EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING
EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AT ONE
URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY

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ABSTRACT

JONIMAY J MORGAN. Exploring the Role of School Leadership in Improving
Educational Outcomes of English Language Learners at One Urban Elementary School.
(Under the direction of DR. CHANCE LEWIS)

Beginning with the Lau decision (Sugarman & Widess, 1974), it has been the

responsibility of schools to provide educational support to English Language Learners

(ELL). However, as elucidated by Hakuta (2017), educators continually struggle to

supply ELL students with the necessary assistance for educational success and

adaptation. Rapid growth in the school enrollment of English Learners, means the

numbers of students not being served also increases. Much of the previous literature has

focused on teacher beliefs and behaviors, effective programs, and classroom practices

with regard to the instruction of ELLs. This research aim is not to exclude those factors,

but to move beyond curriculum and instruction, to the role of the principal in creating an

environment where English language learners are successful. It brings new light to the

issue of effective instructional practices for English language learners and how the

administration of a school building can promote and maintain such practices. This

qualitative case study explores the specific elementary principal leadership

responsibilities that support ELLs using interviews, observations, and document data.

The theoretical lens of culturally responsive leadership (CRL) will be used to view

research data obtained using conceptual frameworks constructed from two evidence

based frameworks (VAL-ED Matrix and the ES-I Framework) derived from research on

learner-centered leadership. Upon analysis, it was found that the leadership practices and

core components demonstrated that the role of the elementary principal improving

educational outcomes of ELLs in this case study was to: (1) be intentional about implementation of the tenets of CRSL, (2) create a school culture and learning environment that is safe, welcoming, and positive, and (3) be an advocate, supporter, and model in making meaningful connections with staff, students, families, and communities. Considering the key role that principals play in the successful implementation of programs for ELLs and their potential impact on students' educational outcomes, the implications of this study provide the starting point for school leadership to improve those outcomes.

Keywords: School leadership, English Language Learners, elementary schools, Culturally Responsive Leadership

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, my amazing nieces and nephews, and my hometown, Lorain, Ohio.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Despite the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954 that entitled all children, regardless of race, economic background, or religion, to equitable educational opportunities in the United States, students of color; students with disabilities, students who speak a language other than English, and students from poor families are marginalized and continue to face inequitable opportunities in the public schools (Frattura, Capper, Hurd, & Dubowe, 2014). One group of students that educators increasingly encounter is English Language Learners (ELL). These students, who are typically not proficient in English, either U.S.-born or foreign-born, refugee or immigrant, are learning English while simultaneously learning academic content. The U.S. Census predicts that by 2060 the U.S. population is expected to increase to just under 417 million. Of the nation's total population in 2060, nearly 20% are projected to be foreign-born, an increase from 7.9% in 1990.

The Civil Rights Data Collection (2018) reports an estimated 4.8 million English Language Learner (ELL) students enrolled in English language programs in U.S. schools. This estimate does not include those students who are not English proficient and enrolled in "mainstream" classrooms. Beginning with the Lau decision (Sugarman & Widess, 1974), it has been the responsibility of schools to provide educational support to English Language Learners (ELL). However, as elucidated by Hakuta (2017), educators continually struggle to supply ELL students with the necessary assistance for educational success and adaptation. Rapid growth in the school enrollment of English Learners means the numbers of students not being served also increases. Academically, they frequently lag behind non-ELL students (Kena et al., 2014). They are faced with trying to learn

language and content while grouped with other students with limited English proficiency, being instructed by ill-prepared teachers (Fenner, 2014; Karner, 2017; Valentino & Reardon, 2015).

The revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or No Child Left Behind, requires all schools to increase student achievement annually (No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001). All students, including the English language learner subgroup, must be proficient in the academic subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics. Coupled with that is the onset of Common Core State Standards, where ELL students who already need support in language are being asked to write across the curriculum, read more complex texts, and increase their academic vocabulary at the same pace of achievement as their non-ELL peers. Many schools are not showing growth due to their ELL subgroup not meeting the required yearly percentage target. These schools must now look at revamping their instructional programs to increase student achievement for ELLs.

Statement of the Problem

While the demographics of students in U.S. school systems continue to diversify, the educators of this population persist as a predominantly female, middle-class, White teaching force. The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) reports that since 2004, the 83 percent non-Hispanic White teaching force has seen slight change. This results in a substantial economic, cultural, and social gap between educators and the increasingly diverse student population. As highlighted by Milner (as cited in Landsman & Lewis, 2012), "Having good intentions is important, but teachers must transform and enact those good intentions into thinking (that is, mind sets) and practices that allow all

their students, including their culturally diverse students, to (1) find meaning in the classroom, (2) feel a sense of belonging in the space, and (3) build knowledge and skills for academic success" (pg.56). Ladson-Billings (1995) has further illustrated that if educators are to grant students the best learning opportunities possible, it is imperative they not only obtain knowledge about the various cultural and social contexts in which students learn but utilize the cultural diversity of students as a foundation to transform learning into culturally responsive strategies for effective education and social integration. Research suggests that rather than appreciate the cultural complexities of a group of students, too many educators may have a limited and narrow view of a particular cultural groups (Demereth & Mattheis, 2012; Fayden, 2015). Moreover, cultural characteristics too often influence the realization of potential (Fayden, 2015).

Cárdenas and Cárdenas (1977) report that negative perceptions about ability and intelligence create environments where ELL students are neglected and held to low expectations, resulting in failure and frustration. This demonstrates that ability is malleable, reflecting previous learning opportunities provided by a student's school environment. In addition, fixed mindsets, coupled with deficit perceptions, can affect performance, willingness to engage in challenging academic activities, and ultimately, long-term academic development. Research on closing the opportunity gap demonstrates the importance of educator mindsets and deficit beliefs on the educational outcomes of students (Cosner et al., 2015; Delpit, 2006; Fayden, 2015; Hernandez & Kose, 2012). Studies have shown that when ELL students experience educators who care and learn in a school environment that believes in their educational abilities, the results have been positive (Nieto, 2013).

School culture generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes; namely written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions (NCDPI, 2019). This also includes encompasses more concrete issues, such as the physical & emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, and the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, and/or cultural diversity. Educators can make a school culture more representative and inclusive while improving the cultural landscape within the school. The principal's role is the foundation of organizational change. As the leader in a school, the principal is central to managing cultural change, influencing change, and shaping the climate for school improvement.

One of the groups that has not been successful are ELLs, and schools cannot be deemed effective with students failing to achieve important academic goals. Relatively few leaders experience broad success across a campus or district with ELLs, resulting in a significant number of these children being left behind. Understanding the perspectives surrounding sociocultural issues of ELLs is critical in determining if school culture change and improved achievement of English Learners is possible. Promoting transformation in schools requires the principal understand deficit mindsets impacts on education and challenge educational systems that support deficit mindsets impeding change. Principals must determine how to offer the best possible educational environment, assuring learning English for academic purposes as well as addressing other characteristics that put ELLs at risk for school failure. Engrained school cultures, lack of research, and low-performing characteristics of the ELL subgroup itself compound the need for school leaders to develop comprehensive systems that address not only the

instructional needs of ELLs, but also the underlying equity considerations. As previously stated, existing literature on improving outcomes of ELLs focuses primarily on teacher level actions (i.e. teacher beliefs/attitudes, curriculum, and instruction). What is missing from the equation of improving educational outcomes of ELLs is that of the school leadership. The principal is central to school change and transformation. That is why this dissertation aims to fill that gap in literature to gain a full picture of the problem to find effective and sustainable solutions.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand and explore the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes for ELLs. School culture is about what schools believe and what they do as a result of these beliefs. It can be extended to refer to groups within a school and how they are educated, what teachers and leaders believe about their school and the abilities of minority students and do to be successful. Principals play a significant role in the development and implementation of practices and strategies that may be effective for increasing the achievement of ELLs. Their actions as school leaders in creating a school climate, the types of professional development they encourage, their experiences with language acquisition, their hiring and evaluation practices, and the expectations they have for the instruction of ELLs may be influencing the achievement of ELLs at their schools. They also may be contributing factors as to whether or not their schools ELL populations achieve educational success, both in language acquisition and academics.

Much of the previous literature has focused on teacher beliefs and behaviors, effective programs, and classroom practices with regard to the instruction of English language learners. This research aim is not to exclude, but to move beyond curriculum

and instruction and the role of the principal in constructing an environment where English language learners are successful and brings new light to the issue of effective instructional practices for English language learners and how the administration of a school building can promote and maintain such practices. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to investigate the characteristics of principals who lead schools that are successful in creating academic achievement among English language learners.

Research Questions

To understand the phenomena of high levels of academic achievement amongst elementary English Language Learners, this study will investigate the following:

- What is the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs in urban elementary schools?

To provide holistic understanding of the primary research question, secondary aspects to be explored are:

- How does principal affect the school culture to create a school environment that contributes to the success of ELLs?

- How does the principal promote equity and high expectations in instructional practices for ELLs and monitor for their effectiveness?

Theoretical Framework

Culturally Responsive Leadership

Researchers (Khalifa, 2018; Khalifa et. al 2016) have long identified school leadership as the foundation for school-wide change and transformation. It is the responsibility of school leadership to ensure all students receive and equitable, quality education. With such dynamic change in the population, school leaders must ensure

school organization not only accommodates all students, but includes their backgrounds, lived experiences, and communities. Numerous schools fail to serve all students, blaming certain communities or cultural behaviors for school failure (Khalifa, 2018). While majority of literature discussing cultural responsiveness focuses primarily on teaching and pedagogy in the classroom, school-wide transformation in essential for sustainability. For this reason, the key to equitable, positive educational outcomes is in culturally responsive school leadership. Leaders have the ability and power to "identify resources of inequity and marginalization, and then mobilize resources to address them", in both the classroom and the community (Khalifa, 2018). For these reasons, based off the focus of the current study, the theoretical framework of Culturally Responsive School Leadership, as theorized by Khalifa, 2018) was used for exploration into models of effective culturally responsive school leadership for ELLs in urban elementary schools. Information in this section will reflect Khalifa's explanations of CRSL. Culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) is expressed in four essential ways: critical self-reflection, curriculum and instruction, school context and climate, and community engagement.

Critical self-reflection refers to an awareness (or critical consciousness) of ones values, beliefs, lived experiences, and dispositions (Khalifa, 2016, pg. 1280). While critical consciousness is a developable leadership characteristic, it takes more than preparation programs that address areas of difference. They must understand and question themselves, the contexts in which they live and teach, as well as their own beliefs and assumptions. Then use that understanding to create a positive learning environment for students who previously did not have that opportunity to have one. School leadership

"must be keenly aware of inequitable factors that adversely affects their students'
potential" and "be willing to interrogate personal assumptions about race and culture and
their impact on the school organization" (Khalifa 2018, pg. 52).

A second way CRSL is expressed is culturally responsive curricula and teacher
prep or the "ability of the school leader to articulate a vision that supports the
development and sustaining of culturally responsive teaching" (Khalifa, 2018, pg. 53).
This highlights the need for school leadership to recognize and challenge common
patterns of inequities seen in the classroom. The recruitment and retention of cultural
responsive teachers is essential to achieve this. Securing resources and curricula materials
is imperative to supporting culturally responsive classrooms and teachers. For teacher
development, ongoing professional development opportunities pertaining to CRSL or
contributing subjects are things a culturally responsive leader must provide. Also, it is
responsibility of school leadership to mentor teachers and model culturally responsive
teaching to staff.

Creating culturally responsive and inclusive school environments refers to the
"ability of the school leader to leverage resources to identify and foster a culturally
affirming school environment" (Khalifa, 2018, pg. 55). Not only should indigenous
identities be acknowledged, but protected and celebrated by school leaders. For this to be
successful, Khalifa (2018) specifies questions school leaders can ask, such as : what are
the ways student identities are excluded in school and how do leaders recognize them,
how do leaders promote welcoming school environments that embrace student identities
as positive and normal, what must leaders do to ensure that educators and staff celebrate,
humanize, and support all student identities and connect them with classroom pedagogy.

One way to challenge the exclusion of identities is explained as challenging and supporting teachers who fall into the common pattern of disproportionately disciplining minoritized students for the same infractions as white classmates. Such an action challenges the status quo and addresses exclusionary behavior that impedes a positive, welcoming, accepting, and safe school environment.

The last expression of CRSL, according to Khalifa (2018) is engaging students and parents in community contexts, or the "ability of the school leader to engage students, families, and communities in culturally appropriate ways" (pg.57). This includes a leader possessing the ability to advocate, understand, and address community-based issues and educational goals. The inclusion and engaging, of students, families, and communities requires an overlap of school-community contexts where school leaders promote students' native languages, understanding and including parents' lived experiences, creating school spaces where student identities and behaviors are accepted, and community educational goals are considered. Further literature and discussion of this theoretical framework is articulated in the chapter 2 review of literature.

Conceptual Frameworks

In the study, the use of two frameworks guides the development of the leadership practices that emerged from my investigation. The first framework is called the Essential Support and Indicators (ES-I) framework and the second is called the VAL-ED, which supports learner-centered leadership. Both frameworks work in concert to provide guidance about the essential supports necessary for school improvement in the context of the subject of this study, elementary education for ELLs. The first framework, Essential Supports & Indicators, was derived from a ten-year study of success school improvement

initiatives and transformation efforts in Chicago's failing urban schools (Bryk, Sebring, Allenworth, Luppescu, & Easton 2010). Data analyses from this work resulted in the identification of five essential supports (e.g., leadership as the driver for change, professional capacity, school learning climate, parent-school/community ties, and instructional guidance) and fourteen indicators (e.g., school leadership, teacher's ties to the community, parent involvement, teacher background, frequency of professional development, quality of professional development, changes in human resources, work orientation, professional community, safety and order, academic support and press, curriculum alignment, basic skills, and application emphasis) that were necessary for these failing schools to demonstrate improvements in school effectiveness. The study to develop this framework found strong, consistent relationships between the five essential supports and improvement in student outcomes. Each essential element was strongly associated with each of the student outcome trends. The key role of the ES-I framework is elevating the probability that learning gains will improve over time, and how the school community context influences and interacts with the essential supports. It adds to the linkage between the social context of school communities and their capacities to improve. The framework's validity and reliability relies on quantitative findings that schools strong in most of the essential supports were at least ten times more likely than schools weak in most of the supports to show substantial gains in both reading and mathematics. Moreover, surveys and test-score trends further validate these findings, confirming the linkages between strength in the essential supports and subsequent improvements in learning gains.

The second conceptual framework, The Vanderbuilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) was constructed from evidence-based research on learner-centered leadership practices (Goldring, Cravens, Porter, Murphy, & Elliot, 2015), which can best be described in terms of six-core components and six-key processes of learner-centered leadership. These components and processes form a matrix with which the school leader can determine areas of strength and areas of needed growth in order to implement the necessary supports for gains in school effectiveness. The matrix was developed based on the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Field data from over 270 schools found this matrix to be reliable for measuring principals' learning-centered leadership behaviors in urban suburban, and rural public elementary, middle, and high schools in all regions of the country. Principals' backgrounds, along with their contexts, shape their leadership behaviors. Along with context, these behaviors affect their schools' performance in terms of, for instance, the quality of the school's instruction and the nature of its relationship with the external community. Finally, context and the school's performance on the core components affect student success, leading to value added to student academic and social learning.

This study is defining leadership practices as the sustained habits and action taken by a school leader in order to systemically improve student learning. The Essential Support and Indicator framework and the learner-centered leadership practice frameworks build on prior work and research in the field of school leadership. Taken together, the frameworks focus on the work of the school leadership in improving schools and are therefore powerful drivers of school leadership practices. What makes the combination of these two frameworks unique for this study is that when combined, they

provide a powerful lens that schools leaders can use to define, guide, and justify their practices as school leaders. In combination, these two frameworks identify the supports and indicators, core components and key processes that need to be in place for the school organization to improve and for students to show academic gains. The power of these frameworks used in tandem is that they provide a theoretical backing to the supports that need to be in place for students to increase their learning; they also guide the leader in ensuring that their practices are actionable through the key processes identified by the VAL-ED framework. Also, these frameworks provide ways to analyze the extent to which specific leadership practices are being implemented in a particular school, not found in many other leadership frameworks. Further discussion of the use of these two conceptual frameworks will be provided in Chapter 3: Methodology.

Overview of Context and Methods

The school site and district is located in a metropolitan area in the southeast region in the United States. The Civil Rights Database reports the school district's 39 schools serving 31,420 students in the 2015 survey year (see Table 1 for district-school comparison).

Table 1: Demographic Composition of study district and study site school population.

Demographic Composition		
	District, % of enrollment	Site School, % of enrollment
# of Schools	39	1
Total Student Enrollment	31,420	917
Hispanic/Latinx	15.6	21.5
White	56.1	39.3
African American	19.8	30.7
2 or more	4.0	6.7

Asian	3.7	.8
Native American/Alaskan Native	.6	.2
Economically Disadvantaged	42.1	70.5
Limited English Proficiency	5.2	40
Teachers	1, 940	68
Elementary Teachers	1, 173	68
Administrators and Support	106	3

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

A qualitative study was the chosen method due to qualitative data's ability to understand and explore lived experiences, how those experiences shape realities, and the ways in which experiences influence change. The use of a qualitative approach allows a researcher to delve deeply into the experiences, attitudes, and thoughts of participants. The results of this study provide insights into individual biases, deficit ideologies, and the dialogue necessary to defy deficit logic and promote change within a school. Also, the information gathered in this study reflects the practices and behaviors demonstrated by a principal who has been successful in maintaining high academic proficiency among English language learners.

To fully understand every aspect of one elementary principal's role in creating an environment that is successful for English language learners, dedicated time for observation, interviews, and data collection was necessary so that a complete picture could be drawn. Therefore, the method chosen was an instrumental case study method, which effectively captured the detailed behaviors, interactions, actions, and effects of elementary principal's efforts in creating an environment that is successful with ELLs.

The principal was interviewed, observed, and asked to reflect upon their actions, knowledge, and expectations related to English Language Learners. A semi-structured

interview process was utilized because it combined a structures questioning with the adaptability and flexibility to ask subsequent questions. In addition, staff members were interviewed about the actions of their principal and observed in their interactions. Documentation and archival records from the school, district, and state provided essential information about the performance of all students, including the English language learners in the building, the characteristics of the staff, professional development opportunities, the demographics of the school, and the background of the principal. This type of triangulation was necessary to see whether what was being recorded and observed was happening in all contexts of the principal's role. Given the nature of qualitative study purposive sampling was implemented. Chapter 3 explains methods in greater detail.

<div align="center">**Significance of Study**</div>

Because most research regarding the educational outcomes of ELLs focuses on teachers instructional practices and how they can improve upon their curriculum and instruction strategies, this study adds dimension to English language learner literature in that it provides the exploration of the elementary principal's part in increasing the educational opportunities of ELLs. Specifically, this study investigated the behaviors, practices, strategies, and expectations of an elementary principal in improving educational outcomes for English language learners. With such a rapidly growing ELL population, principals must be ready to meet the challenge of educating the diversity of the students attending, as well as provide the best educational outcomes possible.

The results of this study aim to function as a starting point for urban elementary principals who desire to improve issues of effective practices, teacher beliefs and strategies, in addition to equity and lessening the opportunity gap between ELLs and non-

ELLs throughout their school. Also, data from this study could provide a new perspective on effective policies, plans, and professional development in a school with high achievement of ELLs. The understanding and reflection of deficit-based and asset/strengths-based perceptions of principals could shed new light on how school culture is utilized to promote equity, high expectations, and culturally sustaining curriculum and instructional practices for ELLs, which promotes a positive learning environment for ELLs, thus reducing the opportunity gap between ELLs and non-ELLs.

Definition of Terms

Effective schools. Much of the research regarding effective schools centers on the Effective Schools Correlates (Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). These correlates were the results of the research of Lezotte, Edmunds, and Brookover (year) and represent a framework for reform based on seven guiding principles addressing the culture and learning climate of schools where students are achieving. The seven guiding principles are a clear and focused mission, high expectations for success, instructional leadership, frequent monitoring of student success, the opportunity to learn and student time on task, a safe and orderly environment, and home/school relations. These correlates, however, do not represent the final word in effective schools. A more recent study (Aleman, Bernal, & Cortez, 2015) identifies four characteristics of high-performing, urban elementary schools in California, Texas, and Florida. These four characteristics are high expectations, a focus on conceptual understanding, a culture of appreciation, and leadership.

English language learners (ELLs). English language learners include any student who is in the process of acquiring or has recently acquired functional use of the

English language. Though some research utilizes terminology such as emergent bilingual, for the purpose of this study and to ease in interpretation, it indicates students whom participated in an English language acquisition program (i.e., English as a Second Language or bilingual classes) at some point during his or her educational career. ELL is a linguistic marker and has no racial, ethnic, or cultural connection.

Principal. Site administrator who officially provides evaluation and suggestions for instructional practices in the classroom and sets the tone for the culture in the school (Di Paola & Hoy, 2013; Hernandez & Murakami-Ramalho, 2016).

Standardized testing. For the purpose of this study, standardized testing will include any state-level test administered to the general student population. The tests might include either criterion-referenced or norm-referenced tests or exams. As noted by Knoester and Au (2017) improved standardized test scores do not necessarily reflect strong educational practice, but do represent success within the parameters of the state in which the student lives.

Success. Success is defined differently by a number of researchers. This research combines several standards of success used in various contexts. Many researchers, such as Gneezy et al. (2017), rely on passing scores on standardized tests. Because of the emerging research regarding ELLs and standardized testing, this study will not look solely at that factor (Farah, 2017). After all, as Knoester and Au (2017) point out, standardized tests typically measure a single dimension of a skill without accounting for other knowledge or skill requisites. In this study, school success will be the measure of academic achievement coupled with a positive school climate.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations and delimitations that could be factors influencing the results of the proposed study are as follows:

- This study was limited by the number of participants that were studied.

- This study was limited geographically to the Southeastern region of the U.S.

- This study was limited to urban public elementary schools with high percentages of ELL student populations in one district.

- Not all of the school leaders of ELLs showing growth participated in the study.

- The study was limited by the knowledge of different programs and protocols used to accommodate the needs of ELL students.

- The study was limited by the willingness and honesty of the participants answering the research questions.

- Possibility of researcher location, employment, cultural, and professional bias that may exist must be taken into consideration.

Summary

The first chapter of this dissertation provided background information that offers background, explanation of problem and significance, research questions, and context with which the research was conducted. In Chapter 2, a presentation of the literature related to the topics addressed in the research questions are covered. This includes delving deeper into the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study. Chapter 3 describes methods used in this study that consist of participants, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review is organized on the following topics: demographic trends of immigration and English Language Learners; the problems faced by ELLs in education; social and economic impacts of inadequate schooling of ELLs; the role of principals as leaders in relation to improving instruction for ELLs; and the ways leadership influences and perceives ELLs and ELL education. This chapter provides a rationale for this study regarding the many years of struggle that educational systems in the United States, and North Carolina in particular, have encountered as the numbers of English language learners increases exponentially, and how the effective leadership of school principals relate to the improvement of the educational outcomes of ELLs. There is an extensive increase in educational research (Deal & Peterson, 2016; DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2016; Murphy & Torre, 2014) on school principals' influence in school effectiveness and student achievement, but the need exists to study their influence on school effectiveness and achievement as it pertains to underrepresented groups of ELLs. The review of the literature supports the need to carry out this research study, and the findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge about school principals and their influence in addressing issues in the education of English language learners, as well as demonstrating a model of effectiveness for current and future principals of ELLs.

Demographic Trends

The flow of immigrants into the United States has increased steadily since the 1930s when only 500,000 individuals were admitted to the United States during the entire decade. By the 1950s, 250,000 immigrants entered the country each year. By the 1990s, the most recent decade with complete statistics available, nearly 900,000 immigrants

were being admitted each year with another 1.1 million undocumented immigrants estimated to be "apprehended" per year (U.S. Census, 2018). Because of these startling statistics and individual accountability within schools, English Language Learners present a particularly vital sector in today's educational world. As the most rapid demographic of the student population, English language learners (ELLs) have increased in all states over the last twenty years (U.S. Census, 2018). Anti-immigration and English-only policies have created challenges in providing culturally and linguistically responsive education (Arias, 2015). In the last decade, English language learners have experienced an increase in isolation, both linguistically and otherwise (Arias, 2015).

Schools with a high concentrations of ELL students are presented with the challenge of communicating with parents that have low literacy levels, both in English and native languages. (Arias, 2015). Overall, the barriers that most often confront ELL parents regarding educational success within schools include the following: (1) school-based barriers like a deficit perspective and negative school climate; (2) lack of English language proficiency; (3) parental educational level; (4) disjuncture between school culture and home culture; and (5) logistical issues like immigrant parents, who are often dealing with culture shock, may see the school as a completely foreign environment, and one that they choose to avoid (Arias, 2015). Additionally, the Pew Hispanic Center (PHC, 2018) reported that more than 12.4 million, or an equivalent of one in every four students enrolled in K-12 education nationwide, were identified as Hispanic. When evaluating growth of one group in the United States, no other minority group has ever grown this fast while also being the youngest in the history of this country (Hansen, 2016; PHC, 2018).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2018), the ELL population residing in the United States grew to 4.8 million and is the fastest growing ethnic population. In North Carolina, the ELL population grew by 90% from 1990 to 2010 alone, the second highest growth nationally (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018); the Latinx population accounted for 65% of this growth. Seventy-seven percent of all ELLs nationally reported speaking Spanish, with Arabic, Chinese, and Vietnamese being the next most common home languages. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2016, just over 4 million Hispanic students were enrolled in grades 9-12 alone, and the projection for 2020 is that North Carolina will have had a 20% increase in enrollment (Max & Glazerman, 2014). Though this minority group is growing rapidly, the majority are native-born Hispanics with two-thirds born in this country (Pew, 2018). When comparing the national ELL student population to North Carolina, there is a huge discrepancy in ELL enrollment. Nationwide, 4.8 million ELL students were identified in U.S. public schools, which is comparable to a 10% increase nationwide over the past decade (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). The data shows North Carolina as a state that currently has an ELL student enrollment of nearly 7% (U.S. Department of Education, 2018), which is a high percentage of total enrollments with a very specific need.

Barriers Encountered By ELLs

Although coming to the United States is viewed by many as a dream come true, the children of immigrants are faced with an immediate dilemma of straddling two worlds as they adapt. The Pew Center (2018) also found that these children come from families who place a high emphasis on maintaining their family traditions, preserving pride in their country of origin and more specifically their language. Not only have these

students been transplanted from a culture and life that they appreciate as normal, now they have been thrown into an educational system where everything is in English. Simple tasks, such as finding the office or the nurse, may seem almost impossible. Rong and Preissle (2014) noted that government policy states students should be English proficient within three years, despite the fact that research in language acquisition overwhelmingly agrees it takes between five to seven years to master a new language. Many states shifted to an "English Only" approach to instruction, which has not shown positive growth with this group (Gunderson, 2017).

Drop-out Rate

Over one million students are not completing high school and the effects of this will ultimately affect our society and economy. This is something researchers are studying to understand, the true reasons students drop out at such a young age (Erwin, 2018). On a national scale, ELL students in the U.S. public high school system have a higher dropout rate than any other group (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2018). Hispanic youth are three times more likely to drop out compared to Whites and double the amount for African American youth (PHC, 2018). The U.S. Census (2018) reported that over the last ten years there has been a decline in dropouts, from 53% in 2003 to 35% in 2013 for ELL students, but it is still higher than non-ELL students who was at 6% in both 2003 and 2013. There have been many documented reasons for this high drop-out rate and some of the most important factors include individual, socioeconomic, and sociocultural issues (PHC, 2018). The Pew research group (2018) also found that the majority of young ELLs claim the reason for dropping out is the need to work to support their family, and the next highest reason is due to lack of English language skills.

Socioeconomic Factors

The largest portions of ELL students nationally, and in North Carolina, are Hispanic and/or Latinx. One of the greatest causes of the high dropout rate reported by Hispanic youth has been the pressure they feel to obtain employment to assist with family finances (PHC, 2018). Yet Fry and Taylor (2013) broke down the reasons even further and found 41% of female Hispanics drop out due to pregnancy. They also noted that over 90% of all jobs in this country require more than a high school diploma. Archambault, Janosz, Dupere, Brault, and Andrew (2017) found that contributing to the family was an important cultural factor for ELLs, which caused a conflict for the students when having to choose between school and helping support the family. Moreover, even young immigrants reported that they felt they would only have employment opportunities in manual labor type jobs whether or not they had a high school diploma; for them leaving school early to earn money was an easy decision (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2018).

Sociocultural Factors and Educator Preparedness

Miller (2017) emphasized that moving from one country to another is difficult under any circumstance. The inability to communicate with others naturally causes even more problems, especially when in school a child has to be immersed in a culture of which they have little to no understanding. They also believe that the traditional curriculum in the United States lacks cultural awareness and discussion; instead, it is primarily aimed at American issues and the American culture. Their research has shown that traditionally immigrants do not feel accepted by their new culture and lack enthusiasm to continue to be enrolled in high school. Students whose parents do not

speak English are also limited in their ability to help their children due to lack of insight on the U.S. school system and more so because of their lack of English (Duong, Badaly, Liu, Schwartz, & McCarty, 2016). Duong et al., (2016) also pointed out that due to these limitations, immigrant and low-income parents are dependent on school personnel, school boards, and elected officials to make the right choices about education, determining their outcomes in the public school system. In a seminal work, Ogbu (1992) categorized immigrants into two categories: those who willingly arrived and those whose arrival was forced upon them. He further clarified this by commenting that those who willingly immigrated to the United States had a greater desire to learn English than those who did not wish to be in the country. This group included school children that were required to immigrate with their families, which led to a lack of desire to either learn English or adopt a new culture.

Scholarly research points to the fact that teachers who are given the title of "ESL" teacher are most times not prepared with the task put before them (Alcantar-Martinez, 2014; Collier & Thomas, 2014; Duong et al., 2016; PHC, 2018; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2014). This issue is exacerbated when ELL students are placed in mainstream classroom with their non-ELL peers, much like the majority of schools across North Carolina. Many times, teachers are not given adequate preparation on how to shelter instruction or how to differentiate, and many times they expect the students to assimilate to the English only environment of the school (Campbell, Kyriakides, Mujis, & Robinson, 2012). Teachers need to learn how to use the first or native language to help or advance the learning of the concept in the second language, and school administration needs to support the teachers in that endeavor (Valentino & Reardon, 2015).

Opportunity Gap

Unlike several countries where more than one language is commonly taught and spoken, immigrant school children in the United States are required to learn English as quickly as possible so they can be mainstreamed or function in mainstream classrooms with native students (Rong & Preissle, 2014). In a study by Rumbaut (as cited by Miley & Farmer, 2017) results showed that all immigrant children underwent some social and academic adjustment period and most prevailed over time; however, some seemed to regress and never meet the expected level of academic or social competence. Miley and Farmer (2017) conducted a study comparing academic success of ELL students versus non-ELL students to analyze the differences between the groups. They found that the non-ELL students had overall better grades and less absences than the ELL group which caused them to investigate other factors such as background characteristics to determine the effect of other mitigating factors. The factors showed ELL students were significantly lower in socioeconomic status (high poverty) than the non-ELL students and tended to be older than their traditional grade level would indicate. In addition, the ELL students had higher rates of absenteeism leading to lower grades and ultimately lower academic achievement. Collier and Thomas (2014) state that the best predictor for success in the second language can be linked to the amount of formal school they received in their home language.

The National Center for Education Statistics data (2018) found that ELL students fell far behind the national levels of achievement for non-ELL students in Reading and Math; Table 2 demonstrates national and state comparisons. The data indicated that at the level of assessment (4th grade), 47% of ELL students were below basic in Math, and

68% were below basic in Reading. Comparatively, 17% of Non-ELL students at the same grade scored below basic level in Math and 28% below basic in Reading. The statistics reported for eighth grade showed a widening gap. At this level, NCES reported that 71% of ELL students in 8th grade were below basic math levels, while 68% of ELLs were below basic reading levels. A reported 27% of non-ELLs were below basic math levels and 21% reading. Title III mandates that the district monitor students two years after being exited to ensure their progress continues or to reenroll them into ESL services as needed (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Collier and Thomas (2014) noted that educators must consider that research has consistently shown that the highest quality ESL programs close about half of the total opportunity gap.

NCES highlights a significant "opportunity gap" between ELL and non-ELL students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test. Recent data available from the state of North Carolina (shown in Table 2) show a large gap between the academic successes of ELL students compared to other non-ELL students. This statistic causes concern for lawmakers due to the dramatic, continuous increase of students enrolled in ELL, ESL, or bilingual courses in North Carolina (NCEE, 2018).

Table 2: The percentage of 4th and 8th graders scoring below basic math and reading levels on the NAEP tests.

Percentage of 4th and 8th Graders Below Basic Math and Reading Levels		
	National	North Carolina
4th Grade Math		
ELL	47	56
Non-ELL	17	17
4th Grade Reading		
ELL	68	81
Non-ELL	28	28
8th Grade Math		
ELL	71	76
Non-ELL	27	30
8th Grade Reading		

ELL	68	74
Non-ELL	21	25

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2017 Mathematics Assessment.

Another alarming statistic is that North Carolina has been a state that historically has high levels of ELL students who have not shown significant academic growth (NCEE, 2018). Compounding this issue, Latinx youth who are less than 18 years of age are the fastest growing population nationwide, as well as in North Carolina. In fact, Hansen (2016) showed that the Latinx population has doubled in size over the past ten years. Thus, it is imperative that lawmakers, educational leaders, and others need to consider this growth and plan accordingly. With a group this large who have documented linguistic limitations and who statistically have been living in poverty and many of whom are immigrants or offspring of immigrants. It must be not just a desire, but a duty to help this group succeed and persist school to completion, to investigate and research how to reach this group (Alcantar-Martinez, 2014). In the words of Gerhart, Harris, and Mixon (2011), "Closing the achievement gap for the ELL group often means shooting a moving target" (pg. 43) describing how difficult it is to educate this group of students at the same level as their non-ELL counterparts.

Social and Economic Impact of Inadequate Schooling of ELLs

In order to accomplish significant changes, educators and policy makers must promote bilingualism in a positive way at the local and national level and build on the cultural and linguistic capital of English language learners (Gorman, 2015). Cultural globalization and language education have not been addressed with intentional fidelity in most educational systems. As a result of this neglect, students in American schools are not prepared to enter an economic society that is dependent on its citizens to be

knowledgeable about globalization and be proficient in the English language, particularly the increasingly large population of English language learners (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Schools need to validate students' culture and all that it entails such as language, beliefs, values, and overall heritage. When educational settings value these factors and their impact, then students will have relevancy and applicability in the world around them (NCELA, 2017).

Cultural logic and its constant impact on language education is the central theme that Kumaravadivelu (2012) addressed in his book *Cultural Globalization and Language Education*. Kumaravadivelu tried to present new and difficult ways to understand the intricacy of the connection between cultural globalization and language education. Historically, culture before World War II was not considered part of language education but afterwards it was evident that international trade demanded language education to include the direct teaching of culture (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Few second language education programs fully seized the crucial need to increase global cultural awareness in the learner even believing that just speaking English is enough to evidence a good education (Lingard, Rezai-Rashti, Martino, & Sellar, 2015). Stereotyping can manifest itself as "a virus that replicates… and rapidly infects unquestioning minds" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p.51). In language education, stereotypes seem to persist, and the majority is targeted towards ethnicity issues, overgeneralizing the cultural characteristics of certain groups of people (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

According to Perea, Padilla-Martinez, and Coll (2018), the United States as a superpower must meet the demands of the development of globalization and the needs of the economy for more foreign-language proficiency. Knowing two languages is not

enough; sometimes the socio-economy forces society to become multilingual or polyglot. In countries like Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, and Belarus, bilingualism is actively supported by their governmental entities and school systems. The United States must follow lead and actively support our school systems' diversity to ensure they meet the demands of an ever-changing global society (Darling-Hammond, 2010). English language learners in our public schools nationally are among the country's lowest performing students, scoring far below the national average on the reading portion of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), or the Nation's Report Card (2018). Many of these English language learners have long been characterized by high dropout rates and low college completion rates, and the educational opportunity gap between ELLs and non-ELLs persists (PHC, 2018). One important challenge in today's school system is how to empower mainstream and language minority students with resources and decision-making skills that will develop their full potential to become lifelong learners, and not become dropout statistics (Esmail, Pitre, Lund, Baptiste, & Duhon-Owens, 2018). During their lifetimes, dropouts cost the United States over $200 billion in unrealized tax returns and lost wages, for each graduating class (Alliance for Excellence Education (AEE), 2015). Hispanic youths are among the most at-risk for academic failure with 22% dropping out of school (NCES, 2018), and Hispanic English language learners are even more at-risk with 59% dropping out of school (PHC, 2018).

The principal avenue of targeting the challenge of Hispanic English language learner achievement has been a spotlight on the efficiency of language acquisition methods (PHC, 2018). Nearly six in ten or 58% of Hispanic adults say the major reason for dropping out of school is the students' limited English proficiency (PHC, 2018).

Consequently, students who drop out of school are under skilled and undereducated and will have difficulty gaining employment and maintaining a job or attending a college or university (Dupere et al., 2018; Ovando & Combs, 2018).

In 2016, more than 129 languages other than English were spoken in homes across the state of North Carolina (NCES, 2018). Additionally, Spanish is by far the most frequently spoken language in North Carolina by ELLs (NCES, 2018). Unfortunately, in the United States there is such a great shortage in personnel with foreign-language proficiency, but the schools and communities do not fully support bilingualism, much less multiculturalism (Perea et al., 2018). One of the most obvious impacts to society is the drain on the economies of the state with significantly lower wages than those who graduate (The Alliance for Excellent Education, 2015). Another impactful factor is that state and local economies suffer when they have less educated human capital and find it more difficult to draw new business venture, and the same entities have to spend more on social programs when their population has lower educational levels. Therefore, dropouts represent a huge waste of human capital and efficiency, which reduces the ability to compete in the global economy (The Alliance for Excellent Education, 2015). Another major issue about English language learners is that this group has the highest proportion of economically disadvantaged students; in North Carolina approximately 90 % of ELLs are eligible for free and reduced-fee lunches (NCES, 2018). The importance of this study becomes even more critical to understand how school principals at the various school levels perceive bilingual education and how this perception may influence program implementation. Even more, how does the social and economic outcome for ELLs fair

with effective principals of ELL students? One way to improve educational outcomes for ELLs leads to the theoretical framework of this study: culturally responsive leadership.

<div align="center">F**rameworks**</div>

The VAL-ED Matrix

The first conceptual framework and matrix used for data analysis, VAL-ED, focuses on the intersection of core components and key processes of leadership behaviors (Goldring et al., 2015; see Appendix C). This study chose the VAL-ED Matrix as the core components and key processes assess the principal's actions not just from the perspective of the principal, but that of teachers and supervisors. This provided an in depth understanding of principal actions from the full spectrum of perspectives. The matrix, along with the ES-I framework, guided interview protocol development and data analysis. A summary of the matrix is as follows.

The core components contribute to leadership characteristics that create a culture of learning. The six core components include:

1. High Standards for Student Learning
2. Rigorous Curriculum
3. Quality Instruction
4. Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior
5. Connections to External Communities
6. Systemic Performance Accountability

Key processes focus on actions of leadership that influence the attainment of core components. Those six key processes include:

1. Planning
2. Implementing
3. Supporting
4. Advocating

5. Communicating

6. Monitoring

Essential Supports – Indicators (ES-I) Framework

The second conceptual framework, ES-I framework, is based off school improvement research by Byrk et al. (2010). This framework contributed to this study in that the VAL-ED matrix analyzes principal actions from a full 360-degree perspective, and ES-I delves into the specifics of those actions, broadening the scope of the study in reviewing effective culturally responsive leadership. The ES-I framework consists of five essential supports (ES) and associated indicators (I), which are:

- ES: School leadership: the principal is a catalyst for change, building agency at the community level, and nurturing shared leadership and vision.
    - I: *school leadership* and encompasses inclusive principal leadership, teacher influences on decisions, the contributions of the Local School Council (LSC), the principal as an instructional leader, program coherence, and the implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
- ES: Parent-community-school ties- the outreach to families and the immediate community to establish a welcoming environment and strengthen relationships.
    - I: *teacher ties to the* community and *parent involvement in the school*.
- ES: Professional capacity of the faculty- developing a quality instructional staff that functions as a professional learning community focused on continuous improvement.
    - I: *teacher background*, *frequency of professional development*, *quality of professional development*, *changes in human resources*, *work orientation*, and *professional community*.
- ES: Student-centered learning climate- nurturing an environment that is safe and facilitates engagement in learning that is rigorous and supportive.
    - I: *safety and order* and *academic support and press*.
- ES: Instructional guidance- school-wide supports in the areas of curriculum and instruction to promote ambitious academic achievement for all.
    - I: *basic skills* and *application emphasis*.

Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRL)

For the most part, the curriculum in U.S. schools primarily presents the world from a Eurocentric perspective, and schools have largely failed to acknowledge the knowledge, experiences, and strengths of culturally diverse student populations (Frattura et al., 2014). This has contributed to the marginalization and disengagement of ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse students, families, and communities. This continues to happen despite the reality of the presence of large number of culturally diverse and marginalized students in U.S. schools. Consequently, there is a need for leaders who are willing to challenge deeply rooted beliefs of communities different from their own and achieve an understanding of the realities of other people's lived experiences. Culturally responsive leaders seek to know their school communities and put strategies in place to level the playing field for the marginalized communities they serve. This is especially important amongst marginalized English Language Learning student populations. Central to this study are ideas about culturally responsive leadership contained in several studies. While most approaches to culturally responsive education have focused on teachers' classroom teaching strategies, few researchers have used a culturally responsive framework in relation to school leadership.

By using diversity in a positive way to improve school culture, educational experiences, and outcomes of all students, effective school leaders promote culturally responsive education by: (1) adjusting school culture to ensure a welcoming environment for all students; and (2) supporting teachers in integrating students of all backgrounds into curriculum and instructional practices. Both practices are supported in literature as being essential to combatting oppressive institutionalized practices that remove cultural

capital and educational power from students having backgrounds not matching the majority (Bourdieu, 2011; Hilaski, 2018; Nieto, 2018; Rios-Ellis et al., 2015).

CRL Strategies

Considering the demographic shift in many urban schools, students need school leaders who are prepared to be advocates and cultural change agents, "principals armed with the knowledge, strategies, supports, and courage to make curriculum instruction, student engagement, and family partnerships, culturally responsive" (Williams, 2018, pg. 7). Three key strategies administrators can use to accomplish this are: (a) to foster cultural responsiveness, (b) promote culturally responsive pedagogy, and (c) create a welcoming school environment focused on building relationships.

Foster cultural responsiveness. Leaders are better prepared to promote culturally teaching practices, respond to the needs of marginalized student populations, and build meaningful partnerships with families and school communities when they become culturally responsive (Barakat, Reames, & Kensler, 2018; Minkos et al., 2017). Cultural responsiveness is a personal journey of growth and development individuals embark on that enables them respond to difference in order to facilitate change. That being said, only a limited amount of literature highlights what school leaders need to do to become culturally responsive to the students and communities they serve. However, administrators first need to become culturally competent by developing the ability to identify and challenge their own cultural assumptions, accept and respect differences, continuously expand their cultural knowledge, and make adaptations to their belief systems, policies, and practices (Arvanitis, 2018; Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell-Jones, 2013; Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2012). Cultural competence necessitates

that knowledge and values must be integrated with skills relevant to education and that these skills must then be adapted in response to the needs of marginalized students (Arvantis, 2018).

In a similar vein, Nelson and Guerra (2014, pg. 12) suggested that school-wide cultural competence refers to "how well a school's policies, programs and practices reflect the needs and experiences of diverse groups in the school and outer school community." In any case, inference and understanding between the terms "cultural competence" and "cultural responsiveness" would seem to imply that cultural competence gives one the capacity to act, whereas cultural responsiveness is cultural competence in action. In essence cultural responsiveness is that response planned for and delivered that comes from possessing cultural competence (Arvanitis, 2018). In this dissertation for instance, since these school leaders were culturally competent, they exhibited cultural responsiveness by taking action to fulfill the needs of their school community. In effect, cultural responsiveness requires moving beyond superficial knowledge of cultural groups in order to understand the social realities and histories that shape their lived experiences and intervening to enact policies and programs to level the playing field on their behalf. Cultural responsiveness, then, is a viable strategy used to improve links between access and equity for marginalized populations as well as to enhance the effectiveness of educational experiences for all (Minkos et al., 2017).

Many school leaders find it difficult and uncomfortable to engage in open and frank conversations about race, culture, class, ethnicity, privilege, and inequity with their staff, students, and families; however, this is something they should do to show their commitment to equity and cultural responsiveness (Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell-Jones,

2013; Lindsey, Thousand, Jew, & Piowlski, 2017; Noltemeyer, Harper, & James, 2018; Singleton, 2013).

   Promote culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive school leaders also assist teachers in identifying, understanding, and implementing teaching strategies that are effective for diverse learners (Knoester & Au, 2017; Williams, 2018). There is a considerable amount of research supporting the idea that teaching from a culturally responsive/relevant pedagogical frame of reference has a positive impact on the learning and educational outcomes of students from culturally diverse or minoritized backgrounds (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Au & Kawakami, 2016; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Darling, 2010; Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ovando & Combs, 2018; Sleeter & Carmona, 2016). In addition, mounting research suggests that school culture is positively influenced by culturally responsive educational leadership, thus increasing student engagement and improving educations outcomes as a result (Johnson, Uline, & Perez, 2017; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012). According to Ladson-Billings (2006), culturally responsive school leaders support teachers in using cultural backgrounds and experiences to develop students intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Moreover, Nelson and Guerra (2014) argue that culture is the lens through which we see and understand the world, thus this "broadened cultural lens allows teachers to see students for what they bring and use student knowledge and contributions as a bridge for teaching and learning. As a result, students feel valued and are engaged in learning, leading to higher achievement" (pg. 12).

  In other words, rather than just tolerate or celebrate cultural diversity, culturally responsive leaders support and encourage their educational communities to implement

culturally responsive/relevant teaching across the grade levels (Cooper, 2017). For instance, they ensure that the cultural knowledge, lived experiences, prior knowledge, and learning styles of ethnically diverse students are used to make learning more relevant and effective for them (Gay, 2018). These culturally responsive leaders encourage teachers to build positive, constructive, trustful relationships with their students involving honoring students' home cultures while emphasizing student achievement. In this culture of learning, teachers not only become researchers of their students, but they also create spaces in which they can learn with their students (Nieto, 2018). This interaction leads to heightened awareness of each other's culture, thereby maximizing the learning experience for both teacher and students (Vassallo, 2015). Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) becomes a two-way communication process in which both teacher and student actively participate to construct a new pedagogy as a result of their interaction. Culturally responsive leaders also change school programs and structures to meet the needs of students and parents (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012). How the principals in this study go about promoting CRP and supporting student achievement in their schools serves as an example for other practitioners in the field. Teacher narratives as to the impact their principals' culturally responsive leadership approach has on their teaching practice are also examined.

Create a welcoming school environment focused on building relationships. As mentioned in the literature around CRL and social justice leadership, a common attribute of these principals was that they demonstrated an ethic of care towards all stakeholders and endeavored to cultivate a welcoming and inclusive school climate as well as develop strong relationships with their school community (Frattura et al., 2014;

Johnson, 2017; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Shields, 2014; Williams, 2018). All stakeholders were invited into the school and encouraged to become actively involved in the life of the school. These school leaders reached out to marginalized communities to form meaningful coalitions with families and community groups (Baquedano-Lopez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013; Frattura et al., 2014; Shields, 2014; Williams, 2018). According to Kalyanpur (2014), many parents feel inadequate when dealing with school personnel in the process of ensuring an appropriate education for their children. Culturally responsive leaders help parents gain the necessary skills they need to negotiate the educational system and obtain knowledge of the norms of behavior in the education system (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). Without this support, parents are more likely to flounder through the educational system, unable to advocate for their children.

According to Passiatore, Carrus, Taeschner, & Arcidiacono (2017), culturally responsive leaders allow parent life experience and culture to inform schools' cultural worlds. Parents and caregivers come from many different places, speak various languages, and have a variety of experiences, which can serve to enrich the school environment. Various strategies these principals use to create a welcoming and inclusive school culture can serve as a model for other school leaders. Furthermore, Wade (2018) argued that cultural responsiveness also entails "recognizing power inequities, making them explicit, aligning oneself with marginalized groups, promoting collective action, and striving to empower oppressed groups." (pg.3) Political action is needed to transform schools and develop culturally responsive school environments (Giroux, 2017; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Wade, 2018). When administrators create a welcoming school environment and build meaningful relationships with families and community

organizations, treating them as partners and important allies, students benefit greatly from these collaborative alliances (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernández, 2013).

Impact of CRL

Drawing from the literature in previous sections, when principals enact a culturally responsive approach to leadership, marginalized students achieve better academic results as well as have more positive and engaging school experiences (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2006). The school culture is welcoming, and parents are more inclined to become actively involved in their children's schooling. In addition, school leaders and educators are more likely to develop authentic partnerships with families and community members (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernández, 2013; Johnson, Uline, & Perez, 2017). Several recent studies that have examined culturally responsive leadership practices in culturally diverse schools have identified similar findings. For instance, Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis (2016) reviewed the literature to explore the role of the school leadership in responding to the needs of diverse students. They argued that given the growing diversity in schools, the notion that a single method of instruction works for all students ignores the concept of cultural pluralism. According to the literature on culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching, such practices promote learning among diverse students because educators honor their different ways of knowing, focus on caring for them, as well as support their academic achievement. Moreover, provisions ought to be made so that all students, whatever their cultural background or socioeconomic status, experience success in school.

In this vein, the growing literature on how schools can more effectively serve diverse student populations focuses on various approaches to social justice leadership,

teacher education, professional development, curriculum, instructional methods, and the relationship between schools and students' families and communities (Frattura et al., 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). Moreover, according to Fullan (2018), school leaders are morally obligated to promote forms of teaching that enable diverse students to succeed and foster school cultures that embrace and support diversity, equity, and inclusion. As Llopart & Esteban-Guitart (2018) noted, when committed to to equity and social justice in education, school leaderships' "efforts in the tasks of sense-making, promoting inclusive cultures and practices in schools, and building positive relationships outside the school may indeed foster a new form of practice" (pg. 22).

Johnson, Uline, & Perez (2017) applied a culturally responsive framework in cross-national studies of school leaders in the United States, Norway, and Cyprus. Although there were differences across national contexts, Johnson and her colleagues found that school leaders who exhibited culturally responsive leadership practices rejected a deficit approach towards students from culturally diverse backgrounds, expressed high expectations for academic achievement, and worked to include parents from diverse backgrounds in decision-making processes. These leaders considered the local and cultural contexts when choosing leadership strategies, and students' academic achievement improved in most cases. For instance, in the United States, all schools experienced improved student performance. That being said, these leaders also experienced tensions between incorporating students' home language and culture in the face of accountability mandates that tended to narrow the school curriculum. Cooper's (2009) study of two elementary schools in North Carolina explored how educators can

serve as transformative leaders by "performing cultural work that addresses inequity, crosses sociocultural boundaries, and fosters inclusion" (pg.3). They argued that in the midst of such dynamic shifts in student populations, "students need leaders and advocates who are prepared to be cultural change agents; educators armed with the knowledge, strategies support, and courage to make curriculum, instruction, student engagement, and family partnerships culturally responsive" (pg.5). This partly entails educational leaders' rejecting ideologies steeped in blatantly biased or color-blind traditions to transform schools.

The principals in her study were equity-minded leaders who strived to provide equal educational opportunity and a high-quality education to all students regardless of their socioeconomic and cultural background. These leaders encountered obstacles to their equity agenda in the form of cultural differences and anti-culture policies that serve to oppress ethnic and linguistic minority students and their families. Nonetheless, these principals continued to promote culturally responsive practices, broaden their cultural consciousness, and use various strategies to combat forces of resistance in order to build partnerships with culturally diverse groups to promote educational equity. Similarly, Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) describe how culturally responsive school leaders promoted equity in a linguistically and racially diverse schools. They report building relationships, being persistent and persuasive, transparently communicating, and fostering cultural responsiveness, among others, produced this result. According to Madhlangobe and Gordon, Faith's culturally responsive approach to leadership improved the attitude of staff, parents, and students towards each other. The history, values, and cultural knowledge of students' home communities were incorporated into the school

curriculum, and their academic achievement improved. With her caring and persistent

support, all stakeholders became more collaborative, worked on projects, and shared

activities. Parents were encouraged to be involved in their children's schooling. As a

result, they became more engaged in the school environment, visiting classrooms and

sharing their expertise and experiences in the process.

Barriers to Implementation

School leaders tend to find it difficult to examine their own biases and deeply held

beliefs and assumptions about students and families that have cultural backgrounds or life

experiences different from theirs (Horsford & Sampson, 2013). Another barrier to the

acquisition of cultural responsiveness is the lack of awareness and understanding among

principals about the cultural backgrounds of students in their school community

(Archerd, 2013). To mitigate the tendency that some educators have to view marginalized

students from a deficit perspective, culturally responsive leaders must provide them with

the training they need so that students' cultural norms and language are not treated as

deficits but recognized as attributes that can be used to effectively connect with and reach

them (Combar, 2015; Flessa, Bramwell, Fernandez, & Weinstein, 2018; Valencia, 2012).

This tends to be a difficult barrier to bridge because deficit thinking is often deeply

entrenched and training courses that combat this type of thinking are not readily

available. It is not uncommon for school leaders to encounter opposition from staff when

they begin to facilitate discussions about entitlement, bias, cultural awareness, and racism

(Lindsey, Karns, & Myatt 2010; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Unless skillfully handled, an

adversarial relationship can easily develop between teachers and principals. This

dissertation provides insight into effective strategies school leaders use to discuss these sensitive issues with their staff.

Teacher workload, personal bias, and lack of expertise are well documented in the literature as reasons why teachers resist teaching from a culturally responsive perspective (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2006). This teaching methodology tends to involve more work and planning because of the Eurocentricity of the curriculum (Miller & Martin, 2015). It can be physically and mentally draining for administrators if they encounter resistance as they strive to enact culturally responsive practices (DeMatthews, 2015). Some principals mentioned that their limited budget made it difficult for them to purchase culturally diverse resources and provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to teach from a culturally responsive perspective (Nelson & Guerra, 2014).

Initiating parental engagement can also pose a challenge. Reaching out to marginalized families can be a daunting task for school leaders, since these parents often seem reluctant to participate in their children's schooling in the traditional sense (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Olivos, 2012). Soliciting parental involvement can be frustrating for school leaders when repeated efforts to engage parents fail to generate reasonable levels of involvement. Nonetheless it behooves culturally responsive principals to be committed to the process and become adept at initiating and sustaining the vision of shared leadership and meaningful parent engagement (Fullan, 2018).

Supports for CRL

It is well documented in the literature that students from culturally diverse backgrounds perform better academically when they are taught from a culturally

responsive pedagogical perspective (e.g. Arvanitis, 2018; Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Minkos et al., 2017). Consequently, it would seem necessary for culturally responsive leaders to ensure educators receive professional development about CRP to make it easier for them to understand how to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of marginalized students. In this vein, this dissertation explores whether principals who have a strong understanding of the underlying principles and instructional methodologies, which benefit culturally diverse and minoritized students, are instrumental in positively shaping the instructional program for them.

Principals assert that university-based programs should be designed to train them for the task of addressing the needs of marginalized communities. Traditional administrative preparation programs have focused on management skills rather than on preparing school leaders to mediate the new diversity that characterizes many urban schools today (Bellei, Vanni, Valenzuela, & Contreras, 2016). Leaders urgently need specific training on how to work with students and families from marginalized communities to advocate for their needs and facilitate their navigation of the Canadian educational system. These issues are addressed in this dissertation. Research also suggests that principals need specialized training to enable them to ensure that all students have equalable access to culturally responsive education that holds high expectations for all students (Cooper, 2017; Padron & Waxman, 2016; Williams, 2018), yet there are limited opportunities for administrators to receive the training necessary to work effectively with culturally diverse and minoritized school populations. This study raises awareness that it is unlikely school leaders can meet this challenge unless they

acquire effective strategies and skills they need to manage and succeed in such diverse school environments (Skrla, Erlandson, Reed, & Wilson, 2014).

Conclusion

Taken collectively, this literature presents culturally responsive leadership as those practices that serve to create inclusive, caring, and equitable learning environments for students and families from culturally diverse and marginalized backgrounds. School leaders' ability to create a culturally responsive school system for students and their families depends a great deal on their level of commitment to social justice and equity. It is far easier to maintain the status quo than to advocate for change or go against the tide. However, while these leaders seek to challenge dominant notions of schooling, they still have to do what they can to ensure students are successful within the existing system. Mansfield (2014) supports this notion, for they argue that it is necessary to teach marginalized students what is valued in the dominant society, so they can "acquire negotiable currency to gain entrance and navigate new contexts", for instance, through higher education. In essence, it is necessary to know the "rules of the game" in order to play it successfully. The literature clearly indicates that there is an immediate need for school leadership with the capacity to lead culturally diverse school communities in the field of education who implement various strategies to move their social justice agenda forward.

Role of the Principal in Improving Instruction for ELLs

Given the large numbers of English language learners in schools today, coupled with the prediction that those numbers will only grow over the next few years, it is disheartening that there is very little research specific to the role of the principal in

improving instruction for this underserved group of students. A small amount of available

research on the role of administrators in improving instruction and programming for

ELLs has been done over the last two decades. This research refers to the several

recommendations presented by previous research to understand and explore examples of

what effective school leadership for ELLs manifests like in current elementary education

(Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013; Fuller, Hollingworth, & Pendola, 2017; Menken &

Solorza, 2015). The combined literature argues that for principals to improve instruction

for ELLs, they must be proactive in meeting the needs of newly established ELL

populations. They suggest that principals work with their local community and churches

to understand the needs of incoming ELLs, prepare the staff to work with ELLs through

cultural awareness and professional development opportunities, and prepare the parents

by extending a welcoming culture. Several characteristics of principals of high

performing schools with high numbers of ELLs were that these principals were noted as:

1. Rising through the ranks of the profession before becoming a principal
2. Having high levels of job satisfaction
3. Being involved with the people who make up the school community
4. Identifying their main role as that of an educational leader, not a manager
5. Having concerns about the future of education as a whole and their role in setting the direction
6. Having a strong sense of commitment to the program (for ELLs) derived from a deep understanding.

Also, collective research has echoed three key tasks that principals do, related to

demonstrating multicultural leadership, which was witnessed as improving instruction for

ELLs:

1. Fostering new meanings about diversity
   a. Having high expectations for all
   b. Changing the cultural deficiency perspective
   c. Understanding through communication
   d. Socializing new immigrants into U.S. schools
2. Promoting inclusive instructional practices within schools

        a.   Hiring practices that promote diversity
        b.   Multicultural displays
        c.   Peer tutoring and inclusive educational practices
        d.   Multiculturally proficient instruction
3. Building connections between schools and communities
        a.   Community Early educational opportunities and intervention
        b.   Parent involvement
        c.   Partners with social service agencies

These three tasks combined create a positive school culture with shared ideas of what is important, caring and supportive relationships, and commitment to helping all students learn. This requires school leadership to create a school culture that is inclusive of multiple forms of diversity where diverse students experience educational equity and cultural empowerment by appreciating students existing cultural knowledge. Doing such, school leadership fosters new meanings about diversity that transforms previous narrow-minded views of data, events, and attitudes, allowing for more thoughtful, inclusive decision-making. They found that effective school leadership promotes inclusive instructional practices within schools by building relationships, challenging beliefs and practices, and providing meaningful, inclusive, and sustained staff support (such as professional development) that takes into account the needs of not only the students, but the entire school. Also, proactively create supportive staff environments by ensuring that their hiring and evaluation practices take into account the school culture, community, and vision; this ensures the ability to attract and retain effective teachers. It is fundamental that school leadership helps to create the conditions which enable a staff to develop so that the school can achieve its goals more effectively. One of the most significant effective tasks taken by effective leadership with high concentrations of ELLs is to build connections between schools and communities and working with the local community to understand the needs of incoming ELLs. It was found that parents who have experienced

a dissimilar culture in other schools are delighted to have the opportunity to experience a true relationship with the school and staff and work together to support their children in being successful in school. School leadership prepares the parents by extending a welcoming school culture. Also, Khalifa (2018) indicated that school leaders who create a strong school community, are supportive of the students, staff and parents, and encourage the use of instructional strategies appropriate for ELLs lead effective programs for ELLs. Included are several of the actions that school leaders take to promote successful programming for ELLs such as, hiring highly qualified/endorsed teachers; providing professional development for all staff; training and collaboration or co-teaching with classroom/content teachers; understanding the importance of readily accessible data; and having high standards for ELLs.

As far back as 1982, research such as from Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee has reported that "a number of studies have found that principals in high achieving schools tend to emphasize achievement. This involves setting instructional goals, developing performance standards for students, and expressing optimism about the ability of students to meet instructional goals" (p. 37). Other, later research studies supported that a principal as an effective culturally responsive leader promotes positive educational outcomes through a positive school culture (Bryk, 2018; Campbell, Kyriakides, Mujis, & Robinson, 2012; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). An understanding of the direct and indirect effects of school principals on educational outcomes is thoroughly supported in a number of research studies.

Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2013) conducted a study in Texas between the years 1995 to 2001 to measure the impact of effective principals on student achievement.

Utilizing several years of observational and student achievement data, they created a measurable scale of effectiveness for school leadership, the McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework. The researchers were able to conclude "highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools between two and seven months in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount" (p. 1). The framework focuses on a "purposeful community" as the foundation for leadership success, which is defined as "a community with the collective efficacy and capability to develop and use assets to accomplish purposes and produce outcomes that matter to all community members through agreed-upon processes" (Miller et al., 2016). McREL framework identifies eight leadership responsibilities as essential to a purposeful community: (a) affirmation, (b) communication, (c), culture, (d) ideals/beliefs, (e) input, (f) relationships, (g) situational awareness, and (h) visibility. These eight leadership responsibilities are characterizes as leadership behaviors that directly and indirectly promote positive educational outcomes. In their study of improved student learning in schools, Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) similarly identified Core Leadership Practices and Practices that echo the McREL framework and deemed as directly impacting educational outcomes.

School leaders are faced with a difficult task. This task involves getting students to achieve at their highest potential. That highest potential must be above the minimum passing grade, which is set by the governor and their board of education (who are in the business of politics, not education). With that being laid out, school leaders are also faced with the fact that no two schools are alike. No two schools have the exact same demographics of students, or teachers for that matter. No two schools have the same

social and community issues to deal with, and no two schools have the same parents, teachers, and students to lead. Some of those factors that affect student achievement are to include district organization, school organization, curriculum, principal and teacher development, teacher and principal self-efficacy, teacher motivation, staff trust, the culture of the school, the culture of the community, the diversity of students, motivations of students, teachers and parents, etc. It is known that there is a wide array of factors that could affect a school's achievement level. They could define what a successful school may look like, but could they fit that framework or model into every school? This would suggest that just as not every school is the same, and not every leader is the same, then there must be some kind of contingency approach taken to leadership in a school setting. The leader chosen would be contingent on the situation or dynamics of the situation at hand.

Therefore, by merging the above findings with the expansive amount of literature about the practices of principals who are successful in maintaining high academic achievement for native English-speaking students, one can postulate conclusions about those practices that will bring about the best results for English language learners. There are four crucial areas of focus in education that principals potentially have the most impact and significant role in improving instruction for ELLs: school culture, professional development and capacity building for teachers, principal and culturally responsive leadership (CRL), and social justice measures for equity.

School Culture

If English language learners are to be afforded the best possible instruction and in an educational environment that is conducive to learning English as well as addressing

other characteristics that put them at risk for school failure, principals must first evaluate the current culture within their school and its propensity for change (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). As with any organization, the educational system has developed a culture within each of its programs, departments, and schools. A school's culture is a complex pattern beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes; namely written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions (NCDPI, 2019). The school's culture dictates in no uncertain terms the way we do things around here (Burgener & Barth, 2018), At their best, school cultures can be encouraging and supportive for students and staff. At their worst, they can be harmful and toxic to all involved. Understanding the culture of a school becomes critical when principals attempt to initiate change within the already established culture. Principals may find that the established culture clashes with the research and best practices related to social and academic achievement for ELLs. When a mismatch of cultures occurs, and the existing beliefs and practices are not conducive to the achievement and overall well-being of all students, including ELLs, principals are forced to deal with those personal and professional issues that are causing the school culture to remain stagnant before any systemic, positive change can be made (Cosner et al., 2015; Katz, 2013; Markus & Rios, 2018).

If principals are serious about affecting change for the ELLs in their building, then changing the school culture becomes a priority and a necessity. Marlow Ediger (2013) stated that school cultures tend to be stable and yet subject to change. Consequently, principals must be proactive and deliberate in their approach to creating a school culture that is focused on meeting the needs of ELLs. Cardiff, McCormack, and McCance (2018) maintain that principals must be open to experience. They must move

away from being narrow-minded in their views on data, events, and attitudes, allowing for more thoughtful decision-making. In addition, principals should be able to identify with others and try to understand what situations, backgrounds, attitudes, and events are affecting the behaviors of others. This is referred to as reading behavior backwards. Being able to identify with others will promote responsible and trustworthy behaviors leading to a healthy school environment. A healthy environment encourages collaboration, cooperation, and interdependence. Building relationships is the key ingredient for beginning school improvement (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). In order to build those positive, open relationships and foster school improvement in a healthy environment, quality professional development is essential.

Professional Development and Capacity Building for Teachers

In order to build those positive, open relationships and foster school improvement in a healthy environment, quality professional development is essential. Effective professional development, based on research from several studies and the National Staff Development Council's staff development standards, does the following (August & Shanahan, 2017; Murphy & Torre, 2014; Padron & Waxman, 2016):

1. Incorporates professional learning communities
2. Elicits skillful leadership
3. Is a long-term investment
4. Is data-driven
5. Provides skills for collaboration
6. Promotes equity

They contend that teachers most often stated that they learned from other teachers, as well as from their observations. The culture of professionalism that professional learning communities fostered built capacity and drive high expectations for better performance. Also, teachers involved in data supported professional development

increased the likelihood of teacher collaboration. School leadership reported effectively

using professional development that contained these six characteristics to train staff in

collective inquiry, team building, establishing group norms, and reaching consensus.

One of the key components of effective professional development is a

professional learning community. The design of professional learning communities,

summarized by DuFour and Reason (2016), provides a framework for principals to utilize

in order to promote community and build strong, open relationships. They make these

suggestions:

1. Provide time in the school day and school year for teachers to work together on issues of teaching and learning.
2. Develop structures to help teachers determine the purpose of their collaboration and the results it should produce.
3. Train staff in collective inquiry, team building, establishing group norms, and reaching consensus.
4. Use a staff development training model that incorporates guided practice and coaching.

To build capacity, principals must not only be instructional leaders themselves,

but also strive to promote skillful leadership among teachers. The National Staff

Development Council described skillful leaders as those who not only establish policies

and structures to support professional learning communities and school improvement, but

also enable teachers to develop and use their talents on committees, and as mentors,

trainers, or coaches. DuFour and Reason (2016) maintained that the central role of school

leadership is to support teachers in effectively accomplishing school goals. These

conditions are vital to ensure that teacher leaders have the resources and skills necessary

to afford success in their leadership roles. Ensuring resources for staff development

requires not only immediate and tangible resources, but also those that promote a long-

term investment into the work being done. Kusieliewicz (as cited in August & Shanahan,

2017) reports that educators need to commit to the long haul. A one- or two-day workshop is a band-aid that will not solve the problem. In order to commit for the long haul, principals must be prepared to fund the staff development being provided. Costs may include things such as materials, trainer fees, release time for teachers, stipends for teachers, and the like.

Principals, then, can foster a culture of ongoing coaching, discovery, reflection, and mentoring by finding ways to encourage the development of collaboration skills (August & Shanahan, 2017; Marsh & Farrell, 2015). Sometimes the concept of collaboration seems desired, yet unattainable for many educators. They must be given opportunities to learn about systematic procedures and methods for incorporating collaboration into their current structures (August & Shanahan, 2017; Gaudelli, 2014). Many times, teachers must also make a shift in their everyday practice and remove themselves from their comfort zone. Collaboration is a give-and-take model by which all parties take responsibility for the actions of the group. In an educational setting, this means that teachers will work together and share responsibility for the education of all students (Watson & Bogotch, 2015).

Principals and Culturally Responsive Leadership

In a growingly diverse nation, teachers and school leaders need to be aware of social and cultural differences in students because of their importance on student achievement. DiPaola and Hoy (2013) call for more professional development when it comes to cultural competence of school leaders. School leaders should be prepared to lead all students to academic success, not just the students who they or the teachers can identify with. The only way these school leaders can help all students is to be developed

through a culturally relevant, socially just aspect of school leadership. Students of minority status are generally marginalized because of their nonconformity to the dominant, generally Anglo culture. This of course leads us to the most glaring aspect of student achievement, the opportunity gap that exists between the Anglo students and those of minority status. One cannot just look at school leadership and the positive gains that have been made over the years, or what percent change a "good" leader will have on a school. We must explore how to make education and academic success cross-culturally relevant.

First and foremost, when examining how principals create supportive learning environments for dual language teachers to help meet the student outcome requirements, we must define student outcomes. For some, student outcomes and academic achievement are reflected in standardized test scores. For others, student outcomes can vary dependent on the student we are examining, or linguistic achievement versus standardized testing. In this case, we will define the term student outcome to mean helping dual language students attain a greater capacity in both the native and partner language. We will do this because according to Collier and Thomas (2014) and Kim and Hinchey (2017), and other subsequent works on second language acquisition, it takes a student from four to seven years to attain a native like language command in the partner language. This would allow for the dual language student to transfer content knowledge on an assessment like an exam while giving them adequate time to possibly gain command of the mechanics and nuances of the partner language (which are often used to assess language command). With this being said, principals must create an environment that is accepting of the fact that statistics like student scores may not immediately gratify

the legislative requirements of policy. This can be a daunting task for a principal, but it can be done. There have been several studies (DeMatthews, 2015; Dennison & Shenton, 2018; Nelson & Guerra, 2014) done on principals and schools that create safe havens for students and teachers to create a classroom environment that is linguistically responsive, respectful and value the differences in all learners. Most relevant to this study, supporting previously mentioned literature, are the five criteria examined by Rodriguez and Alanis (2011) as needed for success dual language implementation and student outcomes. These criteria include: (1) administrative and home support, (2) school environment, (3) high quality instructional personnel, (4) professional development, and (5) instructional design and features.

Rodriguez and Alanis (2011) used a borderland epistemology (Anzaldua, 2012) to frame an understanding of principals to negotiate the various aspects of schools and provide a shared vision of leadership and schooling so that all stakeholders feel valued. Within the study, a case study design was followed to extend previous research on the sustainability and success of a dual language school. Major findings from the study included the importance of having people on campus who were socially cognizant of the inequities that lie in the realm of education and the school itself. Second, the need for those who were advocates for students, parents, and the dual language program. Third, the importance of instructional leadership and a trust in staff to be sure their classrooms practices were being informed by data. Along with this was the need or a strong relationship between the school leadership and the teacher collaboratively working for the betterment of the student. Finally, there is a strong need or building a school culture that fosters the need and desire to stay current with dual language instructional practices.

The relationship between adults is again necessary for the instructional gain and equitable attainment of the children.

Principals for Social Justice and Equity

There is a need for social justice leadership in schools so that those students who are traditionally on the margins and are served in such a way that still allows them an equitable opportunity at school success (DeMatthews, 2015). They argue that principals must have knowledge in language development, effective instructional practices, collaboration, assessment and class management in order to truly promote a school to be one that fights for the equity of all students and the equitable opportunity for all students as laid out as basic premises for social justice leadership by Rawls (2009).

To facilitate the notion that teachers collaborate and share the responsibility for all students, principals must promote professional development that ensures equity for culturally and linguistically diverse students, including ELLs (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). Banks (2015) asserted that the attainment of equity is something that must be deliberately planned and executed in a school building. He provided three essential actions that schools must take:

1. Restructure their curriculum and teaching so that students from different ethnic, racial, language, and social-class groups will have equal opportunities to learn;
2. Implement prejudice-reduction strategies that are effective for different individuals and different racial/ethnic groups; and
3. Promote social inclusion, in addition to prejudice reduction, so that both teaching practices and school climates foster relationships that build across differences so that all students will develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function as effective citizens in our diverse, complex, and troubled world.

The type of school leadership that takes these actions creates a school culture that is "validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory. Culturally responsive leaders have the capabilities to furnish the type of

education to their students, staff, and community members that transform them into social critics. In this type of school culture, students' outcomes will improve, thus resulting in liberation for students, staff, and the entire community. Moreover, relationships between the school, students, and the community will be strengthened as identities, histories, and heritages are validated. These culturally responsive leaders value and recognize the history and cultural heritages of their students, their staff and their communities, and support and facilitate the educational improvement and growth of all students.

At the heart of equity work is having high expectations for ELLs and holding students accountable (Singleton, 2013). When schools lower their expectations and give students a different or "watered-down" curriculum, complete with lower standards, students will not be prepared to compete in today's society (Liu & Huang, 2011). In addition, schools must consider the non-linguistic needs of ELLs. Liu and Huang (2011) have indicated that issues such as culture shock, social status, mobility, poor attendance, and poverty can all lead to the low achievement of ELLs. Addressing these concerns should be a priority of the school and may be accomplished through a school-wide focus on equity, which permeates all conversations, including instructional conversations, at the school level (Singleton, 2013).

DeMatthews and Izquierdo (2016) presented a school district case study from the Texas- Mexico border and six schools (also individual case studies) within the school district. They used the social justice framework to offer non-linear steps that may help social justice leaders build and sustain a successful dual language program that not only closes the opportunity gap, but also the achievement gap. These abbreviated steps are: (1) valuing all stakeholders, (2) exploring perspectives to engage stakeholders, (3) planning

the program used, (4) recruiting and building capacity, and (5) monitoring and reevaluating the program. These are important findings because they attempt to lay a foundation for how principals who may not have the training needed to fully understand the plight of bilingual emergent students can develop a social justice understanding and sustain a program that helps all students succeed. These are also important because they place social justice, inclusive, equitable leadership at the core of successful schools…successful schools that do not rob students of their valued culture of language, or place students who are not part of the dominant culture on the fringes of success.

Leadership Influence and ELL Education

In a culturally proficient society, school leaders must be responsible for closing opportunity gaps in our schools, especially with students who are English language learners (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011). Implicit leadership theory dictates " individuals have implicit beliefs and conviction about attributes and beliefs that distinguish leaders from non-leaders and effective leaders from ineffective leaders" (Northouse, 2018, pg, 7). Santamaria (2014) established that "leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers" (pg. 14). The persuasion by the leader is often influenced by ethnocentrism and discrimination. School leaders need to be cognizant that ethnocentrism can be a primary contributor to the impediment to effective culturally responsive leadership because it averts individuals from fully considering or valuing the viewpoints of others (Northouse, 2018).

Academic Knowledge of Multicultural Education of ELLs

School principals as leaders of school communities are responsible for defining and articulating whatever multicultural, societal, and governmental policy exists (Dimmock, 2016). This is not to say that it is the only issue in campuses school principals must deal with but should be one of the priorities. Leadership of cultural diversity in schools is connected with the school's mission, vision, curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, professional development for teachers, and decision-making (Dimmock, 2016). Transformation leaders achieve because they connect their own inspirations and their employees to the objectives of the school organization (Tsunoda, 2017).

Leaders have a tremendous responsibility in the educational programming decisions for English language learners (Willet, Harman, Hogan, Lozano, & Rubeck, 2017). Debatably, the roles and responsibilities of principals are an important and influential variable in the success of schools' instructional programs (Menken & Solorza, 2015). School leaders who value inclusive leadership practices place students at the center of their decision-making (Frattura et al., 2014). In school settings, principals must attend to the structural features of the organization, be strong leaders, work hard to shape the school culture and promote student learning and maintain teacher collegiality (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Dennison & Shenton, 2018). Schools need principals and administrators who are visionaries and are aware of the disparities associated with diversity and equity which are essential goals of social justice (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) had great implications for schools across the United States. This reauthorization of the Education Secondary and Elementary Act was the first

to highlight opportunity gaps among students based on race, ethnicity, gender, and social class.

Additionally, Race to the Top, a federal competitive grant focused on the achievement gap by preparing students for college and university; developing effective school leadership; improve assessment practices; and, closing the opportunity gap which continues in some sectors of our society (Franco et al., 2011). The role of leadership must also maintain an attitude of student assets and a coherent focus about what students from diverse backgrounds bring to our schools (Skrla, Erlandson, Reed, & Wilson, 2014). This attitude will assist school principals into appropriate equity-oriented change advocates who focus on what Llopart and Estaban-Guitart (2018) call the "funds of knowledge." The funds of knowledge concentrate on advantage and positive attributes students bring and not on deficits (Llopart & Estaban-Guitart, 2018). Research findings suggest there is no silver cullet to improving educational outcomes of ELLs. However, school leadership identified essential key features to educational growth for English language. School principals identified the following as most critical (pg.9): staff capacity to address the needs of ELLs; school-wide focus on English language development (ELD) and standards-based instruction; shared priorities and expectations in regard to educating ELLs; and systematic, ongoing assessment and data-driven decision-making as most critical in improving the educational outcomes of English Language Learners.

Throughout the United States, a lack of academic achievement has compounded the deficit point of view of ELL student populations (Calvo & Bialystok, 2014: Feiman-Nemser, 2018). School principals can support their school culture by changing it from within the school, as opposed to out to promote learning in others (Burgener & Barth,

2018). Current leadership research has contributed a thorough understanding of effective

leadership behaviors (Fitzgerald & Militello, 2016). School leaders must emphasize high

expectations for all students and model and promote positive relationships (Johnson et al.,

2017). Consequently, school leaders are overwhelmed with issues regarding

accountability and they forget that their role as principals can contribute to the success of

English language learners (Leithwood & Sun, 2018).

Language Discourse or Bilingualism

According to a recent study, elementary school principals who were bilingual had

a more positive perception of bilingual education (Padron & Waxman, 2016). Currently,

there is no survey to demonstrate language orientation of public school administrators

(NCES, 2018). However, since the studies have been so limited in this area, the

recommendation is that further studies be made with school principals who are bilingual

(English-Spanish), monolingual (English) and from elementary, middle, and high school,

not only those who lead in bilingual settings (Padron & Waxman, 2016). To remain

globally competitive, it is essential that the United States keeps up with the dynamic

developments of globalization. This requires culturally competent, multilingual leaders

who recognizing their cultural histories, as well as the cultural histories of their students

and families, and how it has impacted the current global state (Perea et al., 2018).

Similarly, culturally responsive leaders must understand the ways in which inequitable

educational structures impact the educational opportunities of their students if they are to

understand the strengths and needs of their diverse student populations (Gaudelli, 2014).

Many educators still regard bi/multilingualism and bi/multiculturalism as deficits instead

of assets (Gallo & Link,2016).

School systems are under pressure to find competent and skilled principals who are adept to lead the demand of increasing student achievement (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018; Shepard, 2015). Beside the training and preparation that school leaders demand to address the challenges of today's schools, the linguistic, cultural, and diversity of the leaders themselves is not taken into consideration and research asserts that teacher qualifications and the assignment of more bilingual educators are effective strategies to implement (Nieto, 2016). Teachers who are assigned to bilingual education programs sometimes feel inadequate as they have to deliver academic content and in reality their language discourse is minimal if not deficient (Guerrero, Smith, & Luk, 2016). Guerrero et al. (2016) explains that leadership educational training programs attempt to utilize student teaching experience as a solution to school failure to promote bi/multilingualism and bi/multiliteracy

Language discourse, or ability to speak in various languages, becomes even more important as school leaders try to communicate with parents and community members from diverse cultural and ethnic about schools and learning. While school leadership understands the theoretical underpinnings of second-language acquisition, they often fail to understand the lived experiences and power relationships between schools and families due to the barriers created by language abilities. (Gaudelli, 2014). Leaders may better understand the factors that affect how families participate in their children's education. Conclusively in a recent study, school principals acknowledged that even though is not possible to expose principals to everything concerning bilingual education in their academic training, today's increasing numbers of English language learners' merit that

school principals have knowledge, competencies, and experiences to meet the challenges and needs of this student population (Cobarrubias, 2015; Farah, 2017).

Summary

Chapter two examined literature that addressed the demographic trends and problems encountered by ELLs in education. English Language Learner education in the United States and in North Carolina has experienced dramatic increase in enrollment and thus there is a need to address issues of this dramatically increasing population, such as high dropout rates, socioeconomic and sociocultural factors, educator preparation, and the enlarging opportunity gap. Additionally, to exacerbate the issue, the social and economic impact of inadequate schooling of ELLs is exponential. The literature also indicates that school principals sometimes forget the ways in which they can contribute to the achievement of ELLs, and training programs are not preparing them for the school system's demands. The literature review points to the need for research on school principals and their influence in addressing issues in the education of English language learners, as well as demonstrating models of effectiveness.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a discussion on the qualitative research design, its characteristics, and why this approach was the most appropriate for the current study. Additionally, this chapter includes a discussion on strategy of inquiry, selection of participants. The data collection, data analysis are thoroughly detailed. Also, the conceptual frameworks used for data analysis are explained in depth, including the creation of coding analysis matrices to be utilized for this study (which are provided in full in the appendices). The trustworthiness and transferability conclude the chapter.

Rationale and Research Questions

The retention of English Learners (EL) in high school is a documented and escalating problem (Kim, Hutchinson, & Winsler, 2015; Miley & Farmer, 2017; OCR, 2014). The population of students with limited English proficiency, one of the fastest growing in education, will require intervention to narrow the academic opportunity gap between them and non-ELL students (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010; Kena et al., 2014). Educators within a positive school culture, influenced by the principal, can ameliorate the culture shock that these students encounter in mainstream classrooms (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Haynes & Zacarian, 2010; Muhammad, 2017). Furthermore, leaders must understand the sociocultural issues within a school to meet the needs of minority students (Calvo & Bialystok, 2014).

School culture is about what schools believe and what they do because of these beliefs (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). It can be extended to refer to groups within a school and how they are educated, what teachers and leaders believe about their school and the abilities of minority students, and what is done to be successful. The purpose of the study

was to understand urban elementary school leadership's contributions and influence on the phenomena of high levels of educational success amongst elementary English Language Learners. The following research questions guide the proposed study:

- What is the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs in urban elementary schools?

To provide holistic understanding of the primary research question, secondary aspects to be explored are:

- How does principal affect the school culture to create a school environment that contributes to the success of ELLs?
- How does the principal promote equity and high expectations in instructional practices for ELLs and monitor for their effectiveness?

Research Design

Given the nature of gathering information about the performance and intricacies of human, rather than inanimate subjects, it is important to attempt to understand and make sense of the bigger picture of what happens in schools and how principals' actions can influence the successes and failures (Mertens, 2015). Since the principals' intentions and actions cannot be quantified and the observations of the results of such intentions and actions are essentially evidence of the latter, qualitative methods provided the most comprehensive evaluation. Qualitative research is based on the premise that "meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (Mertens, 2015). Utilizing qualitative methods provided an avenue to explore issues with the goal of deep understanding. Mertens (2015) defined four characteristics of qualitative study:

1. Understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants'... or insider's perspective
2. Having the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis involving fieldwork

3. Employing an inductive research strategy which builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses or theories
4. Creating a final product that is richly descriptive

One type of qualitative research, case studies, provides an in-depth understanding of the meanings behind behaviors, actions, and beliefs. The most applicable type of case study for this research is an instrumental case study. An instrumental case study is determined based on a research question with the hope that by studying an individual case, the researcher may gain insight into the question. In order to fully understand every aspect of one elementary principal's role in creating an environment that is successful for English language learners, dedicated time for interviews and data collection was necessary so that a complete picture could be drawn. The researcher believed that an instrumental case study was a method that effectively captured the detailed behaviors, interactions, actions, and effects of one elementary principal's efforts in creating an environment that is successful with ELLs. Within the instrumental case study, the researcher creates rich, thick descriptions. Thick description can be defined as the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated and the interpretations of the people most knowledgeable about the case. Rather than relying on commonplace observations of events, the objective was to create a detailed account of every aspect of the case being studied as defined through the experiences of the principal and staff in the school and documented by the researcher. This study is unlike other case studies, such as collective case studies, which uses multiple cases, and intrinsic case studies, where the participant is the focus. Instrumental case study was chosen due to this being one case and the focus is not the participant or the location, but on the interpretation of the results. The focus is on the phenomena of culturally responsive

leadership behaviors, characteristics, and actions that lead to improved educational outcomes in ELLs.

Participants

Participants were selected for potential participation in the instrumental case study based upon the performance of their ELL subgroup, as defined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) language proficiency categories of Non-English Proficient (NEP), Limited English Proficient (LEP), and Fluent English Proficient (FEP), as it pertains to meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the previous three test administrations including the years 2015-2017. The scores used for determination were obtained from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) website. The initial cohort of elementary principals all experienced an increase in progress each year for the 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 school years (See Table 3). The principal must have worked in a school with a minimum of 30 ELLs, which is the minimum subgroup number for AYP determinations in North Carolina.

Table: 3 Percentage of ELL Student Growth

		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Performance Growth		39	42	47
Overall Academic Grow		71	74.3	83.2
English language		34.4	53.6	58.5
Math	Grade Level	26.9	28.8	31.3
	Above Grade Level	19.3	17.3	22.4
ELA/Reading	Grade Level	11.7	17.3	13.4
	Above Grade Level	4.6	5.8	9.0
Science	Grade Level	18.3	22.2	33.3
	Above Grade Level	13.0	15.6	16.7

The researcher employed a purposive sampling procedure aimed at achieving representativeness of the case being studied. Purposive sampling enables researchers to choose the most appropriate cases for a given research strategy. One specific type of purposive sampling, convenience sampling, which involves selecting willing and easily accessible participants, was used to identify only those principals currently working in an urban school district in which the researcher is employed and could easily gain entry, have access to internal district data, and obtain historical information about the case being studied. In addition, due to close proximity, it was convenient to schedule interviews at the selected school.

Once the previous criteria were met, reputational sampling was used to narrow the selection to one elementary principal from a large, urban school district. Reputational sampling involves obtaining the recommendation of knowledgeable experts to identify the most appropriate examples. The principal was selected based upon years of experience and information gained from conversations with the experts within the field of TESOL and English Language Learning education. Reputation as a principal who has been effective in various settings including successful non-administrator educational experiences was critical to the study in that the principal would have the ability to reflect upon their actions and behaviors and how they compare to their experiences as an educator and principal. The principal selected for the study was asked to volunteer their participation, as well as ELL school leadership, and agree to the interviews focused on the principal's role and behaviors that contribute to academic achievement of ELLs in their school. The participants consisted of the principal and two ESL teachers.

Data Collection Techniques

It is common practice in an emergent design methodology for research to be modified as new issues become apparent or questions and data collection techniques to be refined based on new information. Therefore, the following outline of planned methods of data collection may change as necessary. Mertens (2015) identified six primary sources of evidence for case study research: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. Each of these sources of evidence was utilized during the data collection phase of this study. Since case study is known as a triangulated research strategy, data source triangulation was used to determine if the case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently. The principal was interviewed about her actions, knowledge, and expectations related to English language learners before being observed by the researcher and was then be asked to reflect upon her actions, knowledge and expectations related to English language learners after being observed by the researcher. The ESL teachers were interviewed, and the data viewed aside principal self-reported data and observations. The focus of data is on the principal themselves, and will be the bulk of analysis and dissemination. Since the principals' data is self-reported, the data from the observations and ESL teachers interviews function as a verification of what the principal is reporting. This type of triangulation was necessary to see if what is being recorded and observed was happening in all contexts of the principal's role.

Documentation and Archival Records

Documentation and archival records from the school, district, and state provided essential information about the performance of all students, including the English

language learners in the building, the characteristics of the staff, professional

development opportunities, the demographics of the school, and the background of the

principal. A data collection checklist was utilized to document all pertinent information.

The documentation and archival records portion of the case study was mainly done

during the first two weeks of the first semester during which the case study is done but

continued throughout the study as more information is discovered using a checklist to

track the information.

Data from the Interviews and Observations

Interviews were the most useful method for gathering information from the

principal about the practices they employ within their school that contribute to increased

achievement among ELLs. The specific qualitative methods used in the study are semi-

structured interview questions. It is important that the initial questions are determined

ahead of time, but that they also allowed for the principal to elaborate on some of their

answers. A semi-structured interview process was utilized because it combined a

structured set of questions with the flexibility to ask subsequent questions**.** Three 1-hour

interviews, for a total of 9 hours, (see Appendix A) were conducted with the principal

and ESL teachers (2) from February to May, one at the beginning during the first week of

the study; one midway through the data collection; and a final interview at the conclusion

of the data collection. Since each interview lasted approximately one hour, this allowed

time in between the predetermined questions to then ask supplementary questions for

clarification or elaboration. The questions for each semi-structured interview were

finalized before the interview and discussed with the participants so that they could begin

to prepare responses. This type of interview assisted the participants in focusing on the

key questions and yet avoided the divulgence of unrelated information. Principal interviews were conducted in the principals' office, and teacher interviews in the classroom (with no students present).

During the interviews, the participants were asked several questions related to subjects such as, instructional practices and programs for ELLs, teacher qualifications, ELL experience, evaluations, ELL training, principal practices, and scheduling and grouping. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary to gain additional information related to the purpose of the study. All of the interviews were recorded onto digital recording devices in order to allow for transcription of the content. After the transcriptions are complete, the data was analyzed according to themes and categories. Because originating questions were initial questions designed for the first interview, the researcher also developed additional questions for the second and third interviews after the researcher had conducted principal observations, teacher interviews, and other data collection at the school site.

Following interviews, direct observation of the principal in the school building were conducted by the researcher in an attempt to develop an understanding of the themes that emerge related to practices and behaviors of the principal that influenced the achievement of English language learners. All of the observations were scheduled for one full workday (6 hours a day, for a total of 18 hours), the day of interviewing, in order to allow for observations of the role of the principal from the beginning to the end of a typical workday. The aim was to shadow the principal during all daily activities, such as district meetings, teacher meetings, parent meetings, and student interactions. Also, observations focused on viewing the principal interacting with students, observing in

classrooms, planning professional development sessions, facilitating meetings with teachers, parents and committees, and participating in district meetings and events. During observations, notes were taken in a small notebook detailing the principal's role specifically related to promoting the achievement of ELLs in the areas of school culture, professional development, hiring and evaluating teachers, and promoting and evaluating instruction that is equitable and demonstrates high expectations.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed throughout the data collection phase by making sense of the results and notes taken from interviews, observations, and the like. Mental analysis included asking questions such as: How does this information relate to what I just observed? When analyzing data in a qualitative study, it is imperative that the researcher triangulates the data gained from observations, interviews, and documents. Therefore, themes were developed throughout the data collection phase and meticulously coded based on the type of observation or interaction from which the theme was noted.

There are two ways in which to find meaning from cases. The first is described as direct interpretation of the data, and the latter as categorical aggregation of the data in order to classify them into one class. Both direct interpretation and categorical aggregation are necessary in analyzing and synthesizing the data collected; however, because this is an instrumental case study, more emphasis was placed on categorical aggregation. The researcher is most interested in the relationships to the question being asked: What is the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of English Language Learners (ELLs)?

To facilitate the process of aggregating the data, all data was collected in a field log for analysis during the data collection phase, but also as part of a larger cohesive group of data, which was useful when categorizing observations and interactions into meaningful categories. Interview data was digitally recorded and transcribed to assist with the development of themes and categories. The transcriptions were then entered into NVIVO for thematic analysis. Those developed categories/themes functioned as a means to make meaning and generalize from the information contained in them. The researcher developed a coding system designed to elicit consistent patterns or correspondence through the repetitive reappearance of themes in the data.

Essential Supports and Indicators Codes (ES-I)

Creating a codebook for data analysis first required the combining of essential supports and associated indicators to create codes. Lettered abbreviations were used to identify the new codes (see Appendix D). For example, the essential support *parent community – school ties* is assigned the code PCST. Likewise, the associated indicators *teacher ties to community* and *parent involvement* are assigned codes TtC and PI respectively. This makes the resulting two code combinations PCST-TtC and PCST-PI. For analysis of observation and interview data, these ES-I codes will be cross-connected to the VAL-ED Matrix.

Essential Supports and Indicator Codes Aligned with VAL-ED

In order to complete the cross-connection with the VAL-ED matrix and ES-I framework, the coding process used to the ES-I frameworks was first repeated for the VAL-ED matrix. Each intersection on the VAL-ED matrix was assigned a code. For example, the intersection on the VAL-ED matrix between *Connection to External*

Communities (CEC) and *Implementing* (I) becomes CEC-I. Once both the VAL-ED matrix and ES-I matrix were coded, the codes were then grouped by similarity (see Appendix E). The ES-I code PCST-TtC (Parent Community – School Ties – Teacher Ties to the Community) and PCST-PI (Parent Community – School Ties – Parent Involvement) was placed within the VAL-ED code CEC-I (Connections to External Communities – Implementing). This process was repeated to match all ES-I codes to the 36 intersections of the VAL-ED matrix.

Validation

Qualitative research investigates reality constructs and the lens with which lived experiences are viewed. Trustworthiness in qualitative research can be tricky due to the dynamic nature of human behavior (Merriam, 2015). While development of research design, data collection methods, and data analysis work to manage issues of trustworthiness, the most consequential is ensuring that results accurately reflect the data collected. Using qualitative measures and processes on par with other researchers assures accuracy by granting a study credibility and trustworthiness; or the ability to repeat the same study in a different setting and produce the same result (Creswell, 2017).

In this case study, member checks, engagement in data collection, peer review, and reflexivity triangulation methods were used. Multiple data sources, interviews, observations, and documents, were investigated and triangulated. Member checking, or participants providing feedback on emerging themes, was done as multiple interviews were conducted and data was collected. Prolonged and persistent fieldwork, a third strategy, was utilized to ensure corroboration between findings and participant reality. After the interviews took place, recordings of each interview were listened to multiple

times to begin the initial coding cycle. A reflection journal containing critical reflection of the researcher was maintained throughout the data collection to reflect on life experiences, beliefs, and assumptions, thus limiting bias. A trusted colleague, with years of experience, conducted peer review of coding data and findings to ascertain the accuracy of finding in comparison to the raw data.

Transferability

Determining answering the question, to what extent, does the transferability in any study can the findings be replicated. Researchers in qualitative studies do not attempt to give the impression that human behavior is static and that there is one reality that will consistently provide exactly the same results if replicated numerous times. The goal of social research is to describe and explain the world through the lens of those experiencing it. In doing so, one would not expect the same results, even if the same study were duplicated numerous times, because the nature of the human experience is such that an observation of the same event on one day may yield an entirely different result if done on a different day. Mertens (2015) suggested that the naturalist inquiry's method for determining reliability is more closely associated with determining the dependability, trustworthiness, or consistency of the study. Dependability in this study is earned via the detailed descriptions of the participants' school, behaviors, actions, communication, expectations, reflections, and statements. Data that provide a strong foundation for conclusions about the behaviors, practices, strategies, and expectations of an elementary principal in improving educational outcomes for English language learners were selected for inclusion in the study. Therefore, the dependability of this study is based on the researcher's ability to provide results that "make sense" to the reader by including only

those results that are specifically tied to and consistent with the data collected. In addition, the researcher provided enough information to allow for a detailed audit trail by including the particulars of how data was collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. The researcher also utilized member checking and reviews of raw data by the research advisor to enhance the trustworthiness of the data and to ensure a second review of the identified themes and categories.

Summary

This chapter provides an outline of the methodology used to explore the research question and the process for collecting data to complete the research study to understand the phenomena of the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs in urban elementary schools. The data collected in this study was reflective of the practices and behaviors demonstrated by a principal who has been successful in maintaining high academic proficiency among English language learners. The researcher intends to understand the specific, observable factors related to the role of an individual principal rather than to understand how the principal may differ from others. Therefore, a single case study, grounded in a naturalistic inquiry method, qualitative data collection, and an interpretive hermeneutic approach was utilized. An emergent design was utilized for the case study due to the complex nature of the role of the principal.

Participants were selected for potential participation in the instrumental case study based upon the performance of their ELL subgroup. Purposive sampling, specifically convenience sampling, was used to identify only those principals currently working in the researcher's school district. Finally, reputational sampling was used to narrow the selection to one elementary principal based upon years of experience and information

gained from interviews and conversations with experts in the field. The principal selected for the study volunteered their participation. Data source triangulation was used to ensure that the case remained the same in various situations and with various constituents. The principal was interviewed, observed, and asked to reflect upon their actions, knowledge, and expectations. A semi-structured interview process was utilized because it combines structured questions with the flexibility to ask subsequent questions. Documentation and archival records from the school, district, and state provided essential information about the performance of all students, including the English language learners in the building, the characteristics of the staff, professional development opportunities, the demographics of the school, and the background of the principal. Data was analyzed throughout the data collection phase by triangulating the data gained from observations, interviews, and documents.

To ensure validity, the conclusions drawn from the research of this study were directly based upon the body of evidence gathered through the data collection phase of the project. Prolonged and persistent fieldwork, mechanically recorded data, member checking, and participant review was also used to enhance validity. Reliability, or trustworthiness, is determined by the detailed descriptions of the participants' school, behaviors, actions, communication, expectations, reflections, and statements. The dependability of this study is based on the researcher's ability to provide results that "make sense" to the reader by only including those results that are specifically tied to and consistent with the data collected. In addition, the researcher provided enough information to allow for a detailed audit trail and utilized member checking and reviews of raw data by the research advisor.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings derived from research investigating effective models of culturally responsive school leadership serving urban elementary English language learners (ELLs). Research questions were answered using interview and observational data using the VAL-ED and ES-I matrices, as well as the culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) theoretical framework. The chapter begins with a description of the study participants. This chapter investigates evidence of effective leadership practices found in interview and observational data that align with VAL-ED and ES-I matrices. The final sections examine the applications of the CRSL framework accentuating characteristics contributing to effective school leadership for ELLs.

Study Site

In the last 100 years, this area has gone from a small mill town of working class people and farmers, to a mass of urban sprawl and wildly uneven wealth. The high paying textile jobs were sent overseas in the 80s and 90s. The mostly textile and farming economy diversified to include healthcare and social assistance, shipping and transportation, banking, manufacturing, retail, finance, and service industry. Most of the once rolling farmland has been covered up by expansive housing developments and large retail venues. The Census reports the ethnic composition of the school district's population of is composed of White Alone residents (68%), Black or African American Alone residents (16%), Hispanic or Latino residents (10%), Asian Alone residents (3%), Two or More Races residents (2%), American Indian & Alaska Native Alone residents/Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander Alone/some Other Race Alone residents (1%). As of 2019, the school district of this study site was home to a population of 197,000 people,

from which 95% are citizens. As of 2019, an estimated 15% of residents were born

outside of the country; a substantial increase from just 8% in 2015. According to NCES,

the median household income is $60, 716, poverty rate 11.5%, and median property value

(which financial influences the school district) is $180, 300.

However, while the overall county seems overwhelmingly white

racially/ethnically, with relatively low poverty rates and high income and property value,

due to the inequitable distribution of income in the area, the location of the study site

does not represent the district. The school district sits at only 11.5% below poverty line,

the study site NCDPI reports the study site school with a continuous enrollment of

approximately 98% free and reduced lunch; showing the income disparity of the district.

Additionally, while the district is comprised of 68% white alone, NCDPI reports as of

2019 the study site school is 68% students of color (SOC; up from 64% in 2016). Among

these significant changes, and most relevant to this study, is the increase in numbers of

ELLs at the study site school, most of whom are native Spanish speakers. Of the 68%

enrollment SOC, the study site school has experienced an increase of 4% ELL enrollment

in 2016 to an 11% ELL enrollment in 2019 (NCDPI, 2019). This demonstrates the rapid

growth of ELL enrollment in the school, and the need for school leadership to adjust to

address the needs of this increasing population.

Participants

Mika Semyorka

Mika Semyorka entered the sector of education in 1995. Over the next 20 years,

they worked as a Spanish and ESL teacher for middle and high school, as well as

assistant principal at an elementary school. In 2015, they began work for the sate

Department of Public Instruction as a regional behavior support consultant. However, a love of working with students brought them back to the school level. Mika became principal of a hometown elementary school in 2017. Since then, they have worked hard to transform their school to meet the ever-changing needs of the school and student population. Mika's goal is to reconstruct their school as one of academic excellence and equitable educational access. Their belief is this happens by getting to know the families, the community, and the specific needs to be addressed. Also, that equitable access occurs when students are not pushed out of the classroom. Mika expressed a deep-seated interest and investment in the community and the success of all students. Creating and maintaining a safe, positive environment where all students can excel academically and behaviorally is their top priority. While there were certainly areas for growth, and observations/comments found that were not culturally responsive, this study aims to focus on the culturally responsive actions, behaviors, and beliefs/attitudes the principal *does* have that improves educational outcomes for ELLs. It also demonstrates that leadership is a dynamic transformation, or a work in progress, not perfection.

Ruperta Santos

Originally from South America, Ruperta Santos came to the US in 2006. Prior to arrival, Ruperta was involved in EFL (English as a Foreign Language), teacher preparation, and assistant principal. They have been at the study site school for the past 13 years. In addition to ESL teaching, they also serve as translator, interpreter, and tutor. Also, they created and maintain a book club for parents as well as English classes.

Judith Beaumonte (JB)

A transplant to the area, but born and raised in the southern US, Judith Beamonte (JB) has been teaching 25 years. They split their time between schools, and thus is the part-time ESL teacher at the study site school. JB has been the part-time ESL teacher at the study site school for the last 10 years.

Emerging Themes

The 36 intersections were reviewed and condensed for more efficient analysis. After reviewing the details of each intersection, indicators and core components were combined. The School Leadership component was combined with the Performance Accountability core component (keeping the title of School Leadership); the Parent Community indicator with Connections to External Communities core component were combined; the Student Centered Learning Climate and Instructional Guidance indicators with Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior, Rigorous Curriculum, and High Standards for Student Learning core components (keeping the title of Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior) were combined; and the Professional Capacity indicator with the Quality Instruction core component were combined (keeping the title of Professional Capacity). In many instances within the data analysis, one statement would cover multiple key processes. Since Key processes had extensive overlapping, they were condensed into one for analysis. Table 3 shows the frequency of each core component found in interview data analysis, separated by Principal (P-Mika) and Teacher (T1-Ruperta; T2-JB) perspectives.

TABLE 4: Frequencies of Components

Core Component	Frequency in Data		
	P	T1	T2
School Leadership	21	16	14
Connections to External Communities	20	22	13
Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior	15	15	11
Rigorous Curriculum	6	2	3
High Standards for Student Learning	5	4	4
Professional Capacity	7	3	6
Quality Instruction	4	7	5

Analysis of the interview and observational data demonstrate that all cross-sections of the VAL-ED and ES-I matrices manifested in leaderships characteristics. While all intersections were presented in the data, School Leadership, Connection to Community, and Culture of Learning & Behavior were almost double in frequency in comparison to other core components. This shows that these three components were reported as behaviors/attitudes/actions of the principal at a much more significant rate than the other components. Not only were these components reported by the principal as being most influential, it was also reported by the teachers that the principal implements these effective leadership practices.

School Leadership

According to the core component data analysis, school leadership is the most effective in providing cultural responsiveness to urban elementary ELLs. This component focused on decision-making, school improvement initiatives, monitoring effectiveness, and most importantly accountability. Mika refers to school leadership as "site-based management" or "site-based leadership," as they are in control of school-wide

happenings. This is accomplished, as data revealed, by monitoring, expectation setting,

planning, supporting, and communicating. It was found that monitoring is done on both

the student and teacher levels. Students monitored their own progress with the teachers

and principal by use of a notebook where they tracked data such as math and reading

progress. Mika took a hands-on and personal approach to monitoring teacher

effectiveness, explaining how teacher observations and class walkthroughs ensures that

what happens in the PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), transfers to the

classroom. They then regroup, review the student data, and analyze the effectiveness of

the instruction.

More than instructional practices are monitored; Mika monitored to ensure that all

adhere to the culturally responsive environments, as well as student improvement

initiatives. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and restorative

practices are two ways Mika ensures that teachers are adhering to the school culture they

desire. PBIS practices focus on preventing unwanted behaviors, support students at risk

of developing unwanted behaviors, and provides individualized support to improve

behavioral and academic outcomes. Restorative justice practices seek alternatives to

punitive disciplinary practices that focus on repairing harm done through accountability

and relationship building. These methods not only hold students accountable as

stakeholders in their own education, but also places teachers as gatekeepers of this

accountability.

Interview data and observations revealed a number of approaches utilized by

Mika to monitor for effectiveness and measure whether teachers have implemented what

they learned from staff development opportunities, meeting feedback, etc. When asked

what Mika does that other school leadership may not do, or should pay closer attention

to, Mika stated creating measures then using observations and walk through to check.

> Even ESL pullouts, walk through all the classrooms. So, while they're working
>
> with students, I walk through the classroom and just listen and see what's going
>
> on. Then after a more formal observation, you know, we sit and discuss.

Mika believes it is imperative for effective culturally responsive school leadership to

implement, maintain, and monitor school culture. One way Mika does this is with

programs such as their school-wide ROAR positive behavior intervention support

program. This program aims at increasing appropriate behaviors by setting and

maintaining consistent behavior expectations and rules (ROAR means: Respect for all;

Obey safety rules; Act responsibly; Ready to be my best). Mika detailed the

characteristics contributing to the success of ROAR are those looking beyond the surface

when tracking behavior data, such as how many students make it to the ROAR rallies in

each grade. If not enough students make it to the rallies or certain students consistently

don't earn gold cards, Mika begins to look deeper into the behavior monitoring. They ask

questions, such as are the teachers remembering to reinforce behaviors they see or could

they potentially forgetting positive behaviors due to distractions from negative ones. This

is all in effort to "shift attention away from the negative and focusing on the positive".

When asked what is done for those students not participating, Mika explained:

> So these are the kind of the first checks. To make sure are we actually catching
>
> the students when they're doing these good behaviors, to make sure you are
>
> reinforcing good behaviors, and then the students that are struggling, we use

office discipline referral data or minor incident reports from the classroom to see

if students need extra support.

Expectations were another important characteristic found to contribute to Mika's success

in implementing effective culturally responsive school leadership. One way Mika

promoted equity and a high expectation in instructional practice was by providing

expertise and making decisions about holding students accountable for their learning.

Mika stated, "We're not just letting them off the hook. You know, just because you don't

speak English well doesn't mean that you still can't access the grade level content

standards."

Mika discussed their belief in leading by example and ensuring things are

implemented from the top down. JB supported that and explained how expectations are

not set solely on students and their ability to learn, but also at the school level. In

addition, if school leadership expects certain behaviors not to occur in school, Mika

stated it is the responsibility of leadership to set the expectation of how the alternative

looks and plans for implementation. They pointed out the need to be up front at the

beginning of the year, setting clear expectations. If the expectation is not to yell,

humiliate, intimidate, or kick students out of class, then alternatives to address the

problem behavior must be provided. Mika expounded upon the point by explaining:

Like with teachers. I'm trying to control my classroom. So, if you say I can't take

away recess and I can't do this or this, what am I going to do instead? And so,

you've got to provide that alternative of what appropriate actions and behavior

are, and then that's what you monitor and coach on.

Support of both ESL teachers and mainstream classroom teachers was found to also be key in the effectiveness of culturally responsive school leadership. Planning the instruction of ELLs must go deeper than just their English learning progress. It is the responsibility of school leadership to ensure the transitions are efficient and teachers are supported. Ruperta reports that Mika always ensures "if ELLs are pulled out of class, out they get pulled out during a specific time so they're not missing core instruction, so that they're still getting all of what they need". JB discusses how Mika supports teachers in that they coach with strategies or look at their data and gives constructive feedback to make sure teachers are upholding expectations; if not, they are receiving the assistance they need.

Another school leadership core component practice that Mika was sure to establish was strategic and purposeful hiring practices. Certain types of skills and talents were crucial when hiring new staff members for ELLs. They reflected Mika's beliefs on the school culture necessary for ELL success, such as what they do for student engagement, how they communicate with families, classroom management style, and how they present instructions. Mika explained that it is "imperative I have teachers who are able to connect with my ELL students and their families, as well as understand cultural differences and how they affect learning". Ruperta recalls during the hiring process, having to walk Mika through what a little literacy lesson would look like to make sure that what they're doing would meet the needs of kids.

Along the lines of staff management, Mika discussed having the responsibility of managing district demands, policies, and procedures. When asked how principals can balance district demands, policies, and procedures with the school's goals for culturally

responsive school environment, restorative practices, and autonomy, Mika declared "it's all in how everything is communicated…effective communication across the board".

> Some things I have to lobby for and ask permission. But then some things I kind of tweak and do. And then the way I communicate it to the district is different than the way I communicate it to teachers or parents because we're the ones [who] live in it.

Mika explains, the lens that the district sees the school in is different than the way the teachers look at the school. Therefore, the message isn't changed, but transformed and communicated through the intended lens they use.

School leadership findings focused on decision-making, school improvement initiatives, monitoring effectiveness, and most importantly accountability. This is accomplished, as by monitoring, expectation setting, planning, supporting, and communicating. Mika monitored to ensure all adhered to standards for culturally responsive environments and student improvement initiatives by implementing programs such as PBIS and restorative practices. They then created measures for monitoring effectiveness, using walk-throughs, observations, and formal feedback sessions to check the measures. Mika implemented school-wide PBIS programs to promote equity and high expectations, holding teachers and students accountable for learning and maintaining a positive school culture. Strategic and purposeful hiring practices that centered on what is done for student engagement, how family is communicated with, classroom management styles, and ways instruction is presented ensured new staff had the skills and talents crucial to ELL learning. Lastly, school leadership findings indicate that Mika used differentiated communication to balance district demands, policies, and procedures with

the school's goals for a culturally responsive school environment. The next section explores the findings of connections to community, and how Mika connected with external communities.

Connection to Community

The second most significant core component for effective culturally responsive school leadership is connections to external communities. That is, engaging with and establishing relationships with students, their families, and their cultures. Mika believed inclusion, establishing access, and a relationship with communities does this. One way observed is by having a full-time interpreter on site and all communication going out in English and Spanish (the most common language among ELLs). Data suggests these actions could build a better school culture, build a sense of community, and value the diversity of students' communities.

Mika not only utilized student communities to promote and achieve academic and social learning goals, but also implemented various programming, with the assistance of teachers, that helped parents assist their children in being successful in school. They employed actions such as helping with student drop-off and pick up lines and socializing at conferences and family events at the school to build trust and relationships with parents, particularly ELL students. These purposeful actions were intended to lessen intimidation for ELL and non-English speaking parents coming to the school. Mika stated that because of their efforts, ELL parents "know that somebody's there to help them and work with them, whatever the concern is" and that "they feel I am accessible when they need help". A parent book club ran by Ruperta, as discussed by Mika, builds a sense of community by having more of those parents and family participate, volunteer, and serve

as mentors and such. Having family members (such as parents, grandparents, uncles, and cousins) and community members (such as church members, or community members with shared culture) act as mentors to ELL students is another way Mika implemented programming that used ELL community to achieve learning goals. This not only made students more comfortable within the school learning environment, but according to Mika also brought community presence into the school.

Ruperta stressed that motivating teachers to be responsive to ELL families, to engage them, and build a positive, open relationship with the ELL community was a crucial component to ELL academic and social success. Data revealed one way effective culturally responsive school leaders do this is by sending out communications in English and Spanish (dominant ELL language presence in this case). Mika indicates that:

> It may seem simple but I do think that's huge and that sometimes you know staff members just don't realize and they send stuff home and then the parent...those families are excluded not intentionally, but because they don't know what's going on they can't become more involved.

Mika maintains that communication and relationship building being a team effort and endeavor is the most effective way leadership can engage families and promote academic success. Of the methods discussed, one was a dual language teacher providing Spanish classes for the parents of their students to encourage understanding and help their students with the language. This was highlighted as a possibility for ELL parents. Additionally, JB and Ruperta concurred that Mika implemented teamwork and cooperation as a culturally responsive leader. Ruperta explained a few ways that Mika put

in place to acknowledge and honor the native language of the school ELL majority, creating a more welcoming and safe space:

> We have our Spanish teacher in the specials rotation. So all students are exposed to Spanish culture and language. And then, with the Dual language immersion we have several staff members that speak Spanish. This is helpful in ways such as the PE teacher, he teaches his classes word of the day or word of the week in Spanish. So it's really I guess they just focused on those relationships and making sure our students feel a part of the school and that they're valued.

Also, JB added that the school interpreter Mika hired was integral to creating a welcoming and accessible culturally responsive school environment in the school. Mika discussed this liaison, explaining that:

> She is more like a family school liaison. Parents trust her they come to her when they have concerns or students. She's very much part of school culture as well as contributes to the success of the school culture I feel is best for the school and students.

Mika expressed the importance of supporting teachers to work within the community and with community agencies on behalf of ELL students. Explaining current, and future plans, to build better relations with ELL students and communities. Mika explained that:

> We started small with that this year just by like we went Christmas caroling as a staff into some of our neighborhoods. Next year, it's going to be more targeted. Like, how we do like school-wide PD (professional development) goals for teachers. And so this year one of them was a Dr. Gonzalez's book study. Next year, I'm really thinking of doing like one of those ETO (Experience The Other)

projects where like a group would go in and they go spend time in a Hispanic church or in a community. You know, foster more understanding, acceptance, and like those different things to you know, learn about the cultures and communities are students are a part of.

Essential to the core component of connections to communities is that leadership listens to families regarding social and academic learning for their children. Mika agreed that having the voices of ELL families and communities was vital if school leadership desired being culturally responsive. Mika indicated that one way they achieved this was by a site-based leadership team. This team consisted of representatives from every grade level or departments, administration, lead teachers, student services team, and then parents.

We talk about budget. You know, what are we going to spend our money on. We look at our data and what it means. What are we doing? What programs are we using that we're seeing results and if we're not seeing results, what else can we use? That kind of thing.

During the meetings for this site based decision-making team, Mika explains that parents see what the school is doing to promote the academic and social success of their children. Also, the ability to voice concerns and weigh in on school decisions involving their children gives power to the voice of ELL communities and families. Another team Mika utilizes is a family engagement team that is comprised of a teacher representative from every grade level, lead teachers, and any support staff (such as AIG teacher or EC teacher) that is passionate about family engagement. Mika explained that the family engagement team reaches out to different organizations that the school has a relationship with when there is a school event going on and asks if there is anything they would like

to do to help or contribute. The key to making this team's effectiveness, Mika says, is "getting to know which communities or which agencies, churches, are in your neighborhoods and reach out and build relationships".

These findings on connections to communities demonstrate the significance of engaging with and establishing relationships with students, their families, and their cultures. Mika exhibited this by inclusion, establishing access, and maintaining a relationship with student communities. Analysis found this established a better school culture, a sense of community, and value the diversity of students' communities. Paramount to this was Mika implementing various programming, with the assistance of teachers, that helped parents assist their children in being successful in school. The foundation was laid by helping with student drop-off and pick up lines and socializing at conferences and family events at the school to build trust and relationships with parents. Teacher run programs, such as book clubs, was found to build a sense of community. Having family members (such as parents, grandparents, uncles, and cousins) and community members (such as church members, or community members with shared culture) act as mentors to ELL students is another way Mika implemented programming that used the ELL community to achieve learning goals and connect with communities. This not only made students more comfortable within the school learning environment, was found to also bring community presence into the school. Employing staff, such as interpreters, provided school liaisons for families that created a welcoming and accessible school atmosphere. The utilization of teams, such as leadership and family engagement teams, provided voice to ELL families and communities, as well as build relationships with the surrounding community. While relationships were found to be paramount in

attaining an effective, culturally responsive school environment, the next section demonstrates how Mika's established culture of learning behavior contributed.

Culture of Learning Behavior

While not as prominent as school leadership or connections to community, Culture of Learning made a significant enough impact on the effectiveness of research to warrant inclusion. During data analysis, it was found that Culture of Learning was influenced by multiple components: student centered learning, high expectations for learning and behavior, and quality instruction. Student centered learning focuses on the educational programs, learning experiences, methodologies, and support efforts devoted to the unique needs of students; including individual interests, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic abilities.

Student Centered

Mika indicated that one factor contributing heavily in the effectiveness of culturally responsive school leadership at their school is the student centered learning environment. They explained that at their school, students are given more control over their learning and able to understanding their own learning style. Ruperta supported that statement, explaining how teachers are afforded the opportunity to get to know their students, how they learn, and understand what is most effective for learning. Teachers create an environment that promotes this type of learning by taking the interests and funds of knowledge students bring with them to the classroom and incorporating them into the learning process.

To aid in this process, Mika stated they utilize a number of resources to create a student centered and culturally responsive learning environment at their school. This

includes inviting outside resources to come in and work with teachers, giving them ways that they can embed those types of strategies within their instruction. Mika explains, "If you ask a student to draw a picture of a scientist, what are they going to draw? Probably going to draw an old white man. Einstein or someone similar." The goal for Mika is that students are able to see themselves in the curriculum as this aids in students accessing the content. Mika stressed the importance of this:

> Within the regular classroom, I do want teachers to use some strategies to help our students who maybe have a lower proficiency in English be able to access content standards and making sure that their instruction is language-rich, which also helps students from poverty.

Mika believes it is important to ensure their culturally responsive school leadership reaches all students, with special attention given to ELLs, as this significantly contributes to the success of *all* of their students. One of the largest concerns of all students is accessing classroom content. An easy way leadership and teachers can alleviate student stress associated with accessing content, according to Mika, is collaboration between ESL teachers and mainstream classroom teachers.

> The classroom teacher can provide the ESL teacher with some up-and-coming vocabulary, academic vocabulary that they can kind of work on front-loading so that when the student is in the classroom and they're in those lessons, they've already been exposed to the vocabulary because we know that academic language takes longer than social language.

As indicated by Mika, this is a way to not only assist in English acquisition, but also provide the opportunity for ELLs to access academic content. It is a commonly known

method and is taught in many ESL teacher preparation courses, but Mika explains that it is one that is often forgotten about. Mika believes it is the responsibility of leadership to not only encourage, but to monitor and ensure this type of collaboration occurs between ESL teachers and mainstream classroom teachers. Ruperta expounds upon this by stating that this process of engaging students in their success and providing them access to content results in less frustration and more engagement; which as a result, leads to improved behavior and less incidents of correction. When incidences do occur, Mika uses data, such as office discipline referral data, minor incident reports from the classroom, to determine if the student is receiving the support needed, stating "the goal is to keep kids in the classroom learning and if there are in the office, they're not learning right?"

A support that has had significant influence on improving student access to content and giving students more control over their learning is mentorship. Mika affirms that mentors help students understanding their learning style, as well as strengths and weaknesses. They describes the various places mentors have come from such as staff members that have already established a relationship with the student. Also, passionate volunteers, such as Mika's spouse, that mentors a fourth grader by eating lunch with them once a week and checking on them. There are also high school students, community members, and family members (such as aunts, uncles, or older cousins). The latter of which, Mika reports, is highly effective for their ELL students.

High Expectations

An immense contribution to a culture of learning, Mika asserts, are high expectations for both learning and behavior. Mika insists that for school leadership to be effective in culturally responsive endeavors, it is essential to have high expectations for

learning. This includes promoting the importance of a rigorous curriculum to all students and ability levels. Mika explains one way they promote equity and high expectations in instruction are by having those conversations and then monitoring instruction and student data.

> Making sure that we're looking at student data or individual student data, that we're not just letting them off the hook. You know, just because you don't speak English well doesn't mean that you still can't access the grade level content standards.

Mika also stresses the importance on aligning curricular goals, assessment measures, and instruction when promoting equity and high expectations. When it comes to ELLs specifically, JB indicates their teachers focus on *more* than just language acquisition and align goals with class content. Their ESL teachers, Mika explained, are exceedingly skilled in this, elaborating that "within reading, speaking, listening, and writing they align their instruction to the content standards of what they're doing in the classroom or what skills they're working on as well. So we've got almost like a double dose." To ensure the equity and high expectations Mika promotes are upheld and effective, they monitor implementation through frequent class visits.

A second component Mika indicated as contributing significantly to a culture of learning in a school with effective culturally responsive school leadership is high standards and expectations for behavior. Mika asserted the importance of creating clear expectations when attempting to maintain high standards for learning. They indicated that they do that by "implementing the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), where our school has consistent school-wide expectations that everybody had

a voice in developing." This school-wide system is called ROAR, standing for Respect everyone, Obey safety rules, Act responsibly, and Ready to be your best. They describe the purpose of ROAR is to set those school-wide expectations:

> So, what does it look like to do all those things in the cafeteria, or in the hallways, or in the restrooms, or the classrooms, around the playground? Those are the expectations that we teach and then when students are exhibiting those expectations then we reinforce it with our token reward system.

This is done by having posters down every hall outlining expected hallway behaviors, morning announcements reminding students of the ROAR promise and expectations for learning and behavior. Also, this program reinforces positive behavior by providing students tickets when displaying positive behavior, and those tickets allowing them to participate in school events, such as a carnival. Mika asserts that expectations being school-wide are one of the most crucial components of maintaining high standards and expectations for behavior. As students progress fro one grade to the next, the expectations are the same. Students are not left to wonder how to behave or what to do. It provides consistency in their learning environment.

The ROAR program is also used as a method of reward reinforcement "ensuring students stick to that school culture that you want to maintain." To do this, Mika contends that school leadership must develop a plan for monitoring and measuring effectiveness. At Mika's school, there is a school-wide, individual, and group ticket system to achieve this endeavor. Mika describes the ticket system for individuals, where students start at a white card, and ascend towards blue card, and finally a gold card. At the end of every quarter, the school holds what they call 'ROAR Rallies'; this quarter the

rally was a carnival. Every student that has obtained a gold card is able to attend the rally. As mentioned previously, students earn tickets (individual or group/class) by displaying behaviors that represent the positive school culture leadership wants to maintain. As they gain tickets, they progress in card color, with the goal of achieving gold. One example Mika provided was, "you see a student walking respectfully in the hallway at level 0 (that means silent and not talking), you can hand them a ticket and say thank you for walking at level 0 in the hallway". Mika incorporates their school mascot, a leopard, into the measurement of achievement for group, or class, rewards.

> We do leopard spots. So, if you want to recognize a small group or a whole class, you would give them a spot. And then when they earn 25 spots for their leopard Jersey, than they do a classroom reward celebration.

Mika explains how the ROAR system not only rewards students for upholding high standards for behavior, but also uses data to evaluate trends in student behavior and determine if additional support is needed. If students continually do not achieve ROAR gold cards, or are not receiving tickets, Mika uses that data to determine if the teacher is recognizing the student's actions, and if further assistance is needed from school leadership. Mika explains that at times, certain students may have specific issues that take a substantial amount of teachers' attention and time, causing other students to potentially be overlooked when upholding behavior standards. Feedback will be given to the teacher and asked what leadership can do to assist. In this way, Mika asserts they are able to support faculty in helping students reach high standards of behavior and learning.

Culture of Learning was found to be influenced by student centered learning, high expectations for learning and behavior, and quality instruction. Student centered learning

gave more control over leaning to students and provided the ability to understand their own learning styles. This was shown to use the funds of knowledge students brought with them to the classroom and incorporated them into the learning process. Also, Mika influenced student centered learning by promoting collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers, and inviting outside sources to incorporate students in the learning process. Mentorship was found to be a significant contributor to student centered learning as it gave students more control and individualization to their learning. Quality instruction and high expectations for learning and behavior were seen to go hand in hand with one another. Both collaborated to establish and maintain rigorous curriculum to all students and ability levels. Specific to ELLs, teachers focused on more than just language acquisition, but also aligned goals with class content. A school-wide PBIS program demonstrated the effects of high expectations for behavior in that it taught students what was expected of them, and when students exhibited those expectations it was reinforced with a token reward system. Maintaining this culture of learning required a certain type and level of professional capacity, which will be discussed in the next section.

Professional Capacity

While Professional Capacity was the least found core component reported, it merits mentioning. This includes hiring practices, teacher behavior and action, as well as quality instruction. When searching for new teachers to join her team, Mika declares most important that they are on board with their desire for a culturally responsive school environment and culture of learning. When asked how they determine if a teacher possesses those skills and talents, Mika stated asking questions that are directed towards

actions for student engagement, family communication, classroom management, and instruction presentation.

Mika maintains that teachers, both ESL and mainstream, must recognize the contributions of diverse students and respect the diverse backgrounds of the students. One of the most significant factors impacting the academic outcomes of ELLs is school culture. The professional capacity of a school directly impacts school culture. They highlight the importance of communication with teachers about the aspects of a positive school environment that focuses on culturally responsive student learning. Also, ensuring teachers understand school leaderships' desire to provide a positive environment in which student learning is the central focus. Mika achieves this endeavor by collaborating with teachers to garner their support as a means to maintain a culture of shared responsibility for the social and academic learning of students. This teacher buy-in helps and supports Mika's effective implementation. Mika explained the importance or shared responsibility and teacher support:

> Just kind of, you know, if I don't have the buy-in from the staff, it's really hard to maintain. I can make a change, but for the change to really be effective and sustained, everybody's got to believe in it and have the same vision. So without that it just becomes micromanaging and maddening.

Data determined that planning strategies to develop shared beliefs about professional practice was essential in Mika's implementation of effective culturally responsive school leadership. It was these shared beliefs that encouraged collaboration among faculty and creates the culture of learning Mika aspires to maintain. This collaboration occurs not just between school leadership and teachers, but also amongst teachers themselves. Mika

conveyed the crucial part professional development PLCs played in improving academic outcomes of ELLs. Once a month, district ESL Program Coordinators provide specialized PLCS where ESL teachers participate in collaborative planning that builds a culture of continuous improvement school-wide. These teachers then take strategies learned, and disseminate that information to corresponding schools. So, not only do these PLCs offer ESL teacher training, but also provides the tools necessary for these teachers to then lead transformation in their own schools.

Quality Instruction

An imperative element affecting the school's professional capacity is quality instruction. Mika stated they strive to ensure they have quality instruction across all grade levels. One way this is done is by using grade-level meetings to discuss expectations, goals, review data, and ensure effectiveness. When there is a previous issue unresolved, or a new issue arises, Mika first determines the root cause with questions such as, are these issues due to student learning style or what support could be provided to the teacher to assist in the students' growth and improvement. They then enlist the collaboration of the whole grade level to discuss what has been done, and what can be done to experience the desired outcome.

Ruperta expounded upon the discussion of meetings, describing how teachers examine the issue and see what has been successful in past or any new information that could be of use. School leadership respects the input and utilizes teacher experiences to ensure student growth. Since it is grade level, Mika explained additional meeting purposes are school goals for student learning and dissemination of any information obtained on progress towards achieving goals and learning targets. These meetings

"function to provide meeting time opportunities for teachers to have a pow-wow of sorts to work on developing and strengthening the curriculum and instruction of students".

When asked what components of teacher meetings specifically have been most supportive in implementation of effective culturally responsive school leadership, Mika stated it is "the way feedback is communicated to teachers about their instruction and use of data to monitor instruction." Continuing the discussion, Mika was asked if they could give other school leadership a statement of guidance about what they do as a leader to get the most out of teacher meetings, Mika declared:

> I made sure to listen to teachers about how to strengthen the curriculum and ensure quality instruction. I ask for teacher feedback and ways to implement, offer autonomy in development of materials, and discussing future plans for teacher led PLCs. Teacher led PLCs have proven quite effective in strengthening our curriculum and making sure it is culturally responsive at the same time.

Another way Mika reports they maintain quality instruction, is by observing teachers instructional practices routinely by listening in the halls, walk-throughs, and class visits, both formal and informal. Pulling from student centered learning, Mika also describes their teachers SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) strategies that use students' skill level to provide opportunity for participation and ensure high quality in instruction. This is done in the simplest way, by differentiating the types of questions the teacher asks. Mika provides an example:

> For a student who maybe doesn't speak a lot of English, you're going to ask them yes or no questions. And then, as they are learning you might move then to either or and this or that. And, then open-ended. Those are all kind of like basic recall,

but until their vocabulary and their comfort grow they can still participate in the

class just by the types of questioning that you would ask them.

Once again, mentorship took form when delving into actions taken to ensure quality

instruction. Mentoring not only provided a safe, welcoming learning environment and

creates positive relationships for student success, but also provides additional,

individualized academic assistance to students. Mika detailed the contributions of

mentorship to quality instruction:

We also have tutors or interventionist that based on student data, they'll pull them

into small group interventions. One of the ones that we use a lot for literacy is

leveled literacy intervention LLI, kind of intense guided reading program. And so,

they're really looking at the different literacy skills to strengthen. From how to use

context clues all the way up through reading for meaning as opposed to learning

to read.

Data also revealed Mika ensuring they secured resources necessary to deliver high quality

instruction. A need for an 'idea hub' in the library was expressed to the district. When the

district planner came in to determine exactly what was needed, Mika encouraged the

librarian to express needs and concerns directly with the planner to ensure needs for

quality instruction were met. While many school leadership individuals take on the role

of all-knowing, Mika explains, they make sure to self-reflect and understand that they are

cannot possibly know everything, and respect their teachers opinions on matters where

they may have more expertise, or be able to more accurately clarify the need.

Hiring practices, teacher behavior and action, and quality instruction influenced

professional capacity most significantly. Hiring practices that confirmed staff were on

board with Mika's desire for a culturally responsive school environment ensured teacher behavior and action aligned with their desired culture of learning. This included asking questions during the hiring process that are directed towards actions for student engagement, family communication, classroom management, and instruction presentation. Also, Mika ensured staff, new and existing recognized the contributions of diverse students and respected the diverse backgrounds of the students. Mika collaborated with teachers as a means to garner support and teacher buy-in and maintain a culture of shared responsibility for the social and academic learning of students. This was supported by the continuous professional development opportunities Mika provided teachers. Grade-level meetings that discussed expectations, goals, reviewed data ensured effectiveness and quality instruction.

Also, Mika ensured quality instruction by requesting teacher feedback, offering autonomy in development of materials, and discussing future plans for teacher led PLCs. Mika then monitored effectiveness by observing teachers instructional practices routinely by listening in the halls, walk-throughs, and class visits, both formal and informal. Lastly, Mika's mentoring endeavors not only provided a safe, welcoming learning environment and creates positive relationships for student success, but also provides additional, individualized academic assistance to students. Past results focused on the effective leadership practices fond in this case. The next section will discuss how culturally responsive leadership practices influenced educational outcomes of ELLs.

Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL)

It is pertinent to review the data under the lens of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) to find an effective model of school leadership that is culturally

responsive. The main tenets of CRSL, all of which were found implemented at this case school after data analysis, are (1) critical self-awareness, (2) culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, (3) culturally responsive and inclusive school environments, and (4) engaging students and parents in community contexts.

One of the most prominent tenets of CRSL found through data analysis was critical self-awareness. This is the principal's awareness of self, values, beliefs, and/or dispositions. CRSL requires the principal to understand who they are as a person, the contexts in which they teach, and question previous knowledge and assumptions. For a principal (or leader) to be critically self-aware, they must acknowledge and be willing to interrogate and address inequitable factors adversely affecting their students' and school learning environment. Mika agrees with that theoretical assumption, stating that critical self-awareness is an essential action and behavior of a culturally responsive leader, stating that:

> You have to be self-reflective in order to be a culturally responsive leader. And to do that you have to have trust and have that safe place to talk about different cultures and race, you know, all of that. When you get that, then you can kind of start building that awareness.

When asked why it was so critical for culturally responsive leaders to be critically self-aware, Mika declared, "change always starts with you, right? And so I have to be able to reflect on me first before I can understand and help others reflect". Explaining that if school leadership is closed-minded or does not see the importance in being culturally responsive, they are not going to do it nor encourage and assist teachers in doing it. They asserted that it starts with the individual and working with oneself first.

Upon discussing ways in which Mika works to promote critical self-awareness in both themselves and their teachers, they elaborated on one method of bringing in area experts from the nearby college to do a book study of sorts. The book study included a professional development (PD) session reviewing individual implicit biases. An important component of this process was a presentation. Mika explained that after the presentations, teachers provided their final reflections using Flipgrid, a video discussion board. All teachers shared their implicit biases with their colleagues on Flipgrid, where everyone in the room can see, and reflected together. When asked about the success of the book study, PD session, and final presentation, Mika indicated it was quite effective, using past comments from a teacher in example:

> She didn't realize…she didn't call it implicit bias, she said my perspectives, like I need to step back and say how am I coming across to them? And how do they come across to me? And what assumptions are we making when it's not necessarily true? And she goes, and it's like our own personal biases. And I'm like, that's your implicit bias.

A second tenet found to make a significant impact in this study was culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation. This focused around Mika's ability to communicate a vision that supports the development of culturally responsive teaching. Mika demonstrated this by recognizing and challenging common patterns of inequities that lead to disenfranchisement. One example Mika discussed in addressing teachers' implicit bias in the classroom, they explained:

> You know, what I'm trying to teach the teachers is that even with classroom management, just because a students' actions or behavior may be different from

your cultural perspective of how students should be in school, the way you

communicate that …you don't want to devalue somebody else's background,

culture, or identity. They need to learn how to coexist in the classroom. The

question is how does that happen so students know that I'm still valued and I'm

still honored and can see how they can contribute with their background

experiences and cultures to our school classroom.

To ensure their vision of developing culturally responsive teaching comes to fruition,

Mika works to remedy teachers' resistance to effectively implementing culturally

responsive curricula. Mika explains this resistance is due to misunderstanding the intent

and proper implementation of culturally responsive curricula and teaching strategies.

They stated, "the first thing is to build awareness and understanding. The feedback

received when having Dr. Gonzalez come and share culturally relevant teaching

strategies was that teachers already knew those things. Mika had to explain to them that

culturally relevant teaching strategies is not a list of rules to abide by, but a guide to ways

in reaching your students that must be done with intentionality.

Mika explained how teachers believe there is an isolated culturally responsive or

relevant curriculum. That if they do this, it will make that happen, not understanding that

it is just one piece of the puzzle. Mika elaborated further on past discussions with

teachers:

There is no magic silver bullet that's going to 'BAM' fix everything. It's using all

of these pieces. And so, I found out that they just really need a solid

understanding or awareness of what strategies there are, what they can do, what

they're already doing, and build from there.

Also, Mika demonstrated a commitment to culturally responsive curricula and teaching by recruiting and retaining culturally responsive teachers, resources, curriculum, mentoring, and offering professional development around CRSL. One example was when Mika bout a copy of the PD book on culturally responsive teaching for every classroom. The objective was so teachers who were unable to attend or were not part of the PD session had access to the materials. In addition, Mika was adamant about setting clear and concise expectations for staff to ensure everyone is on the same page with their vision for culturally responsive curricula, teaching, and culture throughout the school. Ruperta asserts Mika sets upfront, clear expectations at the beginning of every year as, such as student centered teaching and culturally relevant curriculum and instruction. School leadership then provides strategies and methods to adhere to those expectations. If needed, Ruperta explains that Mika provides constructive feedback to teachers and provides the support and collaboration into finding a solution.

A third tenet of CRSL demonstrated by Mika during this study was a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment. Promoting culturally responsive school contexts, with an emphasis on inclusivity, was paramount for Mika. They held the perspective that the school leader has the ability to leverage resources to identify and foster a culturally affirming school environment, as well as responsibility to challenge the status quo by interrogating exclusionary and marginalizing behaviors. When asked the best way to create a culturally responsive and inclusive learning environment, Mika stated:

> I would say designing the systems and practices to allow for a culturally
> responsive school. You know, like how I have it set up. Language infiltrating

throughout the building. I have folks that are in charge of family engagement

events. And, making sure all the different pieces are there is more so my role, as

well as then making sure that those things happen.

Mika also does a weekly newsletter highlighting staff actions that reflected the desired

school learning environment, as well as provides cultural information and facts to combat

stereotypes and bring awareness. One predominant action taken by Mika to challenge and

support teachers who fell into familiar patterns of disproportionately referring minoritized

students for punitive action more severely for similar infractions was with the

implementation of restorative practices. This was necessary, as Mika explained, because

teachers often penalized students for a behavior that was linked to a students' identity, or

due to a misinterpretation of the students' behavior. Mika gave an example:

> You know subjective disrespect like teachers just don't...they look at it through
>
> that white middle-class lens and this is what respect is and if you're not fitting my
>
> definition, then you're being disrespectful. And you know, not intentionally, but
>
> that's what they do. And they also stereotype with dress or which neighborhoods
>
> some of my parents come from. I think it's subconscious, but they do it.

Mika is unable to make some aspects of restorative practices mandatory. For that reason,

they are conducting a pilot study to gradually implement additional aspects of restorative

practices that they are unable to make mandatory. Mika provided details of their pilot

study:

> Those that have strong classroom management will be approached. Hey, you want
>
> to try this in lieu of office referrals? And Dr. Gonzalez gave me a great idea,
>
> constructive referrals. So, if this person's coming to the office, we're not going

punitive consequences, we're going constructive. Like what is going to help this

kid and shifting that mindset and then hopefully we'll experienced great success

and then other teacher be like, hey, you know what? I want to go with that.

While discussing what day-to-day actions Mika takes to combat inequitable practices and

build a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment, aside from programs

implemented, Mika stated, "You gotta be in the classrooms and you've gotta listen to the

conversations between teachers and students." They continued:

Do walk the halls test. You walk the halls, you don't look in the classrooms, you

just listen. What are you hearing? Are you hearing more, no, don't stop negative

communication, or are you hearing positive, like, you've got this. You know what

tone are you hearing. Don't turn a blind eye. Address it.

Mika was also a strong advocate of the fourth tenet: engaging students and parents in

community contexts. Mika earnestly worked to engage students, families, and

communities in culturally appropriate ways. Also, Mika made diligent efforts to

understand, address, and advocate for community-based issues. One way this is done is

with a school leadership team mentioned previously, which Mika indicates functions as

the school's site-based decision-making team. This includes representatives from every

grade, administrators, lead teachers, as well as parents. Parents have the opportunity to

express concerns and community-based issues for the school leadership team to discuss

and find a solution for.

By creating community based events at school, including students' native

language throughout the school and in school communications sent home, and making an

effort to ensure personal contact is made with parents, Mika overlaps school-community

contexts and accommodates the lives of parents and students. This is an essential component of CRSL tenets. Mika feels it is imperative to create school spaces for marginalized student identities, behaviors, and communities. One example of such an event was discussed:

> Well, like with my African American students, some of their households are loud. And so, when my students get upset they're loud, or when they're trying to discuss or debate, they're loud. And the teachers think they're being confrontational and aggressive and it's really not. So, I have to have those discussions with those teachers to ensure they are not penalizing students and making necessary adjustments to create a space for students to express themselves comfortably.

Another aspect of CRSL Mika articulates as crucial for school leadership, is building relationships as a means to not only engage families and communities in students learning, but also to create an inclusive and inviting school environment for families. They described their efforts:

> I would say the first step is relationships. You've got to build those relationships and genuine ones. You know, I very rarely have any parent from any background that sees me as an adversary because the way we communicate and the relationships I've built with them. I think that's your first step in feeling welcoming and inclusive.

Analysis revealed all four tenets of culturally responsive school leadership in Mika's practices; critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, culturally responsive and inclusive environments, and engaging students and parents in community contexts. Mika promoted and encouraged critical self-awareness and

reflection by bringing in area experts from nearby colleges to do book studies. Included in this, was professional development, which encouraged teachers to review individual implicit biases. Culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation was found in classroom management. Mika explained to teachers that culturally relevant teaching strategies is not a list of rules to abide by, but a guide to ways in reaching your students that must be done with intentionality. They sets upfront, clear expectations at the beginning of every year as, such as student centered teaching and culturally relevant curriculum and instruction; then provides strategies and methods to adhere to those expectations. Also, Mika discusses with their teachers how students' actions and behavior may be different from their cultural perspective, and adjusting classroom practices to account for it.

Results also found that Mika ensured culturally responsive and inclusive school environments by leveraging resources to identify and foster a culturally affirming school environment, as well as took responsibility to challenge the status quo by interrogating exclusionary and marginalizing behaviors. This was exemplified in restorative practices and school-wide behavioral expectations programming. The last tenet shown throughout Mika's practices was their work to engage students, families, and communities in culturally appropriate ways. This was exemplified through school leadership and family engagement teams. Also, Mika overlapped school and community contexts by creating community based events at school, including students' native language throughout the school and in school communications sent home, and making an effort to ensure personal contact is made with parents. Lastly, but most significantly found, Mika built

relationships as a means to not only engage families and communities in students

learning, but also to create an inclusive and inviting school environment for families.

Summary

Chapter four highlights the leadership practices found from data collection. The

aim was to explore the primary research questions guiding the study: (1) What is the role

of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs in urban

elementary schools?. It also investigated the secondary questions of: (1) How does

principal affect the school culture to create a school environment that contributes to the

success of ELLs? and (2) How does the principal promote equity and high expectations in

instructional practices for ELLs and monitor for their effectiveness? The chapter was

organized in two parts: Part one described a summary of participants in the study. Part

two presented the findings for the core components of leadership: School Leadership,

Connections to External Communities, Culture of Learning & Behavior (including

Rigorous Curriculum and High Standards for Student Learning), and Professional

Capacity (which included Quality Instruction).

Upon analysis, it was found that the leadership practices and core components

demonstrated that the role of the elementary principal improving educational outcomes of

ELLs in this case study was to: (1) be intentional about implementation of the tenets of

CRSL, (2) create a school culture and learning environment that is safe, welcoming, and

positive, and (3) be an advocate, supporter, and model in making meaningful connections

with staff, students, families, and communities. The next, and final, chapter will present a

discussion of these findings, the implications that emerged, and recommendations for

practice and future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this final chapter, I commence with an overview of the study of models of effective culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) for ELLs in urban elementary schools. I continue by providing a summative discussion of the findings from this case study, organized by research question, and their connection to the broader literature. I will then review the implications and recommendations for practice and future research. The chapter closes with concluding remarks and final thoughts.

Review of the Study

As elucidated by Hakuta (2017), educators continually struggle to supply ELL students with the necessary assistance for educational success and adaptation. Rapid growth in the school enrollment of English Learners, by virtue, means the numbers of students not being served also increases. Much of the previous literature has focused on teacher beliefs and behaviors, effective programs, and classroom practices with regard to the instruction of ELLs. This research aim was not to exclude, but to move beyond curriculum and instruction, and to examine the role of the principal in creating an environment where English language learners experience positive educational outcomes. This brings new light to the issue of effective instructional practices for English language learners and how the administration of a school building can promote and maintain such practices. This qualitative case study used observational, interview, and document data to explore the specific elementary principal leadership responsibilities that support ELLs, and answer the research question of: What is the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs in urban elementary schools? The theoretical

lens of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) was used to view research. The data obtained was also analyzed utilizing conceptual frameworks constructed from two evidence-based frameworks (VAL-ED Matrix and the ES-I Framework), which are derived from research on learner-centered leadership. Considering the key role that principals play in the successful implementation of programs for ELLs and their potential impact on students' educational outcomes, the implications of this study could provide the starting point for school leadership to improve those outcomes.

Discussion

What is the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs in urban elementary schools?

Through exploring the analysis of the findings from chapter 4 within the scope of the research question, findings demonstrate three essential responsibilities, or roles, a principal must undertake in improving educational outcomes of ELLS in urban elementary schools. A principal's role is to:

(1) be intentional about implementation of the tenets of CRSL

(2) create a school culture and learning environment that is safe, welcoming, and positive

(3) be an advocate, supporter, and model in making meaningful connections with staff, students, families, and communities

Intentional CRSL

In order to determine effective models for culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL), one of the most crucial components are the ways in which Mika conducted CRSL within the school. The four core, behaviors of culturally responsive school leaders are (Khalifa, 2018): (1) critically self-reflective on leadership behaviors, (2) develop culturally responsive teachers, (3) promote culturally responsive and/or inclusive school

environments, and (4) engages students, parents, and indigenous contexts. School

principals are often seen as the link between policy and practice. According to Khalifa

(2018) school leadership is imperative to culturally responsiveness in schools as

principals are:

> …accountable for the growth and efficacy of their teachers; best
>
> positioned to improve the practice of teachers who are persistently
>
> exclusionary and resistant to cultural responsiveness; and uniquely
>
> positioned to impact non-classroom spaces in the school. (pg. 25)

Leaders are better prepared to promote culturally teaching practices, respond to the needs

of marginalized student populations, and build meaningful partnerships with families and

school communities when they become culturally responsive (Barakat, Reames, &

Kensler, 2018; Minkos et al., 2017) Mika did just that when using their position to create

an inclusive and welcoming environment for parents. They also ensured all school

materials were sent in languages which most parents would understand and utilized the

culture of their students as a resource to both the curriculum and school environment, as

opposed to a hindrance. Going one step further, Mika created a school environment that

held high expectations for academic achievement for their students, utilized an asset

based perspective on all students, and made personal connections with parents by making

an effort to have dialogue with the in car lines, school events, and including them in the

decision-making process on school leadership teams. These actions support literature

highlighting that this type of culturally responsive leadership promotes learning in that it

recognizes and respects students' diverse styles of learning, and demonstrates care and

support for students and families, their education, and the communities from which they come (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016)

While Mika demonstrated all four core elements on CRSL, they were most successful at critically self-reflecting on leadership actions and behaviors. Mika's focus on critical-reflection brings to light administrators' need to become culturally competent by developing the ability to identify and challenge their own cultural assumptions, accept and respect differences, continuously expand their cultural knowledge, and make adaptations to their belief systems, policies, and practices (Arvanitis, 2018; Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell-Jones, 2013; Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2012). They regularly had conversations about various forms of oppression, used data to inform, and supported the use of community voice to inform leadership practices. Mika discussed how a lack of CRSL only reproduces oppressive systems and that the most effective solution was self-reflection; not just personal biases etc., but the educational structures, as oppression is systemic. This recognizes cultural responsiveness as a viable strategy to improve links between access and equity for marginalized populations as well as to enhance the effectiveness of educational experiences for all (Minkos et al., 2017). This was demonstrated in Mika's small voluntary book clubs where teachers could read texts on a variety of educational topics, and then discuss as a small group. This was Mika's way to bring about issues they felt were important (such as culturally sustaining teaching and restorative justice), and get teacher buy-in. It is not uncommon for school leaders to encounter opposition from staff when they begin to facilitate discussions about entitlement, bias, cultural awareness, and racism (Lindsey, Karns, & Myatt 2010; Singleton & Linton, 2006). For this reason, Mika provided the opportunity for teachers to

give small presentations of reflection on themselves and the text. Teachers were encouraged to reflect on the policies and practices that may be reproducing these structures and inhibiting educational success of students. Not only did this promote critical self-reflection amongst teachers, but also worked to develop culturally responsive teachers; a second component to CRSL.

Culturally responsive school leaders also assist teachers in identifying, understanding, and implementing teaching strategies that are effective for diverse learners (Knoester & Au, 2017; Williams, 2018). Voluntary book clubs, professional developments, and restorative justice procedure changes were just some of the ways Mika developed culturally responsive teachers. They explained that this contributed to an inclusive environment where students don't feed overly disciplined and their potential cultural differences overly policed. As a result, discipline rates decrease, students feel understood, and accommodated. In this way, Mika took responsibility of the change desired in their school, as well as for any failures. Most often, student failure, whether real or otherwise, is placed upon the students, their families, communities, and home environments. This ignores what has systemically transpired to create the conditions that caused the failure. Taking responsibility for change and transformation of the school in a key element in CRSL, that not only affects the students and teachers, but also the school culture, which will be discussed more at length in subsequent sections.

For behaviors and beliefs to be reflected upon and transformation to occur, ongoing professional learning throughout the year is paramount. Many harmful behaviors and beliefs are systemic and institutionalized throughout the educational system; a one-time professional developmental session is ineffective (Thoonen, 2011). Mika made sure

to provide opportunities for continuous growth, reflection, and transformation. Mika's continuous professional development opportunities for teachers testify to their commitment to culturally responsive school leadership described by literature. They were part of a district-wide, multi-session professional development for ESL teachers. Principal discussed with the district a need for a professional development series, focusing on more culturally sustaining teachers, specifically for ELLs. For this to be financially possible, and effective, it was made district wide, and ESL teachers would attend, and then spread their teachings upon their return. Monthly, an expert from within the field lead a collaborative professional development series that focused not just on students, but engaging the teachers in becoming a learning community of support and instruction. They learned how to reflect on biases, approach, coach, and support teachers who may not buy-in to culturally responsive teaching, and how to collaborate with fellow teachers, and leadership to gain the support needed. Nelson and Guerra (2014) maintain that a "broadened cultural lens allows teachers to see students for what they bring and use student knowledge and contributions as a bridge for teaching and learning" (pg. 12). Students experience positive educational outcomes, as they feel valued and engaged**.**

When referring to the professional development sessions, teachers mentioned they felt "supported and given a voice to [my] own concerns" which then enabled them to "gain the skills and critical knowledge to supported collaborative in classroom learning". This resulted in a team of teachers and leaders to join in efforts to create a more inclusive, culturally responsive teaching force. This directly lends hard to promoting culturally responsive and inclusive environments, a third component of CRSL.

In a similar vein, Nelson and Guerra (2014, pg. 12) suggested that school-wide cultural competence refers to "how well a school's policies, programs and practices reflect the needs and experiences of diverse groups in the school and outer school community." While through actions of critical self-reflection and providing of ongoing professional development Mika was promoting a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment, it Mika went even further in that endeavor. According to Passiatore, Carrus, Taeschner, & Arcidiacono (2017), culturally responsive leaders allow parent life experience and culture to inform schools' cultural worlds. It supports what was seen with Mika's leadership, as teachers described students feeling comfortable and welcomed in the school, that the high expectations promoted high achievement amongst students as they felt confident, supported, and believed in, and that parents aren't afraid to come into the school with an issue because they know their voice will be heard, leadership will work to understand them, and collaborate with them on a solution. Observations led to the discovery of parents and community members having a sense of acceptance, and students how their identities were accepted throughout the school. These are all actions of CRSL that humanizes and honors student identity to promote an inclusive and safe learning environment. Which leads to the fourth element of CRSL, engaging students, parents, and communities in educational contexts.

Engagement and inclusion with parents and the community is crucial to CRSL, as well as to relationships. It is more than simply speaking to students and parents, but getting to know them, their communities, and their needs. According to Kalyanpur (2014), many parents feel inadequate when dealing with school personnel in the process of ensuring an appropriate education for their children. Can leaders be culturally

responsive if they do not recognize the aspirations of the communities they serve? If you don't understand the needs of your students and their families, you cannot address those needs. These histories are directly linked to how students and parents choose to position themselves in community and school. Which is why when the history, values, and cultural knowledge of students' home communities were incorporated into the school curriculum and school culture, Mika witnessed improvement in educational outcomes. Mika made a habit of keeping that community in mind to position students and families in positive ways. Parents were encouraged to be involved in their children's schooling. As a result, they became more engaged in the school environment, visiting classrooms and sharing their expertise and experiences in the process. Teachers disclosed that observing the results from the engagement between Principal and their students and families motivated them to do the same.

Also, it provided them someone familiar to discuss potential solutions to engaging their backgrounds in educational contexts. In that way, Principal not only motivated teachers to be culturally responsive, but collaborated to discern options for relating classroom curriculum and instruction to the lives of students (histories, experiences, perceptions, and identities) in a way they can understand, enjoy, and identify. Culturally responsive leaders help parents gain the necessary skills they need to negotiate the educational system and obtain knowledge of the norms of behavior in the education system (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). This was demonstrated in the leadership and family engagement teams Mika developed at the school. As stated by Mika, any school leader that is truly invested in transformation and positive change in their school and community, CRSL is one of the most accessible and effective options out there.

Creating a Positive School Culture

At their best, school cultures can be encouraging and supportive for students and staff. At their worst, they can be harmful and toxic to all involved. Understanding the culture of a school becomes critical when principals attempt to initiate change within the already established culture. Effective leadership characteristics found in chapter four analysis highlight the roles necessary to promote academic success and growth for ELLs. Fostering new meanings of diversity, promoting inclusive instructional practices within schools, and building connections between schools and communities are three tasks that combine to create a positive school culture with share ideas of what is important, caring and supportive relationships, and commitment to helping all students learn (Khalifa, 2018).

Findings, such as CRSL programming and monitoring found in School Leadership, engaging, including, and acknowledging communities found essential in Connections to External Communities, student centered learning, equity, and high expectations found in Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior, and quality instruction and rigorous curriculum found in Professional Capacity illustrate these three tasks and all lend hand to creating safe, welcoming, and positive learning environments for students. Thus, one of the roles of principals in improving educational outcomes of ELLs in Urban Schools is creating a school culture that is safe, welcoming, and positive. School culture is shaped by the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that how a school functions (NCDPI, 2019). This also includes encompasses more concrete issues, such as the physical & emotional safety of students,

the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, and the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, and/or cultural diversity.

Mika described the school culture before their arrival as toxic, in that staff was fragmented, failing to figure out what it was their students needed. The purpose of education had been lost, and students disengaged, demotivated, pushed out of the classroom at disproportionate rates, teacher attrition and stress at an all time high, and parents and communities were ignored and excluded from the classrooms and school as a whole. This aligns with current literature that dictates when a mismatch of cultures occurs, and the existing beliefs and practices are not conducive to the achievement and overall well-being of all students, including ELLs, principals are forced to deal with those personal and professional issues that are causing the school culture to remain stagnant before any systemic, positive change can be made (Cosner et al., 2015; Katz, 2013; Markus & Rios, 2018). Mika's actions to be a culturally responsive school leader illustrate how a positive school culture motivates students to strive for excellence, grow in confidence, discover and refine their unique abilities, form positive and enduring relationships, and prepare for educational and future success.

This case study, and the importance of school culture permeating through the data, echo literature from studies far stretching back into educational history. To name a few of those studies, Mitchell (2008) that correlated positive student achievement on state-mandated criterion with six elements of positive school culture; Wagner (2006) in which a study of which 3,100 school culture assessments were performed between 1981 and 2006 and found compelling anecdotal evidence to suggest the connection between school culture and student achievement; and even as far back as 1968 with The School

Development Program, which aims to improve the educational experience of children by improving school culture, which has since grown to include 1,150 schools, 35 school districts, 25 states and at least 6 countries. The idea that school culture impacts student achievement is so accepted that the state of North Carolina includes Cultural Leadership in its North Carolina Standards for School Executives (NCDPI, 2019).

Khalifa (2018) indicated that school leaders who create a strong school community, are supportive of the students, staff and parents, and encourage the use of instructional strategies appropriate for ELLs lead effective programs for ELLs. Included in this are several of the actions that Mika took to promote successful programming for ELLs such as, hiring highly qualified/endorsed teachers; providing professional development for all staff; training and collaboration or co-teaching with classroom/content teachers; understanding the importance of readily accessible data; and having high standards for ELLs. Positive school culture, as seen in this case study, has the ability to motivate, build confidence, and uncover abilities. When a school culture maintains high expectations and positive role models (including but not limited to faculty, staff, coaches, and mentors), students are motivated to produce positive educational outcomes. Also, a safe, affirming, inclusive, and validating school culture generates a healthy acceptance of diverse student identity creates a positive school culture where students exude confidence in their abilities, and thus obtain positive educational outcomes. Students also feel safe to expand their educational horizons and partake in educational opportunities that may normally feel out of reach. Those diverse experiences, especially ones of leadership, positively impact educational outcomes and student futures.

Making Meaningful Connections

The previous subsection discussed the importance of school culture, and how it contributes to the academic success of ELLs. A sentiment it briefly touched on was the importance of relationships; that is, the connection between educators and students (including their families and communities), as well as the peer-to-peer connections between students, and between teachers and leadership. Throughout the data, ideas such as self-reflection conversations are difficult, or that collaboration between teachers and principals depends on their ability to work together, or that parents would participate more if they felt invited into the school. All of these comments and observations, and more, allude to the magnitude of relationship influence on education. However, it is difficult to design policies and procedures for relationships, as the task of building relationships occurs on a personal level. This is one reason Principal believes learning should happen on a more personal level.

While schools increasingly focus on standardized testing and accountability measures, the socio-emotional states of students contributes to both their academic and social futures. Poor relationships, or a disconnection between educators and students cause students to become disengaged and more likely to participate in disruptive behavior, experience mental instability (such as anxiety and depression), fail to complete secondary school, and extend even into poor relationships as adults (Bond et al 2007; Voisin et al 2005). Studies (Hamre & Pianta, 2017; Maldonado-Carreno, 2011; Roorda et al, 2011), found significant associations between student-teacher relationships and students' academic engagement and achievement spanning from preschool through high school. This coincides with Mika's beliefs on relationships, as well as other findings of

this case study, that positive relationships are a key resource for positive educational outcomes. It also coincides with previous studies that found strong connections and relationships as linked to long-term academic success.

Mika considered (as was echoed by observations and teacher opinion) the central element to positive educational outcomes was promoting relationships where learning was done with the student. They declared high quality relationships as ones having high levels of warmth, sensitivity, and emotional connection, and low levels of dependency, negativity, and conflict. For these high quality relationships to occur, Mika indicated the keys were encouraging participation, providing recognition, helping students feel cared for, and fostering motivation. Student-centered and collaborative learning, themes found in this case study, is what Mika dictates as a creator of these authentic relationships that builds participation. Nieto (2018) supports these statements, explaining these culturally responsive leaders encourage teachers to build positive, constructive, trustful relationships with their students involving honoring students' home cultures while emphasizing student achievement. When learning is centered on the student, and culturally responsive, it generates a 'third space' for learning where students are comfortable and open to learn with teachers, mentors, peers, and community members, and as such are seen not as recipients of information but contributors to learning. Mika created a culture of learning where teachers became researchers of their students and created spaces in which they can learn with their students.

The ROAR rewards and rallies, mentioned in previous sections, works to build positive school culture, set high expectations, and lessen discipline disproportionality. But also provide recognition to students; recognition of their identities, their

backgrounds, and what they achieve. If students continue through education feeling unrecognized for who they are, where they are from, and what they are able to achieve, they begin to look to negative avenues for recognition and affirmation. Mika used this type of culturally responsive leadership to furnish the type of education to their students, staff, and community members that transform them into social critics. In this type of school culture, students' outcomes will improve, thus resulting in liberation for students, staff, and the entire community. Moreover, relationships between the school, students, and the community will be strengthened as identities, histories, and heritages are validated (Banks, 2015).

This also applies towards students who do not feel cared for or secure. Many students in a diverse school, such as this case study, have a litany of emotional and social challenges, both in school and out. ELLs in particular have additional challenges due to language barriers and loss of home and identity. Traditionally immigrants do not feel accepted by their new culture and lack enthusiasm in school as a result (Miller, 2017). Mika use of mentoring programs, family nights, ROAR rallies, one-on-one conversations and check-ins, and the ESL teachers parent book club, are all ways that helped students feel that their social and emotional needs were cared for. Ladson-Billings (2006) echoes this sentiment in declaring the culturally responsive school leadership support Mika provided used cultural backgrounds and experiences to develop students intellectually, socially, and emotionally. The use of culturally responsive school leadership Mika ensures is throughout the school culture demonstrates care for who students are, where they come from, and the high expectations lets them know what Mika believes they can achieve.

Motivating students to learn requires knowing what motivates each student. By Mika building relationships with students, their families, they are coming to know the students on an individual level. Reflecting on their biases, engaging their family and community in educational contexts, and promoting culturally responsive learning environments, and developing teachers that do the same is an essential method with which Mika establishes an learning environment where students can feel safe, secure, comfortable, and confident. In doing so, Mika builds up student confidence and capability, sets attainable goals, widens aspirations, creates opportunity to be included in educational processes, and offers relevant rewards and recognition. Bourdieu (2011) characterizes Mika's actions to combat oppressive institutionalized practices as directly contributory to increasing cultural capital and educational power of their students. This, along with the other keys mentioned as essential to relationship building, supports Mika's belief in challenging the current educational system where students are processes through by an impersonal education machine.

A large contribution to the success of ELL students is positive and trusting relationships with parents, families, and communities of students. The necessity of trusting relationships is expounding by the fact that ELL parents are often dependent on school personnel, school boards, and elected officials to make the right choices about education, determining student outcomes in the public school system (Duong et al., 2016). The barriers that most often confront ELL parents regarding educational success within schools are school-based barriers like a deficit perspective and negative school climate, lack of English language proficiency, parental educational level, disjuncture between school culture and home culture; and logistical issues like immigrant parents,

who are often dealing with culture shock, may see the school as a completely foreign environment, and one that they choose to avoid (Arias, 2015). Mika demonstrated success in removing those barriers by the interpersonal trust, mutual respect and support, two-way communication, cooperation, and collaboration they built with the parents and community. These relationships are characterized by the parents' perceptions of the principals' beliefs, attitudes, and values towards education and parental involvement. This is why the primary elements of building a positive parental relationship hinge upon parents' motivational beliefs, perception of invitation, and perceived life contexts. Meaning, if a parents relationship with the school supports a belief that they should be involved in education, that their involvement would promote positive outcomes, that they are welcomed by the school, teachers, and leadership, that relationship would foster positive, trusting relationships that in turn will produce positive educational outcomes.

How does principal affect the school culture to create a school environment that contributes to the success of ELLs?

As school leaders are most often considered the 'face' of the school, as they are responsible for the daily operations, human resources, finances, organizational culture, and accountable for success and failure, they have a significant, direct hand in school culture. Teachers reported Mika creating a sense of belonging for students, a sense of empowerment for teachers, and a sense of inclusion and voice for parents and communities. This is indicative to the ways in which culturally responsive school leadership positively influences school cultures; the results are an increase in student engagement and improved educational outcomes. (Johnson, Uline, & Perez, 2017; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012).

One of the most significant contributors to this positive school culture and positive educational outcomes was the creation of meaningful parental involvement. Mika went out of their way to get to know and understand the expectations, goals, and backgrounds of families, with clear, open communication, avoiding future misunderstandings and feelings of mistrust in the school. When administrators create a welcoming school environment and build meaningful relationships with families and community organizations, treating them as partners and important allies, students benefit greatly from these collaborative alliances (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernández, 2013). Mika's use of parents and community members on school leadership teams, giving them voice and feedback on educational activities and processes fostered positive feelings between the school and parents, and most importantly involved them in their children's' education. Without this support, parents are more likely to flounder through the educational system, unable to advocate for their children.

Four characteristics of high-performing urban elementary schools are high expectations, a focus on conceptual understanding, a culture of appreciation, and culturally responsive leadership (Aleman, Bernal, & Cortez, 2015). At the heart of equity work is creating a school culture that has high expectations for ELLs and holds students accountable. When schools lower their expectations and give students a different or "watered-down" curriculum, complete with lower standards, students will not be prepared to compete in today's society (Singleton, 2013). By hanging consistent reminders of in the hallways of student expectations, ensuring the curriculum was rigorous and accessible to all students, as well as ROAR rallies and the like, not only did Mika establish school norms that built values, but celebrated students' personal achievements and good

behaviors. This went deeper than a face-value 'good job' and made students feel cared

for individually. Also, with clear, high expectations, positive values were built that

helped students learn not just what should and should not be done, but why it is in their

benefit to do it. This also lent hand to the setting of consistent discipline that was fair,

unbiased, and constructive. Mika's belief and changes to include strategies of restorative

justice encouraged a positive school culture in its' proactive approach to discipline and its

active combatting of previously prevailing discipline disproportionality throughout the

school.

An important aspect affecting school culture particularly of interest to Mika was,

socio-emotional learning. Mika indicated it was imperative for leaders to create a school

culture that engaged and developed students' skills in outside of just academic learning,

and to qualities such as reliability, concern, empathy, respect, and sense of humor. This is

supported by Banks (2015) in that the promotion of social inclusion and prejudice

reduction in teaching practices and school climates fosters relationships across

differences so all students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function

as effective citizens in our diverse, complex, and troubled world. They felt these qualities

built well-rounded students and helped students make more ethical decisions, maintain

positive relationships, as well as set and achieve goals at school and at home, and manage

their emotions.

One component of school culture that was undoubtedly affected by Mika was

challenging their own mindset, and encouraging, at times requiring, teachers to challenge

theirs; a mindset being an established belief held by a person or group of people. They

stated that they believe "our mindsets towards students can be a barrier. How much we

think they can achieve, how much we think they can't. If we believe a kid can do it then they can." This is reflected in the literature of the impacts of school culture on education. Fixed mindsets, coupled with deficit perceptions, can affect performance, willingness to engage in challenging academic activities, and ultimately long-term academic development (Cosner et al., 2015). Research on closing the opportunity gap demonstrates the importance of educator mindsets and deficit beliefs on the educational outcomes of students (Delpit, 2006; Fayden, 2015; Hernandez & Kose, 2012). Studies have shown that when ELL students experience educators who care and learn in a school environment that believes in their educational abilities, the results have been positive (Nieto, 2013). As such, Mika utilized open, authentic communication, staff collaboration, and challenging deficit dialogue and thinking as a means to negate deficit mindsets found in their school culture. Addressing small misunderstandings and issues at their onset was a method used to combat deficit mindsets. By not addressing systemic deficit mindsets, such as blaming students and families for low achievement, stating students possess an inability to be taught (especially in the case of ELLs), teachers become complacent in not adequately meeting the needs of students. Mindfulness requires openness to new information and different points of view that challenge established mindsets (Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2016).

The promotion of mindfulness, or positive/asset based-mindsets, requires an awareness of the beliefs and behaviors that contribute to the deficit mindset, followed by a critical reflection of those beliefs and behaviors. School leaders must understand and question themselves, the contexts in which they live and teach, as well as their own beliefs and assumptions. Then use that understanding to create a positive learning environment for students who previously did not have that opportunity to have one.

School leadership "must be keenly aware of inequitable factors that adversely affects their students' potential" and "be willing to interrogate personal assumptions about race and culture and their impact on the school organization" (Khalifa 2018, pg. 52). Mika's promotion of awareness through critical self-reflection of the beliefs and attitudes held individually and collectively, throughout the school challenged the institutionalized norms, practices, and beliefs of the school culture. ESL teachers echoed the sentiments of Mika, declaring "if we have a mindset that our students can't achieve, then we are setting them up for failure". Mika admitted that at times those conversations were indeed difficult, because confrontation is not easy, especially when challenging a deeply held belief, but having these conversations and promoting reflection improves practice and facilitates changes within a school culture. According to Mika, those conversations must be deliberate. That encouraging two-way dialogue showed teachers that they cared, were willing to collaborate, and open to finding an amicable solution. They believe this to be important as ongoing, transparent communication and discussions have demonstrated that a large portion of deficit thinking was directed towards subgroups that have been historically excluded or disenfranchised in the school system, such as those of ethnic, socioeconomic, and most important to this case study, linguistic backgrounds.

How does the principal promote equity and high expectations in instructional practices for ELLs and monitor for their effectiveness?

In terms of Principal developing culturally responsive teachers, promoting equity, inclusivity, and high expectations, adjusted based off the needs of the diverse students in the school, it is indispensable to support a certain level of independence in teaching. One factor that strengthens the relationship between Mika and their teachers is that school leadership places trust and autonomy to their teachers. This level of autonomy provided

teachers the opportunity to implement the culturally responsive practices to achieve the

school culture Mika desired. This school culture was one of inclusion, equitable

instruction, and high expectations. In this discussion, autonomy refers to the freedom and

power of teachers to make decisions about their professional activities, including making

independent decisions in their classrooms. A lack of autonomy and has been found to be

a primary cause attributed to increasing attrition rates (Duyar et al., 2015; Feldmann,

2011). Autonomy was one way in which teachers have a voice. Both Mika and teachers

in this study agreed on the importance of autonomy. Here, they explained that autonomy

meant teachers had an opportunity to express their opinions and have leadership give

them serious consideration; resulting in a positive school culture and learning

environment for both teachers and students alike.

Many times, teachers are not given adequate preparation on how to shelter

instruction or how to differentiate, and many times they expect the students to assimilate

to the English only environment of the school (Campbell, Kyriakides, Mujis, &

Robinson, 2012). A culturally responsive approach to leadership works against this,

resulting in an improved attitude of staff, parents, and students towards each other. The

history, values, and cultural knowledge of students' home communities were

incorporated into the school curriculum, and their academic achievement improved.

School leaders are morally obligated to promote forms of teaching that enable diverse

students to succeed and foster school cultures that embrace and support diversity, equity,

and inclusion Fullan (2018). This mimics literature on teacher autonomy (Ng, 2013) in

that teachers are responsible for partnering collaboratively with school leaderships, as

well as parents, and therefore their voice in decision-making processes is just as vital.

Also, teachers are responsible for assessments, curriculum development and instruction, as well as directly working with students, making teacher voice critical in the learning process. Mika dictates that teachers directly influence students' learning and are the front lines to understanding what individual needs diverse students may have. Continuing, that teachers have the day-to-day access and exposure to students to directly influence their feelings of inclusion, safety, comfort, confidence, and interact most with students, so trusting them to have autonomy to adjust as necessary and accomplish school goals is crucial. Teachers expressed that the autonomy given by Mika was pivotal to them feeling empowered and supported; the more trusted and positive their work environment was, the more positively they were able to perform their job duties and ensure positive educational outcomes.

In such an increasingly high-stakes testing environment with which the majority of schools operate, creativity, diversity, and individuality has given way to conformity and penalizing those who deviate from that plan. To build capacity, principals must not only be instructional leaders themselves, but also strive to promote skillful leadership among teachers DuFour and Reason (2016). Providing autonomy to teachers is one way school leadership provides room for teachers to accommodate and center learning on students. Professional development is how Mika gives teachers the ability to adapt and collaborate to increase the professional capacity of teachers. The schools professional capacity and ability to be culturally responsive, especially in terms of ELLs, was contingent upon teachers taking the initiative and responsibility to make changes that improved not only their practice but also their students' academic outcomes. An example of this is the previously mentioned monthly professional development for district ESL

teachers. Once returning from monthly training, Mika gave teachers autonomy to collaborate and adapt with colleagues throughout the school, just as they did during the training. This permitted teachers in the school to respond to the emerging needs of such a diverse school population. It also provided a sense of collective responsibility, ongoing collaboration, and mutual trust and respect throughout the school culture. Teachers embraced culturally responsive leadership responsibilities, collaborated with colleagues to grow and adapt, as well as built the relationships capable of having those difficult conversations of reflection and bias. By utilizing walk-throughs, observations, and formal feedback on curriculum and instruction, Mika monitored the effectiveness of equitable practices on part of the teachers. The National Staff Development Council described skillful leaders as those who not only establish policies and structures to support professional learning communities and school improvement, but also enable teachers to develop and use their talents on committees, and as mentors, trainers, or coaches (August & Shanahan, 2017). The culture of professionalism that professional learning communities fostered built capacity and drive high expectations for better performance.

Implications

It is my hope that exploring the role of an elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs disrupts institutionalized practices and provides characteristics of principals who lead schools that are successful in creating academic achievement among English Language Learners. It is the aim of the following implications to:

- add dimension to the research surrounding English language learners in that it provides the perspective of the elementary principal's role in increasing the educational opportunities of ELLs.

- demonstrate the behaviors, practices, strategies, and expectations of an elementary principal in improving educational outcomes for English language learners

- create a vision of how principals work to improve issues of effective practices, teacher beliefs and strategies, in addition to equity and lessening the opportunity gap between ELLs and non-ELLs throughout their school

- provide perspective on effective policies, plans, and professional development in a school with high achievement of ELLs

- understand how school culture is utilized to promote equity, high expectations, and culturally sustaining curriculum and instructional practices for ELLs, which promotes a positive learning environment for ELLs, thus reducing the opportunity gap between ELLs and non-ELLs.

By Challenging the Status Quo, the Barriers Associated With Institutionalized Practices and Beliefs Weaken

The observations and data of this case study demonstrated that harmful and oppressive institutionalized systems remain in place unless the status quo is challenged, and more importantly, that school leadership understands how to properly push back against such systems. At the heart of educational reform is addressing the needs of *all* students. A socially-just, culturally responsive school leader is one that challenges the status quo to move the organization through the changes necessary to advocate for equitable education for all students.

The most effective way seen to challenge the status quo was in the actions Mika took towards being a change agent. Moreover, Mika took the personal responsibility and agency to make changes, being courageous enough to risk trying something "new." There is often push back from teachers in changing the ways in which some may have had success, but the key for Mika is understanding the diverse ways people respond to change. To successfully be a change agent, Mika promoted input from teachers, provided a clear plan of implementation, provided opportunities for dialogue regarding goals and outcomes, as well as indicated the parts all had to play in disrupting oppressive practices.

Reflective Practices Shift Mindset

Organizational learning improves by increasing cultural awareness and competence with reflective practices. Every individual has their own mindset based off their lived experiences. Those lived experiences then become the lens of reality through which we view life. If there are negative experiences or exposure it leads to negative and deficit views, such as educators most often viewing ELLs as lacking English skills, ignoring all the strengths and skills they bring into the classroom. Changing this mindset necessitates reflective practices that create a counter-narrative, unhinge what generalizations educators and society hold true about students or a group of students. While having positive experiences with a group of people can disrupt prevalent discourse and beliefs of society fixated on negative characteristics, it alone is not enough. One must meaningfully reflect on the experience to create the counter-narrative, shifting the mindset. Mika often self-reflected upon their own biases, the needs of students, and promoted teachers to do the same by having book clubs on topics pertinent to student oppression, as well as through professional developments and discussions of teacher evaluations.

Urban Elementary School Principals Who Are Aware of Themselves and the Socio-cultural Contexts in Which They Live and Work Are More Effective in Reaching Their Students.

For integration of culturally responsive leadership practices, leadership must be driven to be self-reflective of their school, themselves, and their teachers. When leadership reflects on their own ethnic background, traditions, biases, experiences, and values they understand where they lie within the educational system so they can then promote change and transformation. Also, reflecting on the history, cultures, languages, identities, experiences and values of their students, families, and communities helps

educators understand the populations they desire to educate. When educators do not share a similar culture with their students, it is more difficult to establish those relationships that support positive educational outcomes. Knowing the students and the programs affecting them is imperative to their educational success. Mika had knowledge of ELL programming, and thus that comfort provided confidence in thinking, speaking, and ultimately making decisions regarding the programs. Also, knowing the needs of the students created a sense of trust between the principal and teachers that influenced teachers to be more apt to trust the direction they were being taken during transformation and changes in programming.

High Expectations, Asset Based Thinking, and Inclusion Are Essential to Positive School Culture

Educators' expectations, beliefs, and attitudes directly affect students' educational outcomes. Students perform to the expectations set before them, if you do not believe they can achieve and have low expectations, students will have low achievement. Often, educators have a deficit view on ELL's abilities and fail to capitalize on the abilities and skills they possess. When educators believe ELLs are capable of learning content alongside their peers, aligning goals with class content and not language acquisition alone, it improves educational outcomes. English Language learners are not blank canvases to build upon; they enter the classroom with diverse funds of knowledge, experiences, abilities, and interests that are in the process of obtaining English language skills. When leadership acknowledges and understands other cultures, and what they can bring into the learning process, this contributes to a school culture in which teachers build asset views of ELLs, as opposed to deficit views due to language abilities. These asset based views that value students' families, communities, cultures, and lived experiences

produce a school culture of inclusion. Most importantly, effective culturally responsive leadership creates this school culture of inclusion not just in the classroom, but extends it beyond to valuing teachers, families, and communities.

Positive Relationships Are Key to Positive School Culture and Educational Outcomes

The foundation to effective education is positive relationships: teacher-student, teacher-principal, and school-family relationships. Teachers that build and maintain positive student relationships contribute to a positive learning environment, motivation, engagement, and outcomes for their students. When teachers have positive relationships with their students it requires them to get to know their students, what their backgrounds are, their interests, goals, and lived experiences in order to create learning opportunities that are engaging and relevant to the students' lives. This allows them to make better decisions regarding curriculum and instruction strategies, assessment, and even classroom management decisions.

A significant determinant of teacher attitudes associated with teaching is teacher-leadership relationships. Mika built positive relationships with teachers by promoting positive exchanges, giving trust and autonomy, respecting the knowledge and capabilities of teachers, listening to the needs of teachers, and collaborating with them to find solutions. Not only do these relationships improve school culture and educational outcomes of students, but also decreases costs of attrition due to workplace dissatisfaction.

While teacher-student and teacher-leadership relationships are essential to positive school culture and outcomes, a pertinent piece of the relationship puzzle is missing: school-family relationships. As the need to improve student educational

outcomes exceeds the bounds of the school walls, so do the relationships it requires. Inclusion of students' families and communities provides the support necessary to fully address the learning needs and concerns of students. Often, ELL families are hesitant due to language barriers, not trusting the school to understand their child's needs as they are unique to their lived experiences, and not feeling welcomed to participate in the educational process. Trusting relationships are built when families and communities feel welcomed and respected. This is contingent upon families' perceptions that their involvement would results in positive outcomes, they are welcomed and respected contributors, as they have skills and knowledge of their own, and trusting that the school understands their students needs and has their best interest at heart.

While the current study has just begun to explore the role of principals in improving educational outcomes for ELLs, it has provided tremendous insight into how one principal effectively implements CRSL to improve educational outcomes. To be taken form that, are the implications that school leadership must first challenge the status quo and be intentional about CRSL, reflective practices shift mindsets, principals aware of themselves are more effective with students, high expectations results in high outcomes, and positive relationships result in positive school cultures and improved educational outcomes. These implications provide a clear plan of implementation, providing opportunities for dialogue regarding goals and outcomes, as well as indicate the parts played in disrupting oppressive practices. Doing so moves the school towards one of equitable education for all students.

Recommendations

The exploration into models of effective culturally responsive leadership for English Language Learners in urban elementary schools resulted in findings that the role of a principal in improving educational outcomes for ELLs is being intentional about CRSL, creating a positive and welcoming school culture, and advocating and modeling meaningful connections with staff, students, families, and communities. . Based on these findings, and the implications previously provided, I would like to propose recommendations for practice, as well as for future research opportunities.

Recommendations for Practice

Be a change agent by being intentional about CRSL

With the rapidly dynamic changes in student populations, a commitment to social justice and equity in educational leadership has become more important than ever. Educational leadership professors and policymakers to perform a reexamination of requirements for leadership content knowledge or issues of social justice. The deep-seated concern that traditional school leadership preparation programs appeared subtractive and inefficient in their ability to prepare school leaders for professional practice required to operate successfully in the 21st century is still plaguing leadership preparation programs. Preparation programs must specifically train school leaders to avoid racist behavior and understandings. Until that is accomplished, it is on school leadership to initiate change. They must seize richer opportunities to engage issues of social justice, oppression, and critical consciousness in education. School leaderships' ability to practically implement equal, or equitable, educational opportunity among diverse learners is impaired and will continue to be hindered unless we first deal with oppressive issues such as race (racism), ethnicity (ethnocentrism), class (classism), and

gender or sex (sexism). School leadership currently leans towards "colorblindness". By refusing to consider culture and race as relevant to student learning and also by denying the existence of White privilege, the teachers and school leaders failed to tap into the uniqueness of individual student cultures, values, and beliefs as tools for developing culturally responsive pedagogy and leadership that could benefit all students.

Leadership should incorporate aspects of CRSL for educational transformation, developing a critical consciousness and awareness that is both effective and sustainable. It is essential that social justice, multiculturalism, and culturally responsive school leadership is consistent, supported, and intentional if they are to be effective. It is not enough to be an implied expectation, but must be clear and explicit in visions, values, goals, dialogue, and hiring practices. As such, cultural responsiveness is a necessary component of effective school leadership, but must be present and sustainable by consistent promotion by school leaders. Namely, by leadership being self-reflective, developing culturally responsive teachers and curricula, promoting inclusivity, and engaging students' communities in educational contexts, there has to be a conscious effort to intentionally implement culturally responsive strategies and practices. One such way observed in this case was continuous, ongoing professional development for teachers to engage in meaningful, critical self-reflection and dialogue about implementation of culturally responsive teaching, awareness of biases, acknowledgment of the diversity of the student population and challenges that may arise, and working collaboratively with colleagues to implement the plan school-wide. An awareness and understanding of the practices that promote deficit beliefs, biases, and attitudes, and challenge the status quo

when it deters change and transformation is the first step to intentional CRSL. Some

other recommendations to be a change agent and intentionally implement CRSL are:

- Having deliberate conversations with teachers and staff about deficit mindsets, and the impacts of effective education
- Lead by example in terms of building trust, support, and maintaining transparency in dialogue
- Critically reflect, and promote critical self-reflect amongst teachers to understand how lived experiences impact educational practice and contribute to current institutionalized oppressive educational structures
- Utilizing research-based leadership and CRSL surveys to provide understanding into domains that could be improved upon and ones to be celebrated as effective.
- Being intentional regarding ongoing professional development, both for principals to reflect on leadership practices, and also teachers to have opportunities for reflection and collaboration.

Create a Positive, Culturally Responsive School Culture

Positive school environments and supportive leadership increase teacher

satisfaction with their work. This satisfaction leads to motivation and commitment to

student learning, thus producing positive student outcomes. Creation of a positive school

environment requires leadership promotion of equitable educational opportunities for all

students, especially those of ELLs; this includes school-wide beliefs of students and their

capabilities, understanding and appreciation of cultures, and engaging in positive

relationships with students' families and communities. Sense of belonging is an immense

determinant of ELL educational outcomes as they are dealing with the stress of adjusting

to a learning environment of the majority culture. When students feel valued, supported,

and included, they are more likely to be motivated to learn. Motivation creates

engagement, which in turn results in improved educational outcomes. Scholars

collectively argue that the cultural and social capital of Black, Latino, Indigenous First

Nation, and English language learner students are routinely not recognized and or valued, and thus their geniuses not tapped. Recognizing and nurturing the cultural identity o students, staff, and the community in which the school is located is another culturally responsive leadership approach that has benefited schools. Validating all cultural epistemologies and behaviors requires a critical self-reflection and courage that is not common in many school leaders. Given the pervasiveness of deficit understandings of students, fostering identity confluence and intersectionalities of students who identify as Latino or Black and "smart" has been difficult for some administrates. These behaviors often lead to students being pressured to such an extent that some disengage from school.

As Mika demonstrated, a positive school culture motivates students to strive for excellence, grow in confidence, discover and refine their unique abilities, form positive and enduring relationships, and prepare for educational and future success. Shifting the mindset through organizational improvement and learning requires leaders to take stock in not just promoting a positive school culture, but one that is also culturally responsive. Some recommendations to help build a positive, culturally responsive school culture include:

- Promote strong relationships between teachers and students to create a safe learning environment where students feel safe and secure exploring learning opportunities
- Focus on asset based thinking – cognizant of the skills, knowledge, and lived experiences students bring with them into school and the classroom
- Incorporate clear expectations for behaviors, attitudes, and mindsets throughout all domains of the school
- Set and maintain high expectations for student learning
- Learn about your student population, especially ELLs, using information provided to the school, ESL/bilingual educators, utilizing district resources, a

knowledgeable staff or community member, and asking families, such as on home language surveys.

- Using students' cultures to enhance classroom participation and the development of their critical thinking skills

- Understand differing ways of learning and funds of knowledge, adjusting instructional practices towards learning strengths

- Promote the value in native language literacy as well as English

- Respect parents' intentions, understanding they may have differing beliefs, traditions, or goals for their student.

- Hire bilingual staff and recruit bilingual volunteers.

- Allow students input and share ownership of learning and classroom strategies.

Build healthy relationships, engage with families and communities, and create a welcoming environment for students and families

As some families may be resistant to trusting and collaborating with schools, by providing opportunities for families to be included in the process, motivation and willingness to participate in learning increases. Cultural identity has an impact on the voice of the individual, tribe, and community and having a voice is essential to feeling valued, respected, listened to, heard, and validated. By inviting the community to take part in important educational decisions, school leaders will have made an effort to take care of some of the cultural conflicts that are bound to arise between school administrators and the larger community outside school. Mika did this by promoting a book club for parents, led by an ESL teacher, which worked to improve parental English abilities and develop trusting relationships. Also, parents were invited and participated as an integral part of the school leadership team. This provided the opportunity to have parents' voices heard pertaining to goals and concerns for their students, have their knowledge and lived experience respected and included in dialogue and solutions, and include them in educational processes, such as policies and procedures, that affect their

students. Mika also ensured there were bilingual staff, interpreters, school counselors, and other staff available for parents. This improved relations and trust between parents and the school as parents felt welcomed, respected, and were able to communicate regarding their students education. This is especially important for ELL students and families that may be hesitant or intimidated. These families are often treated as an invisible minority in schools. The following are recommendations that will let students and families know they are a valued, integral part of the school community:

- Ensure that your bilingual staff and volunteers are visible throughout the building.
- Make sure they can 'see themselves' – on the walls (work and photos), in class (books, lessons, etc.), and most important in the staff, volunteers, and mentors coming into the school.

- Make certain that ELL families receive all of the school's scheduling and other important information in their native language, when possible
- Ensure communication is personal and face-to-face when possible – starting at the beginning of the year could results in yearlong benefits
- Create a parent room (such as a lounge or classroom) with bilingual information and magazine subscriptions, a bulletin board, a lending library, and a computer.
- Become involved, and encourage teachers to become involved in ELL students' neighborhood activities - this can also create contacts, like community leaders, who can be invaluable in relationships with students and parents
- Connect new families with a contact person who speaks their native language (when possible) as soon as they enroll in the school for guidance and information
- Create a program in which students and selected staff liaisons are trained to give tours of the school for incoming students and parents
- Create opportunities for parental and community involvement in school activities – whether school leadership teams, mentorship, volunteering in the office/cafeteria/classroom

Autonomy is Essential at All Levels

Freedom and independence to make decisions allow for effective teaching and leadership as processes can be adjusted per the unique needs of a situation. The principal is the central decision maker affecting the entirety of the school, controlling school culture, curriculum, instruction, and accountability. Principals that are provided a certain level of decision-making liberties are able to make adjustments necessary for their school's success. There is no silver bullet to apply to all schools to ensure success as each school may have differing needs and populations to serve. Therefore, when a district provides more autonomy to school leadership, school leadership has higher satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and ability to improve school learning environments and outcomes. Positive learning environments created by school leadership also builds effective and trusting relationships with school staff. As autonomy influences school leadership, so does the autonomy school leadership gives teachers. As teachers have the day-to-day access and exposure to students, as well as responsible for assessments, curriculum and instruction, and parental interaction, autonomy to make decisions regarding students provides them the flexibility necessary to adjust to the diverse needs of the students they teach. Teachers being able to adjust and change with the needs of their dynamic students are able to provide what is necessary to improve their students' educational experiences and outcomes. Ways to increase autonomy within the school include:

- Building trusting, transparent relationships with staff that respect the knowledge they have and collaborate with them to address student needs
- Collaborating about professional goals
- Providing ability to choose textbooks, supplemental reading/materials, and curriculum

- Providing time for collaboration with colleagues

Recommendations for Future Research

Being that this case study explored the roles of principals in utilizing culturally responsive school leadership to improve educational outcomes for ELLs in urban elementary schools, a larger pool and diversity of information would provide a better basis to determine the most effective practices and roles. This larger pool of information would come from, first and foremost, extending the timeline of the study to explore effective CRSL practices over a longer period of time to check for changes and increase depth of understanding. Also, increasing observation of school-wide events (such as conferences and family nights) and of the principal and teachers would add more depth and breadth to the study. Including the input of school personnel (such as interpreters, counselors, mentors, and psychologists) on the effectiveness of CRSL in the school would create a stronger base of support for the findings of principal actions in this care study.

A few new directions for future research would improve the findings of the study. An investigation into whether there are certain themes of critical incidents of the principals' work and life that impacted their implementation of CRSL would give new perspective to the study. If it were possible to determine lived experiences and training that contributed to a change of mindset or skill in providing culturally responsive school leadership, that could guide and inform future leaders and preparation programs. Also, the voices of parents and students into understanding the implementation of CRSL within the school would add a new perspective to the actions of school leadership. Often, students' and families' voices are silenced, both in research and education. By adding

these voices, it would provide a more complete picture and include the voices of those who are impacted most by CRSL within the school.

The future directions for research I have discussed may not only provide more breadth and depth to information and exploration, but may be used to improve the effectiveness and implementation of CRSL within schools and improve the educational outcomes of ELLs in urban elementary schools.

Contributions of the Study

This study demonstrates not just what leadership skills are effective for improving educational outcomes of ELLs, but how significant and influential culturally responsiveness is in assessing that effective leadership. Research, such as Khalifa (2016), discussed in depth the importance of cultural responsiveness in school leadership. However, the most compelling and notable contribution of this study is the lack of cultural responsiveness in the leadership matrices used to assess school leadership. Until now, assessment measures and cultural responsiveness have mostly been researched separate from one another. This would suggest that these leadership matrices be adjusted to include culturally responsive leadership tenets, especially when assessed for effectiveness for ELLs. Core components, such as connection to external community, speak to the CRSL tenet of engaging students and parents in community contexts. Also, VAL-ED and ES-I matrices speak to rigorous curriculum. However, in large part, both matrices (along with most others used for leadership assessment) exclude mentions of this rigorous curriculum being culturally responsive and inclusive. Additionally, there is a lack of assessment on the school culture and climate created by school leadership. This study has highlighted the importance of school culture in improving educational

outcomes of students, specifically ELLs. And lastly, one of the most crucial reported in

this study, current leadership matrices lack emphasis on critical self-awareness of

leadership, teachers, and staff. Lived experiences of leadership and school staff

significantly impacts the learning of students. Reflection of these lived experiences

allows for crucial transformation to occur and should be assessed and measured.

Summary

Chapter five scrupulously discussed the findings of this case study. It delved deep

into a principal's role to: be intentional about implementation of the tenets of CRSL,

create a school culture and learning environment that is safe, welcoming, and positive,

and be an advocate, supporter, and model in making meaningful connections with staff,

students, families, and communities. Discussion described how leaders are better

prepared to promote culturally teaching practices, respond to the needs of marginalized

student populations, and build meaningful partnerships with families and school

communities when they become culturally responsive. Also, that fostering new meanings

of diversity, promoting inclusive instructional practices within schools, and building

connections between schools and communities create a positive school culture with share

ideas of what is important, caring and supportive relationships, and commitment to

helping all students learn. Most importantly, how culturally responsive leaders encourage

teachers to build positive, constructive, trustful relationships with their students involving

honoring students' home cultures while emphasizing student achievement.

This discussion led to a series of implications: (1) by challenging the status quo,

the barriers associated with institutionalized practices and beliefs weaken, (2) reflective

practices shift negative mindsets, (3) principals who are aware of themselves and the

socio-cultural contexts in which they live and work are more effective in reaching their students, (4) high expectations, asset based thinking, and inclusion are essential to positive school culture, and (5) positive relationships are key to positive school culture and educational outcomes. As a result, it was recommended that principals (1) make efforts to be a change agent by being intentional about CRSL, (2) create a positive, culturally responsive school culture, (3) build healthy relationships, engage with families and communities, and create a welcoming environment for students and families, and that (4) autonomy be essential at all levels.

Concluding Remarks

The change in demographics is here to stay. With the rapidly changing, dynamic population in US school, it is imperative that leadership advocates and creates more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environments. This dissertation provides in depth understanding and identification of culturally responsive school leadership practices and behaviors that make it possible for students from diverse backgrounds, especially ELLs, to gain more equitable educational opportunities. Erasing an individual's culture and lived experience to assimilate to dominant culture does not improve educational outcomes. Rather, school leadership must develop a plan of action to build positive, healthy relationships and create welcoming, inclusive environments to promote school-wide cultural responsiveness. When schools fulfill the needs of their students and assist families and communities with accessing school systems, educational outcomes improve.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview 1

1. How many total years have you been a principal at this school?

2. Describe your teaching experience.

3. What ELL training have you had as a principal or what background do you have with ELLs?

4. Do any of your teachers have linguistically diverse endorsements or specialized training in teaching ELLs?

    a. What type or kind?

    b. How many?

5. What do English Language Acquisition (ELA) services look like in your building?

6. Are you aware of or do you implement Global Language Endorsements & Global Educator Endorsements?

7. Do you track or group students according to their language proficiency levels?

    a. If so, for what purposes?

8. What is the role of the elementary principal improving educational outcomes of English language learners (ELLs)?

9. How does the principal promote equity and high expectations in instructional practices for ELLs?

Interview 2

1. Describe the culture here at your school?

    a. How do you ensure it is maintained?

2. Tell me a little more about how you build culture?
    a. What strategies and methods do you utilize?
3. How is the climate and culture of your school conducive to the achievement of ELLs?

    a. How do you promote this culture?

4. How does school culture affect the ability of the principal to create a school environment that contributes to the success of ELLs?

5. What classroom strategies have you successful implemented that directly address the needs of ELL students?

      a. How do you monitor for their effectiveness?

6. What interventions have you successful implemented that directly address the needs of ELL students?

      a. How do you monitor for their effectiveness?

7. What supports contributed to the success principals encountered when implementing interventions?

8. What is your school's relationship like with the local community?
9. Have you built any relationships with organizations in the community?
      a. If so, what are the successes and challenges you've experienced?
10. In what ways do you advocate connecting with families and communities of ELLs?
11. What strategies do you utilize to promote the inclusion of families and community ties within the school?
12. Without constraints of budget, time, etc., what strategies, events, or actions would you take for your school to interact and include ELL families and community in the school and education?

<u>Interview 3</u>

1. Describe the key factors that you believe have enhanced academic achievement for ELLs in your school.
2. What have you done as a principal to promote achievement among the ELLs in your building?

3. What would you like to change to better support the needs of ELLs that might help to shed light on some gaps in practice?

4. What skills and talents do you look for when hiring new staff members?
5. Describe in detail your hiring process.
      a. What strategies do you use to ensure quality candidates?
6. What role does hiring and evaluating teachers play in academic achievement of ELLs?

7. What skills do you encourage staff members to learn?

8. What type of ELL staff development has your staff been involved in the past?

9. Elaborate upon your professional development, particularly on the role of professional learning communities.
10. What types of professional development does the principal provide that may be contributing to increased achievement of ELLs?

11. In what ways do you measure whether teachers have implemented what they have learned from staff development opportunities?

12. Describe your evaluation process for you teachers.
      a. Is that the same for your ELL teachers? Are there any specific measures you evaluate?
13. How do you utilize your evaluations to build the capacity of your teachers?

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UNC CHARLOTTE

Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education
9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Consent to be Part of a Research Study

Models of Effective Culturally Responsive Leadership for English Language Learners
Principal Investigator: Jonimay Morgan, Doctoral Student, UNCC
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Chance Lewis, Professor of Urban Education, UNCC

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know
- The purpose of this study is to understand and explore the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs.
- You will be asked to participate in in-person interviews and will be observed during daily activities.
- If you choose to participate it will require 3 total hours of your time.
- Risks or discomforts from this research include mild discomfort.
- Benefits may include future grant writing work on behalf of the school.
- Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may decline at any time during the process.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this research study.

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this study to understand and explore the role of the elementary principal in improving educational outcomes of ELLs.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study.
You are being asked to be in this study because you are a principal at an urban elementary school with a high ELL population. [describe eligibility criteria; e.g., age, gender, language, etc.].

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in audio recorded, one-on-one interviews that will ask questions regarding your leadership strategies and schools culture, such as *What do English Language Acquisition (ELA) services look like in your building*, *What type of ELL staff development has staff been involved in over the years*, and *How is the climate and culture of your school conducive to the achievement of ELLs in your building*. In addition, you will be observed for the remainder of the school day while completing daily activities. Your time commitment will be about three (3) hours total for interviews over the course of the study, as well as three (3) days total of observation. We will also collect information on school demographics and achievement.

What benefits might I experience?

You will not benefit directly from being in this study. However, others might benefit because/by future grant(s) written by the researcher to obtain school funding.

What risks might I experience?
There is minimal risk associated with this study. You may experience mild discomfort when discussing beliefs pertaining to culture or other experiences while teaching. However, I do not expect this risk to be common. You may choose not to answer any question, as well as withdraw participation at any time.

How will my information be protected?
The researcher will audio record interviews, as well as take observational notes. The results from this study could potentially be published. To protect your privacy I will not include any information that could identify you. To protect your privacy (identity), a pseudonym for participants, schools, and districts will be used. The interviews will be transcribed post-interview. While the study is active, all data will be stored in a password-protected database that can be can be accessed by the primary researcher. Only the primary researcher will have routine access to the study data. Other people with approval from the Investigator, may need to see the information we collect about you. Including people who work for UNC Charlotte and other agencies as required by law or allowed by federal regulations.

How will my information be used after the study is over?
After this study is complete, study data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify you.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?
There are no individual incentives or payment for participation. Participation in this study is voluntary.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
It is up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant?
For questions about this research, you may contact Jonimay Morgan at jmorga90@uncc.edu or Dr. Chance Lewis at chance.lewis@uncc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 704-687-1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to Participate
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____
Name (PRINT)

_____
Signature   Date

_____
Name and Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

APPENDIX C: VAL-ED MATRIX

Key Processes						
Core Components	**Planning**	**Implementing**	**Supporting**	**Advocating**	**Communicating**	**Monitoring**
High Standards for Student Learning						
Rigorous Curriculum (content)						
Quality Instruction (pedagogy)						
Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior						
Connections to External Communities						
Performance Accountability						

APPENDIX D: ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS – INDICATORS (ES-I) CODES

Essential Supports and Indicators Coding Framework			
ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS (ES) – INDICATORS (I)	**(ES)**	**(I)**	**ES-I CODES**
School Leadership – School Leadership	SL	I/IL	SL-I/IL
Parent Community – School Ties – Teacher's Ties to the Community	PCST	TtC	PCST-TtC
Parent Community – School Ties – Parent Involvement	PCST	PI	PCST-PI
Professional Capacity – Teacher Background	PC	TB	PC-TB
Professional Capacity – Frequency of Professional Development	PC	FPD	PC-FPD
Professional Capacity – Quality of Professional Development	PC	QPD	PC-QPD
Professional Capacity – Changes in Human Resources	PC	CHR	PC-CHR
Professional Capacity – Work Orientation	PC	WO	PC-WO
Professional Capacity – Professional Community	PC	PC	PC-PC
Student Centered Learning Climate – Safety and Order	SCLC	S&O	SCLC-S&O
Student Centered Learning Climate – Academic Support and Press	SCLC	AS&P	SCLC-AS&P
Instructional Guidance – Curriculum Alignment	IG	CA	IG-CA
Instructional Guidance – Basic Skills	IG	BS	IG-BS
Instructional Guidance – Application Emphasis	IG	AE	IG-AE

APPENDIX E: VAL-ED/ESI MATRIX CODES

ES-I Codes within the VAL-ED Codes						
Key Processes						
Core Components	**Planning**	**Implementing**	**Supporting**	**Advocating**	**Communicating**	**Monitoring**
High Standards for Student Learning	**HS-P** IG-CA IG-AE	**HS-I** IG-CA IG-AE	**HS-S** IG-CA IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	**HS-A** IG-CA IG-AE	**HS-C** IG-CA IG-AE	**HS-M** IG-CA IG-AE
Rigorous Curriculum (content)	**RC-P** IG-AE SCLC-AS&P IG-CA SL-SL	**RC-I** IG-AE SCLC-AS&P IG-CA SL-SL	**RC-S** IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	**RC-A** IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	**RC-C** IG-AE SCLC-AS&P	**RC-M** IG-AE SCLC-AS&P SL-SL
Quality Instruction (pedagogy)	**QI-P** IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO	**QI-I** IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO PC-PC	**QI-S** IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO PC-PC	**QI-A** IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO	**QI-C** IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO	**QI-M** IG-AE IG-BS PC-WO PC-PC
Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior	**CLPB-P** PC-PC PC-WO SL-I/IL	**CLPB-I** PC-PC PC-WO SL-I/IL	**CLPB-S** PC-PC PC-WO SL-I/IL	**CLPB-A** PC-PC PC-WO	**CLPB-C** PC-PC PC-WO SL-I/IL	**CLPB-M** PC-PC PC-WO
Connections to External Communities	**CEC-P** PCST-TtC PCST-PI	**CEC-I** PCST-TtC PCST-PI	**CEC-S** PCST-TtC PCST-PI	**CEC-A** PCST-TtC PCST-PI	**CEC-C** PCST-TtC PCST-PI	**CEC-M** PCST-TtC PCST-PI
Performance Accountability	**PA-P** SL-I/IL PC-CHR C-PC	**PA-I** SL-I/IL PC-CHR PC-PC	**PA-S** SL-I/IL PC-CHR PC-PC	**PA-A** SL-I/IL PC-CHR PC-PC	**PA-C** SL-I/IL PC-CHR PC-PC	**PA-M** SL-SL PC-CHR PC-PC