another at home so they will continue to practice what they are learning at school. When ELLs experience successful integration in school, parents appeared more interested in their children's learning and began to understand how schools function. P9 described it this way:

> When my daughter tells me what they do in class, I understand what they are learning. Using computers was not available in our country and I see how it helps her. She is a

> little older now and can read the papers that come home from school, so I know what is happening at school.

RQ3 Finding #2: ELLs develop positive attitudes and improved work habits.

Most parents perceive that their children are happy and comfortable at school. Reasons for this included liking the teacher, having friends in school, and being successful in completing certain academic activities and projects. Because children were succeeding in school, parents said their children wanted to go to school and enjoy learning. P1 shared an example:

> When my children like the teacher and have friends they can play with, they get right up in the morning to go to school. When they come home and talk a lot about what they did in class, I can tell they like what happens at school.

Another area mentioned not only by parents, but by the ESL educators during the focus groups, was that it builds their confidence when ELLs are successful in school. When confidence builds, students take more risks in class, meaning they ask questions when they do not understand directions or a concept the teacher is teaching. According to the ESL educators, ELs participate in group discussions more when they have developed the confidence to do so. ELLs also volunteer answers to questions when the teacher poses a question to the whole class, and they take the initiative to interact with others actively in small learning groups according to the ESL educators. As one educator put it:

> One of the behaviors that I consider a "win" for success in school, is when a child who has never raised their hand in class before, does raise their hand to answer a question I have asked. That tells me that they know the answer and are willing to take a risk by volunteering to share their answer in front of their classmates.

Feeling connected to the school community is another positive result of ELLs being successful while integrating into the school system. When ELLs feel respected by the teacher and have friends in class, they form positive relationships. Having these positive relationships gives students more confidence to persevere when content is difficult according to the ESL educators. ESL educators also explained that when ELLs make connections between what they are learning in school with home life it, the student begins to see the purpose and value of the work they do at school.

RQ3 Finding #3: ELLs become complacent about school.

When ELLs have difficulty feeling successful at school and integrating into the school system, negative behaviors begin to surface. Parents explained when students do not understand academic instruction or have slowly gained some command of English, they become uninterested in school. Once they begin to lose interest, children do not understand the value of education and just want to do as little as possible when it comes to schoolwork. P3 describes it this way:

> My son, he is having math problems. He said it is hard and just gives up. He doesn't want to do his work and says it is stupid. I sit with him. I tell him it is hard for me too, but we can try together. He will try again, then.

Another parent explained her child began not to want to go to school. She could not understand why and asked what was wrong. The child told her that her old teacher was gone and another one was there. The mother learned the teacher had had surgery and an interim teacher had taken her place working through the district interpreter. The child did not understand what had happened to her teacher when it was explained at school since the child lacked language

proficiency. Many parents described that their children became frustrated with not knowing the English language within the first few months of entering school. The children could not communicate with their peers nor with the teachers. The children's understanding and use of English improved over time with ELL language instruction but was frustrating. The children began to develop negative attitudes toward school and the importance of learning due to their frustration of learning English proficiently.

RQ3 Finding #4: ELLs fall behind academically and socially.

When EL students are not successful in assimilating into the school system, they often fall behind academically and socially. One mother described her child's experience with being made fun of by her classmates and began to withdraw from her normal outgoing personality:

> She comes home and is crying. She tells me her friends make fun of her when she tries to talk English. That makes her shy and not want to be at school.

The mother explained the change in her child worried her and she wondered if she was playing with friends and getting with peers. She also worried that her daughter would not learn what she needed to, since she seemed withdrawn at school and at home. When children feel embarrassed, they do not participate in class according to the feedback during the ESL educator focus groups. All ESL educators shared ELLs are sensitive to their lack of language in American schools and often will listen quietly in class and not contribute their thoughts because they do not want to be made fun of by their peers. One ESL educator elaborated:

> These students (ESLs) know they don't know much English and don't want to be embarrassed by trying to use English when they aren't sure about it. I know how they

> feel. I am self-conscious when I use Spanish with them. We try to make a game out of it and remember that as long as we try, we are doing our best.

Parents also felt when students have a hard time learning English, they give up and will not try. The parents had observed just reading one page in a book is very frustrating when their children do not know the words. P8 stated:

> He tries and tries and just doesn't know the words. I cannot help him; he gets upset and then will not read.

Continued lack of language acquisition and understanding content-related information are factors affecting ELL's attempts at working through complex academic content. Once they become frustrated, ELLs may give up and not complete their work. Several ESL educators stated that if general education classroom teachers were taught and applied scaffolding strategies and techniques to use with ELLs, they may support these learners who are struggling in the general education classroom.

Chapter Summary

The data collected during the parent interviews allowed the researcher to answer the research questions for this study. Questions posed during the interviews were open-ended, allowing the researcher to probe deeper into insights and responses shared by the parents. Overall themes for each question emerged as the researcher reviewed data collected from the parent interviews.

Parents defined successful integration into the American school system as schools delivering services aligning with ELL parent values and goals for their children, parents involved in the educational process at school and at home, and ELL students exhibiting certain qualities

and behaviors. Unsuccessful definitions of integration into the school system were defined as minimal parental involvement and academic and social progress below parent expectations.

A large amount of data collected during the interviews reflected ELL parents" and ESL educators' perceptions concerning the factors that support ELL learners. The researcher asked the ELL parents and ESL educators to identify the factors that were in place to help support ELs and to identify factors that were absent and, in the participant's view, would add additional supports within the school system for the ELLs. Factors identified as currently in place as supports for ELLs included school services and academic approaches focused on their unique needs, the existence of social connections to help ELLs feel at ease in school, parents who were involved in their children's educational experience, the presence of high-quality teachers, and positive ELL student characteristics and behaviors. Through the interviews, these themes emerged as factors that were absent from the school system but could support ELLs at school: revised school and educational practices, provision of and training on the use of educational resources for use at home by families, and additional professional development for school staff in instructional strategies for the EL population.

Finally, the third research question of this study sought to define the impact of successful and unsuccessful integration into the school system as perceived by ELL parents and ESL educators. Themes that arose from the analysis of the data shared in response to the question about successful integration resulted in the following: families gain expertise in language acquisition and understand the operations and nuances of U. S. schools and EL students develop positive attitudes and improved work habits. The participants also shared their perceptions of how unsuccessful integration into the school system impacts ELLs. Two themes emerged from

this data: ELLs become complacent about school and ELLs fall behind academically and socially.

Chapter 5

Summary of Findings, Discussions, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This chapter contains a summary of findings, a discussion of the findings, and conclusions drawn from the data collected and analyzed during this research study. The chapter includes recommendations for educational practice by readers who may use the results of the study for making decisions about district policies and procedures and school instructional practices to address the unique needs of English Language Learners and ELL families. This qualitative study sought to gather the perceptions and expectations of ELL parents, identify the factors of ELL student success, and determine the impact on ELL academic and social development in elementary school. Three research questions guided the work of the study:

1. What does successful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner? What does unsuccessful integration into a school system mean as defined by a parent of an English Language Learner?
2. What factors are in place that provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system? What factors are absent that could provide a positive support system for English Language Learners in the school system?
3. What is the impact of successful integration into the school system on the English Language Learner? What is the impact of unsuccessful assimilation into the school system on the English Language Learner?

Qualitative data collected throughout the research study were gathered from two ESL educator focus groups and nine one-on-one ELL parent interviews conducted by the researcher using semi-structured, open-ended questions. The ESL educator participants were assigned to

deliver ELL programming to elementary students within the district in-person during the 2020-2021 school year. The ELL parent participants were comprised of parents of Latino students who attended school in-person during the 2020-2021 academic school year. The focus groups and interviews were recorded, transcribed, organized, and then coded to ascertain themes based on the participants' perceptions. A thorough analysis of the data resulted in several themes and sub-themes, which provided answers to the three research questions addressed in this study.

Summary of Findings

The qualitative analysis reported in this research study was based on three research questions. The findings of the study resulted in several themes related to the perceptions of ESL educators and ELL parents and the experiences of their children in elementary school. The themes included how participants defined ELL student success in school, the factors that supported ELLs academically and socially, and factors that were not in place and may provide additional support. The findings also included the perceptions of ELL parents and ESL teachers about how successful and unsuccessful integration into the school system impacts English language learners.

When ELL parents were asked to define successful integration into a school system, five themes emerged from the data. First, parental involvement was apparent based on data gleaned from the interviews and focus groups, although parental involvement took on different forms. Parental involvement was defined by parent participants as interacting n the educational process with their child at home. Additionally, parents stated that becoming involved at school was dependent upon parents feeling comfortable and welcomed at school meetings and events. Second, ELL parents defined successful integration as aligning school services with ELL parents' academic and social goals and expectations for their children. Third, students who

display certain qualities, such as perseverance, confidence, and goal-setting emerged as a common theme defined by parents regarding successful assimilation into the school system. A fourth theme emerged when parents cited their perceptions of unsuccessful integration into the school system. Minimal parental involvement emerged as the fourth theme as parents described limited amounts of time spent on academic activities at home, the lack of emphasis placed on education by parents, and children not getting opportunities to learn responsibility at home. The last theme emerging from the definition of unsuccessful integration by ELL parents was students whose academic progress and social development was below parent expectations.

ELL parents and ESL educators were asked to share their perceptions of factors that were in place that served as a positive support system for English language learners and to identify factors they perceived as absent that might provide support. Themes emerging when asked about factors perceived to benefit ELLs included school policies and academic approaches focused on ELL needs, social connections for ELLs, ELL parental involvement at school and at home, the presence of high-quality teachers, and student behaviors supportive of ELLs' learning. Factors absent that could provide a positive support system for ELLs developed into three themes: Educational resources for use at home, revised educational practices to address the unique needs of ELLs, and delivery of professional development focused on enhancing the skills of teachers who instruct ELLs in their classroom.

Four global themes emerged surrounding the research question addressing the impact of ELLs' successful integration into the school system. When asked about successful integration into schools, two themes developed. Parents perceived their families benefited and gained expertise in language acquisition and in understanding the expectations of the American school system. Another theme regarding successful integration included ELLs' development of positive

attitudes and work habits. When determining their perception of unsuccessful assimilation into the school system by ELLs, parents and ESL educators shared perceptions that resulted in two themes when analyzed. These included ELLs becoming complacent about school and falling behind academically and socially.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study offers insights for district and school leaders who serve English language learners. The results will be presented in this section to provide administrators and educators who work with English language learners with research-based data as they seek to understand the unique needs of ELLs and their families. The key focus areas of this discussion are: (1) ELL parent perceptions of successful and unsuccessful integration into U. S. schools; (2) ELL parent and ESL educator perceptions of supportive factors existing in schools; (3) ELL parent and ESL educator perceptions of supportive factors absent in schools; and (4) Impact of successful and unsuccessful integration into schools as perceived by ELL parents and ESL instructors.

Successful and Unsuccessful Integration into Schools

It was apparent from the ELL parent interviews that they consider themselves important influencers in their children's academic and social development. While parents perceive schools as providers of a high level of services matched to their children's academic needs, ELL parents perceived their contributions to the successful integration of their children into schools as a contributing factor. Traditionally within the Latino culture, a parent's role is to teach proper social behaviors, and the teachers' role is to deliver academic instruction. Most parents who participated in the study have learned that those roles are not thought of in the same way in

American schools. Parents believe by explaining educational expectations to their children and consistently reminding them of the importance of completing school, they are taking an active role in helping their child develop a desire to learn and successfully assimilate within the school community. Asking their children about their daily academic activities and social interactions provide parents with knowledge about how well their children are adjusting to school and integrating into the school community. Attending parent-teacher conferences and school events allowed the parents to understand the educational expectations schools have for their children. Some parents maintained that it is their responsibility to initiate contact with the school ask questions to understand expectations; however, they were reluctant to do so because they lacked English. Parents who took the initiative to contact their child's teacher or participate in school events felt more comfortable after these interactions with school staff and stated they would continue to participate actively in the future.

Of utmost importance to ELL parents was the acquisition of English. According to the parents in this study, children who do not understand English during their first years in school are likely to make little academic progress. According to the ELL parents, the lack of English impacts the quality of social integration. Becoming a part of the school community, understanding teacher expectations, and making academic progress are all dependent on the progress students make in mastering English according to the ELL parents.

ELL parents expect schools to provide services that will help their children succeed. Parent-teacher conferences allow parents to ask questions, share their expectations, and express their concerns about their child's progress with ESL educators and the general education teachers. Parents said they felt most comfortable participating actively in meetings with their child's teachers when they were warmly welcomed and provided a chance to communicate their

thoughts through a translator. Meeting with the teachers also allowed parents to determine how teachers were addressing their child's academic and social needs. An important concern of a Latino parent is making sure their child is adjusting socially in the school community. Nearly all participants mentioned they wanted their child to behave in school, make friends, and feel happy at school.

ELL parents indicated that their children's personal characteristics and behaviors were important factors in the integration of their children into the school system. Parents shared the importance of their role in assisting their children in developing positive behaviors and providing opportunities for fostering positive character traits at home. Parents felt the development of positive character traits, such as responsibly completing chores at home, would transfer to the school environment. In addition, the development of these positive characteristics and behaviors increased the confidence of their children, thus increasing the likelihood that the children would actively participate in their learning at school and home. ELL parents indicated their children would most likely not succeed in integrating into the school system if they did not share the importance of school, are not helping their children develop positive behaviors and work habits, or spend little time with their children engaged in academic activities.

Factors in Place that Support ELLs in Schools

Hanus (2016) states many factors contribute toward ELL academic success while they work to acquire English, adjust to new behavioral and academic expectations, and understand different cultural values. Because teachers and parents influence different aspects of a student's life, school success is attributed to a variety of factors. Parents have an important role in terms of motivation and educational expectations. ESL teachers and general education teachers must meet

ELL student needs by creating culturally responsive classrooms, building positive relationships with ELLs, and differentiating instruction and assessments (Hanus, 2016).

ESL teachers and ELL parents were forthcoming in the focus groups and interviews in identifying factors contributing to the school success of ELL students. From their perceptions, five themes emerged from the data after a thorough analysis. These themes were: Focusing school and academic approaches on ELL student needs, connecting ELLs within the school community, involving parents of ELLs in school, providing high-quality teachers, and developing positive student behaviors.

ESL teachers and ELL parents stated that report card feedback and graded work indicate the progress students make at school. ELL parents were dependent on the quarterly report card, and a few mentioned they regularly review graded classwork that comes home weekly. ESL educators indicated that when parents take time to review student work regularly, they will acquire an understanding of the level of mastery of academic content their students are achieving. Parents said they wanted more information about how their children were mastering academic content, and reviewing their student's classwork provided this information. Gaining an understanding of their child's academic progress and providing time at home to practice content-related skills not yet mastered are both factors identified by participants as supportive for ELLs in making progress at school.

Related to the factor above, ESL educators and ELL parents explained that parents who allocate and invest time to work with their children at home on academic activities is another factor that supports an ELL's academic development. Even though most parents were not English speakers, they felt that spending time listening to their child read or sitting with them while they completed homework communicated the importance parents place on education.

Encouraging their children to speak English at home was also a factor that parents could influence, according to all study participants. Siblings who speak English at home are not only getting practice themselves, but they are also providing exposure to English for younger siblings and parents.

Another factor ELL parents perceive as a supporting factor for their child's success at school is learning in small groups. It is perceived as advantageous since ELLs feel more comfortable attempting to read aloud or explore new topics within a group of three or four peers. ESL instructors agreed with this parent perception. Both groups shared that ELLs take more risks when working in groups comprised of other ELLs, particularly those who speak their native language. Learning with their cultural peers immediately puts students at ease, giving them the confidence to respond to questions or practice a new skill.

Participating in supplementary academic experiences was also a factor mentioned by ELL parents as a factor schools have to support student success. Experiences mentioned included participating in pre-school, summer academic camps, and after-school programming. Having additional opportunities to practice English, further developing language acquisition, was the main reason parents felt these extra learning experiences were beneficial for their children.

Having access to interpretive services during teacher-parent conferences and when needing to contact teachers was perceived as a factor helping to support students. Only one of the parents interviewed by the researcher was an English speaker. Parents who were non-English speaking stated they appreciated the availability of translation services to speak with school staff to help them understand school and classroom expectations. These parents were dependent upon the translation services as a supporting factor, whether the services were provided by the district interpreter or by using a translation texting application.

Schools that place high-quality teachers in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms and in general education classrooms support ELLs' success according to parent participants. Parents indicated that teachers who are friendly, encouraging, and help ELLs form connections with peers are viewed as teachers who make extra efforts to understand and address the specific needs of their children. Parents also stated that a teacher who identified skills their child needed to work on, found resources to support the mastery of those skills, and spent extra time with the child, is an important success factor. Additionally, general education teachers who know and apply best practices for ELL instruction effectively meet the unique needs of these learners, according to ESL educators. ELL parents also mentioned teachers who reach out to them and communicate frequently are ones who respect their child and care about their children's academic and social development. As one parent stated, "Any teacher who takes time to explain the learning to me, she is the one who cares about my child."

Factors Absent that May Provide Support to ELLs in Schools

School administrators, teachers, ELL parents, and even the ELLs all have vital responsibilities in supporting the academic and social development within the ELL school experience. The previous section discussed ELL parent and ESL instructor perceptions of the factors currently present in schools that provide academic and social support. This section describes additional thoughts from study participants about success factors absent from the ELL educational experience that could offer additional support to students. The data shared emerged into three themes related to school policies and practices, ELL family educational resources, and professional development for supporting ELLs in the classroom.

Parent participants and ESL instructors stated that the district interpreter was a vital communication resource. The interpreter is available for meeting with parents and teachers,

assisting ELL parents with interpreting documents and forms, and translating communication between families and schools. The experience of ELL parents and ESL educators has been that the availability of one district interpreter is limited due to the large numbers of families and educators he supports throughout the district. Both study participant groups, parents and educators, felt that having a second interpreter in the district would enhance communications between teachers and families. Another factor related to communications mentioned by parents and educators was having more school documents available in the family's home language. ESL educators added that some school documents could be simplified to contain only the most pertinent information to ELL families. The ESL teachers felt that documents containing a great deal of information are overwhelming to parents and should be revised to narrow the information contained in documents so that the information in documents is simplified and easy to understand. According to ELL parents, receiving written communications in their home language would improve understanding between the school and ELL families. Additional supports of communication mentioned by participants included free texting translation applications and the placement of bilingual teachers in the schools. Parents agreed these resources would speed up the ability to communicate with teachers and school personnel, and they would not have to wait on the interpreter's availability. Parents stated that even if they understand a little of spoken English and could speak some themselves, writing English was much more difficult, and they appreciated having access to the application that would allow them to type in Spanish and have it translated into English.

ELL parents expressed an interest in being more involved in their child's learning. Research indicates that the more involved and supportive families are in their child's education, the child becomes more engaged in school since they want to please their parents (Hanus, 2016).

Parents stated that they want to know more about specific academic content their child learns in the classroom and how they are achieving mastery of English. ESL educators mentioned the benefit of educating parents to a greater extent regarding EL services delivered in the ESL classroom and how mainstream teachers in the general education classroom support the needs of ELLs.

Another factor shared by ELL parents and ESL educators was families having resources at home to support the educational goals of ELLs. Parents viewed themselves as supporting their child's language acquisition at home by facilitating opportunities to use English in the home. ELL parents agreed that when they provide opportunities for their children to practice English outside of school, they are more likely to achieve success sooner. Several parents expressed their desire to learn English and have learned some from their children as they practice their new language at home. ELL parents requested the availability of English classes for adult learners to learn the language along with other parents.

ESL educators suggested that additional resources and materials be sent home for families to use to support their child's academic development. Parents also requested materials such as books in English and Spanish and math manipulatives. ESL educators in both focus groups expressed the desire to address specific literacy and math content by providing literacy and math take-home kits for families to use at home. Educators also determined that holding workshops to show parents how to use the kits and teaching them specific methods for working with their children at home would be beneficial for at-home learning.

Parents and educators agreed that the formation of a parent support group led by a parent liaison would be beneficial in bridging the home and school understandings of cultural values and social customs. ESL educators perceived that a community group, especially for newcomer

families, would speed up assimilation into schools. The availability of a parent liaison from within the Latino culture would quickly build trust and security for the families as they try to understand their roles in Western culture and school expectations.

Lastly, ESL educators perceived that professional development provided for mainstream teachers who have ELLs in their classrooms would improve instructional quality these teachers provide to ELLs. Since ELLs depend more on their teachers for academic support than their parents, it is critical that all teachers of ELLs build strong, positive relationships with ELLs and have specific training and knowledge to deliver strategic interventions to these learners. Understanding how to scaffold specific linguistic skills within the general education classroom instruction will address language development and skills as they relate to content knowledge and academic outcomes.

Impact of ELL Successful and Unsuccessful Integration into the School System

Parents of ELLs and ESL educators perceived a certain impact on ELLs when their integration into the school system is successful. Data from this aspect of the study resulted in two themes: Families gain expertise, and ELLs develop positive attitudes and improve work habits. Parents conveyed that successful integration impacted the expertise of the family. An important skill contributing to the family's expertise was the acquisition of English. When parents encourage and facilitate the practice of English within the home, parents and younger siblings benefit since they are exposed to auditory elements of English. Practicing their new language enhances ELL skill level and gives them the confidence to use English at school. At home, ELLs become the "teacher" of English which, according to parents, strengthens family bonds as family members work together to become more proficient using English. It appeared that the more ELL parents interacted with their children using English, helping with schoolwork, and asking

questions about what their child was learning, the more interested parents became in the educational process aiding them in understanding the new cultural, social, and academic expectations of the school system.

ELL students develop positive attitudes and improve work habits was a common perception of ELL parents and ESL educators related to the impact of successful integration into the school system. Both groups of participants agreed that students are responsible for studying, participating in class, interacting with classmates, and persevering when academic tasks become challenging. Development and display of these character traits and behaviors contribute to the confidence felt by ELLs. This acquired confidence leads to ELLs feeling connected to peers and teachers, encourages ELLs to take an active role in classroom discussions, and assists them in maintaining an overall positive attitude toward school based on parent and educator viewpoints.

Conversely, ELL parents and ESL educators viewed unsuccessful assimilation into the school system resulting in ELLs becoming complacent about school and falling behind their peers academically and socially. According to the perceptions of parents and educators interviewed for this study, students who do not make progress in English language acquisition also struggle with mastering academic content. This lack of progress also impacts their social integration, according to ESL educators. ELL students who lack language skills cannot effectively communicate with their teachers or peers, leading to frustration on the part of the ELL. According to ESL teachers, ELL frustration often impacts their willingness to apply themselves in class generating a disinterest in learning and school. Left unchecked and without strong encouragement from ELL parents, these students may not recognize the importance of education and become complacent about school.

ELL parents determined when their children do not have strong relationships at school with adults and peers, they begin to withdraw socially. When social bonds are weak, parents felt their children lost interest, did not participate in class, and felt disconnected from the school community. Since academic and social development are dependent on a higher level of engagement, students who do not have strong, trusting relationships with teachers and peers lack the motivation to learn (Hanus, 2016).

ELLs fall behind academically when teachers do not identify specific learning needs and apply strategic practices in scaffolding the language acquisition and academic content that ELLs need to master. According to ESL educators and ELL parents, when ELLs fall behind academically, they begin to struggle to complete work and lose their drive to achieve at school. ESL educators agreed they have much to offer general education teachers when it comes to understanding the factors that affect ELLs' social development, academic success, and linguistic proficiency. Given an opportunity to collaborate with mainstream teachers, ESL educators perceived that all teachers of ELLs within a school would come to understand and develop engaging, effective, and targeted learning for ELLs.

Limitations of the Study

Results of this research study may provide helpful data for districts and schools serving ELLs. However, several limitations exist within the current research. First, the study was limited to a single school district resulting in data based on localized perceptions. ELL parents and ESL educators from other districts within the region or other geographical sections of the United States may possess varying perceptions than those gathered from this study. Second, data collected during the focus groups and individual interviews were dependent upon the forthrightness of each participant and their willingness to self-report the experiences of their

children. Third, while the researcher used member-checking to verify the responses gathered during the focus groups and interviews, there was no other collection of data such as observations or artifacts to verify the participants' responses.

Conclusions

This research study's major conclusion is ELL parents have certain educational expectations and goals for their children and want them to succeed in school but often lack the resources and language to communicate with teachers, understand a new culture, and determine how to best help their children integrate into school systems. Administrators and educators should be encouraged to learn that ELL parents understand the importance of school and share expectations and goals with their children. It was apparent that ELL parents often seek ways to support their children as they navigate a new educational culture. While language is considered a barrier by parents and ESL educators, a lack of proficiency in English should not translate into an ELL parent's lack of interest in helping their child become successful in school. Establishing improved communications methods, removing language barriers, elevating the value of ELL parent contributions to learning, and emphasizing educators identifying specific needs of English language learners will help build mutuality and reciprocity between schools and ELL families.

Recommendations for Practice

The results of this study indicated that ELL parents share their educational expectations and goals with their children to indicate the importance of education. ELL parents seek ways to support their child's learning at home and desire pathways for navigating the language barrier that exists to build stronger relationships with schools. ESL educators support ELL learning and

academic achievement at school and identified additional resources and collaborative training that will help support ELLs.

Administrators and school leaders should utilize the expertise of current ESL educators to build the mainstream teachers' capacity for working with ELLs in the classroom and supporting ELL families at home. Additional professional development should be ongoing and could be delivered by ESL educators. The training could be designed as professional learning communities within each school and include the following topics: (1) building strong student relationships; (2) creating culturally responsive instruction; (3) establishing classroom climates that are culturally inclusive; (4) differentiating instruction and assessments; (5) implementing strategies to help ELLs adjust to differences in cultural and social behaviors; (6) fostering social interaction between ELLs and their English-speaking peers; (7) teaching appropriate reading and literacy skills; (8) effective identification of learning opportunities and applying research-based strategies to improve academic outcomes; and (9) utilization of translation applications.

Any educator working with ELLs needs to establish a welcoming, friendly classroom environment so that ELLs and their families feel at ease at school. Teachers should initiate contact with ELL families. Teachers should strive to explain how the needs of ELLs and explain how they are addressing those needs at school. ESL educators and general education teachers need to explicitly share methods families can implement at home to help their children achieve. Specific methodologies for sharing with families may include strategies for reading with their children at home, provision of resources such as family literacy kits and content-related activities, and explanation of how reviewing classwork at home helps parents understand their child's progress. Equipping parents to help their child at home is a critical factor in engaging

parents with their child's education and will establish parents as partners with teachers and schools.

Other ways to build teacher capacity for instructing ELLs include emphasizing the importance of communicating classroom expectations to ELLs and creating opportunities for ELL student success in the classroom. Children who take risks and are not afraid to make mistakes feel accepted, improving student self-efficacy and impacting their academic progress. Mainstream teachers and ESL educators should develop a collaborative relationship as they seek to implement strategies within their classrooms to help ELLs achieve Individual Learning Plan (ILP) goals for each ELL. Lastly, every teacher should provide instruction in small groups for ELLs since they appear more relaxed and ready to attempt challenging content when working with only a few other peers.

Building ELL parent capacity should be a proactive goal launched by school leaders and teachers. Including parents as stakeholders by seeking their input and perceptions will recognize ELL parents as important stakeholders within the school community and provide a pathway for the needs of ELL families to be included in school practices and considered in school decision-making. Seeking additional methods of communicating with parents to overcome the language barrier will indicate the efforts schools are making to connect and communicate with non-English speaking parents. Facilitating parent support groups and working with an ELL parent liaison from within the ELL family community will support understanding of educational expectations between the school and families. Schools should review documents and communications sent from the school to assure that vital information is provided in the family's home language which would aid communication. Workshops for parents should be held to help parents develop skills so they may support their children in completing academic work at home,

provide information about how ESL services are delivered and how their child's teachers support their learning in the classroom, and offer access to adult English classes.

The district and school should consider offering support and training on a free texting application so staff can communicate easily with parents. ELL families could use this application in conjunction with the parent communication application currently endorsed by the district. All parents indicated the "Talking Points" application was easy to use, came directly to their smart phone, and the translation services were available at no extra charge. ESL educators indicated they had had great success in communicating with parents using this application during the past school year.

Schools should seek to place bilingual teachers in classrooms when hiring for teaching positions, especially in schools with higher numbers of ELL students. Since ELL parents and ESL educators indicated that placing ELLs in classrooms with other second language students helped increase ELLs' comfort level, schools should consider placing ELL students together in classrooms when developing class roles. This arrangement would be especially helpful for newcomers as placement with other ELLs would provide a sense of comfort while the newcomer begins to acclimate to a change in culture, structures, and expectations. Offering a "mentoring" program where older ELL students mentor younger ELL students would benefit ELLs in schools and connect students across grades. The district could also connect with local higher education institutions to establish partnerships where the two organizations work together to identify the needs of immigrant families, seek improvements to communications with families, and develop methods of providing responsive education to ELLs. Mogge, Martinez-Alba & Cruzado-Guerrero (2017) describe such a program developed between a middle school and a local

university. The partnership influenced a change in school culture, promoted school-community relationships, and improved teacher instructional strategies delivered to ELLs.

Finally, the district should evaluate the cost-benefit of adding a second interpreter to the district to provide more availability of interpretive services to serve the increasing numbers of ELL families. ESL educators suggested one interpreter could be assigned to work with ELL families when their child is in lower grades and the other interpreter could be assigned to work with families with children in upper grades as the expectations change from elementary schools to middle and high school. This arrangement would also allow the interpreter to develop a deeper sense of school expectations and build relationships with school personnel within a certain grade span.

Recommendations for Further Study

It was clear that ELL parents value education and understand the benefits their children will gain by completing their education. ELL parents communicate educational expectations and goals with their children so they understand the importance of education and connect. Knowing their parent's expectations help ELLs connect the quality of their daily efforts in the classroom to their overall success in school (Hanus, 2016). Parents were forthcoming in defining successful integration into school and their responsibilities regarding the facilitation of learning and the supports parents should provide at home to help their child succeed academically and socially at school. Parent participants willingly shared their perceptions of school success and the factors contributing to that success when asked to participate in this research study. Several parents thanked the researcher for the invitation to participate in the study. Parents stated they were encouraged that their viewpoints were sought and were hopeful they would be included in further discussions about supporting ELLs in schools.

This research study was conducted in a single school district and cannot be generalized to a broad population. The study could be replicated and expanded to include other schools and districts, adding more ELL parent and ESL instructor perceptions to the data. Results from additional studies could be compared to the results found through this research to understand ELL parent perceptions for school success further and identify additional success factors or confirm the success factors identified in the results of this study.

Conducting research to gather similar information from ELL parents with children currently in middle and high school grades would add to the current body of knowledge regarding the expectations of ELL parents and identify the factors of academic and social success as viewed by the parents and ESL educators. As ELLs progress through school, ELL parent expectations may evolve. Also, ELLs who enter U. S. schools at middle and high school grades may require different supports to scaffold their academic and social success as they assimilate into the school system at a different grade level. Conducting research to identify success factors of ELLs entering schools in middle grades and high school may prove beneficial to schools as they continue to respond to the needs of English learners dynamically.

Additionally, an action research study conducted within the district that incorporates the implementation of practice recommendations explained in the previous section would provide the district with data to determine the impact of the recommendations on the academic and social success of ELLs in elementary schools. A quantitative study would allow a researcher to collect achievement data before and after the implementation of recommended practices. The study results would indicate the effectiveness of adjusted instructional practices, modified school approaches and policies, revised school communications, and adjusted methods of connections between teachers and families. A qualitative study before and after implementation of

recommended practice would identify differences in parent perceptions of school success and the impact of their child's academic and social assimilation into the school environment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter included a discussion of the findings from the study in the form of overall themes derived from each of the three research questions. The chapter also included a discussion of the study's limitations and presented the overall conclusions of the research study. Practice recommendations included building teacher capacity for working with ELLs and building ELL parent capacity for supporting learning at home and becoming more engaged in the educational process. Recommendations also included actions schools and the district can take to improve communications and school practices, so ELL families are informed about school expectations and events and become established as important stakeholders within the school community. Recommendations for further study were also presented and discussed in this chapter.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letters

MILLIGAN
UNIVERSITY

Date: April 9, 2021

From: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Milligan University

Re: *An Examination of School Success Factors as Perceived by Parents of Latino English Language Learners*

Submission type: Expedited Review/Cooperating Institution Approval

Dear Nancy Miles:

On behalf of the Milligan University Institutional Review Board (IRB), we are writing to inform you that your study, *An Examination of School Success Factors as Perceived by Parents of Latino English Language Learners*, has been approved as expedited. This approval also indicates that you have fulfilled the IRB requirements for Milligan University.

All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission, meaning that you will follow the research plan you have outlined here, use approved materials, and follow university policies.

Take special note of the following important aspects of your approval:

- Any changes made to your study require approval from the IRB Committee before they can be implemented as part of your study. Contact the IRB Committee at **IRB@milligan.edu** with your questions and/or proposed modifications.
- If there are any unanticipated problems or complaints from participants during your data collection, you must notify the Milligan University IRB Office within 24 hours of the data collection problem or complaint.
- Your Milligan IRB Approval Code is: MU2104091454

The Milligan University IRB Committee is pleased to congratulate you on the approval of your research proposal. Best wishes as you conduct your research! If you have any questions about your IRB Approval, please contact the IRB Office and copy your faculty advisor if appropriate on the communication.

On behalf of the IRB Committee,

Trini Rangel, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Milligan University

JOHNSON CITY SCHOOLS
APPROVAL FORM FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

REQUESTOR'S NAME Nancy W. Niles

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL An Examination of School Success Factors as Perceived by Parents of Latino English Language Learners

STEP 1: RESEARCH REVIEW OF CURRICULUM DIVISION

___ We temporarily withhold approval of your proposal until you address the questions we have raised about it in the attached letter. (Include this form with re-submission of your proposal.)

___ We conditionally approve your proposal and you may proceed with making contact with principal(s) of the appropriate school(s), but it is necessary for you to address the questions we have raised about your proposal in the attached letter.

X We approve your proposal. Proceed with obtaining approval of the principal(s) of the appropriate school(s).

[signature] 3/16/21
Signature, Curriculum Division Reviewer Date

STEP 2: PRINCIPAL'S EVALUATION

___ I temporarily withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in my school for reasons stated in the attached correspondence. (Include this form with the re-submission of your proposal.)

PRINCIPAL #1: _____ DATE: _____

PRINCIPAL #2 _____ DATE: _____

PRINCIPAL #3 _____ DATE: _____

___ I approve your proposal. Please forward this form to the Central Office for approval of the Superintendent.

PRINCIPAL #1 _____ DATE: _____

PRINCIPAL #2 _____ DATE: _____

PRINCIPAL #3 _____ DATE: _____

STEP 3: SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION

___ I withhold approval of your proposed research being conducted in our schools for the reasons stated in the attached correspondence. I am forwarding a copy of your proposal, a copy of this form, and a copy of our correspondence to the Curriculum Division reviewer. They will communicate with you further.

X I approve your proposal. Proceed with your research according to the conditions agreed upon in the preceding sections of this form and your research proposal.

[signature] 3-19-2021
Signature of Superintendent Date

NOTE: The signed copy of this form should be returned to the Curriculum Division for their records.
(Reference: Johnson City Board of Education Policy 4.210)

Appendix B: Parent Invitation to Participate in Research (English)

To: Parents of English Language Learners

From: Nancy W. Miles, 4th grade teacher, Johnson City Schools

Subject: Research Study to identify support services for ELL students
==========

As a parent of an English Language Learner in the Johnson City School district, you are invited to participate in a research study that will give you an opportunity to identify what is working in your child's elementary school to support his or her academic and social needs. You will also have a chance to describe any challenges that get in the way of your child's success, or to identify services and supports you feel are missing that would help your child succeed in school.

I am conducting this study as part of my research with Milligan University and the completion of my doctoral degree. I have taught school in the Johnson City system for nearly twenty years and have mentored an ELL family during that time period. My involvement with that family led me to wanting to learn more about how ELL parents perceive what the school system has done to help their children be successful at school and to identify additional services that parents need to help their children learn.

As a participant in the study, you would take part in a 30-minute interview with me either at your child's school or at an agreed upon location. If you are willing to participate in an interview, please check "yes" below and provide your phone number and email so that I may contact you and arrange a time for the interview.

Please return this form to your child's ESL teacher. Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study.

Nancy W. Miles

4th grade, South Side School, Johnson City Schools

_____Yes, I will participate in this study.

Your name: _____

Your phone number: _____

Your email address: _____

Check one below:

_____I will need an interpreter during the interview.

_____I will NOT need an interpreter during the interview

Please return this form to your child's ESL teacher by May 7.

Parent Invitation to Participate (Spanish)

Para: Padres de Estudiantes que Aprenden el Idioma Inglés

De: Nancy W. Miles, Maestra de 4º grado, de las Escuelas de Johnson City

Asunto: Estudio de investigación para identificar los servicios de apoyo para los estudiantes que aprenden el idioma Ingles (ELL por sus siglas en inglés)

==========

Como padre de un estudiante que aprende el idioma de inglés en el distrito escolar de Johnson City, se le invita a participar en un estudio de investigación que le dará la oportunidad de identificar lo que está funcionando en la escuela primaria de su niño para apoyar sus necesidades académicas y sociales. También tendrá la oportunidad de describir cualquier desafío que se interponga en el camino hacia el éxito de su niño, o de identificar los servicios y apoyos que cree que faltan y que ayudarían a su niño a lograr el éxito escolar.

Estoy llevando a cabo este estudio como parte de mi investigación con la Universidad de Milligan y completar mi doctorado. He enseñado en el sistema escolar de Johnson City durante casi veinte años y he sido mentora de una familia ELL (aprendices del idioma ingles por sus siglas en inglés) durante ese período. Mi participación con esa familia me llevó a querer aprender más sobre cómo los padres de estudiantes ELL perciben lo que el sistema escolar ha hecho para ayudar a sus niños a lograr el éxito en la escuela y para identificar los servicios adicionales que los padres necesitan para ayudar a sus niños a aprender.

Como participante en el estudio, usted participaría en una entrevista de 30 minutos conmigo en la escuela de su hijo o en un lugar que acordaremos. Si está dispuesto a participar en una entrevista, marque "sí" a continuación y proporcione su número de teléfono y correo electrónico para que pueda ponerme en contacto con usted y concertar una hora para la entrevista.

Por favor, devuelva este formulario al profesor de ESL (Ingles como Segundo Idioma por sus siglas en ingles) de su niño. Gracias por su consideración para participar en este estudio.

Nancy W. Miles

4º grado, Escuela South Side, Escuelas de Johnson City

_____Sí, participaré en este estudio.

Su nombre: _____

Su número de teléfono _____

Su dirección de correo electrónico -email-: _____

Marque una de las siguientes opciones:

_____Necesitaré un intérprete durante la entrevista.

_____NO necesitaré un intérprete durante la entrevista

Por favor, devuelva este formulario al profesor de ESL de su niño antes del 7 de mayo.

Appendix C: ESL Educator Participant Interview Guide

1. How many ELL students do you serve? What grade levels are represented among these students?
2. In thinking about the children you teach, what is your definition of their success at school? How do ELL parents define success for their children at school?
3. What is your overall feeling about the students' attitude toward school?
4. What is your overall feeling about the students' attitude toward their teachers?
5. How does the school support an ELL student's academic learning during their first year in school? How does the school support ELL student learning after their first year?
6. How does the school support the social development of ELLs during their first year in school? How does the school support the social development of ELLs currently?
7. What barriers prevent ELLs from being successful in school during their first year in school? What support does school offer to get over any barriers? How do you help ELLs overcome any barriers?
8. What barriers exist beyond the first year in school that prevent ELLs from being successful in school? What supports does the school offer to overcome any barriers? How do you help ELLs overcome over any barriers?
9. How did the supports put in place by the school change the barriers ELLs face?
10. What things would you want the school to offer to help ELLs in school? What things would you want the school to offer to families to help ELLs be successful in school?
11. Who are the people at the school that have helped ELLs be successful?
12. What are the supports outside of school that have helped ELLs be successful?

13. What are the barriers outside of school that prevent ELLs from being successful in school? What have families been able to do to remove those barriers?

Appendix D: Parent Participant Interview Guide (English)

1. When did your child first enroll in this school and what grade level were they assigned? What is your child's current grade level?
2. In thinking about your elementary age child, what is your definition of he/she being successful at school?
3. What is your overall feeling about the school your child attends?
4. What is your child's overall feeling about the school? What is your child's overall feeling about his/her teachers?
5. How did the school support your child's academic learning during their first year in school? How does the school support your child's academic learning now?
6. How did the school support your child's social development during their first year in school? How does the school support your child's social development now?
7. What barriers prevented your child from being successful in school during their first year in school? What support did the school offer to get over any barriers? How did you help your child get over any barriers?
8. What barriers still exist that prevent your child from being successful in school? What supports does the school offer to get over any barriers? How do you help your child get over any barriers?
9. How did the supports put in place by the school change the barriers your child faced?
10. What things would you want the school to offer to help your child in school? What things would you want the school to offer to families to help your child be successful in school?
11. Who are the people at the school that have helped your child be successful?

12. What are the supports outside of school that have helped your child be successful?
13. What are the barriers outside of school that prevent your child from being successful in school? What have you been able to do to remove those barriers?

Guía para la entrevista de los padre (Spanish)

1. ¿Cuándo inscribió a su niño en esta escuela por primera vez y qué grado se le asignó? ¿Cuál es el nivel de grado actual de su niño?

2. Al pensar en su niño en edad de escuela elemental ¿cuál es su definición de que él/ella es exitoso/a en la escuela?

3. ¿Cuál es su opinión general sobre la escuela a la que asiste su niño?

4. ¿Cuál es la opinión general de su niño sobre la escuela? ¿Cuál es la opinión general de su niño sobre sus profesores?

5. ¿Cómo ha apoyado la escuela el aprendizaje académico de su niño durante su primer año en la escuela? ¿Cómo apoya la escuela el aprendizaje académico de su niño ahora?

6. ¿Cómo apoyó la escuela el desarrollo social de su niño durante su primer año en la escuela? ¿Cómo apoya la escuela el desarrollo social de su niño ahora?

7. ¿Qué dificultades impidieron que su niño tuviera éxito en la escuela durante su primer año de estudios? ¿Qué apoyo le ofreció la escuela para superar las dificultades? ¿Cómo ayudó usted a su niño a superar los problemas?

8. ¿Qué desafíos siguen existiendo que impiden a su niño tener éxito en la escuela? ¿Qué apoyo ofrece la escuela para superar los desafíos? ¿Cómo ayuda usted a su niño a superar los desafíos?

9. ¿De qué manera los ayudas puestas en marcha por la escuela cambiaron los desafíos a los que se enfrentaba su niño?

10. ¿Qué cosas le gustaría que la escuela ofreciera para ayudar a su niño en la escuela? ¿Qué cosas le gustaría que la escuela ofreciera a las familias para ayudar a los niños a tener éxito en la escuela?

11. ¿Quiénes son las personas de la escuela que han ayudado a su niño a tener éxito?

12. ¿Cuáles son los apoyos fuera de la escuela que han ayudado a su niño a tener éxito?

13. ¿Cuáles son los desafíos fuera de la escuela que impiden a su niño tener éxito en la escuela? ¿Qué ha podido hacer para eliminar esos retos?

Appendix E: ESL Educator Invitation to Participate in Research

Miles, Nancy
Tue 4/13/2021 3:17 PM

Greetings all,

I am currently completing my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at Milligan University, and have gained approval through our Central Office staff to begin my research study in our district. My qualitative study, entitled *An Examination of School Success Factors as Perceived by Parents of Latino English Language Learners,* involves the collection of data via interviews of ELL parents and focus groups involving ELL educators within grades K-4 in our district.

I plan to conduct the ELL educator focus group over the next two weeks. The focus group will last 30-45 minutes and will be conducted via Zoom. It is my intention to gain an understanding of your perception of how ELL parents define academic and social success of their child and to identify supports you (and parents) deem valuable in supporting this population of students in elementary grades. The collective analysis and findings will be shared with all who participate at the conclusion of the study to provide research-based information to help support ELL students and families in our district. All participants and their feedback will remain anonymous beyond the focus group and interviews.

Your viewpoint will be invaluable to the research and I hope you will consider participating. If you are willing to participate in the focus group, please respond to this email indicating your willingness and I will forward the dates and Zoom log in information. (You will have two different dates to choose from but will only participate in one session). If you would like more information about this research study before committing to participate, please feel free to reach out to me with your questions.

Kindest regards,

Nancy Winfree Miles, NBCT
4th Grade Remote Teacher
South Side School
Johnson City Schools
@milesnawmiles

Appendix F: ESL Educator Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study of the perceptions of parents of English Language Learners on the success factors present or not present that support the English Language Learner at school. This study also includes the study of perceptions of English Language Learner educators with the system being studied. This form is part of a process called "informed consent", which allows you to understand more about the study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Nancy W. Miles, who is a doctoral student at Milligan University, and is an elementary classroom teacher in the Johnson City School System. This study is separate from the role of a classroom teacher in the system and will not include any participants with children under the instructional supervision of the researcher.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate parent perceptions of successful integration into the classroom as experienced by their child who is an English Language Learner. The researcher is interested in identifying the factors which must be in place for the English Language Learner to successfully integrate into the school system, academically, behaviorally, and socially. The researcher will also investigate the perceptions of ELL educators regarding success factors of English Language Learners within the educational system.

Procedure:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group with the researcher, Nancy W. Miles. The focus group will be audio recorded and will be

transcribed for the purposes of collecting data. The focus group will last no more than forty-five (45) minutes.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary on your part. Everyone will respect your decision of whether to choose to be in this study. If you choose to participate, you can change your mind and stop your participation at any time during the study. Should you choose to remove yourself from the focus group prior to the conclusion of the session, your comments will not be included in the transcription of the focus group discussion and therefore, will not in any way become a part of the data collected.

Risk and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Participation in this study could involve discussion of situations where the school system has been lacking in supporting your students or existing barriers that prevented them from being successful in the classroom. Being in this study will not impact your safety or well-being. No participants with students under the instructional supervision of the researcher will be included in the study. It is the purpose of this study to identify areas in which the school system can improve existing or consider additional services that could benefit English Language Learners. Identifying the needs of English Language Learners shared by parents will help educators understand these needs and possibly result in changes in the way the school system educates ELLs. Additionally, the study results could identify opportunities in which the school can support the families of English Language Learners and the community beyond the walls of the school building itself.

Payment:

There will be no monetary or gift payment for participation in the study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential, and the researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Participants will be identified in transcriptions and study records using pseudonyms. Audio recording and data will be kept secure with password protected locations or in a secure, locked location inaccessible to anyone except the researcher. As required by Milligan University, the data will be kept for a period of 5 years.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher using the following email address: milesn@jcschools.org. If you would like a private discussion about your rights and participation in this study, you can contact Milligan University Institutional Review Board at IRB@milligan.edu. You may also contact Dr Patrick Kariuki, Director of Educational Research at Milligan University, (423) 461-8744.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand I am agreeing to the terms described above. I am also acknowledging that I understand I can drop out of participation at any time during the study.

Printed Name of Participant_____

Date of Consent_____

Participant's Signature_____

Researcher's Signature_____

Appendix G: Parent Participant Consent Form (English)

You are invited to participate in a research study of the perceptions of parents of English Language Learners on the success factors present or not present that support the English Language Learner at school. This form is part of a process called “informed consent”, which allows you to understand more about the study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Nancy W. Miles, who is a doctoral student at Milligan University, and is an elementary classroom teacher in the Johnson City School System. This study is separate from the role of a classroom teacher in the system.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate parent perceptions of successful integration into the classroom as experienced by their child who is an English Language Learner. The researcher is interested in identifying the factors which must be in place for the English Language Learner to successfully integrate into the school system, academically, behaviorally, and socially.

Procedure:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher, Nancy W. Miles. This interview will be audio recorded and will be transcribed for the purposes of collecting data. The interview will last no more than one hour. If needed, an interpreter will also be present during the interview to provide interpretive services during the interview.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary on your part. Everyone will respect your decision of whether to choose to be in this study. If you choose to participate, you can change your mind and stop your participation at any time during the study. Non-participation or withdrawal from the study will in no way impact the services or educational rights provided to children of participants. No participants with children under the instructional supervision of the researcher will be included in the study.

Risk and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Participation in this study could involve discussion of situations where the school system has been lacking in supporting your child or existing barriers challenges that prevented your child from being successful in the classroom. Being in this study will not impact your safety or well-being.

It is the purpose of this study to identify areas in which the school system can improve existing or consider additional services that could benefit English Language Learners. Identifying the needs of English Language Learners shared by parents will help educators understand these needs and possibly result in changes in the way the school system educates ELLs. Additionally, the study results could identify opportunities in which the school can support the families of English Language Learners and the community beyond the walls of the school building itself.

Payment:

There will be no monetary or gift payment for participation in the study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential, and the researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Participants will be identified in transcriptions and study records using pseudonyms. Audio recording and data will be kept secure with password protected locations or in a secure, locked location inaccessible to anyone except the researcher. As required by Milligan University, the data will be kept for a period of 3 years.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher using the following email address: milesn@jcschools.org. If you would like a private discussion about your rights and participation in this study, you can contact Milligan University Institutional Review Board at IRB@milligan.edu. You may also contact Dr Patrick Kariuki, Director of Educational Research at Milligan University, (423) 461-8744.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand I am agreeing to the terms described above. I am also acknowledging that I understand I can drop out of participation at any time during the study.

Printed Name of Participant_____

Date of Consent_____

Participant's Signature_____

Researcher's Signature_____

Parent Consent to Participate in Research (Spanish)

Consentimiento para participar en la investigación

Se le invita a participar en un estudio de investigación sobre las percepciones de los padres de estudiantes que aprenden el idioma inglés acerca de los factores de éxito presentes o no presentes, que apoyan al estudiante que aprende el idioma inglés en la escuela. Este formulario forma parte de un proceso llamado "consentimiento informado", que le permite entender más sobre el estudio antes de decidir si quiere participar en él.

Este estudio lo lleva a cabo una investigadora llamada Nancy W. Miles, que estudia para obtener su doctorado en la Universidad de Milligan, y es profesora de primaria en el sistema escolar de Johnson City. Este estudio es independiente a su rol de maestra en el sistema escolar.

Información de antecedentes:

El propósito de este estudio cualitativo es investigar las percepciones de los padres sobre la integración exitosa salón de clases de acuerdo a la experiencia de su niño que es un estudiante que aprende el idioma inglés. El investigador está interesado en identificar los factores que deben estar en su lugar para que el estudiante que aprende el idioma ingles se integre con éxito en el sistema escolar, en las áreas académica, de comportamiento y social.

Procedimiento:

Si acepta participar en este estudio, se le pedirá que participe en una entrevista individual con la investigadora, Nancy W. Miles. Esta entrevista se grabará en audio y se transcribirá con el propósito de obtener data. La entrevista no durará más de una hora. Si es necesario, un intérprete también estará presente durante la entrevista para proporcionar servicios de interpretación durante la misma.

Carácter voluntario del estudio:

Este estudio es voluntario por su parte. Todo el mundo respetará su decisión de elegir participar o no participar en este estudio. Si decide participar, puede cambiar de opinión y abandonar su participación en cualquier momento del estudio. La no participación o su retiro del estudio no afectarán en modo alguno a los servicios o derechos educativos prestados a los niños de los participantes. No se incluirá en el estudio a ningún participante con niños bajo la supervisión docente del investigador.

Riesgos y beneficios al participar en el estudio:

La participación en este estudio podría implicar la discusión de situaciones en las que el sistema escolar ha sido deficiente en el apoyo a su niño o los desafíos existentes que impidieron que su niño tuviera éxito en el salón de clases. Participar en este estudio no afectará su seguridad ni su bienestar.

El propósito de este estudio es identificar las áreas en las que el sistema escolar puede mejorar los servicios existentes o considerar servicios adicionales que podrían beneficiar a los estudiantes

que aprende el idioma inglés. La identificación de las necesidades de los estudiantes que aprenden el idioma inglés compartidas por los padres ayudará a los educadores a entender estas necesidades y posiblemente resultará en cambios en la forma en que el sistema escolar enseña a los estudiantes que aprenden el idioma inglés (ELL por sus siglas en ingles). Además, los resultados del estudio podrían identificar oportunidades en las que la escuela puede apoyar a las familias de los estudiantes que aprenden el idioma inglés y a la comunidad más allá de las paredes de la escuela.

Pago:

No habrá ningún pago monetario o en forma de regalo por la participación en el estudio.

Privacidad:

Toda la información que proporcione será confidencial, y el investigador no utilizará su información personal para ningún fin ajeno a este proyecto de investigación. Los participantes serán identificados en las transcripciones y registros del estudio utilizando seudónimos. Las grabaciones de audio y los datos se mantendrán seguros sitios protegidos con contraseña o en un lugar seguro y cerrado con llave, inaccesible para cualquier persona excepto el investigador. Tal y como exige la Universidad de Milligan, los datos se conservarán durante un periodo de 3 años.

Contactos y preguntas:

Puede hacer cualquier pregunta que tenga ahora. Si tiene preguntas más adelante, puede ponerse en contacto con el investigador utilizando la siguiente dirección de correo electrónico: milesn@jcschools.org. Si desea una conversación privada sobre sus derechos y su participación

en este estudio, puede ponerse en contacto con la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad de Milligan en IRB@milligan.edu. También puede ponerse en contacto con el Dr. Patrick Kariuki, Director de Investigación Educativa de la Universidad de Milligan, (423) 461-8744.

Declaración de consentimiento:

He leído la información anterior y entiendo el estudio lo suficientemente bien como para tomar una decisión sobre mi participación. Al firmar a continuación, entiendo que estoy de acuerdo con los términos descritos anteriormente. También reconozco que entiendo que puedo dejar de participar en cualquier momento durante el estudio.

Nombre impreso del participante _____

Fecha de consentimiento _____

Firma del participante _____

Firma del investigador _____

Appendix H: Translator/Interpreter Confidentiality Agreement

Translator/Interpreter Confidentiality Agreement

I have been contracted to translate or interpret interviews as part of a research study being conducted by **Nancy W. Miles**, **candidate for Educational Doctoral degree with Milligan University** in Elizabethton, Tennessee.

During the course of interpreting, I will refrain from expressing any personal opinions, or doing anything else that might be considered an activity other than interpreting.

Confidentiality

I agree to respect the confidentiality of any conversation I interpret. I will not communicate, publish, or share any information from the research study with any individual or organization other than the researcher named above nor will I share names of any of the interviewees.

Accuracy and Completeness

To the best of my ability, I will execute a complete and accurate translation/interpretation, not omitting or changing anything discussed in the course of the interview. I will not provide any explanation without a specific request from the interviewee or **Nancy W. Miles**.

Impartiality

At no time will my personal opinions be allowed to interfere with any communication, and any unsolicited comments or suggestions will be made strictly to improve the quality of communication.

_____ _____

Translator/Interpreter's Printed Name Date

_____

Translator/Interpreter's Signature

_____

Researcher's Signature