Achievement and high school completion rates of Hispanic students with no English language skills compared to Hispanic students with some English language skills attending the same high school in an immigrant responsive city

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ACHIEVEMENT AND HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES OF HISPANIC STUDENTS WITH NO ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS COMPARED TO HISPANIC STUDENTS WITH SOME ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS ATTENDING THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL IN AN IMMIGRANT RESPONSIVE CITY

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Abstract

ACHIEVEMENT AND HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES OF HISPANIC STUDENTS WITH NO ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS COMPARED TO HISPANIC STUDENTS WITH SOME ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS ATTENDING THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL IN AN IMMIGRANT RESPONSIVE CITY

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The purpose of the study was to determine achievement and high school completion rates of Hispanic students (n = 13) with no English language skills compared to Hispanic students (n = 11) with some English language skills attending the same high school in an immigrant responsive city. All students were in attendance in the research school district’s high school, ninth-grade through 12th-grade. Entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links Assessment scores compared to the ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with no English Language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition Program were in the direction of improved speaking (p < .01), listening, (p < .001), reading (p < .001), writing (p < .001), comprehension (p < .001), and composite (p < .001) dependent t test scores. Null Hypotheses were also rejected in the direction of improved speaking (p < .05), listening, (p < .05), reading (p < .01), comprehension (p < .05), and composite (p < .05) dependent t test scores for immigrant high school students with some English Language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition Program. However, null hypotheses were not rejected for any of
the posttest-posttest English Language Development Assessment single classification analysis of variance scores comparisons. Results of chi-square ending twelfth-grade core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements of immigrant high school students with no English language skills compared to immigrant high school students with some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English language acquisition program as measured by core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements by school year were statistically different ($p = .008$) in the direction of greater credit accrual for students with some English language skills. The null hypothesis was rejected for observed absence frequencies across all four years of high school attendance. Students with no English Language Skills had significantly greater ($p < .05$) recorded absences. This pattern of absence frequencies represents a concern for students’ who cannot afford to miss days of school if they are to succeed academically but who may have competing demands elsewhere at home and work. We have a moral and professional obligation to determine through research and careful analysis how to bring our immigrant students and families into a quid pro quo relationship with the world of academia—the world through which their hopes, aspirations, dreams, and talents may be realized. Immigrant students with no English language skills and some English language skills clearly benefitted from participation in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.
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Sitting down to write my acknowledgements should be very easy, but instead I am struggling over my words. I have just completed close to 200 pages of my dissertation; expressing heartfelt sentiments of gratitude should role off my proverbial pen. I suppose I should be grateful that writer’s block has set in at the end of this journey, rather than the beginning. However, I believe the antidote to overcome writer’s block is to write, so write I shall.

My dissertation journey was an adventure I never thought I would take. As with many things in life, I embarked from humble beginnings. Most noteworthy of my early academic career was the inauspiciousness of my endeavors. You see, I am a high school dropout; I am one of the statistics that make educators cringe. Fortunately, I did return to school and owe many heartfelt thanks to all those who supported me along my bumpy journey.

I do not know if I can express through words the love and support I have received from my family. Thank you to my husband Jay for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and supporting me through incredibly busy times. I have been blessed with three wonderful sons, Jan, Pieter, and Jacques. I am so very proud of the fine men they are and the constant source of comfort and friendship we share. My two daughter-in-laws, Jennifer and Rebekah light up my life, bringing joy and laughter wherever they are. Anne, Ryan, Megan, Adam, and Marcus I am so happy I have the privilege of being a part of your life. You have made my life richer and sweeter. Most importantly I want to recognize the youngest members of the family, Madeline Grace and Jacob Hudson; you are forever in my heart, and bring joy to my soul at the mere thought of you.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The United States is once again reclaiming the moniker of, a nation of immigrants. In the early 1900’s, the social and economic adjustment of immigrants to life in the United States was seen as part of an inevitable wave of assimilation that would, hopefully, propel them to quickly reach the same level of social and economic well-being as the native born population (Warner & Srole, 1945). The reality of assimilation for immigrants today is neither easy nor inevitable. Although, many immigrants come from the same country or geographic region they do not represent a homogeneous group. To the contrary, the new wave of immigrants is very heterogeneous; they come to the United States from vastly differing levels of educational attainment, social class, generational differences, and contexts of both country of origin exit and country of adoption reception. The new wave of immigrants is a culturally and linguistically diverse population, significantly different from previous waves of immigration which had their origins in southern and eastern Europe (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Furthermore, the United States is not a homogenous society but offers starkly different situations for each individual immigrant and their family. The outcome for immigrants, and their ease of transition to a new life in a new country is largely predicated on the human capital they posses, and the context of reception they encounter (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Current Immigration Trends

Given the complexity inherent in immigration in a global society, the process of assimilation is better viewed from a perspective of segmented assimilation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). While the inevitable and quick assimilation of the 1900’s may still
occasionally happen, there are a variety of outcomes and trajectories that are also possible, and even likely given the diversity of the new wave of immigrants, and the variety of skills and attributes they bring with them (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Age, education, occupational skills, economic resources, and skill level and use of English are all forms of *human capital* that may ease the immigrant’s transition. Human capital functions in congruence with the conditions of reception which include the de facto, and de jure policies of the host government, community attitudes, and immigrant family structure (Jensen & Chitose, 1989; Jensen & Chitose, 1996; Portes, 1998; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

**Demographic changes.** Current immigration trends have significantly changed the demographic composition of U.S. schools, and the face of urban and rural America. The majorities of new immigrants are from the *developing world*, and look different from the dominant U.S. ethnic group as *people of color*. Research supports the understanding that the more similar a minority population is in appearance, social class, background, language, and religion to the dominant population, the easier will be their transition, and assimilation into the new land. Their context or reception will be more favorable (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Warner & Srole, 1945). Regardless of their ability to negotiate this paradigm, the concept of being the *other*, different from the dominant group, will be mirrored to them (Suarez-Orozco, 2000). Despite the historical evidence of previous generations of Italian, Irish, and Polish immigrants facing discrimination and racism, and their ethnic group’s abilities to overcome adversity, and assimilate into the dominant culture, the story for the new wave of immigrants is different. In the early 1900’s, by the second generation, once the ethnic accent was subjugated, and common practices of dress
and deportment adopted, it was virtually impossible to distinguish who was an immigrant or a child of an immigrant, from a native born citizen. Not so with the new wave of immigrants; their ethnicity is evident, and the discrimination and racism that go with it are not easily abated. This, in turn, affects student’s levels of academic achievement, engagement, self-esteem, goals and aspirations, and motivation (Fernandez-Kelly & Schauffler, 1996; Rumbaut, 1994; Waters, 1996; Waters, 1997).

**Rainbow underclass.** Non white immigrants face greater barriers to acceptance, and a lower return on their human capital. The darker an immigrants skin color, the more profound will be their difficulty accessing the educational, economic, and social opportunities of the dominant culture (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Tienda & Stier, 1996). When ethnicity is a mark of subordination it can also be a vehicle upon which immigrants are placed at risk for joining the permanent underclass of society, compounding the discrimination and inequality increasingly present among the dispossessed and relegating immigrants to a *rainbow underclass* (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Failure to realize the full potential of its citizens, either immigrant or native born, represents an irreplaceable loss of human capital, and resources for the nation.

**Importance of school and the global economy.** The importance of school for many immigrant children cannot be underestimated. For many youth, school is their first, and often times, only connection with their new world. Whether this contact is positive or negative can shape an immigrant student’s entire future (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, 2000). Public schools and school districts have experienced a robust increase in the number of immigrants or children of immigrants (Hernandez, Denton, & McCartney, 2007). Globalization of the post-Cold War world is driving the unprecedented numbers
of immigrants to enter the United States where their children must go to school (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). In turn, education drives the life chances and future outcomes for all children. This principle is the undoing of many immigrant youth. Those who excel within the academic world are well positioned to reap the rewards and take advantage of the many opportunities the global economy and dominant culture offers. Students who drop out of school, or graduate without the necessary skills to compete in the global economy, may be relegated to the lower sectors of society that offer limited opportunities for social and economic advancement and marginal reward for effort (Orfield, 2002). The ability of immigrants to adapt to the myriad challenges presented in a new land and culture foreign to both themselves and their parents is a protective characteristic for future success. Successful adaptation is measured largely by the following factors: school performance, English language skill and use, ethnic identities, and the degree of parent-child generational conflict. The extent to which immigrant youth are successful with these factors will map their future social stability and economic ascent as adults (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

**Second generation immigration.** Second generation immigrants tend to fare better economically, and educationally than new immigrants. Approximately, one in five children in the United States today is from an immigrant family, with Latinos making up over 62% of this group (Hernandez, 2004). Already, by 1995, foreign-born mothers made up 18% of all births in the United States (Rumbaut, 1997). In the United States, the first and second-generation immigrant population reached fifty-five million in the year 2000, and in 2009 had grown to seventy million people. This represents the largest
Historically, immigration has been fueled by youth with dreams, and ambitions of a better life than what they may have had in their country of origin. Since 1960, fully 80% of all immigrants who arrived in the United States have been under thirty-four years of age; only 10% of the immigrant population were forty years of age or older. Given the relatively young age upon arrival, this population demographic is in the prime of their childbearing years. Fifty-six percent of U.S. born, second generation children of at least one immigrant parent are under eighteen years of age (Rumbaut, 1999).

**Country of origin.** Over 80% of current immigrants are from Latin America, Asia, and the Afro-Caribbean basin (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2000; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003). Many immigrants retain strong bonds to their country of origin, and maintain the goal of returning once they have accumulated sufficient resources, or the political climate has stabilized. However, the children of these immigrants, the second generation, have grown up *American*, and are here to stay. The long-term welfare and economic achievement of the new wave of immigrants is inexorably tied to the long-term welfare, and economic achievement of the United States (Pedrazza & Rumbaut, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996).

The vast majority of the young children of immigrants are citizens of the United States; they were born here. The fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees citizenship to all who are born within its shores. In another ten years, second generation immigrants will account for close to 50% of the population increase (Suro & Passel, 2003). Immigrant youth, and the children of immigrants are the
fastest growing population segment in the under twenty-one demographic in the United States (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Latin American immigrant youth are by far the fastest growing group within this demographic. Over the past ten years the number of Latin American youth immigrating to the United States has increased by over 57% (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2000). First generation immigrants make up 25% of the demographic increase. Many first generation immigrant children contend with the challenges of learning English as a second language, and the very real stressors, and barriers inherent in being undocumented. All immigrants must learn a new and unfamiliar culture, redevelop social networks, and learn to successfully negotiate access to health care, and education for their children (Suro & Passel, 2003).

**Undocumented immigrants.** Navigating a new land is made more complex for undocumented immigrants by the challenges of poverty, the unavailability of securing work for a living wage, and the daily dissonance experienced by living in a culture that rejects their very presence, but is welcoming of the labor of their hands, compensated for at a below market rate (Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, & Passel, 2005; Perez Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005, Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Estimations of the population of undocumented immigrants places the number at over eleven million, with fully 60% of all Mexican immigrants being undocumented. Parents tend to bring their children when they immigrate to a new country. Recent estimates indicate there are approximately one-point-eight million children residing in the United States without documentation. Approximately, three-point-one million babies are born every year to parents without documentation (Passel, 2006). These children have been given the negative label of *anchor babies*, thought to be born to parents who came to the U.S. to
take advantage of the fourteenth amendment to insure their children’s U.S. citizenship, and legal status (So, 2010).

Bearing the stigma of having undocumented status brings with it additional racism, and discrimination. When immigrants encounter racism, and ethnic discrimination it has a significant negative effect on their social, and emotional well-being, physical health, sense of efficacy, and sense of self; which in turn may diminish their motivation to succeed, and academic achievement (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). This may account for an apparent diminishing in the levels of motivation, and positive attitudes of many immigrant youth towards school, and their future life chances. The longer many immigrant children stay in school the lower their levels of academic achievement, and the lower their grade point average (Orfield, 2002; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

**Heterogeneous immigrant demographics.** The immigrants coming to the United States today represent a truly mixed demographic. Growing up in an immigrant household increases the risk factor of poverty by more than 50% compared to children growing up in native born households (Hook, 2006). Many of the new immigrants to the United States from Latin America have little formal schooling. They can be described as unskilled or semi-skilled workers who frequently enter the United States without proper documentation. Approximately 22% of all new immigrants have less than a ninth-grade education (Orfield, 2002). They are more likely to work for minimum wages, and in jobs without the benefit of insurance or other labor protections and safeguards (Orfield, 2002). Unlike the opportunities for past waves of immigrants, the changing economic structure
in the United States offers today’s low-skilled immigrants little opportunity for upward mobility through factory or industrial work. Many new immigrants live in areas of high poverty, racial segregation, and limited meaningful work opportunities (Wilson, 1997).

**Parental educational attainment.** The educational attainment of immigrant parents is a significant factor in the academic achievement of their children. Immigrants that arrive in the United States with a history of educational attainment in their country of origin tend to have children who achieve a higher level of academic success than children of immigrant parents who have low levels of educational attainment (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The greater the educational level of the parent is related to an increase in the number, and quality of resources the parent has to help their child achieve academic success, and access to academic opportunities. The level of parental education has a direct correlation to student outcomes on achievement tests, grades, and school completion (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Jenks, 1972). Children of immigrant parents who have higher levels of education are in a better position to receive help from their parents to navigate the road to college, enter school with greater and more sophisticated vocabularies, experience a literacy rich home environment, have easy access to technology such as computers and the internet, and are more likely to be able to receive help on home work (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

**Immigrant paradox.** Many students, be they immigrants or native born, experience a decline in their motivation, grade point average, and engagement the longer time they spend within the educational system. While this overall decline in performance crosses all racial and ethnic divides, it is significantly more noticeable in minority populations (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Steinberg, Brown & Dornbusch,
1996; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). However, an interesting phenomenon in the research suggests new immigrants have better outcomes than second generation immigrants in several areas (Hernandez & Charney, 1998). This has been referred to as the immigrant paradox (Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008). Educational achievement may also be negatively correlated to perceptions of discrimination. The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) data indicate many immigrant youth feel a pervasive sense of discrimination in school and community settings. The source of their feelings of discrimination comes from interactions with peers, teachers, and neighbors. Interestingly, a majority of immigrant youth who report discrimination also feel that they would experience less discrimination if they obtained a high level of education (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Parental involvement is strongly linked to higher levels of academic achievement (Christenson & Hurley, 1997).

However, immigrant parents do not experience efficacy in their interactions with the educational system. Limited access to English is a significant barrier to effective parental involvement; it also is a determinant of individual identity, and authority. Access to interpreters can bridge some of these barriers, but this alone does not eliminate the problem (Trueba, 2004). Frequently, immigrant parents must rely on their children to act as interpreters. When this happens, the social dynamics of family are weakened, and become unbalanced. When the familial hierarchy is altered, the parent-child bond can be negatively affected (Perez Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005).

**English language acquisition.** Data from the CILS Study indicate that all immigrant youth have a greater command of English than their parents. By the second
generation, immigrant youth have a greater command of English than the language of their parents, and their command of English is approaching fluent (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The CILS data suggest immigrant parents and children have, on the whole, high academic and educational expectations that include high school, and college graduation. The exception to this is found in the majority of immigrants from Mexico, Laos, and Cambodia who do not have an expectation of college. There is an extensive body of research that supports the positive correlation between high academic expectations, and academic success. A lack of high educational expectations may be a strong negative factor in students of Mexican descent achieving academic success (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

**Context of reception.** The composition of the co-ethnic community the immigrants settle in is an important factor in the context of reception. At times, immigrants settle in a community where there is no presence of a co-ethnic cohort. In this situation, adaption, and assimilation to the community must be navigated without the assistance of peer ethnic cultural mentors. However, more frequently immigrants find themselves in a co-ethnic community that, depending on the resources available to the community, the social capital present, can help to soften the difficulties of initial adaptation to a new and unfamiliar culture (Coleman, 1961; Portes, 1995; Roberts, 1995). Frequently, immigrants follow the established path previous immigrants have taken in the search for work, and a place within the community. This can be a significant help, or it can result in a downward assimilation trend if the new immigrant has a greater degree of human capital than the previous immigrants, but is channeled into a working-class, rather than a professional track (Mahler, 1995; Rumbaut, 1994). The context of reception for
immigrant parents is significant as it directly affects their children’s access to resources, and ability to adapt, and assimilate into their new culture. The human capital of the parents will affect their choices and options as they guide their children in a new land. The ability of the parents to successfully adapt, as well as their ambitions and goals for the future, will become the foundation upon which their children’s academic, economic, and adaption will be built (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

**Familial factors.** Growing up in a two parent family is a protective factor for student’s academic achievement (Boyce Rodgers & Rose, 2001; Kim, 2004; Pong, Dronkers, & Hampden-Thompson, 2003, Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Having a family with two parents allows for a greater level of economic security, as well as emotional stability, supervision, and structure that can be lacking in a single parent household (Aufseeser, Jekielek, & Brown, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The human capital of the parents, their educational attainment, and occupational skills, has a direct effect on their economic wellbeing and employment opportunities. According to the CILS data, the proportion of Mexican immigrants with a college degree is 2.6%, far below the national average, and distinctly below that of other immigrant groups. In addition, Mexican immigrants have very low English language proficiency levels (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). The level of socio-economic status of the parents has a direct effect on the children’s acculturation, and adaptation outcomes. All of these variables are manifested in differing modes of incorporation; the more favorable the context the more positive the outcomes. Mexican immigrants arrive in the United States with low levels of human capital, and an unwelcoming governmental de jure, and de facto context of reception. They receive no additional economic or other modes of support, and are
frequently viewed as *illegal aliens*, further increasing their threat to a community, and decreasing any level of support they may have received from the community (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Parental levels of socioeconomic achievement are linked to acculturation, which has a direct correlation with the level of English language skills. When the parent has a low level of English language proficiency, and the child is gaining in English language proficiency, a *role reversal* between parent and child can occur. The child has a greater command of English, and a greater understanding of the culture. In many ways, the child becomes the parent, needing to explain to the parent the nuances, and ramifications peculiar to their new environment. The parent becomes dependent on the help, and guidance of the child to navigate the new land. This in turn, releases the child to a world of independence prematurely (Gordon, 1971; Rumbaut, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997). This situation is detrimental to maintaining functioning familial dynamics, and parental authority.

**Gender.** Gender is a factor when considering familial dynamics, and parental authority as they relate to academic achievement. In traditional Hispanic culture, girls tend to be raised in a more protective, and structured environment, and thus come under the authority of the parents more easily. They are traditionally raised to be wives, and mothers, to care for a home, and raise children. Boys conversely are encouraged to develop interests outside of the family, and to explore other options as they become available (Gibson, 1989). Even when girls are raised in non-traditional Hispanic families they have a higher degree of compliance, and lower levels of defiance, and opposition to their parents than boys (Fernandez-Kelly & Garcia, 1989; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).
When gender is applied to academic achievement there is a distinct gender gap. Hispanic girls demonstrate better academic results than Hispanic boys, and girls have a less pronounced decline in academic achievement than boys. This is the gender gap. The gender gap is present across all racial and ethnic groups, but is particularly evident amongst immigrant students (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

**Acculturation and assimilation.** Acculturation and assimilation are related to academic achievement, and positive socioeconomic mobility. Portes and Rumbaut (1996) have identified several different types of acculturation with varying outcome potentials. *Dissonant acculturation* occurs when the parent and child have a differing trajectory, and pace for learning English and their new culture. When the child is learning at a more rapid pace than the parent, and the parent has low levels of human capital and adaptation skills separate from the child, they are on a course for *cultural dissonance* (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). The child is readily turning away from the old culture and towards the culture of their new land while the parent is still grasping onto the norms, and mores of their heritage culture. Dissonant acculturation does not inevitably lead to a downward assimilation, but does place the child and the family at greater risk for familial dissonance, and role reversal leading to an erosion of parental authority, and child compliance (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). *Consonant acculturation* occurs when both the child and parent embrace and assimilate into the new culture at roughly the same pace (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). This is more likely to occur when the parent has a higher level of human capital. Consonant acculturation does not lead to an inevitably favorable outcome or upwardly mobile assimilation. There are still very real issues of
discrimination, inequality, and racism that may factor into the outcome. Selective acculturation, according to Portes and Rumbaut (1996), occurs when both the parent and the child are immersed in a co-ethnic community which encourages, and promotes the retention of certain cultural norms and mores while assimilating into the new culture. Selective acculturation results in the least amount of reported intergenerational conflict, and the most productive assimilation outcomes without losing either the culture or language of origin. Again, a positive outcome is not inevitable, but is made more likely through selective acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Given the increasingly high number of immigrants to the United States with limited educational background, studies examining school success are relevant to the field. Educational attainment of immigrant children is an issue that will have significant ramifications for the future of the United States.

**Dropout Risk**

The U.S. Department of Education regularly collects data on dropout rates for the general education population. When this data is disaggregated it suggests certain demographic groups have a greater risk factor for dropping out of high school. Some of the risk factors associated with drop out include: minority status, and students from a culture of poverty (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Students sharing one or more risk factors have a significantly greater chance of dropping out of high school than students who do not share one or more of the risk factors.

**Deficit model.** Educators must emphasize the value of the family’s cultural heritage, and acknowledge the critical role families play in the success of their children. Viewing families from the paradigm of the deficit model is counterproductive. Research
indicates educators who work side by side with families to encourage shared decision making, and active participation, and collaboration on the school and community level see increased levels of parental engagement (Green, Rhodes, Heitler Hirsch, Suarez-Orozco, & Camic, 2008; Lessard, Fortin, Joly, Royer, & Blaya, 2004; Suarez-Orozco, 2000, Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

**Minority risk factor.** Minority youth appear to be at greater risk for disconnection, and in turn, dropping out of high school. A minority male student from a background of poverty, who frequently moved during his school years, was retained in school, and grew up in a single parent home, has a higher statistical chance of dropping out than his peers (Stout & Christenson, 2009). The dropout rate for minority males is striking in its magnitude. African American males have the lowest graduation rate of any minority group, only 50% of this population group graduate from high school. American Indians have a graduation rate of 51%, Latino’s graduate at 53%, white’s graduate at 75%, and Asian and Pacific Islanders graduate at 77%. Frequently poverty, or low socio-economic status (SES), is associated with minority status. Low SES is a robust predictor of drop out. Students living in poverty drop out at over six times the rate of students not living in poverty. Low SES is also an important predictor of incarceration rates (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004).

**Academic challenge.** Another robust predictor of dropout risk is a history of academic challenge. Students struggling academically as early as kindergarten establish a negative pattern of academic achievement that can follow them throughout their school career (Cairns, Cairns, & Neckerman, 1989; Sinner & Barnes, 1991). Poor academic grades in the freshman year of high school, and absenteeism are two strong predictors of
early school leaving (Bryk & Thum, 1989). Ripple & Luthar (2000) looked at the various risk factors associated with dropout risk and identified attendance, and past academic history as the most salient factors. They did not, however factor in any school based indicators such as school or teacher quality. The absence of this data represents a limitation in their study. Dropout prevention must begin prior to high school. Effective prevention efforts need to start much earlier with special attention being paid to the critical transition years of preschool to kindergarten, fifth-grade to sixth-grade, and eighth-grade to ninth-grade. Transition programs that are inclusive of parents, students, and teachers show the most promise. When data are used to create a model with at-risk indicators leading to intervention programs for middle school students the dropout rate has been reduced (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009).

**Engagement.** Newly arrived immigrants academic achievement was tracked by Green and colleagues (2008), to determine how students initial levels of engagement, gender, and support of caring adults impacted their outcomes. This research found that student’s levels of engagement were not constant. Academic achievement and motivation were linked to student’s connections with caring adults, and student’s levels of engagement. While some students are more inclined toward academic achievement than others, this is not a constant variable. Academic achievement was found to be shaped by a variety of other factors. Over the three year period of this study some students showed improvements, others remained constant, and still others actually demonstrated declines in their levels of academic achievement. Immigrant boys demonstrated greater levels of initial academic engagement with declining results over
time. Conversely, immigrant girls demonstrated initially low levels of academic engagement with increasing academic engagement over time.

**Negative social mirror.** Suarez-Orozco, and Suarez-Orozco (2001) found that students new to the United States demonstrated higher levels of achievement relative to students who were not newcomers. The longer the students are in the United States the lower their levels of achievement. Students of Latin American descent are at risk for non-high school completion, which is exacerbated by increasing levels of academic disengagement, failing grades, and multiple absences. Suarez-Orozco (1987) looked at the *negative social mirror* that includes stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, that can negatively impact Latino newcomer youth. This can lead to disengagement of the students and a falling off academically. Furthermore, Latino immigrant youth may be seen as *illegal* by some, and therefore not having any rights to educational opportunities (Portes, 1995; Suarez-Orozco, 2000). Unfortunately, Latino youth experience the achievement gap as a crushing daily reality. Overwhelmingly, Latino youth have persistent low levels of academic achievement, and a disproportionately high drop-out rate (Trueba, 1998).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine achievement and high school completion rates of Hispanic students with no English language skills compared to Hispanic students with some English language skills attending the same high school in an immigrant responsive city.
**Research Questions**

Research question one analyzed the entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to the ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Language Achievement Research Question #1.**

Did students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills lose, maintain, or improve entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite measures?

**Sub-Question 1a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking?

**Sub-Question 1b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (b) Listening?
**Sub-Question 1c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (c) Reading?

**Sub-Question 1d.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (d) Writing?

**Sub-Question 1e.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (e) Comprehension?

**Sub-Question 1f.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (f) Composite?

Research question two analyzed the entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to the ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with some English
language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Language Achievement Research Question #2.**

Did students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills lose, maintain, or improve entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite measures?

**Sub-Question 2a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking?

**Sub-Question 2b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (b) Listening?

**Sub-Question 2c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (c) Reading?
Sub-Question 2d. Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (d) Writing?

Sub-Question 2e. Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (e) Comprehension?

Sub-Question 2f. Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (f) Composite?

Research question three analyzed the posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

Overarching Posttest-Posttest Language Achievement Research Question #3. Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have congruent or different ending high school posttest compared to ending high school
posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite measures?

**Sub-Question 3a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking?

**Sub-Question 3b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (b) Listening?

**Sub-Question 3c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (c) Reading?

**Sub-Question 3d.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (d) Writing?
**Sub-Question 3e.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (e) Comprehension?

**Sub-Question 3f.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (f) Composite?

Research question four analyzed the posttest end of high school English core content subject grade point average scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Posttest-Posttest Achievement Research Question #4.** Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have congruent or different ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (a) English, (b) math, (c) science, and (d) social studies??

**Sub-Question 4a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest
compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (a) English?

**Sub-Question 4b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (b) math?

**Sub-Question 4c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (c) science?

**Sub-Question 4d.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (d) social studies?

Research question five analyzed graduation requirements of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Graduation Requirements Research Question #5.** Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have
congruent or different ending high school ninth-grade graduation requirements compared to end of twelfth-grade graduation requirements as measured by core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements?

**Sub-Question 5a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills end of ninth-grade graduation requirements compared to end of twelfth-grade graduation requirements as measured by core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements?

Research question six analyzed engagement of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Engagement Research Question #6.** Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have congruent or different end of ninth-grade engagement compared to end of twelfth-grade engagement as measured by absence frequencies?

**Sub-Question 6a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills end of ninth-grade engagement compared to end of twelfth-grade engagement as measured by absence frequencies?

**Importance of the Study**

This study contributes to research, practice, and policy. The study is of significant interest to teachers, school district administrators, local and state Board’s of
Education, Education Service Units, and Local Educational Agencies, and all educational professionals and service providers who work with immigrant students who speak something other than English as a home language, and are interested in finding out what the indicators are for academic achievement for immigrants in the hopes of raising school achievement.

**Assumptions of the Study**

This study has several strong features. The English Language Acquisition program was begun by, and has been continuously supported by the Grand Island Public School District for over fifteen years. All teachers within the English Language Acquisition program receive professional development in strategies and pedagogies specifically linked to increasing ELL students’ academic achievement. All ELA teachers have a Nebraska certification in teaching English as a second language. Para educators who work with students in the ELA program receive professional development in strategies and pedagogies specifically linked to increasing ELL students’ academic achievement. All schools within the district that actively serve ELL students are required to host two family literacy events per year targeted to their ELL students and families. The Welcome Center was begun by, and has been continuously supported by the Grand Island Public School District since 2007. All families coming through the Welcome Center receive additional support and orientation to the school district and access to adult ESL classes. The Outreach Center was begun by, and also has been continuously supported by Grand Island Public Schools for over 15 years. The Multi-Cultural Coalition has been serving families for over ten years. Grand Island and other community leaders were the impetuous behind the creation of the Multi-cultural
Coalition. Students and families presenting at the Welcome Center with needs are immediately referred to the appropriate agency.

**Delimitations of the Study**

This study was delimited to students entering Grand Island Senior High School in ninth-grade who had a first language other than English, received a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4 on their initial Las Links assessment, and who qualified for and were served in the Grand Island Public School’s English Language Acquisition program. Study findings were limited to the students from this group who completed their high school career at Grand Island Senior High School on or before the 2010-2011 school year. All students participated in the English Language Development Assessment every year and remained at the same high school. All students had the same high school principal for the duration of the study.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study was confined to the students who qualified for the English Language Acquisition program in ninth-grade with a Las Links score of 1, 2, 3, or 4. Study participants consisted of ninth-grade students with no English language skills \(n = 13\) and ninth-grade students with some English language skills \(n = 11\) who participated in the ELA program at the research high school from ninth-grade until high school completion. The limited sample size, families who left the community because of weakening economic conditions, and changes made to the ELA program may limit the utility and generalizability of the study results and findings.

**Definition of Terms**
**Academic achievement.** Academic achievement is not a constant variable but is found to increase, decrease, or stay the same over time. It is shaped by several factors, and can be directly linked to student’s academic engagement, and the quality, and quantity of caring adult’s relationships the student enjoys.

**Academic challenge.** Academic challenge refers to the academic struggles students face from early elementary school leading to a negative pattern that can follow the student throughout their educational career. Academic challenge is also a factor for increasing the drop out risk.

**Academic Engagement.** Academic engagement is defined as the amount of time, and effort the student invests into their academic subjects, and can be measured by attendance, disciplinary reports, achievement, grade point average, core credit accumulation, and elective credit accumulation.

**Acculturation.** Acculturation is a mechanism of cultural change that occurs when different groups come into continuous contact with each other. This can result in integration among both groups of foods, recipes, music, dance, clothing, tools, and techniques (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Achievement gap.** Achievement gap refers to the disparity in academic performance, and standardized test scores between students from low socioeconomic status households, and minority status households, with their non-Hispanic white peers from higher socioeconomic status households. The achievement gap is persistent, and tenacious, and is difficult to overcome in the educational career of a student. Elimination of the achievement gap is one of the salient issues in education today, and is a central point of discussion in education reform circles.
**Adaption.** Adaption is best viewed as a generational process whereby immigrants learn the language, culture, and mores of their new land leading to less differentiation between the immigrant population, and the native-born population.

**Anchor baby.** Anchor baby is a negative label given to children born in the United States to undocumented parents. Some believe undocumented parents conspire to ensure their babies are born in the United States to take advantage of the fourteenth amendment to ensure their children’s U.S. citizenship and legal status. It is further alleged by some, these babies *anchor* the future legal immigration to the United States of their parents and other family members. Thus the term anchor baby is given its negative connotation (So, 2010).

**Anticipatory guide.** Anticipatory guide is a comprehension strategy used to activate a student’s background knowledge, build curiosity, and generate excitement for the text to be read. In addition to building interest in a text or topic, anticipatory guides delineate a purpose for the reading.

**Art and science of teaching.** Art and science of teaching refers to the blending of the science of teaching--which includes knowledge of curriculum, instructional strategies and pedagogies, disaggregation of data, and data analysis to drive instruction, formative and summative assessments, ongoing supervision and research based professional development--with the art of teaching--the ability to read the nuances and unspoken language of each student, to know when and how to reach out to each student, and engulf them in the sea of learning, to cultivate the best in each student, and instill in them the knowledge that education can change the world, and to inculcate into each child
the belief that they can learn, they can succeed, and they can make a difference in their life and the lives of others.

**Artifacts.** Artifacts can refer to examples of student learning assembled together to demonstrate progression toward content, and subject area mastery. Artifacts can also refer to the artifacts of teaching such as graphs, graphic organizers, power point presentations, and advanced organizers.

**Assimilation.** Assimilation is the adjustments made by an immigrant to blend into their new environment. In its most common usage, assimilation is associated with the understanding that an immigrant will shed the vestiges of their country of origin, at least on the surface level, and embrace the cultural and linguistic norms, and mores of their new land (Fernandez-Kelly & Schauffler, 1996)

**Backward design.** Backward design is a process for developing a roadmap for learning by starting with the end goal in mind, and working backwards. Specifically, the following elements make up the essential framework for backward design: (a) identify the desired results, (b) specify the evidence needed given those results, and (c) identify the requisite learning, and teaching for generating the evidence of achieving those results (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

**Below market rate.** Below market rate refers to the practice of paying wages that are lower than the common wage rate for the community. This practice is common when the worker is not in a position to advocate for their rights, or there is an oversupply of labor, and an under supply of jobs.

**Building background knowledge.** Building background knowledge is a critical component of teaching English to second language learners and is necessary if students
are to have a deep and rich understanding of content. It refers to linking content with student’s prior learning and life experiences. Building background knowledge in second language learners require teachers to identify students’ existing background knowledge and fill in any gaps or missing pieces needed to access the curriculum. An important piece of building background knowledge is targeted and specific vocabulary instruction (Marzano, 2004).

**Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS).** Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study was designed to study the adaptation process of the immigrant second generation. The original for the study was conducted in 1996 and included 5,262 respondents from 77 different nationalities. Three years later the first follow-up survey was conducted that measured changes and growth in language knowledge and preference, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and academic attainment. Dropout statistics were gathered and a parental survey was also developed to identify characteristics of immigrant parents and families regarding their future aspirations and hopes for their children. Ten years after the first survey in 1991, a final follow up survey was conducted to gather data on adaptation in the post high school years and access to post secondary educational opportunities. Educational attainment, employment and occupational status, income, civil status and ethnicity of spouses/partners, political attitudes and participation, ethnic and racial identities, delinquency and incarceration, attitudes and levels of identification with American society, and plans for the future were all measured in this study.

**Clarion call.** Clarion call is an urgent, direct, and inspiring call to action.

**Co-ethnic community.** Co-ethnic community is a community comprised of multiple ethnic groups. Co-ethnic communities can provide a significant source of
support, and benefit to their members in the form of social support, clearly defined roles, and values, cultural preservation, economic, and informational resources (Gold, 1992).

**Cogito ergo sum.** Cogito ergo sum simply put is *I think therefore I am.* This philosophical notion of Rene Descartes has become a foundational element of western culture.

**Collaborative inquiry.** Collaborative inquiry is student active participants and involved in the process of learning, and creating knowledge. Through the use of collaborative inquiry the sum becomes greater than the parts. Knowledge is deepened through shared experiences, reflections, intuitive, and research based analysis of a given issue or problem.

**Comprehensible input.** Comprehensible input is a teachers’ understanding of the unique linguistic needs of ELL students, and her ability to incorporate specific methodologies, and strategies to make lessons understandable through the use of a multiplicity of methods. For instance, rate of speech and vocabulary choice is predicated on the students’ English language proficiency levels. Comprehensible input is increased for ELL students through the use of: (a) visual aids, (b) modeling, (c) demonstrations, (d) graphic organizers, (e) vocabulary previews, (f) adapted texts, (g) cooperative learning, (h) peer tutoring, and (i) native language support (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

**Consonant acculturation.** Consonant acculturation refers to both parent, and child growing in their knowledge of the new language and culture at the same rate, and pace. Consonant acculturation may lead to upwardly mobile assimilation, and is generally found in families where the parent has a higher level of educational attainment.

**Content area teacher.** Content area teacher will teach a specific content area
such as reading, math, science, and social studies. Typically, elementary school teachers are expected to be content teachers in all areas. High school teachers, on the other hand, specialize in one content area such as math, or social studies. Content area teachers use specific techniques and knowledge to help students understand, and access different content areas, and types of text.

**Content target.** Content target is clearly delineated and specific to what a student is expected to know and do. They are the foundational structure that guides classroom teaching and learning. The most effective content targets are written at the lesson level to be accessible to the student, and are able to be accomplished in one or two lessons. In addition, content targets should be directly related to grade-level content standards. When working with ELL students it is important that the teacher presents content targets both orally and in the written form (Echevarria, et al., 2008).

**Context of country of adoption reception.** Context of country of adoption reception consists of a multiplicity of different factors that all affect the future chances of a new immigrant. For instance: (a) the economic climate, (b) cohesiveness and presence of a co-ethnic community, (c) ethnic composition of the community, (d) availability of affordable housing, (e) ESL classes and their availability for adults, (f) quality of the local school district, (g) availability of ESL programs for students, (h) expectations of educators and community members, (i) attitudes of the local government, (j) de facto and de jure laws in the community, (k) translators, (l) access to public transportation, (m) peer mentors, and (n) access to health care all make up the context of country of adoption reception.

**Context of country of origin exit.** Context of country of origin exit consists of a
multiplicity of different factors that all affect the future chances of a new immigrant. For instance: (a) the political climate, (b) economic climate, (c) educational level, (d) cohesiveness of the community, (e) stability of the government, (f) opportunity for advancement, and (g) political relations with the country of adoption all make up the context of country of origin exit.

**Cooperative learning.** Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy that forms heterogeneous groupings of students to work together utilizing a variety of different strategies and structures to improve their understanding of content. Every team member is accountable for learning the content, and cooperatively working with the other team members. Cooperative learning involves all students in the process of actively exploring learning, promotes a learning goal rather than a performance goal, and allows students to take ownership of their own learning (Kagan, 1989).

**Country of origin.** Country of origin refers to the country from whence an immigrant came.

**Culturally and linguistically diverse.** Culturally and linguistically diverse refers to students who come from a culture other than the super ordinate culture, and speak a home language other than English. Historically, students from a culturally and linguistically diverse background have struggled to achieve academically in the United States.

**Culturally and linguistically responsive instructional strategies.** Culturally and linguistically responsive instructional strategies are those which take into account the varying cultural and linguistic needs of students including, but not limited to: (a) educational backgrounds, (b) expectations of schooling, (c) socioeconomic status, (d) age
of arrival, (e) personal experiences and, (f) parents educational levels (Echevarria, et al., 2008).

**Culture.** Culture is a way of life, traditions, and customs transmitted through learning (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Culture of poverty.** Culture of poverty is a theory that suggests the burdens of poverty are systemic, and not easily overcome. Children raised in a culture of poverty have been socialized in ways that perpetuate poverty and their status as members of a permanent underclass. The persistence of a culture of poverty results in a learned helplessness, and marginality among its members (Payne, DeVol, & Dreussi Smith, 2001).

**Cultural dissonance.** Cultural dissonance occurs when the family experiences dissonant acculturation resulting in: (a) a disruption to the familial ties, (b) a weakening in parental authority, and (c) an increase in child non-compliance. All of the aforementioned factors can contribute to downward assimilation.

**Cultural diversity.** Cultural diversity refers to a multiplicity of different cultural groups living together in a defined area.

**Cultural proficiency.** Cultural proficiency is seen as the totality of individual or organizational values, behaviors, policies, and practices. The ability of an individual or organization to effectively negotiate relationships and interactions with others from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is the extent to which we have achieved cultural proficiency.

**Data driven learning.** Data driven learning is achieved when educators make instructional decisions based upon analysis of data. To realize the greatest benefit from
data driven learning educators must clarify: (a) what data is needed?, (b) what does the data suggest is not working well?, (c) what does it suggest is working well?, and (d) what changes can be implemented to effect improvement?

**De facto government policies.** De facto government policies are those norms and practices that are common, but are not necessarily ordained by law.

**Decentralized leadership.** Decentralized leadership in schools, and school districts is realized when faculty members are allowed to take on more responsibility for the governance, management, and instructional focus. More decision making authority is given to the local school, and less is retained by administration and the central office. Decentralized leadership is closely associated with a culture of democracy and equality.

**Deficit model.** Deficit model refers to the negative stereotypes and perceptions given to culturally and linguistically diverse students regarding their motivation, ability, and desire to succeed academically. The deficit model views cultures other than the super ordinate culture as being deficient and lacking the resources to equip students with the skills needed to excel academically. This model also suggests families of culturally and linguistically diverse students do not share the same aspirations for their children, do not expect them to succeed academically, do not want to be involved in their children’s education, and do not place a high value on education. This lack of cultural and familial support is assumed to be an explanation for the lack of educational achievement among poor and minority students.

**De jure government policies.** De jure government policies are those rules and laws that are officially in place and subject to judicial and legal oversight.

**Developing world.** Developing world refers to a country that has a low level of
socio economic resources and material well-being. There is no hard and fast definition as to what constitutes “developing”, but generally, it is a country that has a less well developed economic infrastructure and a weak system of social supports for those less well off.

**Differentiation of instruction.** Differentiation of instruction is the process used by a teacher to ensure each student receives content and instruction in a way that is most suited to that student’s readiness level and learning style. In addition, differentiation of instruction encompasses the way a student demonstrates mastery and progress towards a learning goal (Tomlinson, 1999).

**Discrimination.** Discrimination is the act of interacting with another person in a demeaning or devaluing manner based solely upon their membership in a certain group or category due to assumed behaviors, values, capabilities, or attributes (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Dissonance.** Dissonance is lack of coherence between beliefs and actions. Dissonance can cause an individual to feel uneasy and can be disruptive to emotional wellbeing and harmony.

**Dissonant acculturation.** Dissonant acculturation occurs when the immigrant parent and child are on different trajectories for their English language acquisition and levels of cultural proficiency in their new home land. Frequently, the immigrant child becomes fluent in English and seeks to adopt more aspects of their new culture. At the same time, the parent is holding on to their language of origin and the norms and mores of their heritage culture.

**Dominant U.S. ethnic group.** Dominant U.S. ethnic group is commonly referred
to as the non-Hispanic Whites. Interestingly, due to the nature of dominant group identity, non-Hispanic Whites rarely see themselves as an ethnic group (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Dominant culture.** Dominant culture refers to culture within a society that controls the economic and political power and is able to impose its conception of norms, mores, values, and language on other cultures within the society. This cultural transference can be accomplished through de jure or de facto measures and is frequently supported by the media (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Downward assimilation.** Downward assimilation refers to the prospect of second-generation immigrants to the United States experiencing downward mobility, and the development of a new underclass. Downward assimilation has been associated with dissonant, and segmented acculturation, and the immigrant paradox (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

**Economic ascent.** Economic ascent is defined as a change in the economic conditions of an individual. Economic ascent can be experienced by an immigrant when their socio-economic status is raised through: (a) securing better employment, (b) completing a course of study, (c) becoming fluent in English, and (d) developing a social network to give them increased access to opportunities within their community and the larger society.

**Educational attainment.** Educational attainment is the level of official school completed. Educational attainment is closely associated with socio-economic status, and human capital.

**Engagement.** Engagement is defined as the amount of time a student is actively
involved in school activities such as: (a) student counsel, (b) peer mentoring, and (c) outside of school extra-curricular activities such as basketball or volleyball.

**English as a second language (ESL).** English as a second language is applied to all students, and adults in the United States who are not proficient in English, and who did not speak English as their first language.

**English language acquisition.** English language acquisition refers to the process of learning the English language, and is most commonly associated with a second language learner. Second language acquisition follows a defined pattern that is different from that of first language acquisition. Learning a second language is also learning a second culture. Second language acquisition is product of a student’s interaction with meaningful and challenging content and is facilitated by the student’s proficiency in their first language. The greater the proficiency level in the first language, the easier the second language acquisition will be. Echevarria and Graves (2003) identified the following five stages of English language acquisition: (1) pre-production, (2) early production, (3) speech emergence, (4) intermediate fluency, and (5) advanced fluency. Students progress through these stages at varying rates, but all students pass through each stage.

**English Language Development Assessment (ELDA).** English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) is a series of tests developed to measure the annual progress in the English language acquisition in students whose first language is a language other than English. The ELDA assessment is divided into separate tests for listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and is delivered in different grade level clusters: (a) kindergarten through second-grade, (b) third-grade through fifth-grade, (c) sixth-grade
through eighth-grade, and (d) ninth-grade through 12th-grade. Nebraska is one of seven states that use the ELDA as the official measure of English language acquisition for LEP students (Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.).

**English language skills.** English language skills commonly refer to the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These are the four primary English language skills and are the skills assessed for new immigrant students by school district. As English language skills in these four core areas improve, grammar, pronunciation, and other skills can be incorporated into lessons.

**English language proficiency.** English language proficiency refers to the competency a student has in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and comprehension. The proficiency level of a student gives educators a base line upon which to gauge and monitor future progress in their English language acquisition across both time and grade level. The level of student English language proficiency is closely associated with their future academic achievement (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). English language proficiency is also linked to the five stages of English language acquisition. Specifically, the pre-production stage is characterized by a *silent period* where students demonstrate little to no oral language, however, learning is happening as students gain receptive vocabulary and language skills. During this time students are very reliant on context to gain meaning and comprehension is enhanced through the use of realia, visuals, physical gestures or actions, and cognates (Echevarria & Graves, 2003). Early production is characterized by a limited receptive vocabulary of less than 1000 words and comprehension of primarily simple sentences. Students frequently will demonstrate their understanding by responding in their native language or through the use of non-verbal methods of
communication (Echevarria & Graves, 2003). Speech emergence stage is highlighted by a significant increase in the amount of receptive English words, and a noted increase in student confidence level in using the language. However, misunderstandings are still common, especially when more complex language structures are used. The student frequently makes glaring grammatical errors when speaking, but can ask and respond to basic questions and is beginning to develop academic vocabulary (Echevarria, & Graves, 2003). In the Intermediate Fluency stage the student has command of up to 12,000 vocabulary words and is able to share thoughts and opinions with ease. The student is gaining confidence using more complex forms of language but still needs to ask for clarification at times. The level and use of academic vocabulary is increasing, and the student can begin to self-correct language errors (Echevarria & Graves 2003). In advanced fluency the student is functioning at a level comparable to native English speakers, demonstrates a strong command of English, and is able to communicate with confidence in a variety of different settings. Grammatical errors still occur, however they are more complex in nature and are errors that a native English speaker may encounter. Second language acquisition time varies and it can commonly take from five to nine years for a student to gain proficiency in academic English (Echevarria, 1995).

**Ethnic group.** Ethnic group is defined as “a group distinguished by cultural similarities shared among members of that group, and differences between that group and others. Ethnic group members share beliefs, values, habits, customs, and norms, and a common language, religion, history, geography, kinship or race” (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Ethnic identity.** Ethnic identify is the extent and degree to which an individual
self identifies with a particular ethnic group. Ethnic identify is associated with a feeling of belonging which can shape, and define an individual’s perceptions of self, and others as well as their feelings, and behavior. Ethnic identify is self identified, and reflects the heritage of the individual. Ethnic identify is separate, and distinct from personal identity, although they can, and frequently do overlap (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Ethnicity.** Ethnicity is the self-identification with a certain ethnic group. It can also mean the exclusion from other groups based upon self-identification (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Face-to-face promotive interaction.** Face-to-face promotive interaction is a pillar of cooperative learning, and is the belief that how a student thinks, talks, and acts towards their team member influences how well the team performs (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Johnson-Laird, 1983).

**Formative assessment.** Formative assessment is assessment for learning, and can be adapted by educators to reflect the needs of the students. Students, in turn, can use the results of formative assessments to understand their own learning. Formative assessment is not a product, but rather it is a process. The goal of a formative assessment is to direct students to answer three primary questions: (1) where am I going?, (2) where am I now?, and (3) what do I have to do to reach my goal? Formative assessment allows students to take ownership of their own learning, to set goals, to be reflective learners, and active participants in their academic trajectory, and success (Chappuis & Chappuis, 2007).

**Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.** Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits laws that deprive a person of life, liberty, or property
without due process of law, and prohibits laws that would deny any person equal protection of the laws. The first sentence of the Fourteenth Amendment reads, All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. This clearly establishes the constitutional right of automatic citizenship to anyone born in the United States regardless of race, color, or legal status of one’s parents (Alexander & Alexander, 2009).

**Gender gap.** Gender gap in education refers to the differences in academic achievement, engagement, rates of high school completion, and attainment of post secondary education between males and females without making reference to race or ethnicity.

**Global economy.** Global economy refers to the global nature of the world’s economy. Today, more than at any other time in history, the economies of different countries are inextricably linked together. Recently, when Japan experienced a devastating Tsunami and earthquake, production of Toyota vehicles was affected in the United States, and the availability of the newest iPhone was delayed due to interruption in the supply chain. In addition, telemarketers and customer service representatives employed by companies in the United States to service clients in the U.S. are frequently located outside of the United States. Students graduating from high school today will not only compete for jobs locally but on an international level.

**Globalization.** Globalization is the phenomenon of integrating local and regional economies and cultures through an interrelated systemic web of communication, transportation, supply chain, and marketing. The process is solidified through investment
in foreign economies and investment in local and national economies by foreign entities. Cross investment strategies facilitate trade and a constant global flow of capital.

**Grade point average.** Grade point average is a standardized measurement reflecting mastery and comprehension of subject area content. Grade point average can be calculated in a variety of ways including by academic content area or elective content area. A cumulative grade point average reflects a calculation based upon all of the assigned grades relative to the area in question. Generally, grades are assigned a letter such as A, B, C, D, F. Each letter corresponds to a numerical value such as 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0, respectively. Grade point average is calculated by adding the numerical value of the letter grades then dividing by the number of courses taken. Some educational institutions weight their grade values by the relative difficulty of the course. Grade point average is frequently used to screen potential job applicants and make college entrance decisions.

**Group processing.** Group processing is a term used by Johnson and Johnson (1999) to describe a series of steps or events taken along a time continuum to achieve a desired goal. It involves reflection by group members on the process and product of their interactions and ways to improve both. Effective group processing can result in improved interpersonal relationships and academic outcomes, as well as developing a sense of collaboration and interconnectedness amongst students. Increased levels of teamwork, individual, and group accountability further the efficacy of group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

**High academic expectations.** High academic expectations are closely linked to students’ academic achievement. There is a significant relationship between teachers' high expectations for students and the students’ academic success. This is also true with
parent and familial expectations. When the parent and family hold high expectations for the student, the student is more likely to succeed academically. Setting high academic expectations for all students is a simple yet powerful tool in supporting academic excellence and achievement for all (Marzano, 2003; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008).

**High poverty.** High poverty within education is defined as a student receiving free or reduced lunch. Qualification for free and reduced lunch is based upon the Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines. The guidelines are updated each year to reflect fluctuations in the cost of living. The following guidelines are for 2010 and are used by school districts in the 48 contiguous states to determine eligibility for free and reduced lunch:

Persons in family poverty guideline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in family</th>
<th>Poverty Guideline</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>$14,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>$18,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>$22,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>$25,790</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>$29,530</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>$33,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>$37,010</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For families with more than eight persons, add $3,740 for each additional person (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2010).

**Higher-order thinking.** Higher-order thinking, according to Brookhart (2010) can be divided into three distinct areas: (1) higher-order thinking as *transfer*, (2) higher-
order thinking as *critical thinking*, and (3) higher-order thinking as *problem solving*.

Transfer can be described as the ability to learn and then generalize or transfer the new knowledge to another area. Transfer is predicated on the student developing a deeper knowledge in order to apply the new knowledge in different and unique situations. Critical thinking is achieved when students are able to analyze and assess information by reasoned reflection leading to sound decisions. Finally, problem solving is at the heart of creative thought and effective communication. In its simplest form, problem solving is the ability to identify something as a problem first and then act on it by developing a solution for the problem (Brookhart, 2010).

**Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).** Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program is a computer-based thinking program for at-risk students designed by Stanley Pogrow (2005) of the University of Arizona. HOTS focuses on increasing students’ academic achievement through developing thinking skills as a foundation for all learning. Students’ develop their ability to infer, synthesize, and decontextualize information as well as improve their understanding and skills in metacognition (Brookhart, 2010).

**Higher status occupations.** Higher status occupations are often referred to as a profession. A profession develops when certain criteria are met. Specifically, formal qualifications based upon education, apprenticeship, and examination. Typically, professions are regulated by some type of organization with power to apply sanctions and certification. Occupations such as (a) doctor, (b) lawyer, (c) nurse, (d) teacher, (e) judge, (f) police office, and (g) professor are examples of higher status occupations.

**Homework and practice.** Homework and practice are foundational practices in effective schools and give students opportunities to expand upon their in school learning
and deepen their understanding of content and increase their ability to apply new knowledge in a variety of situations. Research suggests homework should be modified according to grade level, increasing in complexity and expected duration as the student progresses into higher grades. The expectation of parental involvement should be kept to a minimum. Students should have a clear understanding of the goal of the homework; it should never be given as a rote activity. Lastly, homework should receive productive comments from the teacher that go beyond, *good job!* (Marzano, 2003)

**Human capital.** Human capital refers to the: (a) skill sets, (b) experience, (c) educational level, (d) cultural knowledge, (e) social competencies, and (f) personal attributes that contribute to an individual’s desirability in the workplace and capability to produce economic value.

**Identifying similarities and differences.** Identifying similarities and differences is an instructional strategy identified by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) as being related to academic achievement. Within this strategy there are four subcategories: (1) comparing, (2) classifying, (3) creating metaphors, and (4) creating analogies. Incorporating the use of advanced organizers and symbolic representations can facilitate students’ understanding of these important concepts.

**Individual and group accountability.** Individual and group accountability refers to the parallel levels of accountability in cooperative learning. The group is responsible for achieving the goals and objectives associated with the project and the individual is accountable for their efforts and contribution to the success of the project. Each individual’s contributions are assessed and reported to the group and the individual. Areas of weakness are identified, and the requisite supports are provided to ensure all are
contributing to their fullest extent and each is being challenged by rigorous content. The ultimate purpose of collaborative learning is to help the individual gain mastery in their own right and thus achieve greater levels of excellence and competence than they would have laboring alone (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

**Interpersonal and small group skills.** Interpersonal and small group skills are the socio-emotional skills needed to interact productively with others in a school or workplace setting. Frequently, the quality of individual and professional relationships rests on communicative abilities or lack thereof. Developing the ability to reach out and communicate with others who are perhaps reluctant communicators can be an effective bridge building skill and can greatly enhance the culture of the school and classroom.

**Illegal aliens.** Illegal aliens are a negative term associated with individuals who reside in the United States without the proper legal documentation to authorize their residency.

**Immigrant.** Immigrant is a person who voluntarily makes a choice to relocate from one country to another.

**Immigrant paradox.** Immigrant paradox is the term associated with the downward assimilation of some second generation immigrants. While first generation immigrants tend to have high expectations and hope for the future some later generations of immigrants lose this dream and hope for their future life chances. Instead of gaining social and economic status with each passing generation, immigrants experiencing the immigrant paradox actually find they lose ground in subsequent generations (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008).

**Immigration.** Immigration is the process an individual undergoes when a
voluntary decision is made to relocate to another country.

**Incomplete or interrupted educational history.** Incomplete or interrupted educational history refers to immigrants who arrive in the U.S. without having attained the grade level of their peers in their country of origin or having been out of school for a period of time greater than twenty days and not related to completing their education.

**Instructional excellence.** Instructional excellence is the sum total of all the qualities that reside within the art and science of teaching. It encompasses all of the curricular knowledge and pedagogical expertise inherent in high quality teaching. It is the mastery of subject matter and fully utilizing data to drive instruction. It is student centered, and student focused learning with daily instruction embedded with formative assessment for learning and summative assessment to quantify mastery. Instructional excellence is the cornerstone of the art and nuance inherent in a master teacher. The ability to catch a teachable moment, to reach a child who has hitherto been unreachable, to light a fire in the heart and soul of students where by learning is no longer a five day a week within the school house endeavor, but becomes a way of life and a passion that will never subside.

**Instructional leader.** Instructional leader is the new definition of a principal. The terms administrator or manager have become passé and woefully inadequate to describe the responsibilities inherent in the role of principal. Instructional leadership is centered on the student and is measured by student achievement and improvement. In addition, the principal as instructional leader is where the vision and purpose of the school is first articulated and expressed. Collaborative leadership promoting teaching excellence, life-long learning in vibrant learning communities, and ongoing reflection,
assessment, and adjustment are at the heart of the instructional leader.

**Language structure.** Language structure is composed of the linguistic rules that govern language use such as: (a) morphology, (b) syntax, (c) phonology, (d) grammar, (e) punctuation, and (f) language usage.

**Language target.** Language target can best be formulated by teacher reflection on how language will be used and how students will practice reading, writing, listening, and speaking. A language target should be clearly articulated in simple, student friendly language appropriate to the proficiency level of the student. Language objectives should be introduced verbally by the teacher at the beginning of the class period and reviewed periodically throughout the teaching. They should also be posted visually somewhere for the student to easily access.

**Las Links Assessment.** Las Links English Language Proficiency Assessment is a “formal, standardized, and norm referenced No Child Left Behind (NCLB) compliant method for determining language proficiency. The test results provide important information for classifying English Language Learners (ELL), and subsequently for monitoring their progress in acquiring English. The assessment measures the competencies necessary for successful academic and social language usage in mainstream classrooms: (a) speaking, (b) listening, (c) reading, (d) writing, and (e) comprehension” (LAS Links, 2005).

**Learned intelligence.** Learned intelligence, also known as crystallized intelligence is the facts, generalizations, and principals a student learns directly and is not necessarily associated with a student’s innate intelligence capabilities. Learned intelligence has more bearing on student academic achievement than innate intelligence
Learning community. Learning community is frequently led by the instructional leader of the school and is an entity comprised of individuals who share common goals and are actively engaged in the process of learning from and with each other. The formation of a learning community is a central tenant in current educational reform and is considered efficacious for both educators and students.

Lifelong learning. Lifelong learning refers to the fervent passion and desire to continue learning and gaining in knowledge throughout one’s life. Lifelong learning is closely associated with educational and instructional excellence, and is an attribute of high effective educators.

Living wage. Living wage is defined as the monetary sum necessary to receive per hour for an individual working forty hours per week to meet basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. A living wage is not the same as the minimum wage. The latter is determined by law and may or may not be sufficient to meet an individual’s basic needs while the former, by definition, must do so.

Literacy rich home environment. Literacy rich home environment is characterized by an abundance of books and other written materials. Adults in this environment read on a daily basis, both for their own pleasure and to gain needed information and knowledge. Children are read to and with on a daily basis and are encouraged to actively engage with the test through questions, reflections, and book talks. Writing supplies, and other writing materials are readily available, and there is a defined space for reading and interacting with text. Environmental print is utilized, children’s questions and early reading efforts are actively celebrated and encouraged.
Meaningful work opportunities. Meaningful work opportunities offer individuals an opportunity to earn a living wage in an environment that is respectful of: (a) the individual, (b) their unique cultural heritage, (c) their individual aspirations, and (d) their ambitions. Meaningful work is challenging and rewarding offering the chance to make a difference in one’s own life, the life of another, or for the betterment of society.

Minimum wage. Minimum wage is the lowest monetary amount that can legally be paid to an individual of legal age for an hour of work. As of January 1, 2011 the minimum wage in Nebraska was $7.25. Minimum wage does not guarantee it is a living wage.

Minority population. Minority population is defined as the people group who comprise less than 50% of the population of the region being measured. The converse of the minority population is the majority population. The majority population group is comprised of greater than 50% of the population of the region being measured.

Minority risk factor. Minority risk factor refers to the increased probability of a minority student dropping out of high school. Specifically: (a) a minority male student, (b) from a culture of poverty, (c) with a frequent history of changing schools, (d) that was retained in school, and (e) grew up in a single parent household has a significantly greater chance of dropping out than do his non minority peers or females.

Minority status. Minority status is individuals from a particular minority group.

Modes of incorporation. Modes of incorporation refer to the: (a) economic, (b) political, and (c) social factors present when an immigrant arrives in their new land. These can include: (a) the legal status of the immigrant, (b) employment opportunities,
and (c) the presence of a cohesive co-ethnic community. Modes of incorporation can enhance, or hinder an immigrant’s adjustment.

**Motivation.** Motivation is the drive that pushes one to action. Motivation can be intrinsic, internal, and motivated by personal ideals and goals. Motivation can also be extrinsic, fueled by the desire to receive a tangible reward for a job well done. Of the two types of motivation, intrinsic internal motivation is the strongest and produces the most lasting results.

**Moral compass.** Moral compass refers to the individual’s internal code of conduct and perception of what is good and beneficial for the larger society as opposed to what is innately harmful, or at best neutral to the furtherance of the greater societal good.

**Multi-ethnic environment.** Multi-ethnic environment is comprised of a multiplicity of different ethnicities all co-habitating or occupying the same general space.

**Nation of immigrants.** Nation of immigrants is the notion that the United States is based upon the long standing tradition and history of welcoming immigrants to our shores, and of being a welcoming bastion for peoples seeking a better life free from religious and social persecutions and intolerance.

**Negative social mirror.** Negative social mirror is when the perception we have of ourselves is derived from the image we see reflected back from the eyes of someone else. Minority students frequently are subjected to a negative social mirror. The images they have of themselves do not reflect what is good, noble, and upright in themselves or their culture. Rather, they see through the eyes of others, themselves, and their culture as lacking significant and efficacy in a world dominated by individuals who do not look,
think, or act like they do (Rumbaut, 1994).

**Nonlinguistic representations.** Nonlinguistic representations are a style of acquiring knowledge through the use of visual imagery, kinesthetic or whole-body modes, and auditory experiences. Teachers of ELL students can increase their access to curriculum and comprehension of content by the use of: (a) concept maps, (b) idea webs, (c) dramatizations, and (d) other types of nonlinguistic representation. Language can be encouraged, and practiced when students verbally explain their non linguistic representations to the class, which in turn can lead to questions, discussions, and a deeper level of comprehension, and cognition (Marzano, 2003).

**Parent-child generational conflict.** Parent-child generational conflict is frequently seen when there is dissonant acculturation between parent and child. When the child assimilates into their new culture at a quicker pace than their parents, is ready to put off the vestiges of their cultural heritage in favor of their culture of adoption, and the parent is still clinging tenaciously to their heritage culture, parent-child generational conflict is likely.

**Parental engagement.** Parental engagement is separate from parental involvement in school, and is not defined as participation in activities such as bake sales or school carnivals. Parental engagement is a proactive activity that centers on interacting and supporting a child with their academic endeavors, and achievement. The child experiences a positive gain in academic achievement levels when there is a supportive and engaged parent or adult figure in a child’s life. There are many mitigating factors that influence the level of parental involvement in a child’s education. However, the research literature does suggest there are three over arching beliefs that are positively
associated with parental engagement: (1) the parent’s personal conviction that they should be engaged in their child’s education, (2) the parent’s belief that they are capable of helping their child, and (3) specific invitations, expectations, and opportunities for involvement from the school.

**Pedagogy.** Pedagogy refers to instructional strategies correctly applied to the art and science of teaching.

**Peer ethnic cultural mentors.** Peer ethnic cultural mentors are individuals that are culturally proficient in their culture of adoption and heritage culture. When these individuals serve as mentors to immigrants by introducing them to their new culture, and helping them navigate unfamiliar norms and expectations, they are acting as peer ethnic cultural mentors.

**Positive interdependence.** Positive interdependence is one of the five pillars of cooperative learning and is the belief that both the product and process will be enhanced by the experience of working cooperatively with other students. Only when the group achieves success is the project successful. There is no success apart from the group. This does not mean that one or two members of the group carry the entire load. Rather, positive interdependence means that every member of the group has an important role and function to contribute and all members are working together towards a common goal. This mind set allows for a united effort that fosters the good of the group as well as the individual. Positive interdependence is at the heart of cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999)

**Pre teaching of vocabulary.** Pre teaching of vocabulary is a very useful tool when working with ELL students. Prior to teaching new content an ELL teacher can
intentionally expose students to new and unfamiliar vocabulary words, enabling them to become familiar with the words, and to place them in the appropriate context when they encounter them in the text or reading. Some suggestions for pre teaching vocabulary include: (1) role playing or pantomiming, (2) using gestures, (3) showing real objects, (4) pointing to pictures, (5) doing a quick draw on the white board, and (6) accessing the student’s native language (Echevarria et al., 2008).

**Project based assignments.** Project based assignments are excellent alternatives for ELL students. However, they must demonstrate rigor, utilize higher order thinking skills, and have alignment with curriculum standards before they can be considered a valid part of learning. In addition, the student must have a clear understanding of why they are doing the project, what are the questions they are to investigate, and how they will know they have achieved success. Project based assignments should be facilitated by the teacher but be student focused and driven. They should appeal to the student’s individual interests, and have application to the student’s real life, and internal motivation to explore and solve the problem or question. Project based assignments should utilize a variety of technology and other methodologies and lend themselves to collaboration with peers, community members, or other specialists. Solving a project based assignment is a perfect opportunity to ask the student to integrate learning from multiple areas into a cohesive and integrated answer.

**Questions, cues, and advanced organizers.** Questions, cues, and advanced organizers are one of the nine instructional strategies identified by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack (2001). Questions and cues should reflect what is important in a topic or content area, not what is unusual. As always, students should be challenged to use
higher-order thinking skills and the teacher should incorporate appropriate use of wait-time to encourage deeper level responses. The use of higher-level advanced organizers is particularly important when accessing information that is not well organized. The practice of skimming a text before reading is a form of an advanced organizer. New content can be presented using an expository advance organizer. Narrative advance organizers are appropriate for presenting information in a story format. Non-linguistic representations are presented through the use of graphic advance organizers (Marzano, et al., 2001).

**Racial segregation.** Racial segregation occurs when individuals are artificially separated into groups along racial lines. Racial segregation existed throughout the south in: (a) restaurants, (b) public transportation, (c) drinking fountains, and (d) schools. Today, segregation is illegal. However, the de facto existence of segregation is very real and is still felt in schools, neighborhoods, work places, and many towns, and communities throughout the country (Kottak, & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Racism.** Racism is the mistaken belief that there are biological differences among various people groups in the world and that certain people groups have traits and characteristics solely due to their race or ethnicity. Racism inherently leads to differential and discriminatory treatment of some individuals. Some scholars suggest it is not enough to understand racism and to abhor its practice. They contend that before racism can be finally eradicated from society we must inculcate the ideology of anti-racism into our children. Anti-racism connotes an active rejection of any semblances of racism from the culture (Kottak, & Kozaitis, 2008).

**Rainbow underclass.** Rainbow underclass refers to the phenomenon associated
with dissonant acculturation when second generation immigrants experience downward assimilation. First generation immigrants arrive in the United States full of hope and dreams for a future awash in success and achievement. By the second generation and later generations this dream has begun to fade for many immigrants. Instead of experiencing continued upward mobility these immigrants begin to slip further down the socioeconomic scale. A rainbow underclass develops when so many immigrants have fallen backward they now comprise a permanent rainbow underclass (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008).

**Realia.** Realia are objects from everyday life generally used in classroom instruction to illustrate an example or demonstrate vocabulary.

**Reinforcing effort and providing recognition.** Reinforcing effort, and providing recognition is another strategy from Marzano, et al., (2001) that is associated with academic achievement of students. According to the research, success is most often attributed to one of four factors: (1) ability, (2) effort, (3) other people, and (4) luck. Surprisingly, many students do not believe in the efficacy of effort in achieving success. However, when students are taught that effort has a significant bearing on success, they can experience the positive benefits of concentrated and deliberate effort. Rewards, and recognition are important for the student to realize the value of effort. However, all rewards or recognition must be directly linked to the student achieving a specific standard of performance. Tangible rewards are less effective than intrinsic motivators. All rewards should be specific to the student and their given situation (Marzano, et al., 2001).

**Role reversal.** Role reversal refers to the phenomenon found in some immigrant families where the familial structure has been disrupted and the child begins to take on
some of the parental roles. This occurs when the child’s cultural awareness, cultural competency, and their command of the English language begins to surpass that of their parents. The child is in a situation of explaining to the parent the cultural nuances and ramifications peculiar to their new environment. In addition, the child frequently acts as an interpreter for the parent. The parent becomes dependent on the help and guidance of the child (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008).

**Scaffolding.** Scaffolding is linked to Vgotsky’s theoretical framework the zone of proximal development. Students learn best when there are sufficient supports and steps to move a student smoothly from one level of learning to the next. Scaffolding allows a student to gain in knowledge as he is learning new concepts and skills by utilizing sufficient supports and resources until he has progressed to autonomous learning and content mastery. Scaffolding supports the students until he achieves mastery and is able to take on the learning on his own (Vygotsky, 1978).

**Selective acculturation.** Selective acculturation occurs when both parent and child are fully immersed into a co-ethnic community and are able to gain knowledge and proficiency in their new language and culture while retaining certain cultural norms and mores from their heritage culture and retaining their language of origin. Selective acculturation may result in a more positive socio-emotional and socioeconomic assimilation experience.

**Segmented Assimilation.** Segmented assimilation is a non linear process whereby new immigrants do not follow one set trajectory for assimilating into the superordinate culture. Expedient assimilation is not the only outcome of segmented assimilation. Rather, in the segmented assimilation model some immigrants will
assimilate quickly, others will partially assimilate while retaining significant markers of their culture of origin which can serve as protective factors to their social and emotional well-being and also their economic advancement (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

**Sheltered Instruction.** Sheltered Instruction is an instructional method for teaching students learning a second language comprehensible and rigorous content while simultaneously ensuring their English language development.

**Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).** Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was first drafted to formalize the process of Sheltered Instruction that was the result of research findings, professional experiences, and best practices from classroom based instruction in ESL, bilingual education, reading, language, and literacy acquisition, as well as classroom management. Today, the SIOP model incorporates nine separate areas comprised of 30 different features. Content is delivered through the incorporation of clearly defined and articulated content and language targets. All instruction is comprehensible, relevant, and meaningful (Echevarria, et al., 2008).

**Sit-and-get professional development.** Sit-and-get professional development is associated with professional development delivered to a passive audience where there is no expectation for interaction with the material, the presenter, or fellow educators.

**Social capital.** Social capital refers to the benefits derived from the social connections and networks an individual has. The social capital of an immigrant is a very robust protective factor. Having a wide range of social capital and being able to access this when needed can make the difference between economic viability and economic demise for a new immigrant.
**Socio-economic status.** Socio-economic status is a combination of income, educational attainment, occupation, and social status in the larger community. A higher socioeconomic status is associated with greater levels of academic achievement, and access to resources. Children entering kindergarten from a higher socioeconomic status background generally present with a much larger vocabulary than students entering kindergarten from a lower socioeconomic status background. This vocabulary disparity is the beginning of the achievement gap and is tenacious in its persistence. Families from a higher SES are able to provide their child with a literacy rich environment replete with books, educational activities, high-quality child-care, and access to health care, as well as frequent opportunities to expand on their social, emotional, and cognitive development. All of these factors lay the foundation for future academic success and achievement.

**Summarizing and note taking.** Summarizing and note taking is one of the nine instructional strategies identified by Marzano, et al., (2001) as being effective at raising students’ levels of academic achievement. Summarizing and note taking go well beyond the moniker of *study skills*. Students who are skillful at summarizing and note taking have gained mastery of the two single most important tools they have for accessing the curriculum and gaining a deeper understanding of content. Summarization requires students to analyze and determine which information is salient enough to warrant keeping, and which is superfluous to their needs and can be deleted. Reciprocal teaching using: (a) summarizing, (b) questioning, (c) classifying, and (d) predicting are an effective use of this skill. When taking notes students should understand they are a work in progress and never should be taken down verbatim. Well-taken notes provide students with an effective study guide for exams (Marzano et al., 2001).
Targeted vocabulary development. Targeted vocabulary development can help to move a student performing at the 50th percentile in terms of ability, and performance, after specific targeted vocabulary instruction to performing at the 83rd percentile (Marzano, 2004).

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language was formed as an organization in 1963 to address the need for a professional organization to lead the way and act as a cohesive unifying force for educators teaching English as a second language. To this day, TESOL is recognized as a professional leader in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages. The mission of TESOL is to further the professionalism and expertise of the field. TESOL actively promotes the rights of the individual and access to high quality educational opportunities. They promote global collaboration and believe the world is, indeed, a global community. Diversity and multiculturalism are embedded into all curricular choices made by TESOL, and TESOL encourages and supports research and reflective practice to further the school improvement process and the high standards of educational excellence (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., 2012).

Textual enhancement. Textual enhancements include such features as: (a) bold faced headings, (b) pictures, (c) captions, and (d) graphs.

Title One. Title One, improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged is a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) The purpose of title one is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic
assessments. This purpose can be accomplished by ensuring that high-quality: (a) academic assessments, (b) accountability systems, (c) teacher preparation, (d) teacher training, (e) curriculum, and (f) instructional materials are aligned with challenging state academic standards so that students, teachers, parents, and administrators can measure progress against common expectations for student academic achievement. In addition, by meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in: (a) our Nation's highest-poverty schools, (b) limited English proficient children, (c) migratory children, (d) children with disabilities, (e) Indian children, (f) neglected children, (g) delinquent children, and (h) young children in need of reading assistance, we will be closing the achievement gap between high-performing children and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers. By holding schools, local educational agencies, and states accountable for: (a) improving the academic achievement of all students, (b) identifying and turning around low-performing schools, (c) providing alternatives to students in such schools to enable the students to receive a high-quality education, (d) distributing and targeting resources sufficiently to make a difference to local educational agencies and schools where needs are greatest, (e) improving and strengthening accountability, teaching, and learning by using state assessment systems designed to ensure that students are meeting challenging state academic achievement and content standards, and (f) increasing achievement overall, but especially for the disadvantaged, (g) providing greater decision-making authority and flexibility to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance, (h) providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program,
including the use of school wide programs or additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time, (i) promoting school wide reform and ensuring the access of children to effective, scientifically based instructional strategies and challenging academic content, (j) significantly elevating the quality of instruction by providing staff in participating schools with substantial opportunities for professional development, (k) coordinating services under all parts of this title with each other, with other educational services, and, to the extent feasible, with other agencies providing services to youth, children, and families; and (l) affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

**Title III.** Title III, Part A is a federal program to help local entities increase and expand their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen their academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability. Title III funds may be used for planning, faculty development, and establishing endowment funds. Administrative management and the development and improvement of academic programs are also supported. Other projects include joint use of instructional facilities, construction and maintenance, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative, customized, instruction courses designed to help retain students and move the student rapidly into core courses and through program completion which may include education and English language instruction (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

**Tracking System.** Tracking system in schools is a practice of separating students by academic ability and funneling them into distinct academic programs determined by
their perceived academic ablaut levels. Students receive all of their education with other students in a similar track with like levels of academic achievement. Students on a college track may receive classes in advanced mathematics, literature, and foreign languages. Students on a non-college track may receive instruction in more vocational classes. In a tracking system students are not allowed to take classes deemed outside of their educational track. This type of a program can severely limit student’s opportunities to excel and diversify their educational experience and may artificially limit their academic future and life chances.

**Transition years.** Transition years refers to the critical periods of movement for a student from preschool to kindergarten, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to post secondary education.

**Transformational leader.** Transformational leader is a person who has the capability to inspire others, and an unrelenting passion to accomplish great things. They are noted for their high levels of enthusiasm and energy, and are adept at developing and articulating a clear and focused vision. After the vision is developed and articulated, the transformational leader begins the process of continually selling the vision to others. She develops high levels of trust and adheres to personal standards of integrity guided by a strong moral compass. Transformational leaders are characterized by their unswerving commitment to their vision, and unshakeable belief in their ability to achieve the goal.

**Wait time.** Wait time is the deliberate pause a teacher takes between the asking of a question and student or teacher response. Typically, average classroom wait time is less than one second. However, research suggests that if teachers can extend wait time to between three to five seconds student response is more detailed, and reflects higher-order
thinking. If the wait time is increased from three to seven seconds there are noticeable increases in: (a) the length of the student response, (b) the number of unsolicited responses, (c) the number of student generated questions, (d) the number of responses from less capable students, (e) the number of student to student interactions, and (f) the number of speculative responses (Fagan, Hassler, & Szabo, 1981; Rowe, 1969; Tobin, 1987).

**Significance of the Study**

The study contributes to research, practice, and policy. The study is of significant interest to students as they strive for educational excellence as immigrants in a new land. The study is also of significance because it supports parents as they try to understand how best to help their children realize academic success and assimilation into the culture through understanding current educational practices and how such practices influence their student. Finally, the study has significance for educators and school district officials as they consider implementing curricular and programmatic changes for learning, including instructional practices, familial and community engagement, adult student mentoring, relational and cultural expectations, and norms--and how these practices, ideals and beliefs affect student’s academic achievement, and educational outcomes.

**Contribution to research.** A review of professional literature suggests that more research is needed on the subject of English language acquisition and minority student achievement as it relates to high school completion, student grade point averages, and student engagement. Furthermore, the results of this study may inform the district central office and building leaders of the impact of instructional strategies, parental and community engagement, and school culture and climate on immigrant student
educational achievement. In addition, the findings may indicate specific factors for increasing student academic achievement.

**Contribution to practice.** A school district with a high population of immigrant and English as a second language students may decide whether or not to maintain current ELA policies and practices, or consider implementing policies and practices articulated in this study, increase efforts to develop parental engagement, and heightened community and school based awareness of the issues surrounding immigrant students in order to ensure students at all academic and English proficiency ability levels learn.

**Contribution to policy.** The results of this study may offer insight in how school district and classroom ELA policies and practices affect student achievement. If results show there is a difference in achievement scores, the school district may choose to reconsider or move forward with the instructional practices, familial engagement imperatives, and cultural competency policies attached to the ESL instructional paradigm.

**Organization of the Study.** The literature review relevant to this research study is presented in Chapter 2. This chapter reviews the professional literature related to immigrant ELL student’s English language acquisition, instructional strategies, practices, and student and familial engagement and student academic achievement. Chapter 3 describes the research design, methodology, independent variables, dependent variables, and procedures that will be used to gather and analyze the data of the study. This includes a detailed synthesis of the participants, a comprehensive list of the dependent variables, the dependent measures, and the data analysis used to statistically determine if the null hypothesis is rejected for each research question. Chapter 4 reports the research
results and findings--including data analysis, tables, and descriptive statistics. Chapter 5 provides conclusions and a discussion of the research findings.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Hope for the future, and a better life are beliefs held by virtually every new immigrant. Despite the significant stressors inherent in any type of immigration, and the socio-cultural, developmental, and institutional transitions new immigrants must navigate; they see a future full of possibilities and opportunities. A detailed review of the literature reveals a variety of factors present in immigrant student’s lives that work in isolation, and together to produce amazing stories of success and resilience in the challenging reality of learning a new land. Ambition, determination, and a realization of the importance of learning English to achieve academic success are defining characteristics of new immigrant children. The correlation between English Language skills, academic success, and the chance for a better life is well realized, and internalized by new immigrants (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008). English language learners (ELLs) at the secondary level face considerably higher stakes than their fellow ELLs at the elementary and middle school levels. Successful ELL high school students synthesize, summarize, and communicate their understanding of complex academic materials with an advanced level of English language skills. In addition, high achieving ELL students learn these skills and the English language in a shorter period of time than their elementary and middle school compatriots. Often, academic achievement is realized in spite of arriving in the United States with an educational history that is incomplete or interrupted. Without a high degree of motivation, determination, ambition, and sheer perseverance, there would be few, if any, successful immigrant ELL students graduating from U.S. high schools (Lucas, 2000).
Supportive Relationships

Sergiovanni’s (1994) classic research work found a positive correlation between student connectedness to school, student engagement, and increased student academic achievement. Educators who develop caring, and engaging relationships with students, and their families, and adult education efforts to introduce families to the expectations, policies, and procedures of the local school district are critical factors to secondary ELL student success (NASSP, 1996). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty’s (2005) later work supported the importance of student-level factors such as: (a) the home environment, (b) educational history, (c) background knowledge, and (d) educational expectations to student achievement. Lucas, Henze and Donato (1990) studied six different high schools that were working to enhance the academic success of immigrant ELL students. They found a positive correlation between the number of relationships developed between immigrant ELL students and caring adults and the level of student engagement in the educational process. Through analysis of the data gathered during student interviews the quality of the relationship between student and teacher, and student and other adult, is more significant to increased levels of academic achievement than any other factor, including the quality of classroom instruction (Lucas, et al., 1990).

Parental Expectations. High aspirations for a prosperous life in the United States are not limited to immigrant students. Fuligni (1997) found that immigrant parents have higher personal aspirations for the academic success of their children than do their native born peers. Furthermore, immigrant parents inculcate into their children an understanding of the importance of education. Many immigrant students have a sense of obligation, and duty to their parents fueled by the knowledge of what parents sacrificed to
bring them to a new land. This sense of duty is operationalized through the immigrant student’s desire to help the family, assist them financially, and show respect and deference to their parent’s authority, and wishes (Fuligni, 1998).

**Role of gender in achievement.** Gender makes a difference for academic achievement levels among Latina immigrant students. Female immigrants have higher levels of academic achievement than their male immigrant peers (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Peer relationships appear to be a strong indicator of academic achievement. Immigrant girls are more likely than their male counterparts to develop friendships with other girls who are encouraging and supportive of school. Developing close relationships with teachers and other adult mentors at school was more prevalent among immigrant girls than immigrant boys. In addition, immigrant girls had the self-perception of more support in the school environment for their success and well being than did the immigrant boys (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2006). Immigrant girls display more compliant classroom behavior than do the boys. This in turn can raise overall expectations for girls. Higher academic expectations result in greater levels of academic engagement (Lopez, 2003). Data from the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008) found immigrant girls had higher levels of academic achievement than do immigrant boys as measured by grade point average and academic engagement (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008).

**Familial structure.** A significant factor in the successful academic outcome of immigrant Latino and Latina students’ is familial structure. Students from families of intact, two parent households that actively support the student, did not have prolonged familial separations during the immigration process, and if they did experience a
separation during immigration had relatively stress free reunions predictive of student success (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2000). The nature and culture of the community of reception can be a factor in the future trajectory of educational outcomes and should not be underestimated when attempting to perform a needs analysis. Cohesiveness of the local ethnic community and the resources available through the local ethnic community can provide significant levels of support for immigrant secondary students and their families. Community level dynamics coupled with familial and student centered leisure time activities and mobility of the family factor into student chances for academic success (Hattie, 2009).

**Student supports.** An analysis of the data from the LISA study authored by Suarez-Orozco and colleagues (2008) identified family resources, social supports, and the immigrant student’s disposition as significant factors in the academic achievement of ELL students. Examples of these four factors include: (1) the educational level of the immigrant student’s parents, (2) the cohesiveness of the local ethnic community, (3) the immigrant student’s ability to remain optimistic—yet to see both opportunities and obstacles clearly, and (4) the willingness of the immigrant students to put in many long hours of work. These four factors, working in unison and independently, can weave a sure and strong support to effectively enhance an immigrant student’s chances of success (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2000).

The difference between academic success and failure for immigrant students lies not only in attitudinal variations but also in very real cognitive skill development. Successful immigrant students have developed the art and skill of communicative competence, and with it the conceptual skill set to master learning within the school
context. Specifically, successful immigrant students are able to construct meaning for abstract concepts within the academic setting both verbally and through the written word, as they classify, store, and retrieve academic information for use in current and future projects (Trueba, 1987). Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (1978) when used as a theoretical framework for immigrant student’s achievement, suggest the successful integration of the individual and the social, and the successful integration of the culture of origin, and the culture of adoption. Vygotsky’s theory (1978) imputes immigrant student’s academic achievement is a systemic success rather than simply an individual success. It represents the effective utilization of all available resources, including school, family, community, past and present cultural norms, and mores to develop the higher order thinking skills, and cognitive functioning needed for academic achievement. In other words, high achieving immigrant students have learned the art and nuance necessary for a parallel yet intrinsically entwined social and cognitive developmental process.

**Knowledge about the educational system.** Lucas, (1997) suggests immigrant ELL students and their families benefit from explicit information regarding the grading system, program availability, and the advantages inherent in specific programmatic choices. In addition, a clear understanding of the rational for the ELL student service delivery model, placement decisions, and expectations for parental involvement enhance student academic achievement (Lucas, 1997). Effective schools give immigrant parents explicit help and training on how to become strong advocates for their children. Furthermore, research supports the efficacy of programs that educate parents on school, district, and state testing expectations and their implications for future post-secondary
educational opportunities. The educational framework supported by research further suggests immigrant students and their families benefit from explicit instruction detailing what a college track high school education is, and what high school courses are needed for students to be eligible for post secondary education, the availability of financial aid, and how to navigate the application process (Kim, 2004; Lucas, 1997; Perez Carreon et al., 2005).

A Portrait of Effective Schools and School Leadership

The antiquated notion of reading, riting, and rithmatic as the three R’s of education has faded into a sepia cliché. Today, we measure educational excellence against the new three R’s: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship. Data from the Longitudinal Immigrant Study Analysis (LISA) (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008) identified students’ ability to access existing human capital by developing a network of mentors, supports among peers, teachers, administrators, and community members to be positively correlated with academic achievement. The work of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2006) identified rigor, relevance, and relationship as the three components needed to effectively engage learners and equip them with the skills needed to succeed and thrive in the new global economy. Optimal learning occurs when students are given curriculum that is challenging, with rigorous content that is relevant and linked to the student’s life. The Gates Foundation (2006) concluded when students make the connection between classroom learning objectives, and everyday application, learning is transformed from simple acquisition of facts to the gathering of essential knowledge that allows students to navigate, and gain entrance into the global economy. When rigor and relevance are paired with relationship, when students not only experience excellence in
the classroom but also have an adult in their lives who acts as their advocate and mentor, the combination is powerful, and learning *goes viral*.

**Breaking ranks.** Breaking Ranks: The consequences of untracking low-achieving students (1996) is an important study released by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) offering a framework for creating school environments conducive for the academic achievement and success of secondary immigrant ELL students. The NASSP Breaking Ranks study highlights the importance of creating a school culture that actively encourages all stakeholders to engage in deep and meaningful learning about their students and community. This is especially critical for immigrant ELL students. Villegas and Lucas (2001) support the positive academic benefits students realize when educators have a clear understanding of the socio-emotional, community climate, and the context of the country of origin exit, and the socio-emotional, community climate, and context of country of reception entrance. Because knowledge is power, in the world of education, the more understanding educators gain regarding student’s familial dynamics including the educational attainment of parents, parental educational expectations for the student, and familial attitudes regarding education, the more power educators posses to be change agents for academic achievement (Green, et al., 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2001).

Education is a systemic multi-dimensional undertaking. The stand alone schoolhouse is not likely to thrive or produce exceptional academic results. Collaboration both inside, and outside the classroom is necessary for academic excellence (Fullan, 1994). The presence of robust collaborative relationships between schools and other local community agencies offers immigrant ELL’s access to resources and supports they might
not otherwise have. Learning is enhanced, and the culture of the school is strengthened when there are strong bonds between schools and local community organizations such as Health Departments, health care agencies, social service agencies, local chambers of commerce, business leaders, colleges, and universities (Lucas, 1997; NASSP, 1996).

**Professional development.** Life-long learning is a 21st century skill needed for today’s students to excel in the global economy. It is also an attribute that is indelibly tied to intellectual creativity and curiosity, both of which are inherent in high-achieving immigrant ELL students and their teachers. Educators of excellence are continually learning (Fullan, 1993). Many school districts rely on research based professional development to focus, align, and bring consistency to district wide teaching strategies and pedagogies. Effective professional development is a factor present in schools with high achieving ELL immigrant students (NASSP, 1996). Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (1997) suggest effective professional development is relevant, ongoing, and embedded within the curricular structure. Their pedagogy for professional development is the antithesis of *sit-and-get*. Rather, Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond’s (1997) research suggest effective professional development actively engages the learner, and challenges them to reach beyond the familiar to embrace what may be unfamiliar. Transformative teaching and instruction do not happen by chance. The likelihood of achieving educational excellence among staff can be enhanced by deliberate, thoughtful, and intentional professional development that is supported by research and aligned with state standards (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997; Reeves, 2010; Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010).
Lucas (2000) argues effective schools appreciate culture, cultural diversity, and understand the history and nature of immigration, and the current state of education for immigrants in the United States. There is an unmistakable relationship between language, culture, and identity. Krashen’s research (1985) found second language acquisition does not follow the same process as first language acquisition. He first suggested second language learning is facilitated by exposure to comprehensible input. Krashen’s framework for second language acquisition has been operationalized in the work of later scholars (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2003; Echevarria et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2001). Effective teachers of ELL students have a clear understanding of research based strategies for teaching English as a second language, and the importance of incorporating language targets into every content area lesson. Incorporating ongoing formative assessment to inform instructional decisions and maintain student centered learning is synonymous with an effective pedagogy for achieving instructional excellence (Echevarria et al., 2003; Echevarria et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2001).

**Principal power.** A casual review of school leadership may lead to the summation that the quality of school leadership is relevant to the academic achievement of students. The anecdotal nature of this premise is disregarded as irrelevant when the extensive body of research literature is examined. The hypothesis that school leadership does affect student achievement is a viable framework supported by scholarly research (Marzano, 1998). Marzano (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies on the principles of school leadership and found a statistically significant correlation between principal leadership and student achievement. The NASSP (1996) data suggest effective school leaders are advocates for educational reform. Villegas and Lucas’ (2001) research
support the findings of previous scholars who suggest schools that produce academic growth and achievement for students share several practices. Specifically, they do not utilize a tracking system. They do incorporate multi-cultural curricula and encourage and promote culturally and linguistically responsive instructional strategies. Darling-Hammond (1997) identified a leadership style compatible with a democratic nature as consistent with effective schools. When the spirit of democracy is the cornerstone upon which an effective school is constructed, the culture of involving students in collaborative inquiry, and expecting students to take ownership and accountability for their own learning is predominant. In addition, democratic schools incorporate family and community stakeholders in the process of school decision-making, and utilize smaller learning communities for students and educators (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond, Ancess, MacGreger, & Zuckerman, 1995; Marzano, et al., 1995; Sergiovanni, 1994).

A significant body of research indicates effective principals inspire high staff morale, articulate a clear vision, have a precise and focused moral compass, exhibit strong leadership, and hold all stakeholders accountable for high academic expectations for all students (Fullan, 1993; Marzano, et al., 1995; Sergiovanni, 1994; Weiss, 2005). ELL student academic achievement is synonymous with educational institutions that exude an attitude of mutual respect among all stakeholders, and an appreciation of and value for the cultural diversity present in a multi-ethnic environment. All of these characteristics are delivered in an environment that is safe and orderly, free from the chaos and danger that can imbue a less than optimal school (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The school principal, in her role as instructional leader, historian,
encourager, administrator, mediator, community liaison, nurturer, champion of lifelong learning, and educational excellence, articulates and personifies the school’s vision and purpose. If she can inculcate this culture within the school community she may be referred to as a transformational leader (Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003; Weiss, 2005).

**Institutional integrity.** Darling-Hammond (1997) further refines the portrait of an educational institution that produces academic achievement in students by drawing a correlation between high performance corporations, and highly effective schools. Both organizations place a significant value on developing a cohesive sense of team in an environment of decentralized power, life-long learning, and multiple opportunities to develop personal excellence. Darling-Hammond (1997) suggests effective schools make a significant impact in the lives of others. They use data to drive learning, and are adept at developing leadership skills across a multiplicity of stakeholders. Decentralized leadership from every stratum of the organization, and ownership for student academic achievement is expected from classified, certified, administrative, and student as well as community members. Leadership and effectiveness are enhanced when individuals feel empowered, and in control of their own learning and work (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 1994). The importance of the example offered by high achieving schools is multiplied exponentially when these schools are populated with students from a culture of poverty, minority status, and students learning English as a second language. Challenging, yet attainable learning goals, a cohesive set of instructional strategies, research based pedagogy, and a commitment to implementation with fidelity and consistency, are attributes found in schools that produce academic excellence in students.
Small communities of teachers and students focused on increasing the depth and breadth of knowledge and learning while promoting a democratic, shared form of collaboration where everyone is a participant and everyone is a beneficiary are central tenets of an effective school. The quality and quantity of learning experiences are in direct proportion to academic expectations for students. Effective schools do not limit learning opportunities. Rather, they share an expectation that all stakeholders have a vibrant and ongoing passion for lifelong learning that never is satiated (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993).

**The importance of teachers.** Teachers can, literally, change immigrant student’s academic trajectories. From a negative downward spiral of academic failure, under the professional guidance and tutelage of a teacher of excellence, students can experience an educational rebirth. Adherence to the dogma of excellence underlies the art and science of teaching. A passionate belief in the power of education to transform lives and the determination that no child is destined to fail, form the theoretical framework that empower educators to work minor, and major miracles in the academic lives of students. The research literature is clear on what makes an effective teacher. Hattie (2009) conducted a meta-analysis on student achievement and identified a robust relationship between student achievement and the quality of the student-teacher relationship. In the most highly effective student-teacher relationships the teacher was nondirective, actively encouraging students to take ownership and accountability for their learning. Students were expected to become increasingly self-directed with a strong sense of intrinsic
motivation and internal drive. At the same time, teachers exhibited high degrees of empathy and warmth.

Educators of excellence are not hesitant to develop close, and nurturing relationships with students while maintaining an ever present focus on high expectations. Grounded firmly in the art and science of teaching is the expectation for students to develop analytical, higher order thinking skills (Marzano, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001; Marzano et al., 2005). Classroom discussions move from the realm of memorization and recitation of information to that which speaks to the essence of being human (Brookhart, 2010). Brookhart (2010) suggests it is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and create using logic, reasoning, judgment, and creative thinking that demonstrates the innately human capacity to exist. To borrow the words of Descartes from Principia Philosophiae (1644) *Cogito ergo sum* is, perhaps, the best illustration for the philosophical grounding and theoretical framework of education and educators.

**Instructional Strategies**

The extensive body of scholarly, and not so scholarly research materials on various educational strategies is comprehensive and voluminous. Scholars of educational excellence have the benefit of years of on-going research to draw upon. This strengthens the field. It allows current day scholars to generate new theories, and hypotheses while synthesizing years of research into a format that is easily accessed by today’s busy educators. The work of Marzano and collaborators (2001) as authored in *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*, is an excellent example of the premise of synthesis and creation. They have reviewed years of scholarly research and numerous studies, and amalgamated their own research to
produce a new classic and modern day staple for informing education and developing instructional strategies. Marzano (1998) in his work at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) identified nine instructional strategies that have a robust relationship to increased student learning and achievement. When classroom teachers apply these strategies intentionally, and with fidelity, student learning is enhanced. However, the efficacy of the strategies is measured by the degree of understanding the teacher has regarding their optimal integration and utilization. In other words, not every strategy will work with every student. The art and science of teaching dictates educators know how, when, and why to use them. The nine categories of instructional strategies identified by Marzano (1998) through a meta-analysis are: (1) identifying similarities and differences, (2) summarizing and note taking, (3) reinforcing effort and providing recognition, (4) homework and practice, (5) nonlinguistic representations, (6) cooperative learning, (7) setting objectives and testing hypotheses, (8) generating and testing hypotheses, and (9) questions, cues, and advance organizers (Marzano, 1998; Marzano, et al., 2001).

**Cooperative learning.** Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy suggesting effective outcomes with ELL students (Echevarria et al., 2008; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Marzano et al., 2001). Johnson, and Johnson (1999) delineated five components for cooperative learning that appeared to be related to student academic achievement: (1) positive interdependence, (2) face-to-face promotive interaction, (3) individual and group accountability, (4) interpersonal and small group skills, and (5) group processing. Within the pedagogy of cooperative learning, heterogeneous grouping of small numbers of students is consistent with the research, and is a model synonymous
with increased academic success. This strategy lends itself well to differentiation of instruction in a natural classroom setting, and may be effective for encouraging verbal participation by immigrant second language learners. When implemented with consistency, intentionality, and systematically, it may help to create a safe learning environment amongst a small group of peers when the larger classroom may be more intimidating (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Tomlinson, 1999; Wormeli, 2007).

**Backward design.** Beginning with the end in mind is a seemingly simple, yet powerful philosophy of life and education. It is also habit number two in Covey’s (1989) work, *The seven habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change.* When this strategy is used in education it allows teachers to reflect on the big picture of what they want students to learn. Wiggins and McTighe have operationalized this strategy into a theoretical framework called *backward design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). Implemented with fidelity, backward design is an instructional strategy that can be beneficial for ELL student’s academic achievement. In summary, backward design asks educational professionals to reflect upon what they want students to learn, and develop content and language objectives backwards from that point. It is not the text, existing lesson plans, resources, or favorite classroom activities that drive learning. Rather, it is the need to accomplish the desired final learning outcome that drives everything in the classroom.

**Wait time.** Rowe coined the term *wait time* in 1969. Tobin (1987) evaluated several studies involving wait time and the effects it had on student achievement. Students learning English, as well as the curriculum content, have a greater need to be given time to cognitively process information. Allowing ELL students adequate wait
time ensures they have the additional processing time they need. What constitutes 
adequate wait time is specific to each student, and is related to the cognitive processing
ability of the student (Fagan et al., 1981). Tobin (1987) found that when teachers
implemented wait time the number of questions they asked decreased, and the number of
student responses increased. In addition, the use of wait time increased the cognitive
level of difficulty in the questions asked (Fagan et al., 1981).

**Quality of classroom instruction.** Echevarria, Short, and Powers (2006) found
the quality of classroom instruction makes a significant impact on the level of academic
achievement for immigrant ELL students. Specifically, content area teachers who
actively encourage ELL students to interact with their peers, and others verbally, and who
regularly encourage students to engage in participatory classroom discussions have
students with higher levels of English language proficiency. English language skill is
positively correlated with achievement, which is associated with teacher use of a
multiplicity of instructional strategies (Echevarria et al., 2006). For example: (a)
cooperative learning, (b) project based assignments, and (c) differentiated instruction help
ELL student’s access curricular content. Echevarria, Short, and Powers (2003) earlier
research identified teacher use of: (a) anticipatory guides, (b) pre-teaching of vocabulary,
(c) the frequent incorporation of realia, and (d) visual aids as conducive to higher levels
of academic achievement. Research suggests the use of a slower rate of speech coupled
with clear enunciation, incorporation of supplementary materials, and specific, targeted
vocabulary development facilitate academic achievement (Echevarria, 1995; Genesee,
1999; Echevarria et al., 2003).
Research by Echevarria, Short, and Powers (2003) found teachers who received training in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model had ELL students with significantly better scores on writing assessments than teachers who did not receive any training in the protocol. Their research findings also suggest there are specific strategies teachers can adopt to promote academic literacy, and in turn, academic achievement among ELLs. Specifically, teachers should have a clear understanding of the language objective associated with every lesson. The language objective must be communicated clearly to the students in an explicit, and intentional way, and in language they can understand. By focusing, and reflecting on the language objectives linked to every content area and lesson, teachers are better able to support the academic language demands and learning of ELLs, and further their English language acquisition skills (Echevarria et al., 2003). Language objectives can be built around key vocabulary words, targeted language structures, reading and writing skills, and listening and speaking tasks. All of the aforementioned domains, listening, speaking, reading, and writing are assessed when measuring English language acquisition skills (Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.).

Culturally responsive instruction. Instructional methods for ELL students that are responsive to cultural differences in learning, language use, and interacting with peers and teachers have been effectively incorporated into successful ESL programs. Specifically, classrooms that use differentiation of instruction, and scaffolding of content have seen promising results. Specific instruction into the meaning of textual enhancements such as boldfaced headings, pictures, captions, and graphs can greatly
facilitate an ELL student’s access to the curriculum. Finally, teachers who are equipped to teach basic literacy skills to newly arrived immigrants who may not be literate in their first language (L1) have a distinctive advantage over their peers who are unprepared to tackle this instructional challenge (Filmore & Snow, 2002; Rueda & Garcia, 2001).

**Adoption of ESL Standards.** Academic achievement for all students is increased when students know the instructional learning target, know where they are in relation to achieving the learning target, and what they have to do to reach the learning target. Students in this paradigm can take ownership of their learning and develop intrinsic motivators for achievement. A parallel to this approach is found in relation to ESL standards. When instruction is systematic and focused, when it promotes high expectations for all student learning, and when it incorporates national standards to guide state and district curriculum, assessment and professional development, then instructional achievement, engagement, and excellence is enhanced (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). In 1997 the *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages* (TESOL) developed a set of ESL national standards for students in kindergarten through high school completion. Since that time, TESOL has worked to influence the professionalism of ESL teachers, and the instruction they provide. Many states have adopted the TESOL standards, or have adapted them to reflect their current curricular needs. The TESOL standards focus on students gaining academic English language skills as well as cultural proficiency in the norms, mores, and language use in their land of adoption. The movement to national ESL standards has increased the overall academic rigor of ESL programs and curriculum (Echevarria et al., 2006).
Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The research work of Echevarria, (1995) and Genesee (1999) delineated specific strategies, and methodologies that are effective for instructing second language learners. The ability for ELL students to receive instruction in the general education content that is understandable, but not weakened is a central tenet of sheltered instruction. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, (2008) and Echevarria and Graves (2003), synthesized previous research combining existing data with the results of a seven year research project into an instructional framework and model for sheltered instruction. This model became known as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). When teaching is high quality, and instructional strategies are research based, ELL student’s master challenging academic content, and develop academic literacy skills that lead to increased levels of academic achievement, and educational attainment (Echevarria et al., 2003). The SIOP utilizes specific instructional strategies to facilitate language and content acquisition. Teacher use of: (a) slower rate of speech, (b) differentiation, (c) scaffolding of instruction, (d) building of background knowledge, (e) targeted vocabulary instruction, and (f) the use of supplemental materials such as realia and artifacts, are all characteristics of sheltered instruction (Echevarria, 1995; Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Genesee, 1999; Vogt, 2000). The above strategies are effective for facilitating access to curricular content for second language learner students. However, access to curriculum in and of itself is not sufficient for achievement. For example, ELL students must have deliberate and intentional instruction in academic literacy skills to achieve academic success comparable to their country of adoption cohort.
The objective of the SIOP is to give ELL student’s access to the general education curriculum while receiving focused and intentional language instruction through the use of content area language objectives to encourage and facilitate English language acquisition (Echevarria, 1995; Echevarria et al., 2003; Echevarria et al., 2008). There are eight components of the SIOP Model: (1) preparation, (2) building background knowledge, (3) comprehensible input, (4) strategies, (5) interaction, (6) practice/application, (7) lesson delivery, and (8) review/assessment. A key feature of the protocol is the inclusion of a language target within every content lesson. The acquisition of academic language skills is a prerequisite for educational achievement, thus it is a center piece of every SIOP lesson. The protocol’s focus on the development of academic literacy cannot be over emphasized. Every SIOP lesson has explicit vocabulary development, building of background knowledge, and developing of students learning strategies (Echevarria et al., 2008). In addition to the aforementioned instructional strategies, the protocol is flexible enough to allow for a significant degree of variation in classroom needs and procedures. Provided the protocol is implemented with fidelity and consistency, its benefits are not contingent on a rigid pattern of delivery. Another benefit of the protocol is it provides a detailed rating scale to be used for teacher’s personal professional growth and development as well as a tool for administrators and college instructors to provide effective feedback to teachers in the observation and evaluation process (Echevarria et al., 2008).

**Building background knowledge.** Thousands of students entering U.S. schools from other countries face a two-fold challenge--they must become proficient in English and they must master new and unfamiliar content on a daily basis (National Center for
Educational Statistics, 2004). The knowledge students already possess in any given content area is the strongest predictor of how well they will learn new material related to the content (Marzano, 2004). The connection between background knowledge and achievement is even more salient for immigrant ELL students. Given the gravity and enormity of the task of learning a second language, ELL students and their teachers must utilize every strategy, and methodology that is supported by scholarly research evidence.

A significant body of research supports the hypothesis that there is a strong positive correlation between background knowledge and academic achievement (Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999; Schiefele & Krapp, 1996; Marzano, 2004). Marzano (2004) found a statistically significant correlation between background knowledge and achievement. Innate intelligence is not as significant a factor in academic success as learned intelligence (Rolfhus & Ackerman, 1999; Marzano, 2004). Interestingly, Sticht, Hofstetter, and Hofstetter (1997) conducted a research study that examined the relationship between background knowledge and positions of status and power in adults. They found a significant relationship between the degree of academic knowledge and the achievement of a higher status occupation, or above average income. Higher status occupations and above average income are associated with greater levels of power. Not only is the development of a robust resource of background knowledge beneficial to a student’s school achievement, it is also linked to their life outcomes after graduation. This is significant for ELL students. A high level of academic achievement in ELL students is associated with classroom instruction by an educational professional who understands the importance of background knowledge. Teachers of excellence utilize
intentional strategies to access ELL students existing background knowledge and to build needed background knowledge when gaps are identified.

**Vocabulary Development.** Vocabulary development is linked to developing background knowledge as well as academic achievement (Becker, 1977; Marzano, 2004; Echevarria et al., 2003). Marzano (2004) forges a strong link between background knowledge and vocabulary by theorizing the former is made manifest in the latter. Without vocabulary development there can be no full access to background knowledge. Vocabulary is related to socioeconomic stature (SES). Nagy and Herman (1987) found that the vocabulary disparity between high SES first grade students and low SES first-grade students was startling. High SES first-grade students had double the vocabulary of low SES first-grade students. It is estimated there is a 4700 word discrepancy between high SES, and low SES at students entering kindergarten (Nagy & Herman, 1987). This discrepancy represents the beginning of the achievement gap, and it is tenacious in its resistance to change throughout a child’s educational career. There are some scholars who suggest elimination of the disparity in vocabulary between high and low SES students is the first step needed to close the achievement gap. Student’s from a culture of poverty and who are learning English as a second language have weaker vocabularies than students coming from a high SES background who are native English speakers (Allen, 1999). When student’s present in a classroom with lower vocabularies they benefit from strong and systematic instructional support and direct vocabulary instruction (Allen, 1999). Immigrant students who are successful academically have demonstrated conceptual understanding of complex and abstract concepts which is only possible after gaining a deep understanding of academic vocabulary as it relates to content learning.
Rote memorization of vocabulary definitions is not sufficient to achieve higher order thinking (Echevarria et al., 2003). Strategies such as the use of: (a) word walls, (b) semantic webs, (c) demonstrations, (d) illustrations, (e) art projects, (f) student selected vocabulary words, and (g) a structural analysis of vocabulary words and development are supported by the research (Echevarria, 1995; Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Echevarria et al., 2006; Genesee, 1999; Marzano, 2004; Marzano, 2003; Vogt, 2000). All of these strategies are strengthened, and made relevant through the activation of a student’s background knowledge. Background knowledge and vocabulary are inextricably linked. Student achievement is predicated on the successful attainment of both of these skills.

The SIOP address additional strategies for increasing and accelerating vocabulary use, and development for ELL students. The prodigious use of open ended question prompts in response to a student response such as, *Tell me more about that*, or *Why do you think so?*, as opposed to a closed-ended teacher response to a student response such as, *Good, The next question is….., as well as relevant and specific feedback related to the content and language objective are efficacious for English language acquisition.

**Higher Order Thinking Skills.** When can educators conclude they have provided immigrant ESL students with an education that equips them to move forward with confidence, requisite skills, and courage to fully realize the initial dreams and aspirations they held upon first arrival in the United States? Do educators have the end in mind as they make curriculum choices, and instructional decisions? Wiggins and McTighe (1998) suggest the road forward is created through designing backward. They challenge all educators to become reflective thinkers, pondering the myriad of choices before them, and selecting only those avenues that allow students to reach the end goal.
and educator’s beginning point of reference. By applying the backward design framework educators design student learning that provides complex authentic opportunities to: (a) explain, (b) interpret, (c) apply, (d) shift perspective, (e) empathize, and (f) self-assess (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Purposeful use of data to drive instruction, make instructional and curricular adjustments, and solicitation of feedback from students, supervisors, and peers, allows educators to actualize the art and science of teaching. Brookhart (2010) suggests the goal of all education is to develop in students the capacity for higher-order thinking. This entails possessing the wherewithal to independently arrive at sound decisions based upon reason and reflection—not a simple task for a native speaking student and a formidable task for an immigrant ELL student. High-order thinking allows students to become cross-disciplinary problem solvers (Nitko & Brookhart, 2007). The ability to solve complex problems in multiple realms is a skill set necessary for effective teachers and successful learners. To elaborate on this premise further, the ability to solve problems is the corner stone for critical and creative thinking and effective communication (Bransford & Stein, 1984). ELL immigrant students have achieved learning when they are competent, independent, creative problem solvers who can identify and tackle obstacles in academic and personal spheres of life (Brookhart, 2010).

Creativity is a factor when students are faced with multiple solution problems and projects requiring high-order thinking skills. There is a strong relationship between academic achievement and teacher instruction focused on the aforementioned skills (Wenglinsky, 2004). The Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program was designed specifically for at risk students (Pogrow, 2005). It focuses intervention and support on
four specific types of thinking skills: (1) metacognition, (2) making inferences, (3) generalization, and (4) synthesizing information. Intentional instruction in metacognition gives students the flexibility to understand thinking, and tackle multiple types of content (Pogrow, 2005). Students who have participated in the HOTS program demonstrated gains on nationally norm referenced standardized tests, and overall gains in measures of academic achievement. Pogrow’s (2005) research results were consistent for approximately 80% of students identified as Title I or learning disabled.

Conclusion

Daily, immigrant students and their families enter the welcoming and at times not so welcoming embrace of the United States. They arrive with varying levels of academic history, educational background, and personal resources. Almost to a person, they arrive with dreams and hopes for a better future in their new land. A few will return from whence they came. The majority will stay and begin the marathon of a lifetime. Traversing the hills and valleys of a new culture, new language, new societal expectations, and new mores, they boldly face each day unsure of its outcome, but determined to press on. Immigrant students who have reached the pinnacle of youthful academic success, they have secured a high school diploma, are poised to begin the next phase of the marathon, post secondary education. The viability of the United States rests on the ability of the new wave of immigrants and their future generations to gain successful entrance into the global economy. Receiving essential education for a changing world is a foundational necessity for immigrant ELL students to succeed. The myriad of factors that affect student academic achievement form an intricate and delicate web that can be sufficient to sustain a student to achieve beyond all expectations.
Similarly, the web of supports can contain gaps or be too weak to resist the inextricable downward pull of gravity resulting in another academic and societal casualty. Academic success, engagement, and unlimited future possibilities for immigrant ELL students can be a reality. However, it is a reality that is hard won. Motivation, determination, ambition, perseverance, and a strong commitment to the art and science of teaching are required of all before miracles can happen. Belief in the power of effort, the power of education to change lives, and the enormous value inherent in diversity speak as a clarion call to those who would say the future of education is bleak, and the demographic mix weighted too heavily with difficulties. Immigrant ELL students do have a future and a hope for a better life. Educators are in the unique and privileged position to give these students reason to hold on to their beliefs, and to continue in the struggle until they realize their dreams.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to determine achievement and high school completion rates of Hispanic students with no English language skills compared to Hispanic students with some English language skills attending the same high school in an immigrant responsive city.

Participants

Individuals who participated in this study were identified upon entering the research high school in their ninth-grade school year, Hispanic immigrant students with no English language skills compared to Hispanic immigrant students with some English language skills. Identification of the study participants was based upon their entering Las Links assessment scores and their placement into the English Language Acquisition program within the research study high school. Individuals who participated in this study attended the same high school from entry in ninth-grade until high school completion.

Number of participants. The maximum accrual for this study was \( N = 24 \). Study participants consist of students with no English language skills \( (n = 13) \) who entered the research high school in their ninth-grade school year, attended the same high school until completion of high school, scored at a level one on their initial Las Links assessment of English language proficiency skills given prior to the students entering the research high school, and were placed into the English Language Acquisition program at the research high school. Students with some English language skills \( (n = 11) \) who entered the research high school in their ninth-grade school year, attended the same high
school until completion of high school, scored at a level two or above on their initial Las Links assessment of English language proficiency skills given prior to the students entering the research high school, and were placed into the English Language Acquisition program at the research high school.

**Gender of participants.** The gender of the group of students with no English language skills that received a score of one on their initial Las Links assessment prior to entering the research high school, and were placed into the English Language Acquisition program at the research high school was male $n = 8$ (61%) and female $n = 5$ (39%). The gender of the group of students with some English language skills that received a score of two or above on their initial Las Links assessment prior to entering the research high school and were placed into the English Language Acquisition program at the research high school was male $n = 8$ (73%) and female $n = 3$ (27%). The gender of the study participants is congruent with the research high school districts gender demographics for entering ninth-grade students with no English language skills and entering ninth-grade students with some English language skills where the overall gender demographics for the research high school is males $n = 82$ (63%) and females $n = 47$ (36%).

**Age range of participants.** The age range of the students with no English language skills entering ninth-grade was 14 years to 17 years. The age range of students with some English language skills entering ninth-grade was 14 years to 16 years. The age range of the study participants was congruent with the research high schools ninth-grade age range demographics.

**Racial and ethnic origin of participants.** The ethnic origin of the students with no English language skills entering ninth-grade with a Las Links assessment score of one
and placed into the English Language Acquisition program, and the ethnic origin of the students with some English language skills entering ninth-grade with a Las Links score of two or greater and placed into the English language acquisition program was Hispanic, \( n = 25 \) (100%). The racial and ethnic origin of the study participants is congruent with the research high schools racial and ethnic origin demographics for entering ninth-grade students placed into the English language acquisition program.

**Inclusion criteria of participants.** Study participants consisted of entering ninth-grade students with no English language skills who scored a one on their entering Las Links assessment and were placed into the English Language Acquisition program and who completed high school \( (n = 13) \), and entering ninth-grade students with some English language skills who scored a two or greater on their entering Las Links assessment and were placed into the English Language Acquisition program and completed high school \( (n = 11) \). Students qualifying for and receiving special education services were not included in the sample of study participants.

**Method of participant identification.** Study participants who had no English language skills or some English language skills upon entering the ninth-grade at the research high school were placed into the English Language Acquisition program at the research high school. Reason for referral to the English Language Acquisition program of entering ninth-grade students at the research high school identified for English language proficiency testing prior to school entry included: (a) parent selection of a language other than English as the student’s first language, and (b) Las Links assessment results of an English language proficiency level of one, two, or three in one or more of the tested domains including: (1) speaking, (2) listening, (3) reading, and (4) writing.
Description of Procedures

Research Design. The pretest-posttest two-group comparative efficacy study design is displayed in the following notation.

Group 1 \( X_1 O_1 Y_1 O_2 \)
Group 2 \( X_1 O_1 Y_2 O_2 \)

**Group 1 = study participants #1.** Naturally formed group of immigrant high school students \((n = 13)\) who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade.

**Group 2 = study participants #2.** Naturally formed group of immigrant high school students \((n = 11)\) who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade.

\( X_1 = \text{study constant.} \) All study participants enrolled in the same research high school in the ninth-grade, completed the Las Links assessment that determined eligibility for and placement into the English Language Acquisition program, completed yearly progress monitoring of their English language acquisition through the administration of the English Language Development Assessment and participated in required high school academic coursework.

\( Y_1 = \text{study independent variable, English language skills, condition #1.} \)
Naturally formed group of immigrant high school students with no English language skills who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade.

\( Y_2 = \text{study independent variable, English language skills, condition #2.} \)
Naturally formed group of immigrant high school students with some English language skills who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade.

\( O_1 = \text{study pretest dependent measures.} \) (1) Language as measured by the entering ninth-grade Las Links assessment scores for (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c)
Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite. (2) Achievement as measured by end of ninth-grade core content subject: (a) English, (b) math, (c) science, (d) social studies, and (e) elective grade point average. (3) Graduation requirements as measured by end of ninth-grade core content subject: (a) English, (b) math, (c) science, and (d) social studies grade point average. (4) Engagement as measured by end of ninth-grade attendance frequencies.

\[ O_2 = \text{study posttest dependent measures.} \]

(1) Language as measured by the end of high school English Language Development Assessment scores for: (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite. (2) Achievement as measured by ending high school core content subject: (a) English, (b) math, (c) science, and (d) social studies grade point average. (3) Graduation requirements as measured by the end of twelfth-grade core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements. (4) Engagement as measured by the end of twelfth-grade attendance frequencies.

**Independent Variable Conditions**

The study has one independent variable with two conditions. Independent variable, English language skills, condition #1 was a naturally formed group of immigrant high school students with no English language skills who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade. Independent variable, English language skills, condition #2 was a naturally formed group of immigrant high school students with some English language skills who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade. Las Links assessment and English language proficiency level prior to ninth-grade enrollment...
determined the placement of students into the English Language Acquisition program at the research high school.

**Description of Grand Island, Nebraska, Immigrant Supportive Community**

Grand Island is located in Hall County, which is in central Nebraska along Interstate 80, the primary east-to-west thoroughfare. Grand Island has a population of approximately 44,000. According to the 2010 census data, Grand Island is second only by a percentage point to the Capital of Nebraska, Lincoln, for experiencing the fastest population growth in the state. Grand Island’s population would have declined in the 2010 census if it had not been for the significant increase in the minority population. Specifically, the Hispanic population of Grand Island and Hall County grew at a rate of over 82% on the 2010 census data. Over the past ten years, The Hispanic population under the age of 18 experienced an 89% growth rate. This figure outstrips the over 18 population of Grand Island and Hall County which grew at a rate of 77.4% during the same time period. As of the 2010 census data, the Hispanic population comprised 26.7% of the population of Grand Island. In addition, in the 2009-2010 school year, Hispanic students accounted for 44% of the Grand Island Public School’s student body. At Grand Island Senior High School the Hispanic population represents close to 49% of the student body (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010).

**Description of the English Language Acquisition program.** Grand Island Public Schools serve close to 9,000 students. The English Language Acquisition (ELA) program at Grand Island Public Schools serves approximately 2,600 students (28%) at 14 elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. The ELA program is staffed by 52 teachers, who all hold endorsements for teaching ESL students and
furthermore are trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method. The teachers are supported by 29 translator, bi-lingual Para-educators and two multi-cultural at-risk coordinators. A Migrant Programs Director, a Teaching and Learning Coordinator, an ELA and Migrant Coordinator, a Migrant Recruiter, a Migrant Para Educator, and a department secretary staff the ELA department. The Grand Island Public Schools Welcome Center is a part of the GIPS ELA Department and is staffed with a GIPS Welcome Center Coordinator and a parent liaison.

**Home language survey.** Each year, approximately 600 students with a first language other than English arrive at Grand Island Public Schools to register as students and begin their educational journey. These students come primarily from Mexico, South, and Central American, Cuba, and a small percentage from Asia and other countries. The first step for any new family entering Grand Island Public Schools is to complete a Home Language Survey (HLS). The HLS is composed of five separate questions: (1) what language does your child speak most of the time? (2) what was your child’s first language? (3) what languages other than those learned at school does your child speak? (4) what languages are spoken in your home? and (5) what languages other than English are spoken by anyone in your family? If the family indicates something other than English in response to question number two, the family is immediately referred to the Grand Island Public Schools Welcome Center. If the family indicates something other than English in response to questions one or three, the principal or ELA teacher is called to conference with the parent to determine if question number two should also be answered as a language other than English. The reasoning behind the further review of the HLS is to determine absolute qualification for a language proficiency assessment.
Only if there is a language other than English in response to question number two can the student be assessed, and possibly qualify for ELA services. If the parent does indicate a language other than English was the child’s first language the family receives a referral to the Welcome Center. If the family presents for registration at a school site or the administration building, a call is placed to the Welcome Center, and an appointment is made for the family. This is usually an immediate appointment, whenever possible.

**Grand Island Public Schools Welcome Center.** The Welcome Center is located within the Central District Health Department (CDHD) and is staffed by a Coordinator and a Parent Liaison. The primary mission of the Welcome Center is to assess all new, or returning students to GIPS who have a first language other than English, and who are, or may qualify for ELA services as limited English proficient (LEP) students. An English language proficiency assessment is given to each incoming student. While the student is assessed the parent is completing the registration process with the parent liaison. This is a one-on-one process whereby the parent liaison walks the new family through all of the paperwork, and gives the family an initial orientation to the Grand Island Public Schools. For many families arriving at GIPS this is their first introduction to the U.S. school system, which can be very different from what they experienced in their country of origin. In addition, many of the families presenting at the Welcome Center have disrupted educational histories. The parents may not have completed schooling in their country of origin, or they may not be literate in their L1. The registration process is a critical time for an initial bridge to be constructed between parent, child, family, and school district. It is an opportunity to get to know the family, and to understand the socio-emotional, and academic skills, protections, and challenges the student and family
possess. It is also an opportunity to begin the process of connecting the family to needed resources within the school district and larger community. After the student has been assessed and the family completes registration and orientation, a summary is prepared of the assessment results. (The summary includes a placement recommendation for ELA service levels, a compellation of the assessment data, transcripts, and records from previous schooling in the United States or in the country of origin, a short history of student immunizations and any existing medical concerns, the student and family’s socio-emotional status, and economic needs.) All of these factors are communicated to the receiving school and to organizations that may be able to help the family adjust to a new life in a new town. Confidentiality of the student and family is closely guarded, and any information shared is done so with the permission of the parent or is only shared with the receiving school and teacher. Upon receipt of the summary, the receiving school and teacher, as well as social workers and other student support services personnel, can prepare for the arrival of the student. This process helps the family as they enter a new school district in a new town. This support also helps the student academically by optimizing instructional time allowing for immediate student placement within a service level that is most appropriate to their academic and language needs.

**ELA Program Service Delivery Models for High School Students**

Grand Island Public Schools offer a variety of different ELA services delivery models to address the varying academic and linguistic needs of its high school students.

* Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade level one service delivery model. Level one provides a full day of ELA instruction in an ELA self contained classroom for those students who score at a level one on their Las Links assessment and who do not speak or
understand English. Instruction focuses on language development through content study. ELL students will learn very basic mathematical concepts, and vocabulary in ELL mathematical literacy one. ELL students will be enrolled in two elective courses including music and/or art. PE is a core credit class.

**Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade level two service delivery model.** Level two provides a full day of ELA instruction in a self-contained ELA classroom for those LEP students who speak and understand minimal English and have minimal literacy skills in English. Instruction focuses on language development through content study. ELL students learn basic American History, advanced mathematical concepts, and vocabulary in content courses.

**Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade level three service delivery model.** Level three provides a combination of ELA instruction and sheltered instruction content academic classes for LEP students who speak and understand limited English and have limited literacy skills in English. Instruction focuses on language development through extensive content study. ELL students participate in sheltered instruction courses, American History SI, and Math one and two. ELL students also take word processing and Spanish for native speakers.

**Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade level four service delivery model.** ELA level four provides a combination of ELA instruction, and sheltered instruction content core academic classes for LEP students who speak and understand more complex English and have high levels of literacy skills in English. Instruction focuses on language development through extensive content study. ELL students participate in a sheltered instruction course, world history SI, and pre-algebra. Students are enrolled in math
support for core credit. ELL students also are able to continue taking Spanish for native speakers and/or another elective course.

**Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade sheltered instruction service delivery model.** Sheltered instruction courses are classes designed to meet the core graduation credit requirements. ELL students participating in sheltered instruction courses have an advanced command of the English language, but lack academic proficiency in English reading and writing. The lack of academic English literacy skills impedes ELL students’ ability to be successful in regular education classes without substantial instructional support. ELL students assigned to sheltered instruction pre-algebra or social studies classes may or may not participate in ELA levels one through four.

**Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade co-taught service delivery model.** The co-taught service delivery model courses are classes designed to meet the core graduation credit requirements. ELL students participating in the co-taught service delivery model have an advanced command of the English language, and are approaching proficiency in English reading and writing, however still need additional support to succeed in the general education classroom. Classes are co-taught by a content area general education teacher and an ELA teacher.

**Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade level credit recovery service delivery model.** LEP students who are classified as credit deficient can attempt to make-up their credit deficiency by participating in an on-line credit recovery program. To realize success in this service delivery model the LEP student must be proficient in English reading and writing and be able to work with minimal intervention and support.
**Ninth-grade through twelfth-grade monitor service delivery model.** Monitor service provides ELL students with 100% of direct instruction in the general education classroom, with frequent, systematic communication between the ELA teacher and the classroom teachers. This service is appropriate for ELL students whose academic language development is sufficient for success in the general education curriculum.

**Services and Programs Offered Through Grand Island Public Schools, Grand Island Senior High School, and the Community**

Grand Island Public Schools and the city of Grand Island, NE, are striving to be responsive and proactive at embracing the challenges and many opportunities that are inherently a part of the changing demographics of this heartland community. At times, success and forward movement is evident. However, for every good effort a clearer picture of the distance still needed to travel is illuminated.

**Parent University.** Parent University was run in conjunction with a grant from Education Quest, and targeted at risk ELL students and their parents. ELA teachers nominated students for participation in the program. Parents were sent a personalized letter inviting them, their families, and students to attend a series of three training sessions to be held monthly from January through March. The purpose of the Parent University was to give students and their families, access to the skills and tools they need to achieve success in both high school and beyond. The premise of the Parent University was to build on the assets inherent in students and families. Students are our greatest asset and one that must be nurtured and cherished. The Parent University was a vehicle to begin to build opportunities and bridges to increase understanding and engagement between students, families, and the school district. The Parent University offered
participants a catered dinner, a variety of speakers and topics, and an opportunity to meet Grand Island ELA staff and other parents. Topics addressed include: (a) presentations by former students who are now successfully attending college and working in the community, (b) presentations by colleges regarding applications, scholarships, tuition, and college life in general, (c) how to succeed and thrive in high school, (d) why is high school so important, (e) how do I get questions answered and find the help I need, and (f) what resources are available and how do I use them.

**ELDA testing event.** Nebraska uses the English Language Development Assessment on a yearly basis to measure LEP students’ progress on their English language acquisition skills. All students designated as LEP are required by the state to take this assessment yearly. Maintaining student motivation, and interest in this assessment can be challenging. Clearly, students are required to take a significant number of high stakes tests over the course of a year. Assessment results from the ELDA are a data point used in the exit criteria for the ELA program. As a means to create greater efficiency in the ELDA testing and to encourage optimal student performance and achievement, GIPS initiated the ELDA testing event for all high school ELL students and a majority of middle school ELL students. The ELDA testing event is held at the local community college during their spring break. Fortunately, the spring break of the community college does not coincide with GIPS spring break. Three days are set aside for the testing. Two days are devoted to testing high school students and one day is reserved for the middle school students. On their designated testing day students congregate at school and are given a complimentary breakfast before boarding a bus to the community college. The ELDA testing event allows students to complete the
assessment in one day, as opposed to over several days or even more than a week. To break up the day students participate in the following: (a) a tour of the campus, (b) introduction to nursing and health careers, (c) exposure to drafting and welding career opportunities, and (d) a presentation on college readiness. Middle and high school students have come away from this event feeling transformed, empowered, and special. Prior to the ELDA testing event, middle and high school students felt stigmatized at having to be pulled out of class over a period of several days to take the ELDA. However, the ELDA testing event has proven to be highly motivational to students, and a positive addition to the services, and opportunities provided to ELA students at the Grand Island Public Schools.

**Youth Leadership and Diversity Conference.** The Youth Leadership and Diversity Conference is open to students in Grand Island, and surrounding communities in eighth-grade through twelfth-grade. The conference is open to all students but the focus of recruiting efforts is targeted to minority and at-risk students. The conference has been held in Grand Island at Central Community College for seven years, and was initially called the *Latino Youth Rally*. As the minority population of Grand Island became more diverse the name was changed to better reflect the targeted audience. The goal of the conference is to reach out to students from a multiplicity of racial and ethnic backgrounds, and show them the career opportunities that are available to them after high school. Historically, the conference has included a motivational and inspirational keynote speaker in the morning followed by various breakout sessions the students can choose from. Colleges, universities, military, technical schools, and other training programs and post secondary opportunities are made available to students at the
conference. Students from Grand Island Senior High School serve on the board of the Youth Leadership and Diversity Conference. In addition to exposing students to post-secondary educational opportunities, the conference is also interested in developing leadership skills among minority students and paving the way for a natural cadre of minority youth leaders to develop.

**Multi-cultural Coalition.** The Multi-cultural Coalition of Grand Island is a tangible realization of the commitment the city leadership has to moving Grand Island forward as a light house in the Midwest leading the way towards cultural competence. In September of 2001, a group of Grand Island government and business leaders developed the idea of creating an entity that would be a one-stop service center to meet the needs of new immigrants and minorities. Today, the Multi-cultural Coalition is an integral part of the fabric that makes Grand Island a working quilt, ever expanding borders, and striving to welcome one and all into a warm and comforting embrace. The Multi-cultural Coalition is a clearing house and resource center for new immigrants working to increase cross-cultural understanding by developing the cultural competence of all residents and fostering an understanding of the rich and varied opportunities immigrant newcomers create within the community.

**Grand Island Public Schools Outreach Center.** The Outreach Center works closely with the Grand Island Public Schools Welcome Center, and is an important part of the safety net the city has woven to catch families before they fall through the cracks. The Outreach Center provides services to homeless children and their families. GIPS understands that there can be no academic achievement if a student is hungry, cold, or tired from lack of adequate shelter or familial resources. When a family presents at the
Welcome Center, and indicates they have a need, or fit the description of homeless, the Outreach Center is contacted immediately, and the connection is begun. The Outreach Center is a resource for families needing (a) groceries, (b) mattresses, (c) toiletries, (d) socks, (e) shoes, (f) underwear, (g) transportation, and (h) help with scheduling doctor’s appointments. The Center is also the location for Homebound services to students who have extended absences of ten days or more due to an illness. Some of the other related community service activities the Outreach Center provides are: (a) translation services, (b) annual coat drive, (c) Take a break summer reading program, (d) Stuff the bus school supply drive, (e) after school tutoring, (f) food for thought home back pack program, and (g) family activity nights. Funding sources for the Outreach Center include: (a) Grand Island Public Schools, (b) Title III, (c) Title I Part F Homeless, (d) McKinney Vento Grant, and (e) Benjamin A. Black Charitable Trust. The work of the Outreach Center in Grand Island is an important factor in the continued success of many students and their families.

**Dependent Measures**

The study’s four dependent variables were (1) achievement as measured by the research high schools individual student scores for the English Language Development Assessment (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite measures, (2) achievement as measured by the research high schools individual student grade point average for core content courses including: (a) English, (b) math, (c) science, (d) social studies, and (e) elective, (3) achievement as measured by the research high schools individual student credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation
requirements in: (a) core credit, (b) elective credit, and (4) student engagement as measured by: (a) attendance frequencies.

**Research Question and Data Analysis**

Research questions analyzed the entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to the ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Language Achievement Research Question #1.**

Did students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills lose, maintain, or improve entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite measures?

**Sub-Question 1a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking?

**Sub-Question 1b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to
ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (b) Listening?

**Sub-Question 1c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (c) Reading?

**Sub-Question 1d.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (d) Writing?

**Sub-Question 1e.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (e) Comprehension?

**Sub-Question 1f.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (f) Composite?
**Analysis.** Research Sub-Questions #1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, and 1f were analyzed using dependent *t* tests to examine the significance of the difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores. Because multiple statistical tests were conducted, a one-tailed .01 alpha level was employed to help control for Type 1 errors. Means and standard deviations were displayed on tables.

Research question two analyzed the entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to the ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Language Achievement Research Question #2.** Did students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills lose, maintain, or improve entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite measures?

**Sub-Question 2a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking?
**Sub-Question 2b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (b) Listening?

**Sub-Question 2c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (c) Reading?

**Sub-Question 2d.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (d) Writing?

**Sub-Question 2e.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (e) Comprehension?

**Sub-Question 2f.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some
English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (f) Composite?

**Analysis.** Research Sub-Questions #2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, and 2f were analyzed using dependent \( t \) tests to examine the significance of the difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores. Because multiple statistical tests were conducted, a one-tailed .01 alpha level was employed to help control for Type 1 errors. Means and standard deviations were displayed on tables.

Research question three analyzed the posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English language acquisition program.

**Overarching Posttest-Posttest Language Achievement Research Question #3.** Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have congruent or different ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking, (b) Listening, (c) Reading, (d) Writing, (e) Comprehension, and (f) Composite measures?

**Sub-Question 3a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest
compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (a) Speaking?

**Sub-Question 3b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (b) Listening?

**Sub-Question 3c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (c) Reading?

**Sub-Question 3d.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (d) Writing?

**Sub-Question 3e.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (e) Comprehension?
Sub-Question 3f. Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for (f) Composite?

Analysis. Research Sub-Questions #3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, and 3f were analyzed using a single classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the main effect congruence or difference between students’ enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores. An $F$ ratio was calculated and an alpha level of .05 was utilized to test the null hypothesis. Means and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Research question four analyzed the posttest end of high school English core content subject grade point average scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

Overarching Posttest-Posttest Achievement Research Question #4. Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have congruent or different ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (a) English, (b) math, (c) science, and (d) social studies?
**Sub-Question 4a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (a) English?

**Sub-Question 4b.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (b) math?

**Sub-Question 4c.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (c) science?

**Sub-Question 4d.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores for (d) social studies?

**Analysis.** Research Sub-Questions #4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d were analyzed using a single classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the main effect congruence or difference between students’ enrolled in the research high school’s English
Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills ending high school posttest compared to ending high school posttest core content subject grade point average scores. An $F$ ratio was calculated and an alpha level of .05 was utilized to test the null hypothesis. Means and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Research question five analyzed graduation requirements of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Graduation Requirements Research Question #5.** Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have congruent or different ending high school ninth-grade graduation requirements compared to end of twelfth-grade graduation requirements as measured by core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements?

**Sub-Question 5a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills end of ninth-grade graduation requirements compared to end of twelfth-grade graduation requirements as measured by core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements?

**Analysis.** Research Question #5 was analyzed utilizing a chi-square test of significance to compare observed verses expected end of school year core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements by school year frequencies. Because multiple
statistical tests were conducted, a .01 alpha level was employed to help control for Type 1 errors. Frequencies and percentages were displayed in tables.

Research question six analyzed graduation requirements of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program.

**Overarching Pretest-Posttest Graduation Requirements Research Question #6.** Do students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills have congruent or different end of ninth-grade engagement compared to end of twelfth-grade engagement as measured by absence frequencies?

**Sub-Question 6a.** Will there be a significant difference between students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills and some English language skills end of ninth-grade graduation requirements compared to end of twelfth-grade graduation requirements as measured by core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements?

**Analysis.** Research Question #6 was analyzed utilizing a chi-square test of significance to compare observed verses expected end of school year ending twelfth-grade engagement as measured by average absence frequencies by school year frequencies. Because multiple statistical tests were conducted, a .01 alpha level was employed to help control for Type 1 errors. Frequencies and percentages were displayed in tables.

**Data Collection Procedures**
All student achievement, engagement, and English language proficiency data was retrospective, archival, and routinely collected school information. Permission from the appropriate school research personnel was obtained. Naturally formed groups of 13 students in one arm and 11 students in the other include achievement, engagement, and English language proficiency data. Non-coded numbers were used to display de-identified achievement, engagement, and English language proficiency data. Aggregated group data, descriptive statistics, and parametric statistical analysis were used and reported with means and standard deviations in tables.

**Performance site.** This research was conducted in the public school setting through normal educational and assessment practices. The study procedures did not interfere with the normal educational and assessment practices of the public school and did not involve coercion or discomfort of any kind. Data was stored on spreadsheets and computer flash drives for statistical analysis in the office of the primary researcher and the dissertation chair. Data and computer files were kept in locked file cabinets. No individual identifiers were attached to the data.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of Human Subjects**

**Approval Category.** The exemption categories for this study were provided under 45CFR.101 (b) categories 1 and 4. The research was conducted using routinely collected archival data. A letter of support from the district was provided for IRB review.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine achievement and high school completion rates of Hispanic students with no English language skills compared to Hispanic students with some English language skills attending the same high school in an immigrant responsive city.

Implementation of the Independent Variables

The study has one independent variable with two conditions. Independent variable, English language skills, condition #1 was a naturally formed group of immigrant high school students with no English language skills who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade. Independent variable, English language skills, condition #2 was a naturally formed group of immigrant high school students with some English language skills who enrolled in the research high school in the ninth-grade. Las Links assessment and English language proficiency level prior to ninth-grade enrollment determined the placement of students into the English Language Acquisition program at the research high school.

Description of the English language acquisition program. Grand Island Public Schools serve close to 9,000 students. The English Language Acquisition (ELA) program at Grand Island Public Schools serves approximately 2,600 students (28%) at 14 elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. The ELA program is staffed by 52 teachers, who all hold endorsements for teaching ESL students and furthermore are trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method.
The teachers are supported by 29 translator, bi-lingual Para-educators and two multi-cultural at-risk coordinators. A Migrant Programs Director, a Teaching and Learning Coordinator, an ELA and Migrant Coordinator, a Migrant Recruiter, a Migrant Para Educator, and a department secretary staff the ELA department. The Grand Island Public Schools Welcome Center is a part of the GIPS ELA Department and is staffed with a GIPS Welcome Center Coordinator and a parent liaison. The Grand Island Public Schools Welcome Center is a part of the GIPS ELA Department and is staffed with a GIPS Welcome Center Coordinator and a parent liaison.

**Dependent Measures**

The study’s dependent variable was achievement. Achievement will be analyzed using the following dependent measures (1) Las Links assessment scores, (2) English Language Development Assessment scores, (3) Achievement as measured by core content subject: (a) English, (b) math, (c) science, (d) social studies, and (e) elective grade point average, (4) core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements, and (5) attendance frequencies.

All study achievement data related to each of the dependent variables were retrospective, archival, and routinely collected school information. Permission from the appropriate school research personnel was obtained before data were collected and analyzed.

Table 1 displays demographic information of individual students enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with no English language skills. Table 2 displays demographic information of individual students enrolled in the
research high school’s English Language Acquisition program with some English language skills.

**Research Question #1**

Table 3 displays entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to the ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The first pretest-posttest hypothesis was tested using the dependent $t$ test. As seen in Table 3, null hypotheses for test score improvement over time were rejected for all entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Comprehension, and Composite where: Speaking pretest $M = 17.93, SD = 8.53$; posttest $M = 28.00, SD = 6.60$; $t(12) = 3.22, p = .01$ (one-tailed), $d = 0.866$: Listening: pretest $M = 20.57, SD = 12.08$; posttest $M = 45.36, SD = 8.70$; $t(12) = 7.98, p = .001$ (one-tailed), $d = 2.196$: Reading: pretest $M = 23.14, SD = 7.11$; posttest $M = 37.57, SD = 10.15$; $t(12) = 7.37, p = .001$ (one-tailed), $d = 2.124$: Writing: pretest $M = 11.93, SD = 5.78$; posttest $M = 23.00, SD = 2.85$; $t(12) = 6.88, p = .001$ (one-tailed), $d = 1.979$: Comprehension: pretest $M = 1.29, SD = 0.60$; posttest $M = 2.71, SD = 1.20$; $t(12) = 6.28, p = .001$ (one-tailed), $d = 2.231$: and Composite: pretest $M = 1.29, SD = 0.60$; posttest $M = 2.71, SD = 0.82$; $t(12) = 8.27, p = .001$ (one-tailed), $d = 2.325$.

**Research Question #2**

Table 4 displays entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to the ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores of
immigrant high school students with some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The second pretest-posttest hypothesis was tested using the dependent $t$ test. As seen in Table 4, null hypotheses for test score improvement over time were rejected for five of the six entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores for Speaking, Listening, Reading, Comprehension, and Composite where: Speaking pretest $M = 25.18$, $SD = 5.75$; posttest $M = 29.00$, $SD = 4.53$; $t(11) = 2.52$, $p = .05$ (one-tailed), $d = 0.783$: Listening: pretest $M = 36.64$, $SD = 14.41$; posttest $M = 47.27$, $SD = 8.24$; $t(11) = 2.52$, $p = .05$ (one-tailed), $d = 0.811$: Reading: pretest $M = 29.00$, $SD = 12.93$; posttest $M = 38.36$, $SD = 13.35$; $t(11) = 3.15$, $p = .01$ (one-tailed), $d = 0.952$: Comprehension: pretest $M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.11$; posttest $M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.09$; $t(11) = 2.28$, $p = .05$ (one-tailed), $d = 0.751$: Composite: pretest $M = 2.09$, $SD = 0.83$; posttest $M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.78$; $t(11) = 2.28$, $p = .05$ (one-tailed), $d = 0.697$, and not rejected for test score improvement over time for the entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment score for Writing where: pretest $M = 18.27$, $SD = 5.44$; posttest $M = 21.09$, $SD = 3.47$; $t(11) = 1.46$, $p = .09$ (one-tailed), $d = 0.469$.

**Research Question #3**

Table 5 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment Speaking scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The third posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to compare end of high
school English Language Development Assessment Speaking scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 28.00, SD = 6.69$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 29.00, SD = 4.53$) where ($F(1, 23) = 0.18, p = .67$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Speaking score comparison.

Table 6 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment Listening scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The third posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school English Language Development Assessment Listening scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 45.36, SD = 8.70$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 47.27, SD = 8.24$) where ($F(1, 23) = 0.31, p = .58$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Listening score comparison.

Table 7 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment Reading scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The third posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school English Language Development Assessment Reading scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 37.57, SD = 10.15$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 38.36, SD = \quad$
13.35) where \((F(1, 23) = 0.03, p = .87)\). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Reading score comparison.

Table 8 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment Writing scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The third posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school English Language Development Assessment Writing scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills \((M = 23.00, SD = 2.85)\) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills \((M = 21.09, SD = 3.47)\) where \((F(1, 23) = 2.28, p = .15)\). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Writing score comparison.

Table 9 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment Comprehension scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The third posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school English Language Development Assessment Comprehension scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills \((M = 2.71, SD = 1.20)\) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills \((M = 3.00, SD = 1.09)\) where \((F(1, 23) = 0.37, p = .55)\). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Comprehension score comparison.
Table 10 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school English Language Development Assessment Composite scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The third posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school English Language Development Assessment Composite scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 2.71, SD = 0.82$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 2.73, SD = 0.78$) where ($F(1, 23) = 0.00, p = .97$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Composite score comparison.

**Research Question #4**

Table 11 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school English core content subject grade point average scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The fourth posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school English core content subject grade point average scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 1.34, SD = 0.85$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 1.88, SD = 1.05$) where ($F(1, 23) = 1.99, p = .17$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest English core content subject grade point average score comparison.

Table 12 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school Math core content subject grade point average scores of immigrant high school students with
no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The fourth posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school Math core content subject grade point average scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 1.66, SD = 1.02$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 1.72, SD = 1.02$) where ($F(1, 23) = 0.02, p = .88$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Math core content subject grade point average score comparison.

Table 13 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school Science core content subject grade point average scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The fourth posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school Science core content subject grade point average scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 1.42, SD = 0.94$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 1.60, SD = 0.68$) where ($F(1, 23) = 0.30, p = .59$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Science core content subject grade point average score comparison.

Table 14 displays results of analysis of variance posttest end of high school Social Studies core content subject grade point average scores of immigrant high school students with no English language skills and some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. The fourth posttest-posttest hypothesis was tested using ANOVA to compare end of high school Social Studies core
content subject grade point average scores ANOVA results for (A) immigrant high school students with no English language skills ($M = 1.38, SD = 0.76$) compared to (B) immigrant high school students with some English language skills ($M = 1.78, SD = 1.13$) where ($F(1, 23) = 1.09, p = .31$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for the posttest-posttest Social Studies core content subject grade point average score comparison.

**Research Question #5**

Table 15 displays results of chi-square ($\chi^2$) ending twelfth-grade core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements of immigrant high school students with no English language skills compared to immigrant high school students with some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program as measured by core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements by school year. The results of $\chi^2$ were displayed in Table 15 for ending. As seen in Table 15 the core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements was significantly different $\chi^2(3, N = 223) = 11.90, p = .008$ so the null hypothesis of no difference or congruence for the posttest compared to posttest ending high school core credit accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements by school year cumulative participation frequencies comparison was rejected.

**Research Question #6**

Table 16 displays results of chi-square ($\chi^2$) ending twelfth-grade engagement as measured by average absence frequencies of immigrant high school students with no English language skills compared to immigrant high school students with some English language skills enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program as measured by absence frequencies by school year. The results of $\chi^2$ were
displayed in Table 16. As seen in Table 16 the absence frequencies by school year comparison was significantly different $\chi^2(3, N = 124) = 8.37, p = .039$ so the null hypothesis of no difference or congruence for the posttest compared to posttest absence frequencies comparison was rejected.
Table 1

Demographic Information of Individual Students Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program With No English Language Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Entering Ninth-Grade Las Links Assessment Scores&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Scores Equal to Level 1 are congruent with no English Language skills.

Note. All students were in attendance in the research school district’s high school, ninth-grade through 12th-grade.
Table 2

Demographic Information of Individual Students Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program With Some English Language Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Entering Ninth-Grade Las Links Assessment Scores&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Monitor 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Monitor 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Monitor 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Equal to Monitor 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Scores Equal to Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Monitor 1 are congruent with some English Language skills.

<sup>Note</sup>. All students were in attendance in the research school district’s high school, ninth-grade through 12th-grade.
## Table 3

**Entering Ninth-Grade Pretest Las Links Assessment Scores Compared to the Ending High School Posttest English Language Development Assessment Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>$d$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>(8.53)</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>(6.60)</td>
<td>0.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>20.57</td>
<td>(12.08)</td>
<td>45.36</td>
<td>(8.70)</td>
<td>2.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>23.14</td>
<td>(7.11)</td>
<td>37.57</td>
<td>(10.15)</td>
<td>2.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>(5.78)</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>(2.85)</td>
<td>1.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>(0.60)</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>(1.20)</td>
<td>2.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>(0.60)</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>(0.82)</td>
<td>2.325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* A = Speaking; B = Listening; C = Reading; D = Writing; E = Comprehension; F = Composite.

**$p < .01$.  ***$p < .001$.**
Table 4

*Entering Ninth-Grade Pretest Las Links Assessment Scores Compared to the Ending High School Posttest English Language Development Assessment Scores of Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Pretest M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Posttest M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>25.18</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.783</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>36.64</td>
<td>14.41</td>
<td>47.27</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>38.36</td>
<td>13.35</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.01**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>18.27</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>21.09</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.469</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.09†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.751</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. A = Speaking; B = Listening; C = Reading; D = Writing; E = Comprehension; F = Composite.  
†ns.  *p < .05.  **p < .01.*
Table 5

Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School English Language Development Assessment Speaking Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>.67†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>774.00</td>
<td>33.65</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking Scores</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>28.00 (6.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>29.00 (4.53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills. †ns.
Table 6

*Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School English Language Development Assessment Listening Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>22.69</td>
<td>22.60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>.58†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1665.40</td>
<td>72.41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Scores</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>45.36 (8.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>47.27 (8.24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills. †ns.*
Table 7

Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School English Language Development Assessment Reading Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>.87*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3125.97</td>
<td>135.91</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>37.57 (10.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>38.36 (13.35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills.  *ns.
Table 8

Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School English Language Development Assessment Writing Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>22.45</td>
<td>22.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.15†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>226.91</td>
<td>9.87</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>23.00 (2.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>21.09 (3.47)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills. †ns.
Table 9

Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School English Language Development Assessment Comprehension Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>.55†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>30.86</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comprehension Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.71 (1.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00 (1.09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills. †ns.
Table 10  

Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School English Language Development Assessment Composite Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.97*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>15.04</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Scores</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2.71 (0.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.73 (0.78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills.  
*ns.*
Table 11

*Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School English Core Content Subject Grade Point Average Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.17+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

English GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.34 (0.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1.88 (1.05)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills.

+ns.
Table 12

*Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School Math Core Content Subject Grade Point Average Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.88†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>23.88</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Math GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.66 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1.72 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills. *†ns.
Table 13

Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School Science Core Content Subject Grade Point Average Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>16.04</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science GPA</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.42 (0.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1.60 (0.68)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills. *ns.
Table 14

*Results of Analysis of Variance Posttest End of High School Social Studies Core Content Subject Grade Point Average Scores of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills and Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Studies GPA  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.38 (0.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1.78 (1.13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.*  
A = Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills; B = Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills.  
*ns.
Table 15

Results of Chi-Square Ending Twelfth-Grade Core Credit Accrual Towards Filling Graduation Requirements of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills Compared to Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program as Measured by Core Credit Accrual Towards Filling Graduation Requirements by School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Credit Accrual Frequencies By Year</th>
<th>Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills</th>
<th>Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( N )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Observed verses expected cell frequencies used for calculation with \( df = 3 \) and a tabled value = 11.345 required to obtain an alpha level of .01, the threshold for statistical significance for this research question.

\(**p < .01\).
Table 16

Results of Chi-Square Ending Twelfth-Grade Engagement as Measured by Average Absence Frequencies of Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills Compared to Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills Enrolled in the Research High School’s English Language Acquisition Program as Measured by Absence Frequencies by School Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absence Frequencies By Year</th>
<th>Immigrant High School Students With No English Language Skills</th>
<th>Immigrant High School Students With Some English Language Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( N )</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Observed verses expected cell frequencies used for calculation with \( df = 3 \) and a tabled value = 11.345 required to obtain an alpha level of .01, the threshold for statistical significance for this research question.

*p < .05.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Discussion

The following conclusions may be drawn from the study for each of the six research questions.

Research Question #1 Conclusion

Overall, pretest-posttest results indicated all entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores were statistically significantly different in the direction of higher posttest mean achievement test scores for all domains measured Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Comprehension, and Composite. Comparing students’ posttest 12th-grade English Language Development Assessment scores with derived achievement scores for immigrant high school students who entered high school with no English language skills puts their performance in perspective. A 12th-grade Speaking posttest $M = 28.00$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 811$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 4 falling within the Advanced range. A 12th-grade Listening posttest $M = 45.36$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 725$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range. A 12th-grade Reading posttest $M = 37.57$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 640$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range. A 12th-grade Writing posttest $M = 23.00$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 706$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range. Finally, A 12th-
grade Composite posttest $M = 2.71$ converts to a Scaled Score = 818 and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range.

Finally, the higher Speaking (+10.07), the higher Listening (+24.79), the higher Reading (+14.43), the higher Writing (+11.07), the higher Comprehension (+1.42), and the higher Composite (+1.42) posttest scores observed in the six English Language Development Assessment domains represents a pattern of improvement that reflects the impact of participation in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participation in required high school academic coursework over time for these students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills.

**Research Question #2 Conclusion**

Overall, pretest-posttest results indicated entering ninth-grade pretest Las Links assessment scores compared to ending high school posttest English Language Development Assessment scores were statistically significantly different in the direction of higher posttest mean achievement test scores for five of the six domains measured Speaking, Listening, Reading, Comprehension, and Composite. However, the ending high school posttest Writing English Language Development Assessment score was not statistically significantly different in the direction of a higher posttest mean achievement test score. Comparing students’ posttest 12th-grade English Language Development Assessment scores with derived achievement scores for immigrant high school students who entered high school with some English language skills puts their performance in perspective. A 12th-grade Speaking posttest $M = 29.00$ converts to a Scaled Score = 844 and an English Language Proficiency Level of 4 falling within the Advanced range. A 12th-grade Listening posttest $M = 47.27$ converts to a Scaled Score = 778 and an English
Language Proficiency Level of 4 falling within the Advanced range. A 12th-grade Reading posttest $M = 38.36$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 649$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range. A 12th-grade Writing posttest $M = 21.09$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 686$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range. A 12th-grade Comprehension posttest $M = 3.00$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 759$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range. Finally, A 12th-grade Composite posttest $M = 2.73$ converts to a Scaled Score $= 773$ and an English Language Proficiency Level of 3 falling within the Intermediate range.

Finally, the higher Speaking (+3.82), the higher Listening (+10.63), the higher Reading (+9.36), the higher Writing (+2.82), the higher Comprehension (+0.64), and the higher Composite (+0.64) posttest scores observed in the six English Language Development Assessment domains represents a pattern of improvement that reflects the impact of participation in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participation in required high school academic coursework over time for these students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills.

**Research Question #3 Conclusion**

Overall, results indicated that students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills and participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participated in required high school academic coursework had statistically congruent 12th-grade posttest Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Comprehension, and Composite posttest scores observed in the six English Language Development
Assessment domain ANOVA comparisons. Compelling here is that students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills and participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participated in required high school academic coursework completed their four years of high school program participation functionally equivalent with Intermediate to Advanced level range scores. Here again this pattern of improvement reflects the impact of participation in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participation in required high school academic coursework over time for these students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills but most particularly those students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills.

**Research Question #4 Conclusion**

Overall, results indicated that students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills and participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participated in required high school academic coursework had statistically congruent 12th-grade English, Math, Science, and Social Studies posttest scores observed in the four Core Grade Point Average domain ANOVA comparisons. Students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills had a 12th-grade English posttest $M = 1.34$ that converts to a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills had a 12th-grade English posttest $M = 1.88$ that converts to a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Students who
entered ninth-grade with no English skills had a 12th-grade Math posttest $M = 1.66$ that converts to a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills had a 12th-grade Math posttest $M = 1.72$ that converts to a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills had a 12th-grade Science posttest $M = 1.42$ that converts to a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills had a 12th-grade Science posttest $M = 1.60$ that converts to a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Finally, students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills had a 12th-grade Social Studies posttest $M = 1.78$ that converts to a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Compelling here is that students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills and participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participated in required high school academic coursework completed their four years of high school program participation functionally equivalent with a classroom performance letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. Here again this pattern of improvement reflects the impact of participation in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and
participation in required high school academic coursework over time for these students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills but most particularly those students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills.

**Research Question #5 Conclusion**

Overall, results indicated that students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills and participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participated in required high school academic coursework had statistically different graduation requirements as measured by Core Credit Accrual towards fulfilling graduation requirements observed in four academic years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010. Core credit accrual frequencies and percentages by years for students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills were 2006-2007 frequency = 12 (11%), 2007-2008 frequency = 11 (10%), 2008-2009 frequency = 53 (49%), and 2009-2010 frequency = 32 (30%). Core credit accrual frequencies and percentages by years for students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills were 2006-2007 frequency = 22 (19%), 2007-2008 frequency = 25 (22%), 2008-2009 frequency = 35 (30%), and 2009-2010 frequency = 33 (29%). Data variance is observed for the students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills whose core credit accrual frequencies start low during their ninth-grade and 10th-grade school years, improve sharply during their 11th-grade school year becoming normative during their 12th-grade year. However, students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills maintained steady and consistent core credit accrual frequencies throughout their four years of high school. Again this pattern of credit accrual improvement reflects the impact of participation in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participation in required high school academic coursework.
over time for these students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills but most particularly those students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills.

Research Question #6 Conclusion

Overall, results indicated that students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills and participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participated in required high school academic coursework had statistically different absence frequencies observed in four academic years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010. Absence frequencies and percentages by years for students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills were 2006-2007 frequency = 14 (11%), 2007-2008 frequency = 16 (10%), 2008-2009 frequency = 18 (49%), and 2009-2010 frequency = 30 (30%). Absence frequencies and percentages by years for students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills were 2006-2007 frequency = 6 (19%), 2007-2008 frequency = 14 (22%), 2008-2009 frequency = 18 (30%), and 2009-2010 frequency = 8 (29%). Data variance is observed for the students who entered ninth-grade with no English skills whose absence frequencies increased every school year. Students who entered ninth-grade with some English skills had lower absence frequencies observed during the ninth-grade and 12th-grade school years with absence frequencies that were congruent with their peers who began high school with no English skills during their 10th-grade and 11th-grade school years. This pattern of absence frequencies represents a concern for students’ who cannot afford to miss days of school if they are to succeed academically but who may have competing demands elsewhere at home and work.
Discussion

Immigrant students with no English language skills and some English language skills clearly benefitted from participation in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program. In this study, both groups of students completed the English Language Development Assessment posttest and high school academic requirements with a statistically significant improvement in their English Language Development Assessment Speaking, Reading, Listening, Comprehension, and Composite score. Students entering the research high school with no English language skills also completed the English Language Development Assessment posttest and high school academic requirements with a statistically significant improvement in their English Language Development Assessment Writing score. However, students entering the research high school with some English language skills completed the English Language Development Assessment posttest and high school academic requirements with improvement in their English Language Development Assessment Writing score, but this gain was not statistically significant.

There was not a statistically significant difference in the posttest end of high school core content subject grade point average scores for English, Math, Science, and Social Studies of immigrant high school students with no English Language skills compared to immigrant high school students with some English language skills who were enrolled in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and completed the high school academic requirements. Core content subject GPA improvements in both groups reflects the effectiveness of the research high schools English Language Acquisition program, as well as the teaching strategies, interventions, curriculum, professional development and methodologies of the research high school, and school district. Particularly noteworthy here is that students who
entered ninth-grade with no English language skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills and participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program required high school academic coursework completed their high school graduation requirements with a functionally equivalent grade point average of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. The evident success of the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program raises a new and pressing challenge to increase the academic achievement of students entering high school with no English language skills and some English language skills to improve their ending core content subject GPA from a letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range to a letter grade of C falling within the satisfactory range.

There was a statistically significant difference between students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills, participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and completed required high school academic coursework towards fulfilling graduation requirements observed in four academic years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010. The data indicate students entering the research high school with no English language skills had much slower core credit accrual frequencies during their ninth and 10th-grade school years, experienced a sharp increase in core credit accrual frequencies during their 11th-grade school year, and realized normative core credit accrual frequencies during their 12th-grade year. Students who entered the research high school with some English language skills maintained steady and consistent core credit accrual frequencies throughout their four years of high school. This consistent pattern of improvement for both groups of students is a reflection of the efficacy of the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and participation in
required high school academic coursework. Most indicative of the effectiveness of the program is the evidence of core credit accrual frequencies in students entering the research high school with no English language skills. Although, they start more slowly than students entering with some English language skills, their credit accrual frequencies increase each year. In fact, in the 11th grade, the credit accrual frequency of students entering the research high school with no English language skills was 19% greater than the credit accrual frequency of students entering high school with some English language skills.

The absence frequencies between students who entered ninth-grade with no English language skills compared to students who entered ninth-grade with some English language skills, participated in the research high school’s English Language Acquisition program and completed required high school academic coursework towards fulfilling graduation requirements observed in four academic years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 were statistically different. Students who entered ninth-grade, with no English skills, had a disturbing increase in absence frequencies throughout their high school careers. Students entering the research high school with some English skills had lower absence frequencies during their ninth-grade and twelfth-grade school years. 10th-grade and 11th-grade absence frequencies for students who entered high school with some English language skills were congruent with their peers who entered high school with no English language skills. This data represents an area of concern. Attendance is closely linked to academic achievement. Excessive absences in both groups of students can be a significant factor in their classroom performance core credit subject letter grade of D falling within the passing but needs improvement range. This pattern represents a possible obstacle for increased academic achievement in both groups who enter high school at a linguistic disadvantage, and cannot afford to miss any school days. In addition, the high absence
frequencies in both groups may be a reflection of the competing demands of home and work experienced by many immigrant students. The research high school will need to assertively seek to ameliorate this trend and educate both families and students in the importance of daily attendance and the significant positive benefits derived from an academic focus and mindset.

**Implications for practice.** The demographic profile of the research school district’s community is rapidly changing. Population growth, the life-blood of any community, is being realized through an influx of first generation immigrants and their descendants. The socio-economic and civic vitality of our communities is inexorably tied to the wellbeing of the fastest growing segment of our population, our immigrant and minority youth. The context of reception embedded within our communities, state, and governmental organizations, and institutions will have a positive, neutral, or negative impact on the outcomes for immigrants, and their ease of transition to a new life in a new country (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Educators must recognize and adjust for the needs of a new population of students. Public schools’ enjoy a unique and privileged position in the life of immigrants. It is frequently within the schoolhouse doors that immigrant families have their first exposure to life in their new land (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, 2000). It is incumbent upon everyone privileged to work with children in the school setting to understand the significant negative impact being labeled as an outsider, or the other has on the academic achievement, engagement, self-esteem, goals, aspiration, and motivation (Fernandez-Kelly & Schaufller, 1996; Rumbaut, 1994; Waters, 1996; Waters, 1997). It is no longer sufficient to assume current educational pedagogy will reach the new population of students in our classrooms. Every school and school district must rethink their priorities and embrace a new educational framework reflective of a new reality, a new dimension, and a new level of cultural proficiency. Schools must adopt a philosophy of doing whatever it takes to
forever relegate the theoretical paradigm of the *rainbow underclass* to the dusty corners of a seldom-donned reference book (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Students entering our public schools with no English language skills and some English language skills are already starting their educational journey at a linguistic disadvantage. Schools must aggressively pursue every opportunity to educate both students and families on the importance of daily attendance, the opportunities available to high school graduates, and the efficacy of education to improve the life chances and future outcomes for all children (Orfield, 2002). Academic success and English language acquisition are two of the measures of successful adaptation by immigrant students, and both are strongly correlated with future social stability and economic ascent (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The interaction between school and student will determine much of what is the future. It is not enough for schools to maintain the status quo. Educators cannot feel comfortable in the knowledge that we have established programs that help immigrant students’ graduate from high school with a letter grade of D falling into the passing but needs improvement category. This is not the standard that will allow our nation to compete in the global economy of the 21st century. Immigrants come to the United States eager to experience all that this great land has to offer. They have dreams and ambitions for a better life than they left behind (Rumbaut, 1994). Educators can be the key to help unlock the vast human capital within our immigrant children, but this will only happen if we commit to the challenge. Immigrant children experience an increased risk factor of poverty, interrupted school history, and the societal and institutional stressors inherent with racism and discrimination that have a significant negative impact on their motivation and academic achievement (Williams et al., 2003). Schools cannot be expected to take on the weight of the world and solve all of our societal ills. However, educators are on the front line of the battle for the hearts and minds of
our children, and to preserve, protect, and further the economic health and civic clarity of our nation. If the United States is to continue as a world leader we must aggressively embrace the call to educate all of our students to realize their fullest potential, and not be satisfied that we have achieved our goals when we graduate students will a letter grade of D.

The decline in motivation, grade point average, and engagement of students the longer time they spend within the educational system is an indictment all of society must bear with shame (Fredricks et al., 2004; Steinberg et al., 1996; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). When new immigrants have better educational outcomes than second-generation immigrants it is time for educators to take a long and hard look at our culpability in these statistics (Hernandez & Charney, 1998). If what we are doing is not producing the results we seek, it is time to shake open the doors and belfry’s of the schoolhouse and let in some fresh air. Research suggests that immigrant youth experience a pervasive sense of discrimination from peers, teachers, and neighbors that is negatively correlated with educational achievement (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). Educators must address the issues of institutional racism and discrimination that hides as a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Cultural proficiency embedded in the culture, climate, and curricula of education should become a normative part of the rigor, relevance, and relationships of learning (Gates Foundation, 2006).

The research clearly supports the efficacy of familial engagement as a factor for increased academic achievement. Schools must embrace familial engagement but also commit to making this more than a token body count at a parent night. Not a minute of educational time can be lost in less than optimal endeavors. Only familial engagement that is established as research based best practices and has a direct connection to increased levels of academic achievement is warranted. In addition, the devastating effects of dissonant acculturation can be
ameliorated by offering sufficient adult ESL classes and community supports for adaptation and acculturation (Gordon, 1971; Rumbaut, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997). Schools must develop effective monitoring policies to track student achievement and intervene early, as soon as an issue is identified. Early identification of student’s as young as kindergarten can detect a negative pattern of academic struggle that persists throughout their academic career (Cairns et al., 1989; Sinner & Barnes, 1991). The earlier intervention is started, the more robust the outcome. This extends to offering preschool programs specifically targeted at the immigrant and lower SES populations. There are already programs such as head start and other federally funded opportunities available to this segment of the population. However, the capacity of these programs falls well short of the need. Although we have ample research that supports the positive benefits of early intervention to narrow the kindergarten achievement gap, we have yet to muster the sense of urgency to extend quality preschool to all children in need.

Sergiovani’s (1994) research clarified for educators the critically important role relationships have to academic success. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty’s (2005) research furthered this notion by identifying student-level factors such as: (a) home environment, (b) educational history, (c) background knowledge, and (d) educational expectations as being directly related to educational attainment. We know the research; we now must implement this into practice. If relationships are important and learning is relational, time, effort, and resources must be allocated to develop this part of the learning experience. The relationship between student and teacher, and student and other adult is more significant to increased levels of academic achievement than any other factor, including the quality of classroom instruction (Lucas et al., 1990). Schools need to make this a priority. The time has come, and the research is painfully clear, there can be no optimized learning without relationship. Teachers,
administrators, and all educational stakeholders need to include relationship into their evaluative rubrics for teaching and learning. Relationship must be incorporated into every schools culture and climate school improvement goals, and every teacher and administrator’s performance evaluation. In addition, central office administrators, principals, and teachers are charged with ensuring the curriculum is challenging, content is rigorous, and is relevant to the student’s life. If upon review of the curriculum the three R’s are not found, it is incumbent upon the school to consider a new curriculum adoption that better meets the needs of rigor, relevance, and relationship.

Within the theoretical framework of relationship falls the simple, yet highly effective practice of holding high expectations for students. Parents often are unaware of the power high expectations have in driving student achievement. This simple concept must be introduced, clarified, and supported by schools to parents and teachers if needed. Furthermore, there is a basic law of nature that suggests you cannot teach and pass on that which you do not know or understand. Immigrant parents frequently do not have a clear understanding of the U.S. school system based upon their own limited educational experiences in their country of origin. Schools have an obligation to educate parents through explicit training on how to become strong advocates for their children and navigate the oft times complex and obscure educational labyrinth (Lucas, 1997). Learning is not limited to the exchange of information between the educational professional and parent. Professional development must be structured so that it is embedded in practice, relevant and ongoing to produce transformative teaching and instruction (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The teaching of students with no English language skills and some English language skills is challenging and requires specific skills and knowledge of the importance of
incorporating language targets into every content lesson and fully utilizing formative assessments to inform instructional decisions (Echevarria et al., 2003; Echevarria et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2001). Through strong school leadership seemingly hopeless deficits in academic achievement can be overcome (Fullan, 1993; Marzano et al., 1995; Sergiovani, 1994; Weiss, 2005). Academic excellence can be realized in the highest needs schools populated with students from a culture of poverty, minority status, and learning English as a second language. School leaders who believe that the quality of learning is in direct proportion to the expectations for students will enjoy the greatest academic gains (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Lee, Bryk, & Smithy, 1993). Academic rebirth does not happen in a vacuum without a teacher of excellence present. The art and science of teaching is grounded in the teacher-student relationship that, when effective, can forever change the life and academic trajectory of a child (Hattie, 2009). As such, teachers must be encouraged to take students to higher levels of cognition through analysis, evaluation, reasoning, judgment, and creative thinking (Brookhart, 2010). Through a process of synthesis and creation, scholars have identified instructional strategies that have a robust relationship with teaching and learning (Marzano, 1998). While every strategy identified will not work with every student, it is critical that teachers have a clear understanding of the research and a familiarity with various strategies. Through utilization of a deep and complete toolkit, educators will have a better chance of positively impacting each student’s learning (Marzano, 1998; Marzano et al., 2001).

Effective teaching does not happen by chance. If the goal is to have students who begin their educational careers with no English language skills and some English language skills finish high school at a proficient level then teachers must utilize a multiplicity of instructional strategies appropriate for the student. Cooperative learning, wait time, and backward design are
instructional strategies supported by research and efficacious to the academic achievement of immigrant students (Echevarria et al., 2008; Fagan et al., 1981; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Marzano et al., 2001; Rowe, 1969; Tobin, 1987; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). The quality of classroom instruction has a significant impact on student achievement (Echevarria et al., 2006). Teachers who received training in the SIOP model and utilize the specific strategies associated with this have student achievement score results significantly higher than teachers who are not trained in the SIOP model. Thus, logic dictates and research supports, training teachers in the SIOP model is a sound strategy to positively impact student learning. Embedded within SIOP and central to high quality teaching, is the concept of building background knowledge. The two-fold challenge facing English language learners of learning a new language as well as unfamiliar content can be mitigated when teachers access and build students background knowledge (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004). Teachers who are intentional about building background knowledge and filling gaps when identified equip their students with the tools to not only succeed in school, but to excel in life as the depth and breadth of an individuals’ background knowledge is positively correlated to their socio-economic statues in later life (Sticht, Hofstetter, & Hofstetter, 1997).

Finally, if educators are to pass on the golden key of knowledge and the American Dream to immigrant students they will do so through the development of vocabulary (Becker, 1977; Marzano, 2004; Echevarria et al., 2003). Without vocabulary there can be no access to knowledge. The gaping vocabulary differential of incoming kindergarten students is the achievement gap which so tenaciously grips our student’s throughout their school careers (Nagy & Herman, 1987). Educators know and understand the value of vocabulary development through strong and systematic direct vocabulary instruction (Allen, 1999). It is high time to
embed vocabulary instruction into all content lessons. While this concept is important for all students, it is critical for students learning English. Lastly, we are in the business of educating children to meet the challenges and needs of the 21st century. Manufacturing and the traditional occupations of yester year will be in short supply when our students are ready to enter the working world. More than the knowledge of how to screw in a bolt or tighten a lug nut, students positioned to compete and succeed in the new world must have the skills to solve complex problems, think creatively, and communicate effectively (Bransford & Stein, 1984). With these understandings and considerations in mind, educators have a high calling to reach beyond the status quo and become transformational leaders of learning eager to connect the disparate threads of student, family, community, and world into a completed fabric knit around the theoretical framework of lifelong learning and educational excellence.

**Implications for policy.** The norm and baseline for every educator must be the passion and deep conviction for every student, every day, to achieve success through the delivery of high quality curriculum to achieve their fullest potential. Time is too short and our student’s have too many needs to waste even one moment of learning time. The urgency is great and the time is now. If we fail to restructure the educational paradigm to meet the needs of our current demographic we will not only lose a future generation, we will lose the legacy of excellence we enjoy as a nation. It is not sufficient to graduate students from high school, although that is a good goal. It is not sufficient to ensure second language learners are able to read and write in English, although that is needed. We are called to educate and equip students to compete and succeed in the global economy with 21st century skills. Educators will fall short if we do not adopt a new mindset to align with the new century. To overcome the challenges facing educators today will require the utilization of a multiplicity of skills and tools. Relationships,
rigorous and relevant curriculum, teacher quality, training and professional development, familial engagement and education, selective acculturation, research based teaching strategies, passion, community engagement and partnerships, are but a few of the ongoing strategies that must become ubiquitous in our daily dialogue. Educators and school districts cannot single handedly change the world. We have not become the super heroes for a sinking system. However, by default we do stand at the front lines of the battle. We must be willing to embrace our role as central to systemic and community wide change. If we fall back into the default position of this is not my responsibility, if we circle the wagons and say we will not engage in more than the traditional teaching role, we will not only abdicate our responsibility to students, we will effectively throw the future of our nation away.

**Implications for further research.** The results of this study support the efficacy of the English Language Acquisition program and the academic high school course work completed by students entering the research high school with no English language skills and some English language skills. Of greatest significance is the progress made by students entering with no English language skills. Despite beginning high school at a significant linguistic disadvantage, their posttest English Language Development Scores and Core content subject GPA were functionally equivalent with students entering the research high school with some English language skills. This is a significant achievement and should be recognized as such. This study supports the teaching and learning foci and strategies utilized by the English Language Acquisition department, the research high school, and the school district in teaching students enrolled in the research high school and served through the English Language Acquisition program. However, questions and areas of concern remain regarding how to improve on the current level of student achievement. This research study identified excessive absences as a
disturbing trend in students entering the research high school with no English language skills. Each year of attendance for this group was marked by an increased number of student absences. Students entering the research high school with some English language skills reflected absence frequencies congruent with their peers entering the research high school with no English language skills in the 10th and 11th grades. It is very difficult to increase academic achievement when students are not present. It is critical when seeking to ameliorate a deficit, be it linguistic or academic, that the student is fully engaged and invested in their education. It is equally critical when seeking to ameliorate a deficit, be it linguistic or academic, that the student is fully supported in their efforts, academic engagement, and educational investment by their family.

The research is clear on the importance of family engagement and support to the academic success of students. There is an extensive body of research that supports the efficacy of family engagement and the theoretical framework enjoys wide support, if not implementation. There is a growing, albeit tenuous nod in educational circles of the need to move away from thinking family and community engagement is equated with a head count at pizza night. Rather, effective engagement is beginning to be linked with research, data, school improvement processes, and educational outcomes. However, missing from the research are definitive studies that look expressly at how to connect with immigrant families coming to this country with a very limited educational background. A very salient question for the research school district and other districts throughout the country is how can school districts and other institutions reach immigrant families and parents to build effective partnerships to increase student achievement? Anecdotally, this appears to be a simple question, with a simple answer. School districts reach out to parents through a multiplicity of avenues including, school conferences, back to school nights, connect ed messages, curriculum focused events, and newsletters. These methods have
had success and served schools, families, and students well. However, today there is a new question for a new time. How can we effectively engage parents who may have no connection with education? How can we bridge the chasm created by the stigma of illegal status and the death knell to motivation this engenders? How can we seek to communicate with families about the transformative power of education when their focus is on day to day survival? How can we eliminate the barriers or fear and distrust that discrimination and racism engender?

Exploring these questions is not an aimless task. Educators stand at the brink of a chasm that is wide and deep, filled with squandered human capital, lost motivation, and failed potential. Many families forsake the long-term benefits of education for the immediate needs of food, shelter, and family preservation. The very real possibility of creating a permanent rainbow underclass is not a theoretical whimsy. It is a distinct possibility if educators do not address current reality. Research is desperately needed to learn what we do not know; how can we fully engage the immigrant population to positively impact academic achievement and future life chances? Specific further research conducted in immigrant communities exploring the efficacy of a home visit program with families and teachers, parental leadership initiative, and grass roots leadership development within targeted immigrant communities is a good beginning. Pre and posttest parental attitudes and student achievement should be closely measured with naturally formed control and experimental groups. Additional longitudinal research on teacher attitudes and student achievement is valuable to track the long term benefits derived from the various programs. Education has the power to change lives and educators are in the unique and privileged position of holding the golden key to the American dream for many who are new to this land. Learning is relational and education
is best taught from a relationship of trust and mutual understanding. Even one student who does not reach their full potential is a human tragedy. The continued saga of unmet dreams and unfulfilled aspirations must find an ending place and can only end in the schoolhouse. We have a moral and professional obligation to determine through research and careful analysis how to bring our immigrant students and families into a quid pro quo relationship with the world of academia--the world through which their hopes, aspirations, dreams and talents may be realized.
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