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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS

The Cultural Growth Mindset of Elementary School Principals and their Influence on the
Academic Achievement of Hispanic English Learners

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

Jane Torres Clark

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2020

The Dissertation of Jane Torres Clark is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for

publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2020

Dedication

This work is dedicated to …

A Dios, a El sea la Gloria

A Mami, con tu amor tan tierno nos leías de la Biblia y orabas por nosotros.
Our first teacher, you would gather us and read to us as we sat at your feet.
A Papi, a champion.
Gladys and Inés, my beloved older sisters, thank you for paving the way for all of us.
Ruth, Abby, Lidia, Lisa,
your text messages mean the world to me.

Dan, for your love and commitment. Thank you for loving God, for being my best friend, an amazing Dad and Grandpa.
To my sons, Josiah and Jonathan, my pride and joy.
To Jaime, treasure from God, for sharing your kind wisdom, always.
Eliana Joy, Jaxsen, Elijah, my sweet blessings from God.

Thank You

Dr. Janet H. Chrispeels
for sharing your wise knowledge with me and for believing in my work.
You didn't have to do it, but you did.
I am eternally grateful.

My Dissertation Committee
Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, Chair, for contributing to my learning throughout my journey.
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Dr. Karen Seashore Louis

Monica Ruiz and Drew Schwartz, for your encouragement throughout these three years.

The teachers who piloted the survey and left your imprint on this research.

Rio Grande Elementary School District

Dr. Elena Mariscal and the teachers from Edmonton Elementary

Samuel Enero and the teachers from Galveston Hill School

For letting me tell your stories.

Dr. Candace Forbes Bright and Dr. Tessa Rivera
for your amazing suggestions and support of this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

VITA

Educational Degrees

2020   University of California San Diego
        California State University, San Marcos, Joint Doctoral Program
        Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

2002   Point Loma Nazarene University
        Master of Arts, Education, Teaching & Technology

1996   San Diego Christian College
        Bachelor of Science, Business Administration

Credentials

2007   Administrative Services Credential

2002   Multiple Subject Teaching Credential – BCLAD / Business

Professional Experience

2019-Present   Point Loma Nazarene University, School of Education, Adjunct Professor

        Administrative Positions

        Principal, Special Assignment, Chula Vista Elementary School District
        (2017-2018)
        Associate Principal, Harborside Elementary, Chula Vista Elementary School District
        (2016-2017)
        Principal, Loma Verde Elementary, Chula Vista Elementary School District
        (2009-2016)
        Associate Principal, Harborside Elementary, Chula Vista Elementary School District
        (2007-2009)

        Teaching Positions

        Valley Vista Elementary, Grade 6, Chula Vista Elementary School District
        Kempton Elementary, Grades K, 1, 2, La Mesa-Spring Valley School District
        Feaster Edison Charter, Spanish, English Language Development, Grade 3

Awards

2008   Superintendent Recognition Award, Chula Vista Elementary School District
2005   Biliteracy Award, San Diego County Office of Education
2005   Teacher of the Year, La Mesa Spring Valley School District

Publications

Clark, J. (2001). *A Correlation Between the ELD and ELA Standards*. Unpublished master's thesis. Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Cultural Growth Mindset of Elementary School Principals and their Influence on the
Academic Achievement of Hispanic English Learners

by

Jane Torres Clark

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California San Diego, 2020
California State University San Marcos, 2020

Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, Chair

A growing population, Hispanic English learners enrolling in our schools are struggling academically. Learning gaps begin to surface for Hispanic English learners at the elementary level (Gandara, 2012; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Grasparil & Hernandez, 2015, Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Increasing the level of academic success of Hispanic English learners is a national imperative. The role of the principal has been linked to student success since, through their beliefs and behaviors, principals construct conditions in their schools that shape student learning (Chrispeels, 1992; Marks & Printy, 2003; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010).

Grounded in a strengths-based theoretical construct— cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership— this case study was organized

under a mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design to answer one overarching question and two sub-questions. Two elementary school principals from schools with high populations of English learners were studied. This study explores teacher perceptions of principal behaviors, and principal leadership practices with teachers directly influencing the academic performance of Hispanic English learners. Phase One included an analysis of quantitative results from a survey administered to 35 teachers, 19 from one school, and 16 from the other. In Phase Two, qualitative data contributed to the research as a narrative unfolding through the interviews and observations of the principal participants, a teacher focus group at one school, and a school counselor at the other. Significant themes emanating from this case study were principals' high learning expectations and a strong belief in students' ability to succeed. Students' first language was considered an asset and students' diverse backgrounds were valued. In addition to strong parental involvement, student emotional well-being was a priority. Principals supported teacher collaboration and demonstrated high trust in teachers' ability to impact the learning of Hispanic English learners. Collection and analysis of key student data was a principal practice. Integration and interweaving of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership were essential lenses to fully understand the achievement gains made by the students. The implications this case study presents for educational research, policy, equity, and social justice are discussed. Limitations of the study are addressed.

Keywords: achievement gap, cultural growth mindset, effective schools, elementary schools, equity, learning, opportunity gap, positive school leadership, strength-based instructional leadership, Hispanic English learners, principals, school leadership, social justice.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

"Latinos in the Americas have always placed a high value upon education as a means of economic, political, social, and upward mobility." -Victoria-María MacDonald (2010)

Introduction

The United States (U.S.) is a nation with a rich history attracting people of diverse races and ethnic backgrounds and continues to draw immigrants seeking to settle in the country. As of 2018, 121,520,180 (13.7%) of the population was foreign-born (data.census.gov). Of the total population, 27% were American-born children of immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). Of students attending schools during the 2014-2015 school year, 4.8 million were designated as English learners (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Although languages spoken by English learners are diverse, Spanish is the most common language spoken (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

English learners are gifted with possibilities, demonstrating a range of learning and language experiences, yet accompanied by challenges as they set foot in the classroom. Added to the challenge is the academic progress English learners are experiencing in our schools (Gandara, 2010; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). A student is designated as an English learner when a home language survey completed by parents or guardians shows the language spoken in the home is other than English (California Department of Education). These are learners in grades kindergarten to twelve who do not demonstrate proficiency in English under the domains of listening, reading comprehension, speaking and writing, do not meet grade-specific achievement standards, and who have not been able to accomplish grade-appropriate achievement levels within their grade (California Department of Education). English learners fall within certain classifications, dependent on the length of residence, acquisition of the English language, and success in meeting English

proficiency (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; California Department of Education, 2018). The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, recognizes the changing dynamics in U.S. schools and the growing numbers of English learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This increasing challenge in U.S. schools presents educators with the task of providing English learners with proper educational experiences (Hopkins, Thompson, Linquanti, Hakuta, & August, 2013; Padrón & Waxman, 2016; Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls, & Cumiskey, 2010), and merits a closer examination of the role of principals in promoting the success of English learners.

Background

The changing demographic landscape in American schools and classrooms (Migration Information Service, 2018) reflects a fast growing Hispanic population in the United States, from 9.6 million in 1970 to a record high of 58.9 million in 2017, and is projected to grow to 111 million by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Many Hispanic English learners do not speak English at home (Contreras, 2011). Emerging from Spanish-speaking countries for reasons exclusive to, and in some cases shared by each Hispanic group, these students are culturally diverse (Gutiérrez, Online 2017; Rumbaut, 2006).

In California, the state with the highest number of English learners, numbering at 1,271,150 or 20% of the student population, 82.19% of English Learners are Spanish speakers (California Department of Education, 2018). Eighty percent of English learners share a Mexican heritage. Within the remaining 20%, Hispanic children from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Peru, Honduras, and Spain complete the list. Included in this number of English learners, 20% are Brazilian students who speak Portuguese (The Majority Report, 2017). Spanish speaking English Learners, representing 77.1% of the student population in the U.S. (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2017), are at risk academically (Contreras, 2011; Genesee et al., 2005; Halle, Hair, Wandner, Mcnamara, & Chien, 2012; Ruiz Soto et al., 2015).

To emphasize, two invisible groups of English learners lie beneath the surface of the Hispanic English learner student population. Students are designated "At Risk" of becoming Long Term English learners (LTEL) when not meeting specific academic criteria. Long Term English Learners are students enrolled in the United States school system for six years or more who have not attained academic levels as evidenced by federal and state-mandated assessments (California Department of Education, 2018; Olsen, 2010).[1] Concern for English learners who remain as LTELs throughout their educational trajectory, *e.g.*, long-term English learners who do not qualify to be reclassified as fluent English learners, is also alarming since these students become the lowest performing students continuing to fall further behind as they progress toward middle and high school (Grubb, 2012; Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012; Olsen, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Hispanic English learners continue to lag far below their English-only peers in reading, mathematics, and science attainment (Gandara, 2010; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). The long national history of this persistent struggle and the profound effects on Hispanic English learners as they traverse the educational system from the elementary grades to middle and high school is cause for concern, an injustice, and a severe issue of educational inequality in our nation. With the enactment of education legislation, funding, and programs developed to support and increase the learning experiences of English

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[1] To better understand English learner achievement in the state of California, the definition for "Current ELs" refers to all students who were classified by the state as ELs. Within this category are 1) all students classified by the state as ELs within a given year, 2) ELs who have been in the U.S. less than 1 year, and 3) long term ELs, who have been classified as ELs and remain as ELs for 6 or more years. Students who are reclassified fluent-English proficient (RFEP) are students who met the criteria for language proficiency (California Department of Education, 2020).

learners, it seems logical these outcomes would result in resolving the achievement performance for Hispanic English learners, yet this most urgent problem persists.

As an illustration, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a congressionally mandated project under the National Center for Education Statistics, administers a standard assessment in every state to fourth, eighth, and twelfth-grade students. Reading and mathematics are assessed every two years; science and writing are assessed every four years. Results show historically Hispanics have fallen below their English-only counterparts. To be sure, the literature on student achievement reminds us that the Hispanic English learner opportunity gap continues to widen (Olsen, 2010). In 2019, the underachievement of English learners and Hispanic students persisted nationwide in reading, mathematics, and science, perpetuating the trend that has existed since 1969 (NAEP Report Card, 2020). Several decades of research (Baker et al., 2012; Brown, 2015; Callahan, 2005; Gandara & Orfield, 2010; Garcia, 2015; Genesee et al., 2005; Olsen, 2010; Roscigno,Vélez & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2001) has produced a significant volume of literature addressing the English learner opportunity gap and the significant challenges facing English learners. These studies suggest English learners have been subjected to limited opportunities impeding their academic success.

The politically contested debate surrounding the academic progress of English learners ascribes the problem to social influences (Garcia, 2015; Keiffer, 2008), the intentional segregation that occurs in educational systems (Ryabov & Van Hook, 2007), and the lack of quality education provided to English learners (MacDonald, 2011; Zamudio et al., 2011), attending high minority, high poverty, and highly segregated schools (Jang, McDougall, Pollon, Herbert, & Russell, 2008; Ryabov & Van Hook, 2007). As a matter of national importance and concern for social justice and equity, the missed learning opportunities experienced by Hispanic English learners warrants a reexamination of this unrelenting problem through the lens of school

leadership practices. Taking a closer look at possible factors to this problem within the context of school leadership adds to the discourse leading to a greater understanding of the complex and dynamic achievement patterns of Hispanic English learners. This line of inquiry addresses the need for fundamental change toward favorable academic results for Hispanic English learners.

As a leader of learning (Fullan, 2014), the school principal stands in a strategic position to influence and build a school culture that embraces the worth Hispanic English learners bring to school. School principals can exercise personal influence, necessitating regulation of purpose and thought, drive and inspiration, in modifying the conditions of the environment (Bandura, 2012). Through their actions, principals inspire learning for all students when they believe in, invest time, and focus on high expectations for student learning (Chrispeels, 1992).

Less is known about how principals influence the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners within the school setting. Additionally, little research considers and analyzes how school principals model their leadership beliefs and set up deliberate managerial practices and actions to create conditions in their schools that influence the achievement of Hispanic English learners. Examining the perceptions, views, actions, and behaviors of principals will lead to actionable knowledge contributing to the body of study on principal leadership and the effects of this role on the academic advancement of Hispanic English learners.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to determine in what ways principal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, at the elementary school level, have a direct influence on the learning opportunities and achievement of Hispanic English learners, and how these characteristics are linked to the achievement of Hispanic English learners. The following research questions provide a deeper understanding of principal attitudes and behaviors with teachers that support English language learners from the perspective of principals and teachers. The overarching question for this study

5

is: How do the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership illuminate principals' ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners? This research question includes two sub-questions:

1) How do elementary school principals' perceptions, practices, and behaviors influence the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

2) How do teachers describe the principal's leadership to influence learning opportunities for Hispanic English learners?

Although these questions appear in a particular order, they are considered simultaneously throughout the study.

In this mixed-methods case study, I define the terms "perceptions," "practices," and "behaviors" as:

- **Perceptions**: the intuitive thinking, discernment, and cultural understanding of a principal that positively influence the school community

- **Practices**: the transparent decisions of the leader that motivate the achievement of the school community

- **Behaviors**: principal actions and attitudes that unite members of the school community to rally around the vision of the school

Answers to the research questions lie in unveiling the positive features of school administrators who create learning conditions that promote high achievement in schools where Hispanic English learners thrive academically. This inquiry highlights vital qualities of school principals that distinguish and shape their leadership practices in schools with high populations of Hispanic English learners.

Methods Overview

The research proposition guiding the design and focus of this study suggests elementary school principals who embrace the challenges of an open system, leading their schools with a cultural growth mindset, a positive leadership outlook, coupled with a deep understanding of effective instruction for English learners, are able to meaningfully influence the learning and progress of Hispanic English learners. This study is positioned and focused on the direct influence school principals exert at the elementary school level that stimulates learning opportunities, and achievement for Hispanic English learners. The study examines the cultural growth mindset of principals, their perceptions, and behaviors as leaders of schools with high populations of Hispanic English learners. This case study is guided by a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) framed by a mixed methodological lens of quantitative and qualitative data collection analysis and results that will be used to explain the observed phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

This inquiry unfolds in two phases. In Phase One, data collection focuses on the pattern of relationships between principals and teachers, the formalized administrative practices of principals, and teachers' perceptions of principal leadership within two elementary schools in one school district in Southern California. Additionally, factors contributing to the academic progress of Hispanic English learners are examined. Survey data from 35 teachers within the two schools were gathered. In Phase Two, interviews of the principals were conducted to explore the results of the survey data in-depth through a qualitative case study analysis. In the qualitative phase, multiple sources of data (*e.g.,* document analysis of school operations) from distinct participant groups (*e.g.,* teachers) provided the contextual explanation that motivated in-depth results from the survey data. Examining major themes emanating from participants' survey responses was equally relevant.

Significance of the Study

This study follows in the tradition of Effective Schools Research in trying to identify "school effectiveness" and in this case, specifically, what principals do that lead to greater achievement gains for English learners. Identifying particular beliefs, and actions of principals that make a difference for Hispanic English learners will fill a gap in the literature that could potentially help address a persistent and pressing educational issue. The results of this case study contribute to the larger field of education in several ways. First, the persistent underachievement of Hispanic English learners is analyzed through the role of the school principal, bringing awareness to the importance of examining patterns and practices of school principals that motivate the achievement of Hispanic English learners. Second, by drawing from evidence illustrating effective instructional leadership within a positive construct, this research informs the work of school leadership as to how effective principals are able to influence the academic progress of Hispanic English learners. Third, discussion and discourse reflect critical insights into research, policy, and social science theory. Finally, exploring the broader associations for school leadership is equally compelling alongside the implications this case study presents for educational research, future policy actions, equity, and social justice.

Overview of the Discussion

Chapter One presented a rationale for the inquiry of this research. Supported by stating the current problem that exists for Hispanic English learners, this case study is situated within three significant theories: cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership. The three interrelated theories form the conceptual frame for the investigation to address ways school leaders influence the academic experiences of Hispanic English learners. Chapter Two consists of the current body of literature on principal leadership,

including what is known about the academic attainment of Hispanic English learners. Chapter Three describes the methodology and design for this study.

Chapters Four and Five examine how each principal's ability to influence their school was illuminated through the constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership. The stories detail how two principals chose to lead their schools, as well as how they created conditions that raised the self-esteem and academic progress of Hispanic English learners and all students. We learn about their beliefs and their desired success for the students and their communities. The voices of the teachers are weaved into the study through a description of their work, their perceptions, and beliefs concerning the abilities and academic accomplishments of Hispanic English learners. The analysis of relevant facts, within chapters four and five, discusses and explains the statistical results by exploring participants' views in depth.

Chapter Six forms a synopsis of the quantitative and qualitative data presenting each principal's intuitive thinking, appreciation, and cultural understanding of their school community. The conditions they created that raised the self-esteem and academic progress of Hispanic English learners, and all students, are compared and contrasted. Chapter Six summarizes principal and teacher perceptions and beliefs concerning the abilities and academic achievement of Hispanic English learners. Actions that united principals and teachers around their work, are highlighted as these were influenced by the principals' instructional decisions that moved the school community toward student achievement. I conclude the dissertation in Chapter Six with a discussion regarding key findings and implications for the broader educational community, policy and practice, theory, and future research.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions help clarify how the study utilized the terms.

Achievement gap: When the academic results for students are inequitable, unfair, and discriminatory.

Culture: The behavioral patterns developed by people as participants in their cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003).

Cultural Growth Mindset: I define cultural growth mindset as the broadening of an understanding of the mores, language, customs, and traditions of peoples originating from diverse cultures and heritages. A person with a cultural growth mindset considers English Learners as linguistically gifted instead of linguistically deficient (Vargas, 2018). A person with a cultural growth mindset appreciates the richness and diversity of human qualities and culture and is oriented toward valuing, affirming, and learning about others' cultures, assets and abilities as well as their own.

Hispanic: While the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" may be used interchangeably in many studies, the term "Hispanic" is characterized in this research as a person of Spanish origin or descent, who speaks Spanish, or has immigrated from a Spanish speaking country, including Spain.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction to the Literature

In this chapter, I examine a selection of scholarship and research from the 1960s to the present that address a combination of these areas from various perspectives. This review draws from a selection of interdisciplinary literature in the social sciences and organizational management in order to both expand and synthesize understandings of the vital role of the school principal. Inasmuch as the personal influence principals exercise within their leadership capacity may be extensive, the attention on school principals in this literature review is focused on their capacity to exercise personal influence, to motivate, and to inspire teachers and students toward academic excellence. This chapter highlights critical moments in education, examines principal behavior, explores literature related to principals and Hispanic English learners, and discusses theoretical perspectives of organizations and leadership.

Equality of Educational Opportunity

In his groundbreaking work, James Coleman and a team of researchers, in response to Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, delivered an extensive study known as "Equality of Educational Opportunity" (1966). Coleman's study set a precedent for improving education. A cornerstone attempt, Coleman and his team of researchers addressed: 1) the segregation of ethnic groups in public schools, 2) the offering of quality educational programs in schools congruent with select criteria, 3) student performance and achievement as measured by standardized assessments, and 4) the relationship between academic attainment, the influence of peers, and the home and school learning environments. Coleman and his team's findings showed a learning gap among minority groups compared to white and "Oriental" students. Coleman argued that the lack of achievement among minority students was affected by familial influences and the schools minority students attended. Coleman's report suggested minorities attended schools that were ill-

11

equipped for learning, were taught by unqualified teachers, and minority students were likely to be tracked into lower ability groups. The Coleman Report also held that non-minority teachers preferred not to teach "blue-collar or low-ability children … [and elected to not] teach in racially heterogeneous schools" (Coleman, 1966, p. 27).

Interestingly, the Coleman Report makes a seemingly contradictory statement to its very title, "taking all these results together, one implication stands out above all: That schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement …" (Coleman, 1966, p. 325), which can be interpreted to mean that the influence of schools is limited. Other considerations, *e.g.*, household socioeconomic status, should be considered as influencers contributing to the lagging performance of minority students as understood by existing knowledge (Leithwood et al., 2006; Ream et al., 2012). Since the release of the Coleman study, researchers have argued that learning gaps begin early in life, contending that inequalities for language minority children develop before they reach school, hold a strong correlation with the child's social class and socioeconomic status, and persist over time throughout a student's lifetime (Garcia, 2015). Moreover, the development of noticeable and persistent gaps in student performance are evident at the onset of schooling and learning outcomes of children in low-income households are affected negatively (Halle et al., 2012). The Coleman Report laid the groundwork for additional research related to the achievement gap, equity in public schools, equality, and educational policy.

Effective Schools Movement

Challenging Coleman's perspective, and adding to the discourse on student achievement, researchers detected problems with the Coleman Report and began to study whether a child's familial background affected his or her academic achievement. To unearth the relationship between continuous student improvement, social conduct, and responses related to school

12

climate, social scientists from Michigan State University studied eight schools. In May 1971, these researchers published their study of eight Michigan elementary schools from a mix of rural, small town, urban, suburban, and small city schools. Their research consisted of questionnaires, interviews, and a comparative analysis of data collected. Two schools were low performing, and six were considered "high improving" schools (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979, p. 2). The study examined within-school effects, across three years, that showed how social structure and school climate affected the achievement of students.

Researchers' findings revealed marked differences in student achievement, in the high learning schools, when compared to the two declining schools. The pronounced differences in characteristics of the improving schools showed these schools were led by strong principals, and students were educated by teachers who held strong beliefs in the achievement of all students. A climate of excellence permeated the improving schools since principals and teachers considered all students capable of meeting state standards and objectives. Singularly important, three of the six achieving schools had high numbers of minority students who were integrated into the schools' programs. Fewer students were pulled out to receive remedial services. Students in these schools were posting dramatic academic increases in reading and mathematics. Principals were involved in the instructional program upholding and setting high learning expectations, monitoring student progress toward meeting school-wide goals in reading and mathematics. These principals worked alongside teachers as instructional leaders and promoted learning conversations around student progress and instructional design. Additionally, school leaders were perceived by teachers as having a firm handle on student behavior and discipline. Notwithstanding the academic progress achieved, concern for parental involvement was expressed by educators in the improving schools, since they understood the benefits of integrating parents into the schools' programs.

13

As a matter of contrast, the declining schools had low numbers of minority students and exhibited a stark difference in principal and teacher behaviors. Unlike the high learning schools, principals and teachers held low academic standards for students, a consensus that students were not capable of achieving or attending high school, and that the schools were incapable of changing this direction. Low achievement was attributed to parents and students. These congenial principals contributed little to the improvement of the schools. These schools lacked focus on reading and mathematics and placed little importance on assessments. Researchers observed a higher number of students were pulled out of the classroom to work with specialists and paraprofessionals who were tasked to provide remedial support. There was a lack of instructional accountability. Teachers felt they were teaching well and were given free rein to teach subject matter as they pleased throughout the instructional day. Adult behaviors were generally agreeable, while at the same time deceiving as to the academic conditions of the schools.

Arguing that leadership practices were critical determinants of student progress, attention was drawn to the effective role of the principal as instructional leader, evaluator, and administrator. Researchers proposed wide circulation of this study and recommended that teaching roles and tasks be re-examined with requirements, including the teaching of reading and mathematics, increased attention to instruction, access for all students, and broadly shared academic expectations for all students. Specifically calling for principal and teacher accountability for student progress on state assessments, this research held that monitoring procedures were necessary to ensure instruction and quality tasks were maximized throughout the instructional day. Equally important, the study set out expectations for teacher professional development resulting in a change in pedagogy (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979).

The results of this research revealed a compelling story countering Coleman's views on the limited influence of schools and suggest an interrelationship of distinctive school conditions and leadership attitudes affect student achievement. This study contributed to the birth of the Effective Schools Movement, which called for educational reform and argued that "all children can learn" (Brookover et al., 1979; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1982; Edmonds, 1983). These researchers challenged society to examine societal inequities, and the need for betterment in poor urban communities with children who lacked a quality education (Edmonds, 1979).

Not surprisingly, educational reform and the effective schools movement stirred some controversy in the field of education. A counter-argument was raised challenging and disputing aspects of the effective schools research as having gaps in many regards, including a failure by the researchers to consider how the findings on effective schools affected policy and disrupted districts as organizational systems (Cuban, 1983; Purkey & Smith, 1982). Other researchers argued that the effective schools movement had many weak areas and the claims made by the pioneers of the movement reduced the intricately complex problem of education to a standard formula for the improvement of schools (Purkey & Smith, 1982).

The effective schools research, nevertheless, highlighted the vital role of the school leader and the impact of the school principal on student performance, which then led to increased attention from researchers who posit that the school leader's actions are interdependently linked to, and influence, student achievement (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Spillane & Hunt, 2010). Furthermore, specific leader behaviors and practices shape the school learning environment, affecting those who are supervised by the leader (Spillane, 2006; Spillane & Hunt, 2010). These studies do not rule out

the impact of home and community environment (Hallinger, 2003) on student learning, but have chosen to focus on identifying actions and behaviors of school leaders that are within their realm of influence and do have an impact on student learning. Equally important, these studies establish that the school principal indirectly influences student achievement and classroom teachers have the most direct effect on student learning. Principal leadership behaviors are critical in terms of their influence over school climate and teacher work (Brooks, Adams & Morita-Mullaney, 2010).

Teacher perception of a principal as being a weak leader, as mediocre, or a leader who ranks above standards, affect the achievement of students (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls & Cumiskey, 2013; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Likewise, teacher judgment of a school leader can be interpreted as an indicator of the leader's influence on the school community. In schools where teachers perceived the principal to be a strong instructional leader, academic achievement was significantly higher when compared to the scores of students who attended the schools of weak or mediocre principals. In schools where students struggled academically, teacher perception of the school leader was also evident (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Further research has worked to cull the interrelationship between direct and indirect factors created by school leaders that impact academic learning (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls, & Cumiskey, 2010; Soehner & Ryan, 2011; Spillane & Hunt, 2010; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). For instance, a leader exercises direct influence when communicating the direction of the school while co-constructing a clear vision with representatives of the school community. Conversely, a school leader has indirect influence on the school culture through the agency of the formal and informal relationships cultivated within or outside the school community. In comparison, studies have

demonstrated certain aspects of the leadership role influence instructionally effective schools. An effective principal establishes a clear vision for the school, sets an instructional focus, and demonstrates knowledge of the content taught. An effective leader sets academic goals, monitors student learning and achievement for all students. Building a climate of high academic and behavioral expectations, a successful principal involves teachers and parents, and distributes the leadership of the school with key stakeholders (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Edmonds, 1983; Levine & Lezotte, 1990).

Leadership distinctions in principals as instructional leaders include the productive investment of time and resources, time in the classroom, high visibility throughout the school day, high behavioral and academic engagement, consistent communication, and compelling articulation of the school vision (Smith & Andrews, 1989). To the contrary, competing in-school administrative factors may impede principals' ability, as instructional leaders, to dedicate time on curriculum and instruction (Spillane & Hunt, 2010; Van Vooren, 2018).

Literature comparing two leadership theories examined how school leadership practices increased student achievement. Researchers studied leadership effects on student achievement and compared transformational leadership theory - motivational leadership that stimulates and inspires followers to carry out a mission, with instructional leadership theory - leadership focusing on instructional design, monitoring student learning, and supporting instruction. Findings demonstrated instructional leadership practices had a more significant impact on student achievement, compared to transformational leadership. Results also supported earlier research on leadership theories. Student achievement increases when, as influential leaders, principals engage in the practice of supporting teacher instruction and student learning, (Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014).

Arguably, researchers and educational reformers agree that a crucial role of the school principal is to balance all aspects of the school to ensure continuous improvement of instruction in order for all students to succeed (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Elmore & Burney, 1999; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Peterson, 2002). Principal behavior can have a positive effect on the academic performance of consistently underperforming students. Underachieving students made tremendous growth in reading and mathematics when principals acted as active agents who mobilized their learning community and its resources, to ensure instruction and academic achievement remained at the forefront of the school's priorities (Andrews & Soder, 1987). In a study synthesizing research on school reform and the effectiveness of site-based leadership, researchers found that in effective site-based managed schools, principals were active in the change process. Principals were intent on building, cultivating, encouraging, and relegating leadership to teachers and members of the community. Student progress at the successful schools was evident when principals were actively involved in promoting school reform and were engaged in sharing leadership roles with members of the school community (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003).

Engaging a broad spectrum of leadership behaviors at several levels, a large-scale study spanning six years, incorporated an in-depth examination of leadership behaviors. The study, representing varying theoretical perspectives, was organized in three sections designed to broaden the literature on school leadership. Researchers employed a mixed methods design of qualitative and quantitative measures. Leadership practices were examined for material evidence of accepted outcomes. Factors directly linked to student learning were, most notably, teacher perception, student and teacher backgrounds, the professional learning community, in-classroom conditions and out of school environs (Louis et al., 2010).

According to this study, leadership can be: "collective," "distributed," or "shared," "shared and contingent," or "productive" (Louis et al., 2010, p. 16-18). Significant findings offer evidence-based opportunities for practitioners to apply in their leadership roles and demonstrate collective leadership exerts a substantial impact on achievement. This study further demonstrated that principal interactions influence school climate and instructional outcomes on the one hand, and teacher perceptions are affected by diversity and poverty on the other hand. Leadership practices considered by teachers and principals as most instructionally beneficial include: 1) setting and focusing on school-wide goals, 2) establishing learning expectations, 3) organizing teacher professional development, and 4) planning and facilitating teacher collaboration. (Louis et al., 2010). Shared leadership - focusing on instructional improvement - directly impacts teacher relationships, and indirectly affects student progress. Even when varying opportunities exist in a school setting under distributed leadership, the principal remains as the leading resource.

Trust, as a factor, has been identified by scholars as a relational aspect demonstrated in highly effective schools (Liou & Daly, 2019). Researchers have shown that high trust environments nourish a host of favorable effects for teachers and encourage student achievement. Researchers posit that a strengths-based approach to leading is necessary for 21st-century schools led by supportive leaders who optimistically embrace learning, establish a climate of trust, and endorse individual and collective competence (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Daly & Chrispeels, 2008). Additionally, teacher perception of the principal role changes as a result of conversations emphasizing non-evaluative and collaborative professional learning for principals and teachers focused on the instructional leadership capacity of principals in building teacher efficacy to increase the achievement of high populations of Hispanic English learners, Standard English Learners, and socioeconomically challenged students (Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls,

& Cumiskey, 2013). Additionally, leadership behaviors affecting teacher efficacy may have a direct or an indirect impact on student learning (Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014).

School Principals and Hispanic English Learners

All students thrive when they are valued and allowed to develop their skills and knowledge in learning spaces where the school leader works with the school community to identify excellent teaching practices, upholds strong beliefs of equity and achievement, and insists upon high-quality instruction (Mendoza Reis & Flores, 2014), yet scholars continue to wrestle with issues of equity and equality in education (Zamudio et al., 2011). Historically, in U.S. schools, Hispanic English learners have been confined to marginalization as socially disadvantaged students (Ayón & Philbin, 2017; Brown, 2015; Hernández & Daoud, 2014). The literature revealed that immigrant children reported teachers held low academic expectations of them and saw them as being "invisible" in class (Brown, 2015, p. 4), and that principal perceptions, beliefs, discussions, and decisions can hinder learning opportunities for English learners (Brooks, Adams & Morita-Mullaney, 2010).

Careful examination of leadership practices is central to providing insights that will help reverse the persistent academic deficiencies which surface for Hispanic English learners in elementary school (Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010; Genesee et al., 2005; Reardon & Galindo, 2009). Prevalent research findings indicate that in schools where Hispanic English learners were immersed in English-only mainstream classrooms, meaningful learning was limited, owing to a lack of comprehension – at minimum – of the instructional content (Olsen, 2010). Researchers submit that in-school characteristics, including the school leader's perceptions, affect an English learners' language proficiency and achievement (Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010; Brown, 2015).

Evidence suggests Latino children experience institutional and interpersonal discrimination in the forms of social exclusion, insults from peers, and teachers. Moreover, school climate affects immigrant children's understanding of discrimination (Ayón & Philbin, 2017; Brown, 2015). As a result, English learners demonstrate significantly lower test scores than do native English-speaking students (Gandara et al., 2003; Portes, 1996; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

A study sought to uncover factors affecting the academic disadvantage of Hispanic children in high-poverty schools. Students who entered kindergarten with limited English proficiency were considered at risk resulting from the reading challenges they faced, and the compelling instructional needs they experienced (Keiffer, 2008). Similarly, Hispanic children demonstrated signs of achievement gaps resulting from their growth and development (Reardon & Galindo, 2009).

Importantly, principals play an essential role in promoting a school climate and culture that embraces the cultural diversity of the students. How principals and teachers value and accept culturally diverse children in their schools and classrooms affects how English learners perceive themselves as safe at school (Brown, 2015). Researchers argue, principal knowledge, perception and support of second language teacher instructional practices affect the achievement of English learners (Padrón & Waxman, 2016).

The literature suggests a need for district leadership and school principals to work in tandem to outline learning conditions that support English learners. Additionally, all students benefit when district and school leaders commit to planning, supporting, and developing opportunities for teachers to learn highly effective strategies. Instructional focus and school direction are essential. Setting expectations for high-quality instruction, monitoring student progress, and utilizing data to change instructional practices are equally significant. Similarly,

fomenting a collaborative community environment, leveraging resources to invest in professional

development, and establishing a climate of exceptional learning, stimulates, motivates, and

engages teachers and students (Elfers, Lucero, Tritikus, & Knapp, 2013).

Researchers have observed strong principals who were resolute in their professional

decisions to advance the achievement of the children in their schools. Operating from the belief

that a child's first language is an asset he or she brings to the school community, effective

instructional practices, and changes in the instructional program were instituted in a recent study.

For example, pull out instructional practices were replaced with inclusionary intervention.

Results illuminated the vital role of the school principal, as an advocate for social justice and

educational equity, mediated the learning of English learners. Findings suggested strong

leadership required a commitment to achievement for all students, including English learners, a

focused mission to replace a deficit mindset of failure with an asset-based mindset of success,

and balancing a process of communication, collaboration, and perseverance with staff and the

parent community. The conditions created by these principals promoted student achievement,

attributable to inclusive principal behaviors characterizing a standard of excellence for learning

and high academic expectations, while advocating for diversity, and valuing cultural

distinctiveness in the learning community (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011).

One function of leadership is to influence change (Louis et al., 2010). The literature

suggests failing schools can be transformed into high performing schools when principals engage

in a culturally / linguistic / professional school model. Several factors surfaced from a recent

study, including the principals' ability to garner social capital, engage in culturally responsive

leadership by embracing the community, albeit maintaining a professional outlook as a role

model. Moreover, as instructional leader, a deep understanding of effective linguistic strategies

was evident. Cultural linguistic practices involved establishing, valuing, and celebrating cultural

connections with students and parents. Careful planning and discussions with teachers and parents resulted in a change in school culture from a deficit mindset to an asset-based mindset. This study revealed that focus on increasing student achievement was a top priority. Instructional leadership practices, included: establishing student achievement goals, daily classroom observations, and study of weekly student academic data. Holding teacher dialogue and offering professional development encouraged a climate change where respect and academic success replaced low expectations. Utilizing distributive leadership practices enabled the school leader to enact another major change - the involvement of parents who later became parent leaders (Reyes & Garcia, 2013). Although this research is limited to the study of one school, replicating the study across various schools in different contexts may generate similar results.

Theoretical Perspective of Schools as Organizations

Schools, the spaces where children learn, are open systems and subsystems influenced by a greater system, including the U.S. political system, consisting of federal, state, local, and district policies and governance. As open systems with distinct organizational cultures affected by the shifts, demands, and conditions of the external environment (Chrispeels, 2001; Scott, 2003), schools are shaped by their environments internally and externally. Participants in an open system may have differing interests, values, views, and goals. As a school leader, maintaining a balance within the school environment is vital. Congruity between a leader's leadership strengths and the predominant organizational culture of an organization can determine how successful the leader will be in leading the organization. In order to maintain control of the organization, effective leaders are able to navigate in and out of competing culture dimensions, develop a competitive culture, strengthen human relations, and seek ways for the organization to creatively adapt to the demands of the environment (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Drawing upon self-theories and implicit theories of intelligence and motivation (Claro, Paunesku & Dweck, 2016; Dweck, 2000), a cultural growth mindset is necessary within an open system that is continually changing. A cultural growth mindset integrates implicit theories of intelligence and motivation (Claro, Paunesku & Dweck, 2016; Dweck, 2000), and values the cultural and language assets the participants bring to the organization. Considering the ever-changing and competing dimensions within a school, a strengths-based mindset helps to illuminate the internal capacities of the leader, its members, and the organization (Murphy & Louis, 2018). Additionally, the demand for external accountability, necessitates that the school leader possesses the instructional leadership skills to establish an academic focus and identify shared instructional practices that will contribute to the success of the school (Fullan, 2008).

Cultural Growth Mindset

Growth mindset theory posits that intelligence increases with effort and that a person can develop and increase their intelligence over time (Dweck, 2010; Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good & Dweck, 2006). Dweck identifies two contrasting perspectives of intelligence and learning as either "innate" or "fixed" or "growth" oriented (Claro, Paunesku & Dweck, 2016; Dweck, 2000). Dweck argues that a past allegiance to IQ testing focused educators on the fixed abilities of students (Dweck, 2000; Yeager & Dweck, 2012) and that teachers' and students' beliefs about their intelligence can affect student learning and achievement goals (Dweck, 2000). To effectively educate all children, a positive self-concept and belief system (a growth mindset) toward academic performance are necessary by both educators and students. A majority of educators now work in settings with students and parents from diverse backgrounds. Developing cultural awareness is critical; however, cultural awareness is not sufficient to close the achievement gap for diverse learners.

I define cultural growth mindset as the broadening of an understanding of the mores, language, customs, and traditions of peoples originating from diverse cultures and heritages. A principal with a cultural growth mindset, views English learners as linguistically gifted instead of linguistically deficient (Vargas, 2018), appreciates the richness and diversity of human qualities and culture, and is oriented toward valuing, affirming, and learning about others' cultures, assets, and abilities as well as their own. Beyond demonstrating that cultural growth mindset matters in a diverse learning community, I intend to incorporate what is presently known in the research, in the context of education, to contribute to a greater understanding of how leading with a cultural growth mindset makes sense when educating students who come to our schools with different cultural practices and lifestyles (Rogoff, 2003), including Hispanic English learners. Leading with a cultural growth mindset focuses on the possibilities brought to the school community.

Positive School Leadership

There is a growing body of literature from positive organizational psychology and scholarship (Cameron, 2003; Cooperrider, 2001a; Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2003; Fredrickson, 2003; Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmalyi, 2000), which has documented the importance and significance of shifting organizational change efforts to focus on organizational and members' diverse strengths as a more effective way to bring about positive organizational change rather than concentrating on the unsolved problems and difficulties that may limit the organization (Maton et al., 2004).

Recognizing this body of literature, and calling for a change in perspective, Murphy and Louis (2018, p. 29) argue the need for leadership that is "moral and ethical," and focuses on members' strengths. They posit nine principles undergird positive school leadership. Although they operate in a hierarchical system, positive school leaders are not hierarchical. Instead, they build relationships with key players in formal and informal settings within the organization.

Relying upon the "cognitive" and "affective" abilities (p. 107) of the participants in the organization, positive school leaders find a balance between individual and group dynamics. Attuned and attentive to the well-being of the members of their organization, positive school leaders recognize the importance of empowering members within their learning community. On the one hand, they rely on strong teams that perform at high professional standards providing opportunities for team members to grow, while on the other hand, intervening when a team experiences difficulty. Furthermore, relationship building forms a "critical foundation" and is "the bedrock of every school's capacity for improvement" (p. 44). Social interactions, for the school leader, are essential factors contributing to school improvement.

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership

With higher expectations for student progress, the role of the school leader has developed into one of increasing accountability to improve teaching practices and student learning (Spillane & Hunt, 2010; Van Vooren, 2018). For this reason, it is crucial to develop a definition of strengths-based instructional leadership. Strengths-based instructional leadership derives from strengths-based theory (Hoy & Tarter, 2011). Rather than focusing on what is not working, on what is negative, strengths-based theory argues for a need to focus, instead, on what is working. Specifically, on individuals', groups' and the collective strengths of teams within organizations. The intentional leadership practices and purposeful collaborative work principals construct interdependently with their learning communities are to create a vision and a learning environment that values all learners. As strengths-based instructional leaders, principals are explicit and establish processes incorporating data as a matter of priority to increase student performance. Effective principals promote professional leadership opportunities for their personnel, support the improvement of pedagogical practices, and cultivate school improvement (Marks & Printy, 2003). Figure 2.1 presents the conceptual model that informs the study.
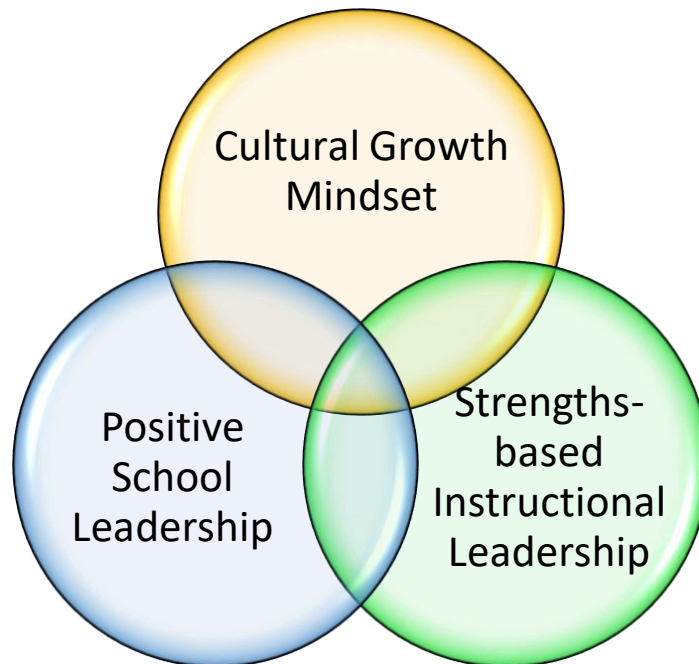
Figure 2.1 Strengths-based Conceptual Model

Summary

The examination and review of scholarship in the areas of educational improvement, effective school leadership, and leadership practices are presented in this chapter. Research studies and literature on principal leadership are examined, including organizational theories. In this chapter, schools are recognized as complex social systems affected internally and externally by the demands of the environment with distinctive organizational cultures and competing values, mirrored by the characteristics of the participants of the organization (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Chrispeels, 2001; Scott, 2003). The attention on school principals in this research is focused on their capacity to exercise personal influence, necessitating regulation of purpose and thought, drive and inspiration or, modifying the conditions of the environment (Bandura, 2012).

Although the school principal works within a system that demands flexibility and discretion, internal focus and integration, external focus and differentiation, and stability and control (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), principals must display behaviors that motivate and inspire teachers and students to close the achievement gap.

Three distinct theories form the conceptual framework for this study: cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership. Grounded on self-theories and implicit theories of intelligence and motivation (Claro, Paunesku & Dweck, 2016; Dweck, 2000) the essentiality of a cultural growth mindset is characterized within an ever-changing open system as it is influenced by its environment. Cultural growth mindset values the culture and language participants bring to the organization. Anchored within a positive construct (Hoy and & Tarter, 2011), a strengths-based mindset elucidates the capacities and abilities of a positive school leader (Murphy & Louis, 2018). Strengths-based instructional leadership is equally as essential, since the school community's successes, strengths and abilities are promoted and developed as the school principal establishes the academic focus and identifies shared instructional practices that contribute to the success of all students, (Fullan, 2006).

Concurring views on school effectiveness subscribe to the urgent imperative that educational improvement is vitally important for *all* children deserving of an equal opportunity to learn and succeed (Contreras, 2011; Gándara, 2010; Gándara & Contreras, 2010; Gándara & Orfield, 2010; Mendoza Reis & Flores, 2014; Olsen, 2010); however, the academic attainment of Hispanic English learners remains unchanged. This national problem poses a need to study the cultural growth mindset, belief systems, and behaviors of elementary school principals that influence the curricular experiences of Hispanic English learners. These interactions and associations necessitate further examination within the context of the learning environment. Chapter 3 forms the roadmap for this study and includes the rationale for conducting an

explanatory sequential case study of two school principals. The intent of the design is to explain

the phenomenon studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Key elements of the research design

are developed. In addition, limitations and implications of analytic generalizations are discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Case Study Research and Methodology Approach

This study uses a mixed-methods case study approach, thus allowing multiple data sources and multiple perspectives to tell the story of two schools in their efforts to improve the educational outcomes of Hispanic English learners. Case studies are appropriate for capturing "the social world and the operation of educational phenomena" (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993, p. 28). A mixed-methods case study enables the researcher to provide rich descriptions from multiple perspectives of a case that is of national importance, and is well suited to explain and better understand "the lived experiences of the individuals and groups inhabiting the case" (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013, p. 61).

In case study research, boundaries for the case must be set, and the study must be carried out to its entirety (Yin, 2018). Quality is manifested in key ingredients – an excellent narrative distinguished by "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 54, in Lincoln & Guba, 1990) and a high standard, placed by the researcher, on the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). This case study examines two principals leading schools with high populations of Hispanic English learners in one school district. Additionally, this case study provided "multiple realities" (Lincoln & Guba, 1990, p. 54) constructed by the participants in this case study. Insight into explanatory processes for the phenomenon was sought through patterns that emerged from the two sites. Surveys administered to participants (teachers) provided an indication of the extensiveness of the phenomenon and added to a deeper understanding of the influence of principals, their beliefs, and cultural growth mindset toward Hispanic English learners.

A mixed-methods study design was selected to examine in what ways principal beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, directly influence, are linked to, and motivate the academic achievement

of Hispanic English learners. The data collection methods provided quantitative and qualitative evidence in connection with the role of the principal and factors influencing the academic progress and achievement of Hispanic English learners.

Research Questions

The study provided a deeper understanding of principal attitudes and behaviors with teachers supporting English learners from the perspective of principals and teachers. The overarching research question addressed by this study is: How do the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership illuminate principals' ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners? This research question includes two sub-questions:

1) How do elementary school principals' perceptions, practices, and behaviors influence the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

2) How do teachers describe the principal's leadership to influence learning opportunities for Hispanic English learners?

Research Design

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods case study was conducted in two phases with one form of data collection following, connecting, explaining, and informing the other (Creswell, 2015). The first phase involved collecting quantitative teacher survey data. Accordingly, a descriptive representation of the data in this study were used to triangulate, understand and explicate the results of participants' survey responses. The second phase entailed gathering qualitative data, interviews, observations, and document review, to help explain the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. The quantitative data (survey) were collected and analyzed to provide a general picture of teachers' perceptions of principals' perspectives, beliefs, attitudes and practices to help answer the research questions. Qualitative data refined, extended, and

explained the general quantitative picture. By having multiple data sources it was possible to provide a richer, triangulated case study of each school. Figure 3.1 shows the two phases, types of data collected, analysis approach and output from the analysis and the integration of the qualitative and quantitative data needed to lead to the dissertation.

The quality of this research design entailed minimizing errors and biases, including making inferences that were unfounded. Seeking to explain why Hispanic English learners are progressing academically, and how principal behavior influenced the academic progress of Hispanic English learners, was important in this explanatory case study design, since the participants studied may contribute information that "establishes a causal relationship" (Yin, 2018, p. 42). Moreover, valid collection and organization of data, the analysis of data, and the writing of this study are interlinked with three important details: 1) the organization of the study 2) the coherence of the study with the corroboration of evidence, and 3) the integration of participants' "natural language" (Lincoln & Guba, 1990, p. 55).

Study Diagram – Explanatory Sequential Design

Model adopted from Ivankova and Stick (2007, p. 98) in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018

PHASE	PROCEDURE	PRODUCT
Quantitative Data Collection	Qualtrics – teacher survey (LfLQ-T) includes 29 questions • 35 teachers (N=35)	• Numeric data
Quantitative Data Analysis	• Data screening (univariate, multivariate) • Frequencies • Discriminant function analysis • JASP	• Descriptive statistics, missing data, linearity, homoscedasticity, normality, multivariate outliers
Case Selection; Interview Protocol Development	• 2 Principal participants (N=2) • 35 teacher participants volunteer for survey / focus groups (N=35) based on typical response and maximal variation principle • Developing interview questions	• Cases (N=2) principals • Interview protocol
QUALITATIVE Data Collection	• Interviews - 2 principal participants (N=2) • Email follow-up interviews • Observations of principals • Two focus groups- 4-5 teachers (N=4-5); individual in-depth • Elicitation of materials • Documents • Researcher Journal, Fieldnotes	• Interview transcripts, fieldnotes, researcher journal, documents, artifact description • Visual model of multiple case analysis
QUALIITATIVE Data Analysis	• Coding, thematic analysis • Within-case and across-case theme development • Cross-thematic analysis • Dedoose mixed methods software	• Codes and themes • Similar and different themes and categories • Cross-thematic matrix
Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results	• Interpretation and explanation of quantitative and qualitative results	• Explanation/Discussion • Implications • Future research

Figure 3.1 Explanatory Sequential Design

33

Research Sites: District Context and School Demographics

The Rio Grande Unified School District (RGUSD) (Pseudonym) website prominently invites visitors to read its Mission Statement: "[Mirada Bella] students will graduate with the skills, motivation, curiosity and resilience to succeed in their choice of college and career in order to lead and participate in the society of tomorrow." A forward moving district, RGUSD is currently drafting its 2030 goals.

The Rio Grande Unified School District is a large school district serving a diverse student population of 124,105 students, of which 46% are Hispanic / Latino, and 27% are English learners. Since its inauguration in 1854 (district website), RGUSD is a school district serving children and young people beginning in preschool through elementary, middle, and high school grades. RGUSD has grown into a large district that is now divided into clusters of schools supervised by Area Superintendents who report to the Superintendent and who work closely with school principals.

School Study Sites

To identify school principals for this case study, lists of schools with high populations of Hispanic English learners in the Rio Grande Unified School District, were studied using state assessment data. Once the list of schools were identified, the next step was to contact the relevant Area Superintendents, who serve as gatekeepers (Creswell, 2015). Area Superintendents were contacted via email. Although both schools had different Area Superintendents overseeing their schools, one Area Superintendent volunteered to sponsor the study. The two participant principals in this study agreed upon initial contact.

Pursuant to RGUSD's research procedures, a Request for Approval to Conduct Research in Multiple Schools and the Research Proposal were submitted to the District's Research and Evaluation Department. Upon review of the Research Proposal, a meeting was scheduled with

the Director of the Research and Evaluation Department. The research proposal, including the intent to report results to RGUSD, the principals and teachers, were presented to RGUSD, Appendix D. During the in-person meeting, I disclosed the purpose of the study, reasons for choosing the two sites for this study, and the study protocol (Creswell, 2015; Yin, 2018). Approval of the Study was granted by RGUSD on June 19, 2019. The relevant university research office also approved the IRB request to conduct the research after the district's approval was secured.

Only a short distance away from each school, the Edmonton Elementary and Galveston Hill School campuses (pseudonyms) are nine minutes apart traveling by car. Both schools house high populations of diverse students, with the predominant group being Spanish speakers. Both schools serve high populations of students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Edmonton Elementary offers Bilingual Instruction and English Immersion. Galveston Hill, a K-8 school serving children from Transitional Kindergarten to 8th Grade, offers a dual language program to students K-5. Although close in proximity, the communities differ greatly. Among the diverse cultures of the Edmonton Elementary community, the majority of students are Spanish speakers, and 61% are English learners. At Galveston Hill School, 35% of the student population are English learners, and 97.16% are Spanish speakers. In the city of Mirada Bella, real estate is at a premium and both schools are experiencing a decrease in student enrollment as families move to more affordable areas.

A close look at the schools' English Language Arts scores shows the cohort of all students who were in third grade (2016-2017) demonstrated consistent growth in fourth and fifth grades over the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years (California Department of Education, 2020). Scores in mathematics fluctuated, however, by 2018-2019, the total average scores of students who had been reclassified fluent English proficient were higher than the scores

of all students in English Language Arts and in Mathematics. Table 3.1 represents the learning trends of RGUSD, Table 3. 2 represents Edmonton's scores, and Table 3.3 represents Galveston Hill's scores.

Table 3.1 Three-Year CAASPP Data, Rio Grande Unified School District

		ELA ALL			ELA ELS			ELA RFEP		
		2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
GRADE										
	3	55.58%	55.76%	56.19%	34.42%	23.32%	13.47%	85.72%	78.58%	67.26%
	4	53.70%	56.58%	56.82%	25.26%	17.59%	23.54%	86.13%	76.43%	78.65%
	5	56.07%	58.51%	60.03%	22.48%	9.40%	14.81%	80.04%	67.33%	74.16%
TOTAL AVG		55.12%	56.95%	57.68%	27.39%	16.77%	17.27%	83.96%	74.11%	73.36%
		MATH ALL			MATH ELS			MATH RFEP		
		2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
GRADE										
	3	46.03%	59.26%	60.43%	42.38%	30.73%	22.30%	83.33%	79.97%	72.57%
	4	50.87%	53.91%	54.99%	24.24%	19.31%	24.20%	82.15%	69.74%	73.40%
	5	46.82%	48.18%	50.68%	17.63%	11.57%	14.35%	62.71%	51.76%	59.33%
TOTAL AVG		47.91%	53.78%	55.37%	28.08%	20.54%	20.28%	76.06%	67.16%	68.43%

Table 3.2 Three Year CAASPP Data, Edmonton Elementary

GRADE	ELA ALL			ELA ELS			ELA RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
3	53.52%	60.72%	68.65%	54.72%	53.49%	37.50%	0.00%	85.71%	90.63%
4	50.00%	55.23%	59.21%	36.21%	35.71%	32.35%	86.67%	78.95%	89.66%
5	56.84%	58.89%	56.34%	30.24%	13.33%	14.29%	87.10%	80.44%	85.72%
TOTAL AVG	53.45%	58.28%	61.40%	40.39%	34.18%	28.05%	86.89%	81.70%	88.67%

GRADE	MATH ALL			MATH ELS			MATH RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
3	54.16%	64.29%	72.46%	56.60%	55.81%	42.31%	0.00%	90.48%	93.75%
4	41.76%	47.82%	58.22%	30.50%	26.67%	32.43%	93.34%	78.95%	86.21%
5	37.50%	46.74%	36.99%	18.19%	15.63%	8.70%	67.74%	63.05%	64.28%
TOTAL AVG	44.47%	52.95%	55.89%	35.10%	32.70%	27.81%	80.54%	77.49%	81.41%

Table 3.3 Three-Year CAASPP Data, Galveston Hill School

GRADE	ELA ALL			ELA ELS			ELA RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
3	47.61%	48.15%	54.54%	44.00%	*	28.57%	*	*	64.28%
4	32.26%	48.65%	40.74%	0.00%	45.45%	27.27%	*	45.45%	*
5	24.24%	48.48%	57.89%	6.67%	*	*	*	*	53.85%
TOTAL AVG	34.70%	48.43%	51.06%	16.89%	45.45%	27.92%	*	45.45%	59.07%

GRADE	MATH ALL			MATH ELS			MATH RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
3	52.39%	74.08%	38.18%	48.00%	*	0.00%	0.00%	*	57.15%
4	35.48%	29.73%	48.15%	9.09%	9.09%	36.36%	*	36.36%	*
5	9.38%	18.18%	21.05%	0.00%	*	*	*	*	30.71%
TOTAL AVG	32.42%	40.66%	35.79%	19.03%	9.09%	36.36%	*	36.36%	43.93%

Participants

Participants are persons from whom data were collected (Yin, 2018). Fundamental to this research was the construct identified in this study as the school principal. The first criterion and the primary criteria was selecting principals leading schools with a demographic makeup of 35% or higher Hispanic English learners who were showing consistent year to year academic progress as measured by the CAASPP. Although I entered the relationship as "the researcher," an important piece of the design was to develop and establish a relationship with participants, at the beginning of the recruitment and interview process. Additionally, the intent of the study was to recruit a high percentage of teachers from each school who would volunteer to take the survey.

After district approval, I contacted the principals to schedule a date, time and location for teachers to complete the survey. At the individual teacher meetings, the study was presented, the consent form was explained (Appendix F), teachers were provided information associated with the research, what to expect, and other specific details.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected beginning August 2019 through December 2019. Data collection methods were designed to determine the specific practices of school principals as shown in Table 3.4, Data Collection Methods. As displayed in Table 3.4 the data were collected in two phases. The first phase involved administering a survey to provide descriptive statistics of teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership. Phase Two involved collection of qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, observations and document analysis.

Table 3.4 Data Collection Methods

Research Questions	Teacher Survey Data	Focus Group Discussion (one school)	Counselor Interview (one school)	Principal Interviews	Observations	Document Analysis
How do the strengths-based constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership illuminate the principal's ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sub-Questions						
How do elementary school principals' perceptions, practices, and behaviors influence the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?	X	X	X	X	X	X
How do teachers describe the principal's leadership to influence learning opportunities for Hispanic English learners?		X	X	X	X	

Table 3.5 Survey Questions Organized Under Conceptual Framework

Cultural Growth Mindset	Positive School Leadership	Principal Role in Creating Cultural Growth Mindset	Principal Strengths-based Instructional Leadership	Open-ended Questions
Likert Scale 1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Sometimes 4=Most of the time 5=Always	**Likert Scale** 1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Sometimes 4=Most of the time 5=Always	**Likert Scale** 1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly disagree 4=Slightly agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly agree	**Likert Scale** 1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Sometimes 4=Most of the time 5=Always	
*Q1 My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts. Q2 My principal listens to teachers' ideas as a way to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners. Q3 My principal works to create ways to involve parents of Hispanic English learners. *Q4 My principal develops a caring atmosphere built on trust.	*Q5 My principal models a high level of professionalism. Q6 My principal effectively taps into the instructional strengths of teachers. *Q7 My principal promotes leadership opportunities among teachers. *Q8 My principal ensures wide teacher participation in decision making around school improvement. Q9 My principal is knowledgeable of best instructional practices for Hispanic English learners. Q10 My principal believes teachers can be effective in helping all Hispanic English learners master grade level standards. Q11 My principal sets high learning expectations for all students. *Q12 My principal ensures that all students are taught by high quality teachers. *Q13 My principal clearly defines standards for instructional practices to support the learning of Hispanic English learners. *Q14 My principal supports teachers when they are struggling to raise the achievement of Hispanic English learners.	Q15 It is the principal's responsibility to work with the teachers to ensure that all of their students achieve at a high level. Q16 As a school we are making important strides toward increasing the achievement of English learners. Q17 Working together, it is possible for the principal and teachers to change a low achieving school into a high achieving school. Q18 My principal ensures intervention for Hispanic English learners is embedded into the school day. Q19 I have many parents of Hispanic English learners attending parent-teacher conferences because of principal outreach to parents.	*Q20 My principal provides resources to help staff improve their teaching for Hispanic English learners. *Q21 My principal encourages data use in planning for individual student needs. *Q22 My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement. *Q23 My principal participates in teacher planning meetings concerning the instruction of Hispanic English learners. *Q24 My principal suggests specific ideas to improve my instruction of Hispanic English learners.	Q25 Please describe an instructional strategy, approach or tip your principal shared with you that you believe helped strengthen your instructional repertoire to meet the needs of English learners. Q26 Please write the name of your school. Q27 List the languages in which you are fluent. Q28 What is your race or ethnicity? Q29 How long have you been teaching? Q30 We are conducting a focus group at your school. Your participation will be a valuable addition to our research. The discussion will take around 30-40 minutes and will be very informal. Participation and responses will be kept confidential. If you would like to volunteer, please provide your, 1) email address, and 2) a telephone number where you may be reached.

*These questions were adapted from *Leadership for Learning* (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, Anderson, 2010).

Pilot Study of Survey Instrument

To determine reliability of the survey instrument developed for this study, the survey was piloted and administered to 30 teachers in Southern California who taught in schools with high populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students and high populations of Hispanic English learners. Teachers were recruited through social networks and the investigator's personal contacts. They represented the range in years teaching and ethnic diversity found in the case study schools. In addition, a pilot focus group discussion with six teachers yielded necessary information to strengthen the survey instrument.

Participants of the pilot test were debriefed. No recommendations were made for changing the questions. They found the questions clear and easy to answer and expressed interest in knowing the study findings. However, the focus group did suggest creating a link that participants could click on so that the survey could be taken from a mobile device and anonymity maintained. This suggestion was implemented. Appendix C presents pilot study participant responses.

Survey Administration in Case Study Schools

Phase One of the study involved administering the survey to teachers in the two case schools. Principals were contacted and a date arranged to present the study to the staff, to sign the IRB consent form (Appendix E) if they wanted to participate and provide the link for the survey. The instrument was administered online via Qualtrics, a web-based survey platform, to measure predictor variables suggested by the theories of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership. Nineteen (out of 22 teachers) participants from Edmonton Elementary and 16 (out of 23) participants from Galveston Hill School completed the survey.

Qualitative Data Collection

      Principal Interviews. Based on the survey findings, as well as being guided by the conceptual framework, an interview protocol was developed for the principal and focus group interviews (see Appendix G for the principal and focus group interview protocols). The first interview with the principal took place once the teacher survey results were studied for recurring themes and questions. The researcher scheduled the first interview with each principal on a date and time that was convenient. The second interview took place after scheduled observations were completed to better understand the cultural growth mindset, behaviors, beliefs, and practices of the principal, and to engage in deeper inquiry, which unveiled more information regarding participants' views. In the second interview, participants responded to questions posed by the researcher, followed by sharing other experiences that were not previously mentioned.

      Teacher Interviews. Based on responses to Q29 on the survey, a focus group of five teachers at Edmonton voluntarily agreed to participate in a focus group, and completed a consent form (Appendix H). Only the school counselor at Galveston Hills agreed to be interviewed, and completed a consent form (Appendix H). For all participants, interviews were scheduled at a time and place convenient for them. The focus group allowed the researcher to probe more deeply and gather in-depth information on the views and shared understanding of the teachers about principals' beliefs, practices and behaviors (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

      Observations. Social interactions were important to this study. Observations of the principals uncovered the social reality of their experiences as they interacted with teachers, staff, Hispanic English learners and families. Walking the school grounds and sitting in the school office helped the researcher to see, experience, and listen to the participants in their workspaces. Observing how principals interacted with students, including Hispanic English learners, during

student activities helped to tell the story of these principals, together with observations of their conversations with teachers at staff meetings. Table 3.6 summarizes the observations made.

Table 3.6 Observations Made at the Two Case Study Schools

Edmonton	Galveston Hill
Family Fridays	Family Fridays
Professional Learning Community Meeting	School Site Council Meeting
Teacher Meeting	Professional Learning Community Meeting
School Visit	Teacher Meeting
	Field Day

Documents. Collecting credible documents added to the validity of this case study (Creswell, 2013, 2015; Stake, 2006).

Data sources included:

- California School Dashboard – California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) - English Language Arts, Mathematics – Student Group Data

- English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Student Group Data for California. This information was used to study the academic trends of English learners. The data showed that schools were careful to reclassify students who were academically prepared to succeed. The data also reflected that students who were reclassified as English proficient (RFEP) outperformed all students.

- Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) ELPAC data show a discrepancy. English learners scored higher on the CAASPP (California Department of Education).

School	2017-2018	2018-2019
Edmonton	*	16.39% Proficient
Galveston Hill	22.76% Proficient	11.11% Proficient

*No data were available from the California Department of Education

- California Healthy Kids Survey – Hispanic English learners' sense of belonging – See Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

- School-Related Documents / Celebrations and Announcements – written in English and Spanish

    o School Announcements – Parents had online access - school provided hard copies.

    o Communication with parents, including website information in Spanish, translations of documents were included.

- Website - Mission / Vision – Edmonton and Galveston Hill websites were visited to examine school information.

- Extended Day Intervention Schedules for English Learners – PrimeTime flyers were provided to targeted families.

- Select ELAC meeting announcements / minutes / agendas – Resource Teachers shared the responsibility with the principal.

- Select current year staff meeting agendas, professional development handouts related to Hispanic English learners - Principals were purposeful to place the needs of specific Hispanic English learners on the PLC agendas.

The documents and information showed how the schools provided access to parents of Hispanic English learners in their primary language to school information and activities related to

Hispanic English learners. More detail is provided in Chapter Four, for Edmonton, and Chapter Five, for Galveston Hill.

Data Reduction and Data Analysis

The data collected in this study illuminate the role of the principal. To better understand this phenomenon, rigorous scrutiny and testing were carried out, including a pilot survey test, valid collection and organization of data, the analysis of data, and the writing of this study are interlinked with three vital details: 1) the organization of the study 2) the coherence of the study with the corroboration of evidence, and 3) the integration of participants' "natural language" (Lincoln & Guba, 1990).

Teachers. In Phase One, the analysis of quantitative data, utilizing JASP, a standard analysis procedure using descriptive subgroup analyses (*e.g.*, means tables, cross tabs), through the lens of teachers, captured principal behaviors directly affecting the achievement of Hispanic English learners, and principals' perceptions and beliefs about the abilities and achievement of Hispanic English learners. Analysis of quantitative data examined how teachers perceived their school leader viewed the attributes and abilities of Hispanic English learners and facilitated the selection of participants for Phase Two of this study. Table 3.7 shows the means and standard deviations of Edmonton and Galveston teacher responses on the survey.

Table 3.7 Teacher Survey Mean Score Comparison – Edmonton and Galveston Hill

LfLQ-T Question Number	Mean E	SD	Mean GH	SD
Teacher Understanding - How the Principal Builds a Community of Learning				
Q1 My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts.	4.421	0.507	4.875	0.342
Q2 My principal listens to teachers' ideas as a way to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners.	4.632	0.597	4.875	0.342
Q3 My principal works to create ways to involve parents of Hispanic English learners.	4.579	0.607	4.688	0.479
Q4 My principal develops a caring atmosphere built on trust.	4.526	0.772	5	0
Teacher Understanding - Principal Practices				
Q5 My principal models a high level of professionalism.	4.421	0.507	4.75	0.447
Q6 My principal effectively taps into the instructional strengths of teachers.	4.526	0.612	4.875	0.342
Q7 My principal promotes leadership opportunities among teachers.	4.316	0.820	4.625	0.619
Q8 My principal ensures wide teacher participation in decision making around school improvement.	4.579	0.769	4.375	0.719
Q9 My principal is knowledgeable of best instructional practices for Hispanic English learners.	4.579	0.692	4.625	0.500
Q10 My principal believes teachers can be effective in helping all Hispanic English learners master grade level standards.	4.895	0.459	5	0
Q11 My principal sets high learning expectations for all students.	4.842	0.375	4.875	0.342
Q12 My principal ensures that all students are taught by high quality teachers.	4.684	0.582	4.813	0.544
Q13 My principal clearly defines standards for instructional practices to support the learning of Hispanic English learners.	4.632	0.597	4.25	0.775
Q14 My principal supports teachers when they are struggling to raise the achievement of Hispanic English learners.	4.368	0.761	4.75	0.577
Teacher Perception - Principal Roles				
Q15 It is the principal's responsibility to work with the teachers to ensure that all of their students achieve at a high level.	5.526	0.612	5.688	0.479
Q16 As a school we are making important strides toward increasing the achievement of English learners.	5.684	0.478	5.625	0.619
Q17 Working together, it is possible for the principal and teachers to change a low achieving school into a high achieving school.	5.789	0.419	5.875	0.342
Q18 My principal ensures intervention for Hispanic English learners is embedded into the school day.	5.211	0.855	5.313	0.793
Q19 I have many parents of Hispanic English learners attending parent-teacher conferences because of principal outreach to parents.	4.684	1.003	4.75	0.775
Teacher Understanding - Principal Support				
Q20 My principal provides resources to help staff improve their teaching for Hispanic English learners.	4.684	0.478	4.375	0.719
Q21 My principal encourages data use in planning for individual student needs.	4.895	0.459	4.500	0.516
Q22 My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement.	4.842	0.375	4.813	0.403
Q23 My principal participates in teacher planning meetings concerning the instruction of Hispanic English learners.	4	0.667	4.500	0.632
Q24 My principal suggests specific ideas to improve my instruction of Hispanic English learners.	4.158	0.765	4	1.095

Principals. Phase Two of the explanatory sequential design consisted of explaining the

survey results with qualitative interviews, connecting the quantitative results with the qualitative

data collection, displaying the results linking the survey results with the qualitative research questions, and interpreting the results to help explain the survey results with information from participants best reflected on the survey results. Capturing major themes was important in order to understand the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2015).

Using Dedoose, a web-based application for mixed methods research, interview transcripts, and memos were assigned to a project and coded. To carefully analyze the qualitative data gathered to answer the research questions, Dedoose helped to organize the research data, including text, audio, and spreadsheets. Participants were provided with the transcripts of interviews to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of data collected. Using a hierarchical coding frame (Appendix I) helped to organize the codes that arose from the survey responses and participants' interviews. Deductive coding was utilized under a framework analysis to code the themes that surfaced from participants' interviews and discussions. The terms "perceptions", "practices", and "behaviors" were selected from the research questions as predefined codes, under the theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership.

From the recording and organization of themes, the findings for this study were developed and arranged under the conceptual framework of this study. Table 3.8 represents the concepts organized under the theories framing this study. Noteworthy statements were selected to compose each participant's story (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). Two methodological approaches captured the stories of participants, portraiture - listening for a story

(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) and a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of their narratives.

Table 3.8 Themes Organized Under Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Construct	Theme

Cultural Growth Mindset Perceptions	• Principal as role model
	• Deep understanding of the culture of the learning community
	    • students
	    • parents
	    • teachers

Positive School Leadership Behaviors	• Strong belief in student achievement and success
	    o Growth Mindset
	• High level of trust
	• Building Relationships
	    • principal – teachers
	    • teachers – principal
	• Unwavering principal support

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership
 	
Practices
	• Vision
	    • Culture
	        • High learning expectations
	    • Climate
	• Professional Learning Communities
	    • Knowledgeable of standards
	    • Knowledgeable of effective instructional practices
	    • High degree of data collection, distribution / posting of data
	    • Supports collaborative work
	• Professional Development
	    • Learning leader
	    • Teachers

Internal Validity

The quality of this research design entailed minimizing errors and biases, including making inferences that are unfounded. Moreover, valid collection and organization of data, the analysis of data, and the writing of this study were interlinked with three important details:

1. utilizing multiple sources of evidence to ensure that all probabilities are studied,

2. maintaining a chain of evidence to make certain all explanations are considered, and

3. working closely with the participants of this case study to allow them to review the study (Yin, 2018).

In mixed methods research, validating data through the use of reliable procedures is essential for the study to be recognized as credible. Careful examination of the data involved determining inferences and contextual factors as revealed by the data. Findings reflected vital insights that advance research on equity and social justice, policy, and social science theory. Integration of the explanatory sequential design consisted of explaining the survey results with qualitative interviews, connecting the quantitative results with the qualitative data collection, displaying the results that link the survey results with the qualitative research questions, and interpreting the results to help explain the survey results with information from participants best reflected on the survey results. Deductive coding was utilized under a framework analysis to code the themes that surfaced from participants' interviews and discussions.

Positionality and Reflexivity

Positionality and reflexivity play a vital role in the researcher's own experience and demands an understanding of the relationship between the researcher and the research, including the effect of the researcher on the research. As a researcher, my position is likely to influence the study because I identify myself as Hispanic, and I may be too close to the subject to present results fairly and in an unbiased form. At the same time, my position as a Hispanic educator enabled the participants to speak frankly about their specific roles and their experiences with Hispanic English learners. Knowing that I have a connection with the topic under study, it is important that I remain unbiased. I attempted to limit this bias by interviewing principals who were recruited through an impartial process by communicating first with an Area Superintendent and following the District's policies and procedures to conduct research within RGUSD. I also

limited my potential bias by using multiple instruments, multiple data sources, and member-checking.

Summary

While the English Learner achievement gap is a well-researched topic, rethinking the interworking of school leadership opens the practice of elementary school principals to analysis, their belief systems and behaviors linked to the academic progress of Hispanic English learners.

This chapter presented salient elements of the research design and methodology, the research questions, as well as the limitations of the study. Mixed methods research demanded a lens that required a broader look at the findings of this study. The stories in Chapters Four and Five, detail how two principals chose to lead their schools, their beliefs and their desired effects for students and their communities. This analysis discusses and explains the statistical results by exploring participants' views in depth. The priority in this study was placed on the qualitative data, since the two phases are connected in the intermediate stage of this research (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Jang, McDougall, Pollon, Herbert, & Russell, 2008).

CHAPTER FOUR: EDMONTON ELEMENTARY

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of a basic explanatory sequential mixed methods design of two distinct phases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). It is a portraiture of the lived experiences of the actors at Edmonton Elementary (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). The data are organized using the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three – cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership – in order to answer the overarching research question guiding this story: How do the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership illuminate principals' ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

Edmonton Elementary School

Situated in a large multi-ethnic, inner-city community in the city of Mirada Bella, Clearwater Heights has become a home away from home to refugees and immigrants recently hailing from Afghanistan, Angola, Burma, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Mexico, Moldova, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Congo, Russia, and other countries (San Diego County Resettlement Agencies, 2020).

Edmonton Elementary, a K-5 school, is surrounded by local and fast-food restaurants, stores, car garages, and older homes protected by iron bars. Clearwater Heights is where Edmonton Elementary's (Edmonton) children live and are experiencing a school success story. Parents of children who enter Edmonton have a choice of two programs: a transitional bilingual program in Spanish, or a structured English immersion program. The school's mission is simple and clear, "To improve student achievement by building a professional learning community with

collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all."

Edmonton's teachers come from African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White ethnic backgrounds. They speak either English, English and Spanish, or English and Tagalog. With teaching experiences that range from 12 years to 35 years, teachers describe their work as having "good experiences," liking "what I do," "being fortunate to be teaching" at this school, a place that "feels like home," (Focus Group Discussion, Oct. 2, 2019) and a principal who describes the students as, "I think they're amazing!" (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal).

When compared to state and district yearly assessment results, Edmonton has outperformed California state and the school district on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Table 4.1 displays a three-year academic trend of the school's progress on the CAASPP in English Language Arts and Mathematics, and is organized into three subgroups: All students (ALL), English learners (ELS), and Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP).

Table 4.1 Edmonton Elementary Three Year Test Results on the CAASPP

	ELA ALL			ELA ELS			ELA RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
GRADE									
3	53.52%	60.72%	68.65%	54.72%	53.49%	37.50%	0.00%	85.71%	90.63%
4	50.00%	55.23%	59.21%	36.21%	35.71%	32.35%	86.67%	78.95%	89.66%
5	56.84%	58.89%	56.34%	30.24%	13.33%	14.29%	87.10%	80.44%	85.72%
TOTAL AVG	53.45%	58.28%	61.40%	40.39%	34.18%	28.05%	86.89%	81.70%	88.67%

	MATH ALL			MATH ELS			MATH RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
GRADE									
3	54.16%	64.29%	72.46%	56.60%	55.81%	42.31%	0.00%	90.48%	93.75%
4	41.76%	47.82%	58.22%	30.50%	26.67%	32.43%	93.34%	78.95%	86.21%
5	37.50%	46.74%	36.99%	18.19%	15.63%	8.70%	67.74%	63.05%	64.28%
TOTAL AVG	44.47%	52.95%	55.89%	35.10%	32.70%	27.81%	80.54%	77.49%	81.41%

Table 4.1 answers the question, "To what degree is the school principal influencing the progress of English learners?" To begin, the EL and RFEP data from the California Department of Education were disaggregated for school years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 for grades 3, 4, and 5. EL and RFEP data were situated side-by-side, given that the most proficient English learners are constantly progressing out of the EL category. The Edmonton data show ELs are progressing academically, are being reclassified under California educational guidelines, and are outperforming students in the "ALL" group. Table 4.1 also answers the question, "What is the school doing for ELs who remain in the EL category because of their lower proficiency (LTELs)?". I observed that the school begins with identification, data analysis, discussion, support, and intervention.

Evidence that the principal is a key player in this process surfaced during the Professional Learning Community meeting with the fourth and fifth grade teachers on September 27, 2019. Reclassification of English learners was a topic of discussion. Teachers were concerned with the

progress of Long-term English learners, and the school reclassification criteria. Dr. Mariscal reminded teachers that to be reclassified students "needed a Level 4 [on the ELPAC and] they also needed a SOLOM analysis." Students who required additional intervention, the principal stated, "That's what Terry has always done. He starts with the LTELs," (Observation of Principal, September 27, 2019). The effects of these discussions and decisions, carried out by Dr. Mariscal and Edmonton's teachers, were recognized in 2018 when the school received the California Distinguished School award from the California Department of Education for making "exceptional gains," (California Department of Education, 2018). On March 4, 2020 the school was featured in Mirada Bella's local news as a school that was exceeding academic expectations, "One Child at a Time."

Dr. Elena Mariscal

"There's always a reason."

Principal Background

Originally from London Acres (Pseudonym), California, Elena Mariscal (Pseudonym), Edmonton's principal was raised east of London Acres and obtained her bachelor's degree from a university in the city of Mirada Bella where she began her career at Rio Grande Unified School District (RGUSD). She advanced her career from being a teacher's aide, to teaching intern, classroom teacher, resource teacher, administrator, to obtaining a doctorate from a leading university in the city of Mirada Bella. It is at RGUSD where Dr. Mariscal has dedicated most of her 27 years as an educator.

Cultural Growth Mindset

Cultural growth mindset is grounded on growth mindset theory (Dweck, 2010; Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good & Dweck, 2006), and focuses on a positive self-concept and belief system. Culture is defined as behavioral patterns developed by people as participants in their cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003). I define cultural growth mindset as the broadening of an understanding of the mores, language, customs, and traditions of peoples originating from diverse cultures and heritages. A person with a cultural growth mindset considers English learners as linguistically gifted instead of linguistically deficient (Vargas, 2018). A person with a cultural growth mindset appreciates the richness and diversity of human qualities and culture, and is oriented toward valuing, affirming, and learning about others' cultures, assets, and abilities as well as their own. It is through this construct that I begin the narrative of Elena Mariscal and her work at Edmonton.

The Principal's Mindset and Leadership of Students: A Deep Understanding of Culture

A major theme that emerged early in analyzing the data, was the principal's deep understanding of students' culture. Thus, cultural growth mindset theory illuminates Dr. Mariscal's understanding and commitment to the students and families of Edmonton and her deep appreciation for the culture and traditions of Edmonton's children. Dr. Mariscal recalls that her difficult upbringing as a child growing up in a high-poverty community has significantly influenced her leadership role as the principal of Edmonton Elementary.

Demonstrating a keen understanding of the cultural challenges some students face, Dr. Mariscal realizes that culture cannot be separated from the child, "… I can't deny that some of our cultural beliefs also seep in," (Email, Elena Mariscal, Oct. 11, 2019) – her own cultural experiences as a Latina who was "born and raised in east London Acres … with a population of "99% Latino, low-income, ... filled with immigrants," as a leader who – because of her cultural

experience – embraces the qualities and assets Hispanic English learners bring to Edmonton. Affirming and valuing the cultural qualities students bring to Edmonton, Dr. Mariscal defines herself as a leader who has "strong feelings about what my Latino/English learner students are capable of, given the right supports." …That's why I'm at Edmonton" (Email, Elena Mariscal, Oct. 11, 2019).

During her interview, Dr. Mariscal compares the two instructional programs at Edmonton and recognizes the assets of language and culture as strengths Hispanic English learners bring to school. Considering how linguistically gifted Hispanic English learners are, she highlights the benefits of being bilingual and biliterate, pointing out that the students who are in the bilingual program are outperforming students who are in the English immersion program (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Through her direct interaction with students, Dr. Mariscal reminds them that "their parents are working hard to put food on the table, pay rent" and the importance of making excellent choices because "in the future it is our job to take care of our parents" and it will not be possible "without a good education which leads to a good career," (Email, Elena Mariscal, Oct. 11, 2019). As a successful Latina leader, principal, and role model, Dr. Mariscal reminds students of her story as a child growing up, "I let them know that I am very proud of the fact that on the day that my mom needs me and my sister to take care of her, we are … ready to do that because we … have advanced education and great careers (Email, Elena Mariscal, Oct. 11, 2019). Dr. Mariscal's passion for Edmonton's students' success is highlighted during the focus group teacher discussion. Teachers enthusiastically talked about their principal's cultural growth mindset and her practice of listening to "all stakeholders."

Nuances of the conversation are captured during the focus group discussion on October 2, 2019. Terry, the school's resource teacher commented, "I believe, with the students, she comes from a place like the students. She talks about her childhood in London Acres, so she

understands the families and the students here. What they come with and what they're going through and what they can achieve. And she believes." Terry continues, "because she achieved herself and she, ... expects the best ... as students plan for college and career," (Terry, Resource Teacher). Janna joins in, "And she believes that they can." (Janna)

Dr. Mariscal's leadership persona is distinguished by her beliefs and practices as described by her teachers when they identified instances Dr. Mariscal supported them when issues arose related to parents and students. Janna recalled a time when Dr. Mariscal took an interest in a child after meeting with her and a parent of a student who was struggling. She relates, "Dr. Mariscal took it upon herself to meet with the student and, … take an interest in her and explained to her that she could do it. And she did need to make an effort. And then after that, when the student came back, … her effort improved. And, so she was able to make the difference for that student. Karen adds, "[S]he's always willing to listen to the parent and listen to the teacher, and … come up with the solution." Of note, on the LfLQ-T, Question 4 – My principal listens to teachers' ideas as a way to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners – Dr. Mariscal received a high rating from her teachers (M=4.632, SD=0.597), indicating a strong teacher belief in Dr. Mariscal's acute ability to observe and listen to the teachers and the parents while maintaining students' interests as the most important consideration.

Dr. Mariscal's passion and appreciation for the children of Edmonton is summed up in her own words, "What I do know from personal experience and 27 years of being an educator is that our Latino/EL students are capable of greatness. Their English learner status is not a deficit … it is an ASSET because it means they will have TWO languages! That's why I am tickled when I see our bilingual program students perform as well as they do" (Email, Elena Mariscal, Oct. 11, 2019).

The Socio-emotional Well-being of Students

A second theme that emerged was the principal's recognition that to support the school's diverse student population, attention needed to be given to their socio-emotional well-being. A walk through the campus reveals gentle reminders to students of movement and voice levels displayed in the walkway with vibrant messages on the school playground that read, "Believe in Yourself," "Persevere," "#CREATE," and "Empathy." These messages counter the challenges faced by Edmonton's children and their stories of "sadness" and "trauma," the lack of exposure to language as English learners, and students' socioeconomic backgrounds (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). In her resolve to lead a school where children thrive and experience multiple opportunities to grow and learn, Elena Mariscal characterizes Edmonton's students as "working really hard" and "giving their best efforts" despite the difficulties they encounter at home. This insight is in alignment with Dweck's (Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good & Dweck, 2006) growth mindset theory that effort is an essential component of life success.

Within the complexity of children's lives, Dr. Mariscal understands students' need to be loved, "the importance of resiliency" and the value of empathizing with them, "when children make poor choices or have a difficult time, I empathize with them and love them, but I also know the importance of resiliency for our particular students. If they're having a difficult time, I want them to pick themselves up, dust themselves off, learn from the situation and move on. 'No probrecito' mentality." (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Her transcendent practice is described by a teacher as, "… she understands the families and the students here. What they come with and what they're going through and what they can achieve," (Focus Group Discussion, Terry, Resource Teacher). During the focus group discussion, teachers enthusiastically talked about their principal's cultural growth mindset and her practice of listening to "all stakeholders." Tara made a comment about Dr. Mariscal,

> [She d]efinitely comes across as very inclusive. She's definitely willing to hear all stakeholders' involvement when it comes to actually impacting our second language students. She's also shared her own personal experiences privately. … And you can hear the passion, you can hear her commitment.

Tara goes on to point out that learning expectations "are consistent as educators [Bilingual and English Transition Program] and the rigor is apparent," (Focus Group Discussion, Oct. 2, 2019). Elena Mariscal is sensitive to the challenges of childhood trauma in this learning community. During our first interview Dr. Mariscal explained, "Sometimes we have to be reminded about all … of the challenges associated with high poverty because you get comfortable," (Transcript #1, Elena Mariscal). She remarks, "[I]f I'm dealing with the challenges of … children who have difficult things going on at home, … we try to be as nosy as possible to fight, to get to the root of the problem. And as a team … we work on how can we best help students," (Transcript #1, Elena Mariscal).

At the school level, Dr. Mariscal sensed a need for teacher training around trauma informed practices. She explained, "I wanted to start with [training] … to remind people about the kind of trauma our children are coming to school with," (Transcript #1, Elena Mariscal). As she listened and observed, Dr. Mariscal noticed a need to address "climate issues." These were confirmed by the results of the California Healthy Kids Survey. Results showed a disconnect between how students felt at school and how staff perceived how students were feeling. Dr. Mariscal reached out to the teachers to develop a team that would lead the school in a conversation around building positive relationships with students. A team of teachers volunteered to participate in a committee that focused on developing a positive response system, through restorative practices, in an effort to build a strong learning community with positive behavior supports for students. Dr. Mariscal recalls a meeting she had with the leaders of the school climate committee:

> [W]e really zoomed in on what kids were saying. … [T]he school connectedness factor was decreasing. … It was a committee decision to begin schoolwide restorative practice lessons once a week. …[W]e also started the staff off by providing them with five premade restorative circle lesson plans. … The first five weeks would already be done for them. … [W]e provided them with … the handouts that … would then support them doing their own restorative circles moving forward.

As a discerning leader, Elena Mariscal took positive action to ensure students received emotional support. A team was organized to lead the vision. Teachers received critical training, and deeper learning for teachers was planned throughout the school year. Resources were provided to teachers as they took on this task. When I attended the first teacher meeting of the school year, on August 21, Dr. Mariscal strategically opened the meeting with a restorative practice. Teachers were guided through a breathing exercise and moments of reflection before discussing data and plans for the new school year.

Climate committee teacher leaders announced the school would continue with community circles, sharing ideas, commitments, and a round "mat" children could sit around. Teachers were excited that lessons had been prepared for them to kick off the new school year, and funds were available to cover the cost for the "mat." While this discussion was taking place, I observed Dr. Mariscal step aside to sit down as she listened and observed the teacher discussion, noting in my field notes "a gesture of respect." She waited. Once the teacher leaders were done, Dr. Mariscal stood up and continued the meeting.

Principal's Mindset and Leadership of Families

A cultural growth mindset toward families is especially critical in immigrant communities. While affirming parents and recognizing the challenges they face, Dr. Mariscal turns their attention toward the value they bring – as parents – to the lives of their children and to the school community. A child of immigrants, Dr. Mariscal's unmistakable desire to see the

children of Edmonton succeed, is a message she relays to Edmonton's parents through her personal journey growing up, and her parents' support for her education. She relates:

> [A] lot of times the parents are like, well, I can't help because, you know, they don't speak English or … it's too hard. … They have very limited education. I tell them, 'My mom did too. She has an eighth-grade education from Tijuana, [Mexico] and to this day … does not speak English. And yet she produced a daughter who's a doctor and another daughter who ... has several degrees including a masters.' So, … I say, 'You know what my mom did? She just made sure I was doing my homework. And she, when I was really little, she would read to me little Spanish books and that's it. But she, was aware that, 'Did ... you do your homework?' … And … my mom, … 'even though my mom didn't understand a lick of English, my dad … does speak English …, she was at every parent conference, … all the way through high school. … [I]t was embarrassing to have my parents go to open house, but there she was, even though she didn't speak the language.' So that's all you have to do. Just be there. Just be there. And … I share that with them [Edmonton's parents] that ... anything is possible and, … I'm evidence of that. (Interview #2, Elena Mariscal).

Acknowledging the reality students of Edmonton face problems at home, Dr. Mariscal is deeply engaged with the community. For this reason, she emphasizes the importance of having children attend school. During Family Fridays, the clear message to parents is, "Get your kids here. … If you're sending your kids to school, we're going to get the job done. I need them here and I … need you ... to just check their work. Just make sure that they're doing the work," (Interview #2, Elena Mariscal).

Her passion for the community was evidenced during a critical conversation with a new staff member. "I know my community" she expressed to the staff member who joined Edmonton in August 2019. She made her expectations clear, "[C]ommunication is very important to me. …[Y]ou communicate with our community," she tells the new staff member. Dr. Mariscal's expectations were not well received. The new staff member perceived Elena Mariscal was "too responsive to parents," and was "too involved," (Interview #2, Elena Mariscal). Hoping this staff member would have a change of heart, Dr. Mariscal contemplates, "A school impacts the community, the mentality," (Interview #2, Elena Mariscal). Dr. Mariscal's dedication to the

Edmonton families is also evidenced by a high teacher rating on Question 3 – My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts (M=4.421, SD=0.507). Teachers understood their principal to be a strong leader who built a community of learning. At Edmonton Elementary, one does feel a sense of belonging, of bonding, of unity, of "familia."

The first impression a visitor gets upon entering Edmonton's administrative office is a feeling of friendliness as the staff smiles and asks, "How may I help you?" A round table invites the visitor to sit and hold discussion with other visitors while waiting to be attended. This is the setting where new families are welcomed to Edmonton Elementary. Investing quality time to interview parents of students new to the school community is a practice Dr. Mariscal follows with fidelity. A family interview checklist (Appendix J) consisting of 12 items to gather important information "right away" (Interview #2, Elena Mariscal) is a tool Elena Mariscal uses in order to support the child. Families requiring resources are connected to services and teachers are informed of the incoming student's academic needs. Not only does Dr. Mariscal optimize this moment as a window of opportunity to understand family dynamics, communicate the school's success and her academic expectations, this is a moment to honor and acknowledge the family and the child.

Celebrating literacy and student success occurs every month. Family Friday mornings at Edmonton are bustling with activity as parents visit, remain on campus, and students rush to class. Outside the auditorium door, information tables are set up for the visiting community. One needs to visit the campus on Family Fridays to witness the support of parents. Parents begin to fill the auditorium at 7:30 a.m. where 70 to 80 parents and guardians wait for Dr. Mariscal to provide important school and community information, including student achievement data,

before they are dismissed to their children's classrooms where they will read to, and with, their children.

On November 1, 2019, I observed the well-attended Family Friday parent meeting that started at 7:55 a.m. There was a blending of cultures in the auditorium. Young couples, grandparents, Asian, African American, White, and Latino families filled the auditorium. There was no translator; however, not a second was lost as Elena Mariscal led and facilitated the meeting in English and Spanish. Parents were trained to access reading and math programs online and were shown school-wide progress data. Once the meeting was over, Dr. Mariscal remained in the room to respond to parents' questions. She guided, assisted and showed parents how to access their child's account online. "Value" and "respect" epitomized her posture as she leaned toward the parents to answer their questions showing them how to access their child's account. She was in no hurry. It was clear parents were her priority.

Once done, she stepped out into the lunch arbor where eager children and proud parents waited to take a picture with Dr. Mariscal. It is no wonder that on Question 3 of the LfLQ-T – My principal works to create ways to involve parents of Hispanic English learners – teachers understood their principal to be a strong leader in building a community where parents were involved. Dr. Mariscal received a high rating, (M=4.579, SD=0.597). Through her strong cultural growth mindset, Elena Mariscal understood the needs of her community. Unhesitatingly, she affirmed the community's struggles, yet focused on the strengths of the community, including their heritages and languages. Dr. Mariscal modeled a strong message – through her actions – of belief and high expectations for the children.

Positive School Leadership

Scholars have recently turned attention to the need for a more strengths-based approach to school leadership. The theory of positive school leadership (Murphy & Louis, 2018), calls

63

attention to a need for schools to distinguish themselves as learning communities where effective school leaders influence their followers – the school community – through their demonstration of positive qualities and attributes. In the previous section, data show how the principal focused on the cultural strengths of students. In this section, the focus is on the critical role of trust. The expectation that teachers can successfully teach children living in socio-economically challenged neighborhoods, and the importance of building strong relationships among principal and teachers focused on strengths. In the paragraphs that follow, the principal's positive leadership actions with students and parents are identified.

Principal's Positive Leadership Actions – Students

A third theme that emerged was the principal's strong belief in the students' abilities to achieve to high levels. Praising the hard work and effort exerted by the children, the principal strengthened the school vision and culture of high achievement. Elena Mariscal desired deeply that teachers and students would love coming to Edmonton. Laced with transparent vulnerability and earnestly desiring that her staff and students enjoy their experience at Edmonton, Elena Mariscal gives voice to her thoughts, "I believe that … a happy teacher is a better teacher. … [T]he better they come to work, the better, the happier the kids will be. And ultimately that's what I want. I want happy kids because I don't want kids to come to school afraid of their teachers either. So, I need to make sure their teachers are happy to come to work." During her interview, Dr. Mariscal takes a moment to reflect, "I truly have … loved all the kids, but I have to say that at Edmonton, it really is such a sweet, sweet campus, … and they're very hardworking. Clearly, they're very hardworking and I think they're amazing for that," (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Not only does Dr. Mariscal want "happy kids," she celebrates their successes.

During the focus group discussion, teachers talked about Dr. Mariscal's positive messages to the students of Edmonton. Karen said Dr. Mariscal, "definitely does believe in them and she believes they can achieve. She's willing to celebrate that. … So, … every little step counts with her." Tara describes Dr. Mariscal's belief in the children, her expectations, and her commitment to providing students with the means to develop successful skills, "she makes sure that the students have the tools …[and] she does tell them. 'I believe in you; I expect it of you, and this is what we're going to do to make sure that you have the tools necessary to make that an outcome.'" The LfLQ-T teacher responses to Question 11 substantiate a strong teacher belief that the principal held and set high learning expectations for all students "Always," and "Most of the time," (M=4.842, SD=0.375). Janna describes how the principal demonstrated her expectations to the students through her positivity,

> Another example is when we have our annual ... awards or a celebration of the students' test results and each child is celebrated, and they receive a certificate or some kind of award. Before she calls each student up individually, she presents the whole school data and she explains … how we're doing and how we are at the top of our Cluster [of schools]. And … she says, 'Oh, and we can do it again. Right?' And she tells them, 'Yes, I know. I believe. You know I believe that you can do this. We can do it again. ... You know, you're capable and smart.' And so, she tells them directly that she knows that they can achieve.

Dr. Mariscal's clear and strong belief in the success of the students of Edmonton translated into high academic achievement. Her influential belief was transmitted to the families through the relationships she built with the community. Character has a lot to do with the respectful manner Dr. Mariscal treated the Edmonton parent community.

Principal's Positive Leadership Actions – Families

Building a community of learning begins with building relationships, the fourth theme that was manifested. On Question 1 of the LfLQ-T – My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts, (M=4.421, SD=0.507)— teachers

perceived Dr. Mariscal to be a leader who built strong community relationships. This datum corroborates with the observed data. At Edmonton, parents of incoming students receive an initial invitation from Dr. Mariscal to meet with the principal. This gesture encourages conversation. It is an opportunity for the principal to welcome the family; to begin a positive relationship with the new parents. Dr. Mariscal describes her actions, "... I let them know … [that] I worked at about 12 different campuses in 27 years, and I love all of them [the students] (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Extending support to new families and students facilitates their integration into the Edmonton school community.

A school tradition, monthly Family Fridays have become a platform, and a priority, for Dr. Mariscal. On Family Friday mornings, parents are invited to join their children in the classroom to read. Once a month, parents gather in the school auditorium to hear Dr. Mariscal present school data and deliver parent trainings. She informs parents and empowers them with resources to support their children at home. On the days I observed the school principal, I sensed a deep longing within Dr. Mariscal to offer the best programs for students and their parents. On those days, challenges beyond the principal's control impeded some of her well laid plans. Resilient and flexible, Dr. Mariscal navigated through the problems, managed meetings, engaged with parents, celebrated students, and supported staff. Uppermost, for Dr. Mariscal, was strengthening the relationship between the parent community and the school through her visibly positive interaction with parents.

Principal's Positive Leadership Actions – Teachers / Staff

Positive leadership actions influence the school community to respond, perform, and meaningfully contribute toward the success of the school. It should be noted that of the themes that surfaced in the data, the word "trust" appeared 31 times. On August 21, 2019, "trust" was an element that emerged during the teacher meeting. There was a moment when Elena Mariscal

interrupted herself to express her deep trust in her teachers. "You guys know exactly what you're doing!," she inserted (Observation of Elena Mariscal, August 21, 2019). During our interview while referring to her teachers, Dr. Mariscal explains, "… I will say that … coming into this school, these teachers did already have a very strong foundation ... with their planning and their data analysis. ... So, my philosophy as a leader is to … start off from a place of trust. 'I trust you guys. You are all professionals,'" (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). High trust was also represented in the results of the LfLQ-T Question 4 – My principal develops a caring atmosphere built on trust (M=4.526, SD=0.772), and teachers' comments. During the focus group discussion, teachers perceived their principal was supportive and offered examples describing a high level of trust.

Terry expressed his point of view,

> [S]he trusts all of us as educators and she believes, and she tells us, and she believes that we are really good at what we do.

José added,

> [S]he's real, she's honest. .... I appreciate that about her, …[a]nd I think that's why we kind of gained her trust as a staff. And I think also she … gained our trust, because there's that type of communication.

Tara continued the discussion,

> I can definitely say that I appreciate Dr. Mariscal. She has empowered us even more so, again, with those key words, trust and validates the works and the effort. That it's a commitment. Education is not for the faint at heart.

Karen voiced her feelings,

> I appreciate the fact that she just trusts us. She's trusting. … She's not willy nilly. She's very ... decisive. She knows what she believes and she's not going to veer from that. She … is determined. She knows what works.

Teachers held a strong belief that Dr. Mariscal trusted teachers' abilities to instruct the children of Edmonton. During her first interview, Dr. Mariscal said of her teachers, "to me, trust

is extremely important. … I don't think that …there's [anything] more important than trust and having faith," (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Additionally, Dr. Mariscal's orientation toward valuing and affirming teachers' ideas was evident on the LfLQ-T, Question 2 – My principal listens to teachers' ideas as a way to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners. Results demonstrated strong teacher belief of Dr. Mariscal to be a leader who built community by listening to teachers' ideas to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners, (M=4.632, SD=0.597). For example, Tara commented, "[S]he takes our input and she values that, and that, you know, ... It's a team effort here." Janna described the essence of "value" as, "She takes our input and she values that and gives us an opportunity to learn how to use a resource and, if we don't feel comfortable, she values, like Tara said, our opinion."

The principal's trust in teachers' abilities was reflected in teachers' high rating of the principal on Question 13: My principal believes teachers can be effective in helping all Hispanic English learners master grade level standards, (M=4.895, SD=0.459). Thinking back to an incident involving a parent of a Hispanic English learner, Tara spoke of a moment where a parent requested a meeting and Dr. Mariscal demonstrated her trust in the teacher. Tara relates her story:

> I had a student in my classroom who was challenged by the work … shares with her mother a very different view of what was happening in the classroom. … We came together … the mom, the parents, myself, the child with Dr. M, and listened to the mother. … She does listen to the mother's ... concerns obviously. But after sharing what I had done, Dr. Mariscal says, 'You know, I truly value Mrs. Ray as a teacher,' and for her to speak up and to listen to 'This is the work that we've done in the class. These are the lessons that we've done' and talk to the child and the mother about, 'These are some of the concerns that are impacting your child, which makes it difficult for them to acquire the skills necessary.' Dr. Mariscal brought that to her attention. ...[S]he was that person who could say it and the parents would be receptive, perhaps more than they were when I had said it to them as well. But again, to hear her say exactly what I already said was just validation and confirmation and empowered me to do the work in my class. She

didn't take away from the work that I'm doing with that student. I was still the person that, you know, who's working with that child day to day and I felt empowered because she believed in the work that I was doing and how I was doing [it]. It wasn't questioned.

Dr. Mariscal's high level of trust in her teachers united them to rally around the vision of the school.

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership

As a strengths-based instructional leader, the school principal builds a positive climate of achievement thus influencing the school's practices and decisions motivating teachers to teach and students to learn. Effective instructional leaders maintain a clear focus on student learning. Affirming the assets teachers bring to the school, instructional leaders engage in collaborative discussion around high learning expectations for all students. They create positive conditions where teachers and principal interact to study data, plan instruction and professional development that translate into student achievement. In this section, the focus is placed on the vital role of the principal as a strengths-based instructional leader. Significant themes that surfaced from the data showed the principal influenced the school culture and climate with a vision of high learning expectations for all students.

As a strengths-based instructional leader, key elements involving the instructional day were intentional decisions made by Elena Mariscal that motivated the achievement of the school community. The practice of collecting data surfaced 33 times. The principal dedicated herself to collecting essential data to support the teachers and students, she engaged in collaborative conversations with teachers to ensure students' academic needs were being met, and she supported teachers in meaningful ways.

Principal Strengths-based Instructional Leadership that Influences Student Learning

A clear focus on student learning is one of the markers of improving schools. At Edmonton, the school principal held a firm and unwavering belief on the importance of preserving the instructional day and safeguarding student learning. Her commitment to this practice was expressed in an email to me,

> At Edmonton I/we try to protect instructional time as much as possible … [W]e have to prioritize. Given the particular needs of our students and what we know they need to be able to do when they promote, we have to stay focused and oftentimes this means having to say no. Ultimately, our students have to be able to be at grade level in the basics and we only have 6 ½ hours a day to teach several content areas (Email, Elena Mariscal, Oct. 11, 2019).

Dr. Mariscal believed teacher time should be invested and optimized in preparing for student instruction and teaching. This was evident during her first interview when she explained, "[T]he truth is I need teachers planning good lessons. But those lessons need to be based on student needs, data. Collecting data and reports can be so time consuming. I don't see how the teachers would have time to do both … the whole data thing plus plan lessons. So … 'I'll do the data part for you. I will bring the data to you, … and then we'll look for trends and patterns that are going to help you get to the nitty gritty,' which is planning effective lessons" (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Teacher understanding of the principal as a strengths-based instructional leader, as generated by the LfLQ-T survey Question 9, showed teachers perceived the principal was knowledgeable of best instructional practices for Hispanic English learners, (M=4.579, SD=0.692). Janna, a Spanish bilingual teacher, expressed, during the focus group discussion, "[S]he's knowledgeable. I feel like she could come into my class and teach a lesson and I would learn something from her," (Focus Group Discussion, Oct. 2, 2019). As Edmonton's instructional leader, Elena Mariscal set apart instructional time and protected teachers and

70

students from distractions. The principal was strategic about making instructional decisions that supported student learning.

Collecting facts, details, and information are practices Dr. Mariscal brings to Edmonton. Stating succinctly what her motive, purpose and intentions are for collecting data, she says, "The better we know our students, the better we know what they need," (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Survey results on the LfLQ-T, Question 21 – My principal encourages data use in planning for individual student needs – show that teachers strongly believed in their principal's support of data use to plan for students' academic needs, (M=4.895, SD=0.459). An "avid user of data management systems," Dr. Mariscal understands the importance of gathering data. "Honestly I feel like it's so important to … look at the data and what the data is telling us, but also to look at children historically." She takes me to the data wall in her office and describes a data report, "And so it's this big document and I color code it because I think it's friendlier to the eyes to see the color coding and it helps you see trends and patterns more easily" (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). At Edmonton, knowing students' academic needs is having significant results. Concerned with finding out "Why?" students may be falling short, leads Dr. Mariscal to probe deeper into issues that may be affecting the learning of children. This practice facilitates informed decisions that encourage children to succeed. For this reason, when Elena Mariscal attends teacher collaboration meetings to discuss student concerns she inquires:

> Where's the data to show how much they've grown since kindergarten? ... I want to get as much data … as possible so that I can bring a student profile report where I can pull data going back to kindergarten and not just the last eight weeks. … [I]t's so important to look at trends and patterns of not just how much has the child learned in eight weeks, but how much have they learned over all these years? Did we see a spike in first grade and then a slowdown in second grade? … What's going on with this child? (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal).

Dr. Mariscal was deliberate about protecting instruction, and collecting data. She was purposeful and conscious to gather information that would shed light on the needs of

students. Support for teachers motivated them to plan excellent lessons that resulted in academic achievement for students.

Principal's Strengths-based Instructional Leadership that Influences Teachers

I had an opportunity to observe Dr. Mariscal lead a Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting with the fourth and fifth grade teachers on September 27, 2019. Items on the agenda included 1) student progress, 2) English language development, and 3) teacher training on the new online instruction program. The scene I describe captures the principal in action as she supports the collaborative work of teachers, encourages teachers to use data, and participates in discussion with teachers concerning the instruction and progress of Hispanic English learners. The discussion centered on student achievement and progress, beginning with a focus on students who were not making progress. As teachers named students, they also expressed a concern over students' home environment. My field notes read,

Atmosphere: Teachers are comfortable - talking openly.

Principal: taking notes looking at 2014 scores.

Principal: listening to teachers, "He's [student] in fourth grade."

Teacher: He began to improve using text features.

Principal: He came in the middle of the school year. The student has an IEP and a history of being in the District.

Teacher: The student has a low reading level.

One of the highest ratings, Elena Mariscal received from teachers on the LfLQ-T was in the area of collaboration to improve student achievement, Question 22 – My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement, (M=4.895, SD=0.375). She was familiar with students' academic and family history. As teachers called out student names, she was reading each student's history. Dr. Mariscal provided teachers with "lots of data," I wrote.

The principal's sense of urgency was manifested at this meeting, substantiating the results of Question 15 on the LfLQ-T – It is the principal's responsibility to work with the teachers to ensure that all of their students achieve at a high level, (M=5.526, SD=0.612).

During discussion regarding English learners, Dr. Mariscal showed concern over ELPAC assessment results in Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. Noting how students scored and the demands of the assessment, she says, "The Listening scores are low. The way listening is tested, they have to listen, then wait." Teachers read their data, named students, and made comments such as "newcomer," "they're pretty close," "big concern," while the principal listened and took notes. Teachers wondered if socio-emotional challenges were affecting student progress as the principal supplied background information, for example, "new to Edmonton, not new to state," and "parent is very involved." Details regarding students' needs were discussed, including medical concerns and support for students. Manifested at this PLC was Dr. Mariscal's practice of participating and supporting teachers to plan instruction of Hispanic English learners. In the LfLQ-T, Question 23 – My principal participates in teacher planning meetings concerning the instruction of Hispanic English learners, teachers recognized this support, (M=4, SD=0.667). Addressing effective curriculum for English learners, and the focus on English language development (ELD), the principal suggested teachers try the ELD lessons in the newly adopted English language arts program. "See how it feels," she said. A teacher chimes in, "I don't like it. It's too separate from what we're doing." Another teacher commented, "We do need to use it for ELA and SLA (Spanish language arts)." Dr. Mariscal gives the teachers choice and tells teachers, "If it's working for you and if we need to revisit the conversation next month, then okay." She goes on to say, "It's not about a program. It's about what works for kids." Her comment brings me back to her email of October 11, 2019. She writes, "I feel that principals need to meet their teachers at their point of need just as we expect them to do that for their

students. We also have to consider their strengths and what they value. Based on these things, I decide on my approach," (Email, Elena Mariscal, Oct. 11, 2019).

Time was set aside to allow teachers to navigate and understand the new online instructional program. Dr. Mariscal was guiding the team corporately and working with teachers individually. I noticed teachers were seated with open laptops and a copy of their students' test results. Dr. Mariscal had individual class results ready for the teachers and passed them out. Seated with an Excel spreadsheet in her hands demonstrating student data in English language arts and mathematics, Dr. Mariscal guided the teachers through the process of understanding assessment results gathered from an assessment and instruction program the school was planning to adopt. Teachers sat engrossed on the computer screen while synthesizing the data on their laptops as they studied the results of the adaptive assessments students had recently taken. As Dr. Mariscal worked with the teachers, a teacher commented, "The kids really like it," while another remarked "Kids are taking forever." The principal continued, "It's kind of cool that [the program] does this," as she takes the teachers to an individual student report and shows teachers where to find the "red flag." The team looks at students' math results. Discussion focuses on differentiation, teaching – next steps, tools for instruction and lesson plans.

During this PLC, I observed the principal interrupt her training to help a teacher with the program. She assisted teachers as reported on the LfLQ-T Q17 - Teacher perception of their principal's role showed teachers "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" - when teachers work together with their principal, they can transform a low achieving school can be transformed into a high achieving school, (M=5.789, SD 0.419). I also noticed serious concentration around the table. The principal was supportive of teachers. She worked one-on-one with teachers needing assistance. Teachers were supporting each other. I found myself writing, "strong instructional

leader," "excited about data." The excitement was contagious within the group as teachers studied student progress data.

Principal's Strengths-based Instructional Leadership that Influences Parents

As a strengths-based instructional leader, Dr. Mariscal shared and placed high trust and confidence in teachers' abilities to communicate the instructional program and learning expectations to parents. She described her teachers as, "I think the teachers here are very good about communicating with parents. …I feel that the teachers have done an excellent job of keeping parents informed about … student progress," (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). In her email of October 11, Dr. Mariscal referred to herself as a leader who walked beside the teachers, to nudge them forward encouragingly." Dr. Mariscal saw herself as a "partner," "a liaison." She believed, "I don't need to get in their way." Instead, she supported teachers with timely data utilized by teachers during teacher conferences, a leadership action that was appreciated by teachers.

Communication of the school's progress is also important to Dr. Mariscal. Creating ways to involve the parents of Hispanic English learners, Dr. Mariscal feels it is essential to notify parents of the yearly CAASPP and ELPAC assessment results. She organizes a parent workshop for parents and provides them with an opportunity to learn about, and engage in, dialogue regarding instructional strategies and school practices that are making a positive impact in the classroom. Dr. Mariscal utilizes this workshop to explain the learning trends surfacing from the data. Contrasting this meeting with Family Fridays, the annual assessment results workshop is not as well attended. Dr. Mariscal explains, every year I'll have a parent workshop ... around the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment System, also known as the CAASPP) results and the ELPAC results and … about a dozen people will show up" (Interview #2, Elena Mariscal). Despite the low turnout, Dr. Mariscal maximizes every opportunity to inform the community

about the outstanding progress students are making at all community meetings. While I was on the Edmonton campus, I noticed the data prominently displayed outside of the cafeteria door. Dr. Mariscal's strengths-based instructional leadership influenced parents directly during her face to face meetings with parents and indirectly through the leadership she distributed to teachers who communicated directly with parents.

Summary: Principal as Role Model for Students, Parents and Staff

Chapter Four, presented a portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) of school principal, Elena Mariscal, Edmonton Elementary School. The data were organized under the conceptual framework presented earlier to answer the research question: How do the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership illuminate principals' ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners? As discussed in this chapter, the principal served as a role model for students, parents and staff in three significant and consequential ways: through a cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership.

Cultural Growth Mindset

Several significant themes emerged from the data. The principal's deep understanding of students' culture was embodied in who she was as a leader. Using the lens of cultural growth mindset theory, this chapter highlighted the principal's understanding of, and dedication to, the students and families of Edmonton. An equally important theme that surfaced, was the principal's understanding that the school's diverse student population needed attention and support with their socio-emotional well-being.

While affirming parents in an immigrant community of diverse cultures, the principal recognized the cultural challenges parents faced. Through a cultural growth mindset lens, the

principal understood parents' values and the attributes they brought to the school. The leader understood the importance of welcoming new families and their children. Immigrant parents were encouraged to see possibilities, not the impossibilities.

Positive School Leadership

As a positive school leader, the principal desired students and teachers to have a memorable school experience. She had a strong belief in teacher quality and teacher abilities to impact students. The principal encouraged and praised student hard work and effort. Student academic success was celebrated.

Building relationships with the community was a priority for the principal. She was strategically visible as a welcoming school leader. She spent time with new families to convey a message that children were loved, and families would be supported. Positive leadership actions that motivated the teachers and staff was the high level of trust the principal demonstrated, the support she offered, and the dignity and respect she displayed toward her staff.

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership

The principal held an unwavering belief on the importance of protecting student learning and safeguarding the instructional day. She also held high expectations for student learning and achievement. As instructional leader, the principal engaged teachers and supported their collaborative work, she modeled, trained and encouraged teachers to use data to inform instruction. The principal also participated in discussion with teachers concerning instruction and the progress of Hispanic English learners. Among the many outreaches the principal organized for parents at Edmonton, a yearly practice was the reporting of CAASPP and ELPAC data to parents. Presented as a workshop, Dr. Mariscal engaged parents to learn about the school's yearly results and learning trends on the CAASPP and ELPAC Assessments.

CHAPTER FIVE: GALVESTON HILL SCHOOL

Introduction

A portraiture of the lived experiences of the actors at Galveston Hill School (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997), is organized using the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three – cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and instructional leadership. The findings of a basic explanatory sequential mixed methods design of two distinct phases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) are presented in this chapter. The data answer the research question guiding this study: How do the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and instructional leadership illuminate principals' ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

Galveston Hill School

In the city of Mirada Bella, the neighborhood of Galveston Hill (Pseudonym) is considered a highly desirable location to live in. The median age of residents in this neighborhood is 34. The median household income is $67,456, and 51.9% represents the number of families where both parents contribute to the household income. In this community, 22.2% of residents are foreign-born. Private school enrollment is 45.1%, yet within this neighborhood, Galveston Hill School (Pseudonym) is a public school reaching out to students where 81.5% students are eligible for free lunch, and 24.7% live below poverty level.

Of the teachers who completed the teacher survey, 50% were White, 43% were Hispanic/Latino, and 7% were Asian, and their teaching experiences ranged from 1 year to 23 years. Teachers spoke English, English and Spanish, or English, Spanish and French.

Samuel Enero

"Love the Kids."

Principal Background

Born in the state of Florida and raised in California, Samuel Enero (Pseudonym) is a Hispanic / Latino school leader with a Spanish and Mexican background who has dedicated his career as an educator to communities like Galveston Hill. Samuel Enero started his career at Galveston Hill as the school's vice principal during the 2016-2017 school year and began his tenure as principal in 2017-2018. Coming to Galveston Hill, a community rich in diversity and culture, Mr. Enero embraced the challenges of the community. He became the model for parents and teachers of a leader who believed in students' abilities to succeed academically if they worked hard.

When Samuel Enero came to Galveston Hill School during the 2016-2017 school year as the school's assistant principal, the school was facing academic challenges. A change in leadership offered Mr. Enero an opportunity to step up as the school's principal. Since taking over as the school's lead-learner, Mr. Enero has been instrumental in transforming the thinking of failure to a belief that loving kids and teaching them to develop a growth mindset will translate into academic success.

Although Galveston Hill is a K-8 school, this research is focused on grades 3, 4, and 5. Galveston Hill's three-year CAASPP data shows promise. Table 5.1 shows the EL and RFEP data from the California Department of Education were disaggregated for school years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. Mr. Enero began as school principal in August 2017. Table 5.1 displays a three-year academic trend of the school's progress on the CAASPP in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Table 5.1 shows the progress of English learners since the principal assumed leadership of the school. A partial answer to the question, "What is the school

doing for ELs who remain in the EL category because of their lower proficiency (LTELs)?" is revealed in identifying the practices Mr. Enero has undertaken since becoming the school's principal in 2017.

During my first interview, Mr. Enero acknowledged the academic challenges of the community and the importance of providing structure for students. Another important decision Mr. Enero made with the school community was to focus on teaching reading across the grades. Mr. Enero expressed, "In professional development, … we focused specifically on guided reading last year. So instead of bouncing around from guided reading to math to independent reading and back and forth, we wanted to stay on a … [professional development] path that … we were going to keep working on until we felt very effective at it [before moving] on to something else" (Interview #1, Samuel Enero). Mr. Enero made an all-important decision to continue concentrating on guided reading instruction. Maintaining the school's focus on reading, was central to sustaining the progress students were making.

Table 5.1 Galveston Hill School Three-Year Results on the CAASPP

GRADE	ELA ALL			ELA ELS			ELA RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
3	47.61%	48.15%	54.54%	44.00%	*	28.57%	*	*	64.28%
4	32.26%	48.65%	40.74%	0.00%	45.45%	27.27%	*	45.45%	*
5	24.24%	48.48%	57.89%	6.67%	*	*	*	*	53.85%
TOTAL AVG	34.70%	48.43%	51.06%	16.89%	45.45%	27.92%	*	45.45%	59.07%

GRADE	MATH ALL			MATH ELS			MATH RFEP		
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
3	52.39%	74.08%	38.18%	48.00%	*	0.00%	0.00%	*	57.15%
4	35.48%	29.73%	48.15%	9.09%	9.09%	36.36%	*	36.36%	*
5	9.38%	18.18%	21.05%	0.00%	*	*	*	*	30.71%
TOTAL AVG	32.42%	40.66%	35.79%	19.03%	9.09%	36.36%	*	36.36%	43.93%

Cultural growth mindset is rooted in growth mindset theory (Dweck, 2010; Mangels, Butterfield, Lamb, Good & Dweck, 2006), and focuses on a positive self-concept and belief

system. Culture is identified as the social interactive behaviors developed by people as they participate in their cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003). I define cultural growth mindset as the broadening of an understanding of the mores, language, customs, and traditions of peoples originating from diverse cultures and heritages. A person with a cultural growth mindset considers English learners as linguistically gifted instead of linguistically deficient (Vargas, 2018). A person with a cultural growth mindset appreciates the richness and diversity of human qualities and culture, and is oriented toward valuing, affirming, and learning about others' cultures, assets, and abilities as well as their own. It is through this frame that I begin the narrative of Samuel Enero.

The Principal's Mindset and Leadership of Students: A Deep Understanding of Cultural Growth Mindset

Cultural growth mindset theory justifies and illuminates the principal's cultural understanding of the Galveston Hill school community in two ways. First, it legitimates the principal's advocacy and support of the school's multicultural dual language immersion program – a program contributing to students' cultural and linguistic diversity that values the primary language and the second language of students (Galveston Hill Flyer, 2020). The dual language immersion program provides students with an opportunity to become biliterate in Spanish and English as "Native Spanish and Native English-speaking children, working alongside one another …." Showing appreciation for the program, Mr. Enero acknowledged, "The community in general is … interested in the dual language program. Some of them come here because … it's the neighborhood school, but a lot of them come here because of the dual language program," (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

Second, although Samuel Enero valued the potential of having an effective dual language immersion program, he also understood that for the school to be successful, a culture of low

expectations and low student engagement needed rebuilding. A major theme that emerged early in analyzing the data, was the principal's understanding of the school's culture when he began as school principal. During our first interview, Mr. Enero noted, the challenges were "in the area of school culture and reading achievement," (Interview #1). Mr. Enero explains, "I can't say enough about the importance of culture. So, you asked about helping to move the school in the right direction, that culture piece is huge, " (Interview #1). Teachers recognized Mr. Enero's efforts in building community at Galveston Hill. On the LfLQ-T – Question 1 – My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts, Mr. Enero received a high rating, (M=4.875, SD=0.342), indicating teachers highly regarded the principal's efforts to garner community support to improve the school.

At Galveston Hill, Samuel Enero started out with a message of love. Mr. Enero recalls telling teachers, "The first thing that I talked to teachers about when I got here was the importance of loving kids and making sure kids know that and not just saying that, but also living that." He continues, "Then ... teachers saw how I connected with kids and saw that I wasn't just saying it, the importance of loving kids, but I was doing it" (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

Additionally, Samuel Enero supported teachers and parents with growth mindset training, … [W]e've also gone through a series of workshops … on the growth mindsets. We … did that … series of four workshops with a growth mindset expert. Simple things like the way we praise kids, [for] example, for effort instead of for being 'smart' can have a major impact and there's a lot of research around that through Dr. Carol Dweck who kind of came up with this idea of growth mindset (Interview #1).

Magnifying the importance of growth mindset and its influence on students, Mr. Enero adds, "[G]rowth mindset is woven into our everyday conversations with kids" (Interview #1). He continues,

> I feel like that's …certainly for Hispanic English learners, … or I should say and it's for everybody. So, I know the questions are specifically about Hispanic English learners, but honestly these are practices and things we need to be doing with all students, but the growth mindset is a huge piece. I feel like it can have a massive impact once you truly embrace the idea that 'I can do this if I work hard.' That's pretty much it in a nutshell. 'I can do this if I work hard.' Whereas a fixed mindset is more, well, 'I'm just not good at that and I never will be,' (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

As if taking a snapshot of the students, Mr. Enero acknowledged that Hispanic English learners needed additional academic support, and within the broader spectrum, he also noticed that all of Galveston Hill's students needed to develop a growth mindset.

The Socio-emotional Well-being of Students

Addressing students' socio-emotional well-being is vitally important at Galveston Hill. As described by the school's counselor, Mr. Enero leads with a keen sense of alertness "that if a child is not able to learn in that moment, there's probably something else going on. And so sort of discovering those [needs] and giving them tools … to help them be more successful," (Counselor Interview, November 8, 2019). Mr. Enero talked about three matters of relevant importance at Galveston Hill: 1) the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners, 2) student poverty, and 3) childhood trauma. How the school addresses these challenges is spot-lighted, here.

For Hispanic English learners, length of residency was a factor Mr. Enero raised in students' development of proficiency in literacy – reading, writing, listening and speaking. Supporting English language development was one of the school's targets. Mr. Enero monitored student progress and put "some interventions into place" (Interview #2). On September 4, 2019,

at a teacher meeting, it was reported that the school resource teacher would support the school's English learners through data monitoring, reading with English learners during the English language development block, she would also support third grade students, students in the dual language immersion classes, and she would also lead a 2/3 intervention group (Principal observation, September 4, 2019). On the LfLQ-T, Question 18 – My principal ensures intervention for Hispanic English learners is embedded into the school day, teachers perceived the principal supported the learning of Hispanic English learners throughout the school day, and gave Mr. Enero a high rating, (M=5.313, D=0.793), suggesting Mr. Enero was involved in the planning decisions for English learner instructional intervention throughout the school day.

During our second interview, Mr. Enero described the Galveston Hill community as a "community that has a lot of students … in poverty … in terms of students getting all of their needs met … at home, … in the home environment. And then, coming to school … a lot of times with some difficulties" (Interview #2). Mr. Enero's intuitive mindset was on display during a Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting while a teacher team was discussing a student. Addressing the student's self-esteem, the concerned principal commented, "I see him down. See what we can do to help him. … Would you guys check up on him? I know him well. I'll follow up on him." When teachers brought up another student, the principal responded, "He's had a little bit of trauma. Homeless for a while. Not homeless now." A young man who was struggling in the Spanish fifth grade class was brought up for discussion, and Mr. Enero suggested, "We need to work on growth mindset. Praise him for his effort and hard work. Zero in on him." (Observation of principal, September 26, 2019). During this PLC meeting, Mr. Enero was supporting teachers and suggesting strategies to improve the learning of students in their classrooms. On the LfLQ-T, Question 22 – My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement, Mr. Enero received a high rating, (M=4.813, SD=0.403).

Teachers perceived Mr. Enero's support to be very helpful in strengthening their teaching practices.

Intervention and support for childhood trauma, states Mr. Enero, is "our number one focus and most important focus in working with kids, making sure that they're feeling … a sense of belonging and a sense of … love here and acceptance. And from there, from that foundation, we can build the … academics. So, all that to say that a lot of times it takes a bit of time before we can really dig into academics with some of our students because we have to address their … most pressing needs first (Interview #2). This behavior was described by the school's counselor as being "always present" (Counselor Interview, November 8, 2019). During my visits to Galveston, Mr. Enero demonstrated he had a strong pulse on the school's activities and teachers' motivation to bolster student learning.

During our first interview, Mr. Enero credited teachers as having a sincere interest in the students, "[W]e have a lot of really impressive and dedicated staff. By impressive I mean teachers who care deeply about kids and want to be here to help kids." Students noticed the support from the school. A positive change was evident on the 2019 California Healthy Kids Survey, administered to students in fifth grade. From 2017, 2018, and 2019, there was a year-to-year increase in students' perceived level of support and engagement at Galveston Hill in: 1) school connectedness, 2) caring relationships, 3) high expectations, and 4) perceived school safety. Students also believed there was a climate of 5) fairness, 6) rule clarity, 7) social emotional learning supports, and 8) an anti-bullying climate. Of note, there was an increase in students who felt a part of the school, adults at the school cared for them, and who felt safe at school. Additionally, there was a decrease in number of students who felt they were harassed at school (Galveston Hill School Documents). During our second interview, Mr. Enero, noted,

… I definitely see, I can picture a lot of students in my head … who feel a lot more of that sense of belonging at school, sense of pride in being here at this school and being a contributing member of our school community. And really, I feel like it's changing the trajectory of their life because they're starting to feel more confidence (Interview #2).

Mr. Enero noticed a change in Galveston Hill's teachers,

… I feel like more and more of our teachers are making that simple shift to praising for effort and also other ways to promote growth mindset thinking like the word "yet", "You don't understand that yet." … You'll see teachers' classrooms that have a bunch of different growth mindset ideas on the doors or on their board or they're just saying those things in their classroom. We're hearing parents in the community use that more also. So, one of my roles is to try to get that, the ideas of the growth mindset to as many people as possible. So definitely teachers and parents and then certainly students and talking to students about truly they can do what they want, they're in charge of whatever they want (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

The structures Mr. Enero was implementing at Galveston were taking root, transforming and grounding the school toward a belief system of academic success.

Principal's Mindset and Leadership of Families

Considering and appreciating the contribution of parents to the learning community, Mr. Enero believes that investing time in training parents is important, "[A] big part I feel … is educating parents." He adds,

[W]e have over the years tried to offer relevant parent education during Family Fridays and things like that. We did … a series of four workshops on the growth mindset last year, which was for our families and that was in English and Spanish. I think things like that help to take root because then parents continue the work that we're doing at school. They do that at home also (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

Worthy of mention, teachers perceived the principal worked with the parent community to involve parents of Hispanic English learners. On the LfLQ-T, Question 3 – My principal works to create ways to involve parents of Hispanic English learners – Mr. Enero received a high rating, (M=4.688, SD=0.479). Comparably, the school counselor described Mr. Enero as,

I feel … he's … very open to … all of their [the parents] ideas, … and welcoming to … having

their support in any way. … [H]e's like, "Sure, I'll be on campus. Do things for your children. …

Sit in the classrooms if you need to." … So, I feel … he's very open to them being part of the

school community (Counselor Interview, November 8, 2019).

During the School Site Council meeting in October 2019, I observed Mr. Enero to be

open and receptive to committee members' comments and suggestions. When elements of

discussion regarding student safety and achievement were addressed, Mr. Enero listened

carefully and accepted responsibility for student learning and safety. I observed Mr. Enero

respond in a cordial manner to members' comments and concerns. He inquired and sought

suggestions. Decision-making, I observed, was distributed to the school site council members

who were given collective voice. This level of leadership was highly regarded by teachers on the

LfLQ-T, Question 5 – My principal models a high level of professionalism. Teacher rating was

high, (M=4.875, SD=0.447). Mr. Enero's decisions were shared with the School Site Council

members, and ultimately made in community with them.

Positive School Leadership

Scholars have recently turned attention to the need for a more strengths-based approach

to school leadership. The theory of positive school leadership (Murphy & Louis, 2018), calls

attention to a need for schools to distinguish themselves as learning communities where effective

school leaders influence their followers – the school community – through their demonstration of

positive qualities and attributes. In the previous section, data show how the principal focused on

the cultural strengths of students. In this section, the focus is on the critical role of trust. The

expectation that teachers can successfully teach children living in socio-economically challenged

neighborhoods, and the importance of building strong relationships among principal and teachers

focused on strengths. In the paragraphs that follow, the principal's positive leadership actions with students, parents, and teachers are identified.

Principal's Positive Leadership Actions – Students

Teaching students to develop a healthy outlook and perspective comes with challenges; however, Mr. Enero saw these as opportunities to reach out to students. Mr. Enero spoke of his efforts at Galveston Hill,

> I try to connect with as many kids as possible every day and talk to them and listen to them and not jump to conclusions and actually listen to their thoughts and try to identify root causes of any negative behaviors, which takes a lot of time. But it's really beneficial for the kids' growth. So, I really try my best to model what I'm asking teachers to do, which is again, first and foremost, love kids and make sure they know it and all of the teachers know that that's the most important thing to me. So, if you asked any of them, I think that they would be able to tell you that that's my number one most important thing. Because I feel like that sets the foundation for all learning (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

To Mr. Enero, connecting with "everybody" was significant, "What I'm hoping to do is have positive connections with everybody. Yeah. So, every student I want to know their name, I want to know about them as a person and academically so," (Interview #1, Samuel Enero). This attitude triggered a reaction from the school's counselor who expressed her respect for the principal during her interview, "the fact that like a principal [he] knows every single child's name. … He knows everything about them. He knows their family dynamics. … I think … that's a really amazing skill" (Counselor Interview, November 8, 2019).

On September 26, 2019, I had an opportunity to see Mr. Enero connect with teachers, aides and students. It was middle school field day. Students had designed university team flags they raised proudly. Rollicking around before the competition began, students socialized sharing comments and food with their friends. Mr. Enero traveled from team to team encouraging students to do their best. Excitement was mirrored on students' faces as they prepared to compete in different physical activities. The adults were enjoying this occasion as they waited for the

games to begin. Relationships – positive connections – among teachers and students, principal and staff, were on display. When the games began, students scrambled and clambered through obstacle courses while Mr. Enero would make his way from team to team to encourage students to carry on to the finish line. Of significance, teachers perceived they could trust their principal and gave him a high rating on Question 4 of the LfLQ-T – My principal develops a caring atmosphere built on trust (M=5, SD=0). It was evident that Mr. Enero's relational mindset and accessible character had extended throughout Galveston Hill.

Principal's Positive Leadership Actions – Families

During one of my visits to Galveston, a parent dropped by to apologize for a delay in t-shirt orders. It was the PTO President. This parent was responsible for organizing the parent community to support the school's outreaches. She was also a member of the School Site Council. Mr. Enero's strong cultural growth mindset and respect for cultural diversity translated into an open-door policy that invited parents to reach out to him. African American and Latino parent representation on the school's committees was noticeable. Furthermore, it was apparent that parent leadership was valued and affirmed at Galveston Hill. These parents were involved in organizing the school's events. These parents were heard.

At Galveston Hill, the parent community rallied around Mr. Enero's efforts, effectuating a stronger parent / school relationship. Similarly, ideas were applauded by Mr. Enero and embraced by the school. As an illustration, one parent partnered with Mr. Enero to teach kindergarten and first grade students the school's behavioral expectations, as recounted by Mr. Enero:

> That was actually led by a parent. That was a parent last year. … He's a wonderful parent volunteer. We had a lot of difficulties with our kindergarten and first grade lunch last year, … so, he and I collaborated on an assembly. We put together some slides and talked to the kids about specific behaviors and then he did a skit with some of the kids on stage and then we came up with five specific

89

expectations that are really short and simple. … [H]e made some awards and would give them out each day to the table that did the best for cleanliness, the best for healthy eating and the best for helpfulness. So yeah, that was pretty effective (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

As illustrated by the involvement of the school's parents, a climate of support reinforced the principal's vision to make Galveston Hill a school that appreciated the ideas and valued the contribution of the school's diverse parent community. On Question 1 of the LfLQ-T – My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts, Mr. Enero was rated highly by the teachers, (M=4.875, SD=0.342), indicating Mr. Enero supported the school's improvement plans and recruited parents to rally around these actions.

Principal's Positive Leadership Actions – Teachers / Staff

During his first year at Galveston Hill, Mr. Enero set out to build relationships with the staff. Mr. Enero described the manner by which he developed relationships with the teachers,

I got to know them. I tried to get to know them as people and I was in their classrooms a lot to see their teaching. ... It was easy to start out with celebrations. [I] started out with just celebrations, not critique, because I didn't know them yet. … [O]nce you establish that trust, I feel like people are more apt to take critique and use it in a proper way. But I would go to the classrooms and send them messages. … It was just all heaping them with celebrations and praise. … Just working hard and following through with what they asked of me was the ways that I feel like ... I feel like they saw that I was somebody they could trust and somebody who's going to ... Who's here for the kids and also here to support them. Now I'm fortunate to have a really good relationship with all those teachers (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

During my visit to Galveston Hill on September 26, 2019, I observed the principal facilitating discussion around student achievement. Teachers were engaged in the process of looking at reading data to plan instruction. During discussion, teachers commented they had not had time to peruse through the new guided readers. As Mr. Enero listened, he interrupted the PLC meeting and suggested giving teachers time to look at the new curriculum. He asked, "Do you want ten minutes to actually go to the room?" After a moment of silence, teachers accepted.

90

The happy teachers returned chattering among themselves. The Spanish teacher asked if he could begin using one of the assessment tools. Mr. Enero replied, "Okay." The teacher exclaimed, "Sweet! Awesome!" Later that day, teachers were released by Mr. Enero to read, review and plan reading instruction with the new language arts curriculum (Observation of Principal, September 26, 2019). I observed that the principal's positive leadership action – allowing time for teachers to review the new teaching resources – validated the teachers and contributed to their success. On the LfLQ-T Question 12 – My principal ensures that all students are taught by high quality teachers – the principal received a high rating from the teachers, (M=4.813, SD=0.544). Teachers' comments and expressions were on display at this meeting and demonstrated their eagerness to learn the new curriculum and plan instruction. In my fieldnotes, I wrote:

Climate:

- appreciative inquiry – the principal is seeking to understand

- collaborative – discussion was supportive – teachers to teachers, principal to teachers

- non-threatening – teachers were transparent in their communication – felt comfortable

- focus on strengths – the principal demonstrated a disarming approach to focus on students' strengths

- support – the principal interrupted his agenda to help teachers

- teachers were motivated

- concern for students – genuine

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership

Principal's Strengths-based Instructional Leadership that Influences Student Learning

Mr. Enero's focus on achievement was evident, as well as, his understanding that academic progress hinged on students' socio-emotional well-being. The principal's instructional leadership decisions influencing student learning included consistently planned in-classroom, modeled instruction provided by the counselor in grades kindergarten through five with teachers "completely present in the classroom." Through this instruction, children had opportunities to develop and practice positive skills in a "safety place for kids." Moreover, a common language across the school became the norm. This change and school-wide expectation positively impacted student learning in classrooms (Counselor, November 8, 2019).

At the time of this study, Galveston Hill was entering year 2 with guided reading instruction as the school's instructional focus. Mr. Enero "wanted to stay connected to a few things rather than doing way too many things but not well," (Interview #1, Samuel Enero). As the instructional leader, Mr. Enero stood firm on the school's decision to focus on offering instructional support through guided reading. Deepening the focus, Mr. Enero informed teachers, at the beginning of the year, of his instructional expectations. He pointed out that instructional support for English learners – English language development instruction – would be taught from 9:15 a.m. to 9:35 a.m. To assist teachers, Mr. Enero reached out to RGUSD. Teacher trainings were scheduled for October and December 2019 (Observation of principal, September 4, 2019). Recognizing students required an additional layer of instruction, Mr. Enero was involved in discussion with teachers during PLCs to ensure students who were not reading at grade level were identified to receive reading intervention (Observation of Principal, September 26, 2019). In the LfLQ-T Question 9 – My principal is knowledgeable of best practices for Hispanic

English learners, (M=4.625, SD=0.500), the principal received a high rating by the teachers as being knowledgeable of best practices to support the learning of Hispanic English learners.

Mr. Enero motivated teachers to look at their students through a growth mindset lens. During a PLC meeting with the fourth and fifth grade teachers, I observed Mr. Enero utilize data to identify English learners in need of targeted support. Mr. Enero facilitated the discussion around reading. Teachers were asked to look at their monitoring sheets. Teachers began to name students. An inclination to focus on students' challenges, such as "disruptive behavior," "easily distracted," "lives with a lot of people," was refocused by Mr. Enero as he affirmed students' strengths, and zoned in on students' abilities to succeed, "If she does participate, that's huge." and "She does have some strengths there." or "Looks like [student] is making progress." Teacher comments began to change. As an example, one teacher referred to a student as, "The kid is brilliant!" another, "He just needs lots of love and to feel safe and nurtured." Mr. Enero motivated teachers to consider students' strengths. He influenced teachers' perceptions to see students' abilities to succeed. On the LfLQ-T Question 23 – My principal participates in teacher planning meetings concerning the instruction of Hispanic English learners, Mr. Enero received a high rating from teachers, (M=4.500, SD=0.632), indicating teacher appreciation for these opportunities to discuss effective instruction and strategies for Hispanic English learners.

Mr. Enero also held teachers accountable for student achievement when student reading levels in Spanish and English had not been assessed. Requesting reading results from teachers "by Friday," Mr. Enero balanced dignity with accountability. Teacher understanding of principal support with data use received a high rating on LfLQ-T, Question 21 – My principal encourages data use in planning for individual student needs, (M=4.500, SD=0.516). The deliberate instructional decisions Mr. Enero made at Galveston Hill motivated teachers to plan effective instruction to advance students' academic success.

Principal's Strengths-based Instructional Leadership that Influences Teachers

A culture of data collection was a leadership practice Mr. Enero adopted at Galveston to ensure students' academic needs were met. Mr. Enero involved and invited discussion with teachers through listening, affirming and inquiry. By positively reframing descriptions of students' abilities, Mr. Enero was able to broaden teachers' views of Galveston's students. Mr. Enero held Galveston's teachers in high regard. His respect and value for Galveston's teachers was summed up during his first interview,

> I would say first and foremost, we have a really strong teaching staff. … By strong, I mean incredibly dedicated. … Teachers who love kids and that's all of them. And that's something that … I feel confident saying and I feel comfortable placing our children in any anyone's class because we're all on the same page with … why we're here, which is to love and respect kids and help them to grow. And so, … that would be number one … quality of teachers. So, I feel super fortunate to work with these teachers (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

This appraisal was balanced and juxtaposed with the principal's strong belief in students' abilities to succeed while holding teachers accountable for student achievement. Mr. Enero realized that a deep implementation of reading was necessary to "increase … reading proficiencies," broadening teacher expertise by having teachers spend time in "each other's classroom," and inviting district experts to support teacher learning (Interview #2). Principal belief in teacher effectiveness was noted on the LfLQ-T Question 10 – My principal believes teachers can be effective in helping all Hispanic English learners master grade level standards, Mr. Enero received the highest rating (M=5, SD=0), revealing teachers' strong perception that Mr. Enero believed teachers were effective at increasing the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners.

Principal's Strengths-based Instructional Leadership that Influences Parents

At Galveston Hill, parents embraced the school's focus on reading. An RGUSD initiative, Family Fridays are held every month. Parents visit the school to read with their

children. Before heading to the classrooms, parents gather in the school auditorium to hear a presentation. At Galveston Hill's first family Friday of 2019-2020, parents received a training organized by parents. Mr. Enero explained,

> [I]t's about our initiative a 'Book in a Backpack,' which is just the simple idea that we want every child to have a book in their backpack every day. So, at any moment we could say, 'It's time to read!,' and kids would be able to pull out a book that they really like. … And it's our parents who are leading it actually, and they'll be sharing with their parent counterparts how to effectively get their kids interested in reading at home and some strategies that they use at home to read with their kids.

I had an opportunity to visit Galveston Hill on Friday, October 18, for the school's Family Friday event. The school was teeming with parents. My field notes read:

- 9:01 a.m. Parents are setting up for Family Friday. The principal is helping the guest speaker set up. Alfonso, the custodian, is setting up the auditorium. I ask him how he is doing. He happily responds, "Great!" There is a translator setting up her equipment. Parents arrive early. A parent asks if there is going to be a raffle. A couple comes in and fills out the attendance form.

- 9:10 The principal walks through the auditorium with a young man and is speaking quietly to him. They stand to the side of the auditorium as the principal speaks to the student.

- 9:11 A long line of parents has formed. This is a HUGE deal!

- 9:12 The auditorium lights are dimmed. The parent line is now outside the auditorium door.

- 9:14 The custodian is setting out chairs. There must be about 80 parents. The principal is standing outside greeting parents. He greets the translator and welcomes her to Galveston Hill. The line is still out the door.

- 9:18 There are still people standing in line waiting to come in.

- 9:22 There must be about 150 parents, and parents are still walking in.

The principal walks up to the stage and greets the parents. He tells them that the focus of the meeting is reading. It is the school focus. He tells parents the school's goal is 100% of students reading. The meeting topic is "Supporting Readers at Home." The speaker tells the parents, "You are the first teacher. You are the second teacher. You're the third teacher. Read to your children every day." The speaker shared strategies with parents on how to read with their children. 9:45. The meeting is over. Parents leave to their children's classrooms.

At this meeting, Mr. Enero moved fluidly to help the guest speaker, fix audiovisual glitches, greet the PTO parents, support a young man, stand outside to welcome parents, and return to introduce the presenter.

After the meeting, Mr. Enero asked me to walk the school with him. He needed to see a student in a kindergarten classroom. When we entered the classroom, the room was filled with parents sitting with their children reading, and children reading to their parents. Galveston Hill was celebrating reading. The appreciation for culture and language was evident in the classrooms we visited as parents and children read in English and Spanish. I was captivated by the moment. I, too, began reading to children.

As I continue to write, I am reminded of a moment during his first interview when Mr. Enero identified with parents,

> As a parent you want the best for your child. You want your child to be safe and cared for and loved, and we do that. We all do that and that's number one for us. They want, of course, their kids to learn and ... be exposed to rigorous activities and instruction and I feel like we really do that too. So I think the word out there is that we're a school that has a very strong culture, a very positive culture, and that's most important to the people at school and we have a really strong dual language program and we're being very innovative, also, in the middle school with project based learning, pre-engineering course, robotics, things like that, (Interview #1, Samuel Enero).

Teachers understood the principal to be a strong leader who built a community of learning. In Question 1 of the LfLQ-T – My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts, Samuel Enero received a high rating (M=4.875, SD=0.342). Mr. Enero's influence on the Galveston Hill community resonated with parents, teachers and students and shaped the culture of the school.

Summary: Principal as Role Model for Students, Parents and Staff

Chapter Five presented a portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) of Galveston Hill School. The data were organized under the conceptual framework presented earlier – cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and instructional leadership – to answer the research question: How do elementary school principals' perceptions, practices, and behaviors influence the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

As discussed in this chapter, the principal served as a role model for students, parents and staff in three significant and consequential ways: through a cultural growth mindset, through positive school leadership and his strengths-based instructional leadership.

Cultural Growth Mindset

Several significant themes emerged from the data. One theme that emerged was the principal's deep understanding of a multicultural community that was interested in students being bilingual and biliterate. Using the lens of cultural growth mindset theory, this chapter highlighted the principal's understanding of, and dedication to, the students and families of Galveston Hill School. An equally important theme that surfaced was the principal's understanding that the school culture needed to be revitalized through both a strengths-based approach and a cultural growth mindset regarding Hispanic English learners. Furthermore, attention and support for students' socio-emotional well-being was critical to their success. Additionally, the principal focused on changing the climate of the school through planned

training on growth mindset for teachers and the parent community. Parents from diverse cultural backgrounds took on leadership roles as opportunities to become involved in the school, and participated in school events. Mr. Enero described this phenomenon, "… [W]e have a lot of parents who care. … They want to be a part of their child's education. Some of them reschedule work … take the morning off so they can be here with their kids for family Friday. So the parental involvement support, … and just overall connection with the school is incredibly important also" (Interview #2, Samuel Enero).

Positive School Leadership

A positive school leader, the principal appreciated and valued in-school relationships. He was accessible and visible to the school community. Students, teachers and parents had an open invitation to approach the principal. The principal sought opportunities to connect with students, teachers and parents. Developing a safe and caring school community – where students were loved - was fundamental if students were to succeed. Of significance, was the essence of trust.

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership

The principal's strengths-based instructional leadership decisions that advanced student learning included a targeted focus on guided reading including teacher professional development, described as,

> …Doing some collaborative work where teachers are visiting each other's classrooms. … [B]ringing in coaching cycles from the district. That's been incredibly helpful for us. Also, … bringing in coaches from the district to work with our teachers and then again to get into other classrooms and spread that, build that capacity and then, … develop and design and implement interventions for students who are struggling to, to keep up with grade level content, (Interview #2, Samuel Enero).

While acknowledging the progress students were making in reading, Mr. Enero assesses a need to focus on increasing student reading progress, "… [W]e're certainly pleased with that. We still

98

do have … about half of our students not reading at a grade level" (Interview #2, Samuel Enero).

Instructional support for Hispanic English learners and students in need of intervention was

carefully planned through the use of data. Mr. Enero described the process,

> … [W]e can … collaborate and share ideas amongst teachers, not just within the same grade level but across grade levels, sharing ideas that are working first for our students. And then on the other side, the students who aren't moving. So we will … see some students in their reading [haven't] progressed in, in three months. And we're seeing that because we have the specific numbers on the spreadsheet that we're looking at. And then we start to drill down deeper and try to figure out what is, what is the root cause or causes of, of the stagnation. … [S]ometimes it's social emotional. Sometimes we might need to look at why a student is not progressing. And so sometimes we'll do some testing. … [W]e'll talk with the families, we'll have a student study team meeting with the, the staff here at school with the family.

> And again, just try to identify the specific learning needs of that student. So the data's incredibly helpful. And as I mentioned previously, looking at a variety of data I think is important. So the case that I just mentioned, we look at guided reading levels. … [W]e also have on the same spreadsheet … their SBAC scores from … however many years they've taken it. And then either their progression or digression based on their scale score on SBAC. And then … we look at where they are on the reading, the reading programs. … And again, try to pinpoint what exactly each kid needs, (Interview #2, Samuel Enero).

To move the school forward, Samuel Enero identified additional effective teacher practices to

strengthen instruction and student learning. Teacher collaboration discussion and planning was

supported, guided and monitored through the use of progress data. A deep message that reading

was the school focus was transmitted to parents who embraced the school's vision and supported

parent training provided by the school.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview of the Study

The script for Hispanic English learners continues as many fall behind their English-only peers in reading, mathematics, and science attainment. This is a critical issue in our nation (Lutz, 2007; Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis, 2020), as these students negotiate the educational system from elementary to middle and high school (Gandara, 2012; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Understanding how the principal influences student achievement is particularly important in the midst of discourses of equity and achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Interrogating ways principal leadership motivated the progress of Hispanic English learners, this study sought to explore in what ways principals in two schools, where state assessments indicated Hispanic English learners were making progress, displayed certain characteristics, approaches, and strategies not yet well identified in the literature that could help close the learning gap.

This case study utilized a mixed methods design, and was guided by an overarching question encompassing two sub-questions that were concurrently addressed in this study: How do the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership illuminate principals' ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

1) How do elementary school principals' perceptions, practices, and behaviors influence the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

2) How do teachers describe the principal's leadership to influence learning opportunities for Hispanic English learners?

Building on research that examines the broader historical (Brookover et al. 1979; Coleman, 1966; Cuban, 1983; Edmonds, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1982), political (Darling-

Hammond; 2010; Mendoza Reis & Flores, 2014), and social context (Brown, 2015; Hernández & Daoud, 2014; Zamudio et al., 2011), this study contributes to scholarship on the intersections of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership. Situated descriptions of the two principals and their staff illustrate the ways in which they understood how the influence of the principal motivated student achievement in their schools. Integrating particular characteristics of the quantitative with the qualitative narrative of principals and teachers, these unfoldings form the portrayal of this case study. The discussion that follows addresses the findings that developed and surfaced under a strengths-based theoretical construct.

Conceptual Framework

Utilizing a strengths-based approach (Maton et al., 2004), the organizing framework of this study, draws from psychology and school effectiveness and improvement literature: cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership. As shown in Figure 2.1 in Chapter Two, these concepts are overlapping and inter-related. Cultural growth mindset draws on self-theories (Bandura, 1997; Dweck, 2000), developing a mindset of resilience (Yeager & Dweck, 2012) and motivation theory (Elliot, Dweck & Yeager, 2017). Every person can increase their intellective capacities with effort and support (Dweck, 2000). This study, in particular, focused on the concept of cultural growth mindset that is framed from the theory of malleable intelligence, also known simply as growth mindset (Dweck, 2000). Culture and language are recognized as assets, are valued, and are not limiting (Rogoff, 2003). Positive school leadership originates from positive organizational scholarship (Cameron & Dutton, 2011; Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003; Murphy & Louis, 2018) and helps to clarify and explain how positivity reinforces and increases the performance of teams and organizations, motivating effectiveness.

Central to improving student learning, as documented in the literature (Fullan, 2006; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Waters, Winters, & McNulty, 2005), strengths-based instructional leadership, the third pillar of the conceptual framework, represents the principal's practice and appreciation for the knowledge teachers and teacher teams bring to the school community (Coghlan, Preskill, Catsambas, 2003; Maton et al., 2004; Spillane & Hunt, 2010). As a strengths-based instructional leader, the school principal integrates his / her own knowledge of curriculum and instruction, in a collaborative process of monitoring student learning and achievement, to ensure all students are succeeding.

Review of Methods

Case study (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2018) was the primary methodology used in this study. Typical of case studies – to study the two principals and schools – "as we find them" (Levine & Lezotte, 1990, p. 1), multiple data sources were used. These sources included a teacher survey, teacher focus group, multiple interviews of two principals, observations of teacher/principal grade level meetings and of parent meetings with the principal, walk throughs of the campus with the principal, and review of key school and state achievement documents. The use of these mixed methods allowed for triangulation and deeper analysis of the findings to better understand the ways principal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors at the elementary level have a direct influence on the learning opportunities and achievement of Hispanic English learners. To present a coherent story of each school, the study also drew on the concept of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997).

Implications for practice, policy, and social justice are described along with suggestions for future research to advance practical applications. The concluding section discusses how the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership illuminated principals' abilities to influence the learning

opportunities for Hispanic English learners and contributes to scholarly research. An in-depth analysis and synthesis of the findings follows.

Comparison of Key Findings of the Similarities and Differences

Between Edmonton and Galveston Hill

Emergent patterns among the findings showed far more similarities than differences between principals and the schools. As inner-city neighborhood schools, these schools were culturally diverse and served economically disadvantaged students. On the state summative assessment, learning outcomes on the CAASPP showed students were increasing academically and seemed to be improving from year-to-year. Both principals were Hispanic and spoke Spanish, the language of the majority of students and their parents. Each principal was culturally sensitive and demonstrated a commitment to raising the achievement gap of Hispanic English learners.

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership

Leadership practices have been extensively studied by researchers through diverse constructs. To name a few, scholars have studied notions of transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2011; McCleskey, 2014) and compared transformational leadership to instructional leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003). As well as, the theory of distributed and shared leadership – sharing school leadership with stakeholders (*e.g.*, teachers, parents, community leaders) (Chrispeels, 2004; Louis et al., 2010; Spillane, 2006), or the idea of collaborative leadership – school-wide efforts toward student improvement shared among principals, teachers and other contributors in the school community (Hallinger & Heck, 2011), and organizational learning (Senge, 1990). In this case study, strengths-based leadership focuses on aligning the strengths of individuals and teams to what is working that will help the organization succeed (Brun, Cooperrider & Ejsing, 2016). Current knowledge has shown that instructional leadership is a

strong characteristic of effective schools (Chrispeels, 1991; Hallinger, 2011; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). Interlinking strengths-based leadership with instructional leadership as strengths-based instructional leadership, balances academic performance with the strengths of teachers, students, parents and the school community.

Overall, the findings in this case study revealed principals engaged in strengths-based instructional leadership resulting in teacher engagement through appreciative inquiry during PLC discussions. Principal and teacher interactions focused on teacher strengths and support of students' abilities to succeed. During their interviews and observations, principals demonstrated they were front and center in designing and supporting curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and monitored student learning (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2005). Emerging from the data were principal practices that included 1) the collection of data, 2) instructional focus, and 3) teacher collaboration and instructional support, among other themes.

To contrast, Fullan (2014) challenged the notion of instructional leadership as a narrowly focused leadership characteristic that may prohibit other aspects of effective leadership and argued that principals should be considered lead learners who learn alongside teachers. Adding to Fullan's discourse, I offer that a strengths-based instructional leader develops the strengths and capacities of his / her followers, while supporting instruction, and is able to influence the academic progress of students. Surprisingly, data that emerged in this case study substantiates Fullan's leader as learner theory. Principals were perceived by teachers as learning leaders who shared in and supported teacher professional development.

Fullan (2014) proffers that principals who engage teachers in collaborative discussions are leading their schools with a "right driver" (p. 25). As such, the literature shows principals who worked directly with teachers were able to support the complexities teachers faced in the classroom (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Chrispeels, 1992). In this study, teachers understood their

principals worked hand-in-hand with teachers to bring about student achievement. The data revealed teacher sentiment in their responses on the teacher survey, *Question 22 – My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement.* Principals engaged in reform strategies through professional development, planning with and for teachers during Professional Learning Community meetings, where it was observed that everyone – principals and teachers – were focused on student achievement. Norms were clearly stated by the engagement of the grade level teams. Discussion regarding student progress, specifically English learners, was a main item on PLC agendas.

Additionally, principals set up school structures that facilitated teacher improvement through resources and training to increase the achievement of Hispanic English learners, as evidenced in teachers' acknowledgment of principal support in their responses to survey *Question 20 – My principal provides resources to help staff improve their teaching for Hispanic English learners*, and in their interviews. As strengths-based instructional leaders, these principals set out to focus on increasing the academic outcomes of Hispanic English learners. They were knowledgeable of the instructional approaches needed for Hispanic English learners, provided essential resources for teachers to raise achievement, actively worked with teachers to analyze data in team meetings, and used data to help teachers gain insights into their instructional practices.

Positive School Leadership

Studies show students can develop self-efficacy through the messages they receive, in this case, at school (Zimmerman, Schunk, & DiBennedetto, 2017). Through the positive messages principals delivered during assemblies and one-on-one conversations with students and teachers, principals in this study promoted a self-efficacy belief system which motivated and influenced students to believe in their abilities to succeed. Survey results suggest teachers across

the two schools held positive perceptions and beliefs with regard to the role of the principal as an influencer in students' academic progress. Furthermore, survey findings fully supported the research questions regarding elementary school principals' perceptions, practices, and behaviors that influence the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners. Recent scholarship has identified the quality of trust as an essential factor that has emerged as a relational dimension in effective organizations, including schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Daly & Chrispeels, 2005/2008; Murphy & Louis, 2018). For these principals building community and relationships was significant. At both schools, principals had developed a climate of trust with their staff.

Comparatively, a number of scholars have posited that a positive working environment motivating teachers to engage as collective leaders in the school, has a strong influence on student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Murphy & Louis, 2018). As positive school leaders, principals took an interest in teachers' skills and teaching expertise. Both schools benefitted from the talent of teachers who were given opportunities to demonstrate practices that were having a positive effect on students. This strengths-based leadership approach was recognized by teachers on Question 6 of the teacher survey: *My principal effectively taps into the instructional strengths of teachers*. Principals cultivated the knowledge of teachers to produce the learning outcomes at their schools.

Cultural Growth Mindset

Perception of academic competence influences performance (Brown, 2015). Principal perception of student achievement translated into students' self-perceptions of competence and motivated them to believe in their abilities to be successful. Scholars suggest that Latino parent aspirations for their children are high. In addition, parental engagement increases in schools where Latino parents feel welcome and experience a sense of identity and belonging in their children's school, when opportunities for involvement arise and parents are given access and

106

space to develop skills and knowledge to further their involvement in their child's school (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Shoji, Haskins, Rangel, & Sorensen, 2014). In this study, the data showed principals were deeply involved in their school communities and demonstrated a clear understanding of the diverse cultures represented in their schools, through their direct interaction with the students and their parents. Principals expressed a deep concern and love for the students and a desire to provide students with an excellent educational experience.

Overview of Findings

This section examined the key findings of similarities between the two schools. Principals held a strong sense of responsibility and led their schools with a high level of awareness and sensitivity for the needs of the community. This was a priority both principals put into practice through socio-emotional training for the teachers and students in. Teachers believed principal practices and behaviors influenced the achievement of Hispanic English learners. More particularly, teachers recognized principals influenced learning opportunities for Hispanic English learners. The importance of bilingualism was recognized as a benefit and an asset (Gándara, 2018). Direct interaction with students and parents fostered caring relationships and opportunities for parental involvement. As a result, parent meetings at both schools were well attended. In short, both schools were experiencing the progress of highly successful schools.

Key Differences Between Edmonton and Galveston Hill

When these two principals and their schools are compared, vital differences emerge from their leadership backgrounds, school dynamics and personal efforts and actions toward school leadership. Central differences are presented below.

Edmonton Elementary

Mission Statement

To improve student achievement by building a professional learning community with collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all.

At the time of this study, Edmonton Elementary was led by a Latina leader who was entering her fifth year as principal. A daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico, Elena Mariscal understood her purpose was to be at Edmonton leading the community. Her strong passion and cultural growth mindset were grounded upon her personal experience growing up in a challenging community where the rate of failure was high.

A unique dynamic Elena Mariscal encountered was the high level of teacher expertise at Edmonton. Edmonton's teachers were veteran teachers who had been teaching at Edmonton prior to Dr. Mariscal's arrival. Self-assured and articulating a strong sense of agency, Edmonton's teachers were proud of the success they and the students were demonstrating at Edmonton. Elena Mariscal understood her teachers' capacity to influence student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). Dr. Mariscal found that taking these teachers to a deeper level of instructional excellence could only happen if there was reciprocal trust between herself and her teachers (Fullan, 2008).

An outstanding feature of Dr. Mariscal's leadership was the high level of trust in the Edmonton learning community. She attributed this behavior to the findings of her research on the influence of principals to motivate his /her followers to go above and beyond (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal). Her research, *Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Schools: The Principal's Influence* (2015), surfaced, among other themes, that a principal influences his / her followers to go above and beyond their roles when he / she:

- builds relationships,

- develops trust,

- is fair,

- leads with justice. (Interview #1, Elena Mariscal).

The insights Dr. Mariscal extracted from her research influenced her leadership perspective in supporting a community of teachers who were teaching students in an unusually effective school (Levine & Lezotte, 1990). Additionally, the intricate and detailed collection and use of data (Hubers et al., 2018; Park, Daly & Wishard Guerra, 2012) within all aspects of the learning community – for every child enrolled at Edmonton – contributed to the success of the school. Elena Mariscal used the language of data to address, negotiate, and challenge the issues and conditions that threatened the learning and instruction at Edmonton Elementary.

Galveston Hill School

The mission of Galveston Hill is to create a learning environment where teachers, parents, students and the community collaborate to develop children who are healthy, caring, responsible, lifelong learners and productive members of society.

Samuel Enero was a Latino leader entering his third year as principal of Galveston Hill School. The school offered a dual language immersion program – kindergarten to fifth grade. Turning around a struggling school entailed training the school community in specific practices – literacy, growth mindset, and socio-emotional learning. Samuel Enero set out to establish structures, a clear direction, a culture of safety and respect – where students, teachers, and parents were treated fairly, achievement was supported, and trust was put into motion (Fullan, 2008).

DuFour et al. (2010), posit that to turn around a school, the learning community must make certain commitments: 1) all students learning at high levels, 2) a culture of collaboration,

and 3) utilization of results to encourage student achievement. In line with Dufour et al.'s (2010) research, the data revealed that by his third year at Galveston Hill, Samuel Enero had implemented structures during PLCs. To illustrate, the PLC agenda specifically referenced the purpose for Galveston Hill's PLC meetings: "Collaborate to ensure that all students are learning, and to align expectations. Engage with the Advance and Adelante curriculum together." A significant direction for Galveston Hill's teachers involved teacher learning and building teacher leadership as opportunities arose for teachers to learn from their colleagues (Blase & Blase, 1999; Hallinger, 2011).

The principal's cultural growth mindset revealed that while it was necessary to encourage the achievement of Hispanic English learners, supporting all students was equally as important (DuFour et al., 2010). The principal was able to cultivate a culture of inclusion to embrace Galveston's diverse community by connecting to students' personal narratives (Lee & Walsh, 2017). The possibilities with parents that waited to be discovered at Galveston Hill can be explained through the concept of funds of knowledge (Moll, 2005). During his first interview, Mr. Enero spoke of "a lot of outreach to parents" from the parent groups. The principal's efforts to build and strengthen home – school relationships were activated through the relationships he built with African American and Latino parents who were highly visible and engaged at the school.

Chrispeels (1992) submits that a key aspect of teacher learning involves allowing time for teachers to master, at the minimum, one effective instructional strategy and allow time for teachers to strengthen their practice. As a strengths-based instructional leader, Samuel Enero, was purposeful in maintaining Galveston Hill's instructional focus on reading and "continuing to increase our reading proficiencies and then …, doing some collaborative work where teachers are visiting each other's classrooms," (Interview #2, Samuel Enero).

At the time of this study, under Samuel Enero's leadership, Galveston Hill School was demonstrating promise. Students' mindset was being influenced through the dedicated efforts of the principal and the teachers. Teachers believed their instruction was making an important impact on the progress students were making. The school's strong collaboration with parents contributed to the success of their children.

Significance and Implications of the Study

This case study is significant in demonstrating the interrelationship among the three constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership. This study contributes to the scholarship that addresses the lack of achievement gains made by Hispanic English learners (Gandara, 2012; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Grasparil & Hernandez, 2015, Umansky & Reardon, 2014). This study builds on research that examines principal leadership (Chrispeels, 1992; Marks & Printy, 2003; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010) and queries the significance of examining the cultural growth mindset and practices of school principals as contributing factors influencing the academic achievement of English learners. This study broadens the research through a positive construct. As Murphy and Louis (2018) noted, more research is needed to document the leadership role of a positive strengths-based approach to enhance school effectiveness.

This study emphasizes three interrelated points of intersection on leadership perspectives and offers the potential to unravel more fully how these perspectives may be interacting to produce positive learning results for Hispanic English learners. In doing so, this study contributes to the body of literature on educational research, school effectiveness, educational improvement, educational leadership, and the advancement of English Learners. Drawing from evidence that illustrates cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership, careful examination of the data involved determining inferences and

111

contextual factors as revealed by the data. Findings reflect vital insights that advance research on equity and social justice, policy, and social science theory.

Strengths-based Instructional Leadership

Principals, in this study received high ratings from teachers on every question. Although questions 23 and 24 were not as highly scored, these questions still reflect that the principals were engaged with teacher planning meetings when addressing the needs of English learners and they had ideas for how to address these students' needs. These are important findings and suggest that the perception of the teachers about the principals' concern and commitment to English learners is a critical factor in enhancing their achievement. This is an instructional leadership skill that may need to be added to the literature on how to improve student learning. The research on teacher networks helps us to understand that teacher collaboration networks can be linked to student achievement (Moolenaar, Sleegers, & Daly, 2012). Being situationally in touch with grade level teams and their group dynamics is a critical aspect of leadership (Waters et al., 2005).

By understanding the needs of teams and individual members, the school leader is able to listen, observe, offer suggestions, and influence the interaction of the team (Murphy & Louis, 2018). This study showed that an instructional skills model utilized by these two principals was active engagement and attention to the work of the grade level teams and suggests that just implementing such teams without active principal support is likely to be insufficient to consistently raise student achievement (Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). In addition, recognizing and encouraging teachers' leadership strengths is another key element that was not fully studied in this research and should be explored further.

Positive School Leadership

Studying how principals influenced student achievement utilizing a strengths-based framework is relatively new in the educational research literature (Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Murphy & Louis, 2018). This study contributes to the field by collecting data on teacher perception of principals' strengths-based actions, particularly with regard to teacher strengths and their ability to help all students succeed. Teachers in both schools believed principal practices were socially just (*e.g.*, loving the children, believing teachers mattered and could impact the achievement of Hispanic English learners, displaying a high level of trust in teachers). Their positive school leadership influenced the achievement of Hispanic English learners.

Cultural Growth Mindset

Although positive school culture as a contributor to school effectiveness is well documented (Cameron, 2003; Cooperrider, 2001a; Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2003; Fredrickson, 2003; Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmalyi, 2000), this study highlights the importance of a cultural growth mindset toward students and their families from diverse cultures, in particular, Hispanic English learners. Both principals in this study spoke Spanish, the dominant language of a majority of their students. These principals valued and celebrated the language and culture of their students and saw them as assets, not deficits.

One of the results of these beliefs was the active engagement of families. These principals also conveyed that effort by students and parents was essential if students were to succeed. At Edmonton, parents learned specific skills in how to reinforce reading and then practiced reading to their children in the classroom on Family Fridays. At Galveston Hill, the principal explicitly helped parents to learn about growth mindset. This study suggests that a cultural growth mindset may be a missing link in the literature as an essential approach for closing the gap in the academic outcomes of Hispanic English learners.

Implications for Edmonton Elementary and Galveston Hill School

An overarching implication of this study is the examination of the principal role, under a strengths-based framework illuminating principals' perceptions, beliefs, practices, and behaviors. The positive experiences teachers shared under the leadership of Elena Mariscal and Samuel Enero were demonstrated in teachers' responses on the teacher survey and teacher interviews. Both principals were intentional and determined to support students and teachers. Still, balancing the responsibilities of the leadership role while recognizing the essence of human quality – in teachers' sense of well-being – may be an area principals may consider strengthening. Although principals received a high score on Question 24 – *My principal suggests specific ideas to improve my instruction of Hispanic English learners* – the rating was not as high as on other survey questions. Researchers have shown there are many benefits to positive interactions, for example, expressing appreciation, genuine interest, and affirmation, that encourage uplifting emotions (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). To better understand this exception, unlocking teacher-principal dialogue and strengthening principal-teacher networks may surface areas of growth (Daly, 2015). Considering the demanding role of the school principal, paying attention to these indicators will open access to opportunities for principals to invest in and strengthen the professional relationships they have with teachers (Louis et al., 2010).

Sustaining the academic progress at these schools is a matter that has a bearing on school leadership (Chrispeels, 1992; Fullan, 2014). At the time of this study, Hispanic English learners were experiencing a degree of academic success under the leadership of principals who demonstrated a strong cultural growth mindset, led their schools as transparent, positive school leaders who had established learning communities thriving under their strengths-based instructional leadership practices. However, external pressure to succeed and sustain a high level of achievement and the realities of the socioeconomic conditions of the student population may

influence principals and teachers to change schools. Additionally, changes in school leadership may result as system-wide decisions are made to move principals. A change in school leadership may disrupt the established culture and climate of these schools. As documented in the literature, leadership can have a positive effect on the school community on the one hand, or may negatively impact student achievement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls, & Cumiskey, 2013; Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Balancing the demands of the principal role with opportunities to step away from work related pressures (Friedman, 2002; Whitaker, 1996) is a critical decision dedicated principals may forget to make. Taking time for mental and physical health far outweigh the stressful conditions placed on principals by the system (Cloud, 2013).

Implications for Practice

Promoting group and individual development, under the cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership framework in districts and schools, will serve to transform and influence system-wide communication and behavior that values the cultural assets players bring to the system. A principal who leads as a positive school leader develops approaches to building on the strengths of teachers and teacher teams. As a strengths-based instructional leader, the school principal collaboratively supports teachers and motivates them to engage in effective instruction where best practices translate into student learning and achievement.

This analysis suggests that teacher and administrator preparation programs should place a greater emphasis on cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership development training. In addition, it is fitting that teacher and principal preparation programs encourage the development of cultural growth mindset, positive school

115

leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership as a framework that emphasizes the strengths teachers, students and parents bring to our schools.

Extending this research to similar schools and districts will serve to strengthen the understanding of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership within an organizational context. Furthermore, expanding the research to focus on how cultural growth mindset illuminates the cultural richness parents bring to our communities would strengthen parental support in our schools.

The broader import of this study extends to all leaders at a national, state, county and local level. Under the conceptual framework of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership, this study's findings confirm Hispanic English learners are fully capable of closing the achievement gap in a school environment that upholds a strong belief in teachers' ability to provide excellent instruction, in a system that encourages and supports a high level of academic expectations, values the diverse cultures in the community, and invites and supports parental involvement.

Implications for Theory

Discussions regarding the lack of achievement of English learners have dominated research for many years. Utilizing a range of theories scholars have studied the problem and have framed possible causes, such as state and federal policies, intentional marginalization and segregation in schools, reclassification patterns, social capital (Gándara & Contreras, 2010; Gándara & Orfield, 2010; Mendoza Reis & Flores, 2014; Ream, Ryan, & Espinoza, 2012; Umansky & Reardon, 2014), and have tried to identify factors, including school leadership behaviors and practices (Brooks, Adams & Morita-Mullaney, 2010; Brown, 2015; Padrón, & Waxman, 2016) that may be contributing to this problem (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Shatzer,

Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Spillane & Hunt, 2010), yet, as demonstrated in the 2019 NAEP results, Hispanic students have not closed the achievement gap in English language arts, mathematics and science, (www.nationsreportcard.org, 2020).

Several studies agree that school leadership contributes to school improvement (Chrispeels, 1992; Marks & Printy, 2003; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010), and instructional leadership - focusing on curriculum design, monitoring student achievement, and supporting instruction, plays a critical role in school improvement efforts (Hallinger, 2011; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). An emerging field, positive school leadership is a model grounded within a positive construct (Hoy & Tarter, 2011) incorporating a multidimensional approach advancing leadership as "moral," "relational," and "spiritual" (Murphy & Louis, 2018, p. 18).

This study suggests that cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership may be missing components of the school effectiveness literature. Grounded upon the theories of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership, this study explored and brought to light the leadership perceptions, behaviors and practices of school principals. Any one of these approaches alone is not sufficient enough to illuminate the academic achievement for Hispanic English learners. Instead, the interrelationship of all three contributes to scholarship as uniquely linked with cultural growth mindset theory. Figure 6.1 is a visual model that brings together the ways these three frames interact in this study and helps to explain how principals influenced their learning communities to improve student achievement.

Figure 6.1 Principal Pathways to School Improvement at Edmonton and Galveston Hill
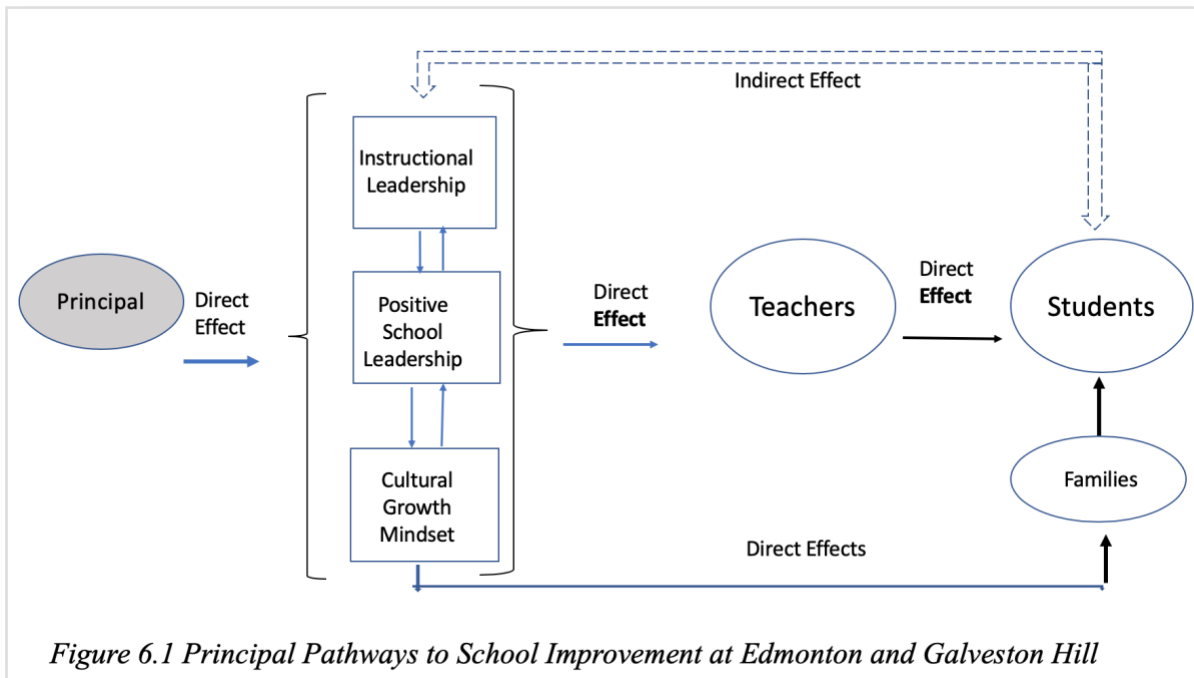
Coupling a cultural growth mindset and positive school leadership practices with strengths-based instructional leadership is a different paradigm that seems to offer a way forward to improving the learning outcomes for Hispanic English learners. Through the lens of cultural growth mindset, English learners are valued as linguistically gifted, which in these schools was having a direct positive effect on students' and families' attitudes and effort in students' schooling.

Principals' appreciation and recognition of the strengths of teachers interlinked with trust in teachers' ability to effectively teach English learners was having a direct effect on teachers' beliefs and practices. In addition, principals' strengths-based instructional leadership, by embedding enhancement of learning opportunities for English learners during the school day and ensuring teachers had effective instructional resources, enhanced teachers' opportunities to have a direct and positive impact on students' English language skill development. Testing this theory further will broaden an understanding of cultural growth mindset under different contexts.

Implications for Policy

In today's society the script of education is being written and rewritten. The historic battle between educators and policymakers over the achievement of Hispanic English learners has contributed little to eradicating the learning and outcome gap between English learners and their English-only peers. It is disturbing to see the academic results of students who are designated within the term "Current ELs" as long term English learners, many who are Hispanic English learners, who will continue the trajectory of failure unless we intervene. Without attention and effective language support, Hispanic English learners will continue to struggle academically in mathematics and literacy (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, 2017).

In the state of California, under Proposition 58, districts and schools were given the flexibility to design programs under the Local Control Formula, in an effort to support English learners and learners of a new language. Closing the Hispanic English learner achievement gap is possible, as found in this study. Establishing policy that delineates guidelines for schools, districts, and county offices to 1) provide professional development in districts and schools on cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership, 2) work with and teach learning communities to develop and deeply understand the cultural assets of Hispanic English learners, and other culturally rich students, 3) identify a process utilizing data as to who these Hispanic English learners are, 4) identify the specific academic needs, 5) develop instructional programs to support these students before, throughout, and after the school day, and 6) monitor the progress districts and schools make, is a place to start.

Implications for Further Research

This study was limited to two schools, the following recommendations for future research would be to:

1. replicate this study in schools with similar student populations across multiple districts that have demonstrated both positive and negative outcomes for English learners;

2. study principal practices influencing the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners to include student and parent voice;

3. examine the effects of the principal role under cultural growth mindset theory, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership, including teacher behavior, and parental involvement over time.

Limitations

Potential limitations originated from the nature of the sample and measures confined to 2 principals and 35 teacher respondents in one city in the state of California. Limitations that may have affected the results of this study could be the challenge of collecting data to adequately document a cultural growth mindset and the belief systems and behaviors of elementary school principals influencing the academic progress of Hispanic English learners. Limitations were addressed by (a) using a survey specifically designed to conduct inquiry around cultural growth mindset and a strengths-based approach, (b) conducting interviews of the principal participants, focus group, and a counselor, to explore the presence and demonstrations of these beliefs, and (c) reviewing documents that reflect these belief systems.

In mixed methods research, validating data through the use of reliable procedures is essential for the study to be credible. Sixteen teachers volunteered to take the teacher survey at Galveston Hill; however, an absence of teacher participation for the focus group discussion presented a challenge to the study. The school counselor volunteered and participated in the interview process.

Generalizability

Findings from this case study will bring empirical awareness. Since the experiences of the participants with Hispanic English learners may be specific to the two schools within this district, the results may not be generalizable outside of the schools in this study. However, the case study will yield leadership behaviors and practices that can be replicated in future and larger-scale studies (Yin, 2018). Through grounding the study in significant leadership theoretical perspectives, the study will add to the limited body of knowledge on cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership and the achievement of Hispanic English learners, and will offer a degree of theoretical generalizability.

Summary

In the collection of data, I sought to study how leaders who lead with a cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership influenced the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners. This conceptual framework helped to inform a balanced understanding and analysis of the nature of leadership practices that directly and indirectly impact the achievement of Hispanic English learners.

Principals understood these were challenging communities. They set a high value on the community of learners, affirmed the teachers and welcomed the parents. Principals' cultural understanding, trust, and high expectations translated into the success of Hispanic English learners. They validated the qualities within the learning community to bring about the unique distinctions within their communities. Student well-being was a high priority. Principals were creative about supporting their teachers building a high level of trust. The ability of principals to listen to teacher voice and provide support for teachers was important. Teachers demonstrated a high level of respect for the principal.

Principals demonstrated a strong sense of self-efficacy. They were resilient. They were known to find ways to maintain a focus on what was important – student achievement. Principals held teachers accountable for student progress. They were humane, humble, and highly visible throughout the school campus. They were described as "passionate." Staff described them as understanding the needs of the community. Several salient conclusions were drawn from this study.

Under the constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership and strengths-based instructional leadership, findings manifested principals influenced and motivated student learning and achievement directly with teachers. Additionally, the constructs of cultural growth mindset and positive school leadership illuminated principals had a direct effect on the students and parents. Through their direct interaction with teachers, as strengths-based instructional leaders, principals directly influenced teachers. Principals had an indirect effect on the learning of Hispanic English learners. Findings confirmed scholarship on teacher effects related to student learning as having a direct influence on student progress and achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010).

Conclusion

This study helped to illuminate teachers' and principals' perspectives and practices that influence learning opportunities for Hispanic English learners. The strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based instructional leadership revealed how principals influenced – directly and indirectly – students, families and teachers to ensure rich and successful learning and achievement by Hispanic English learners.

This study makes a unique contribution to the research on principal leadership. Under the strengths-based framework utilized in this study, several leadership practices emerged that if practiced by other principals could help close the Hispanic English learner gap:

1) Principals must develop a cultural growth mindset toward students and their families as key to raising achievement.

2) Principals need to convey their beliefs to teachers in a genuine and credible manner. If they begin by identifying and tapping into teacher strengths, they can build trust with teachers, families and students needed to change student achievement outcomes.

3) Principals need to deepen their knowledge of the instructional needs of Hispanic English learners, explain data in a hands-on way with teachers to show gaps in instructional practice, set high expectations and believe teachers can meet the instructional challenges to close the achievement gap.

This study strongly suggests that principals who lead with a cultural growth mindset, understand that conventional learning in U.S. schools assesses skills that are highly regarded by White Anglo-Saxon thought. Through the use of appropriate instructional approaches that enable diverse learners to be successful on these assessments, they can close the achievement gap. Furthermore, leaders who respect and balance the cultural values of the diverse learners represented in their communities are able to help students to be bi-cultural. This study also indicates that principals must be able to influence school performance by guiding their communities with creative and meaningful forms of leadership and engagement of teachers, students and parents.

In conclusion, a critical variable to closing the achievement gap and turning around schools that this study suggests is missing in the literature is a blending of three key leadership approaches: cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and strengths-based

instructional leadership. This study indicates that all three are essential if there is to be a significant breakthrough in the underachievement of English learners. Principals who lead with a cultural growth mindset consider English learners as linguistically gifted. They are sensitive to and value the diverse cultures in their learning community, as well as their own. Not only do they welcome students of diverse cultural upbringings, they understand the distress and hardship students and their families are confronted with as immigrants. As documented in this study, principal leadership can have an important direct effect on student learning through their practice of positive school leadership and cultural growth mindset and an indirect effect on students through directly affecting teachers' instructional practices.

APPENDIX A: CULTURAL GROWTH MINDSET TEACHER SURVEY

We are trying to learn more about principals and their work in elementary schools with high percentages of Hispanic English learners who are showing academic growth. The following questions will give you an opportunity to tell us more about your understanding of the leadership practices established by your principal. There are no right or wrong answers and your responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any district officials or be used in any evaluative way. Your thoughtful responses will help us better understand how principals influence the academic achievement of Hispanic English Learners. Thank you for taking part in this research.

Questions 1-14:   1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Sometimes, 4=Most of the time, 5=Always
Questions 15-19:   1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly disagree, 4=Slightly agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree
Questions 20-24:   1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Sometimes, 4=Most of the time, 5=Always

The following questions will give you an opportunity to tell us about your understanding of how your principal builds a community of learning at your school.	
Q1 My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts.	1 2 3 4 5
Q2 My principal listens to teachers' ideas as a way to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
Q3 My principal works to create ways to involve parents of Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
Q4 My principal develops a caring atmosphere built on trust.	1 2 3 4 5
The following questions will give you an opportunity to tell us about your understanding of your principal's practices as the leader of your school.	1 2 3 4 5
Q5 My principal models a high level of professionalism.	
Q6 My principal effectively taps into the instructional strengths of teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
Q7 My principal promotes leadership opportunities among teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
Q8 My principal ensures wide teacher participation in decision making around school improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
Q9 My principal is knowledgeable of best instructional practices for Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
Q10 My principal believes teachers can be effective in helping all Hispanic English learners master grade level standards.	1 2 3 4 5
Q11 My principal sets high learning expectations for all students.	1 2 3 4 5
Q12 My principal ensures that all students are taught by high quality teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
Q13 My principal clearly defines standards for instructional practices to support the learning of Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
Q14 My principal supports teachers when they are struggling to raise the achievement of Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
In the following questions, your responses will help us to understand teacher perception of the principal role.	

Q15 It is the principal's responsibility to work with the teachers to ensure that all of their students achieve at a high level.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Q16 As a school we are making important strides toward increasing the achievement of English learners.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Q17 Working together, it is possible for the principal and teachers to change a low achieving school into a high achieving school.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Q18 My principal ensures intervention for Hispanic English learners is embedded into the school day.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Q19 I have many parents of Hispanic English learners attending parent-teacher conferences because of principal outreach to parents.	1 2 3 4 5 6
In the following questions, you will tell us about your understanding of how your principal supports teachers.	
Q20 My principal provides resources to help staff improve their teaching for Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
Q21 My principal encourages data use in planning for individual student needs.	1 2 3 4 5
Q22 My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement.	1 2 3 4 5
Q23 My principal participates in teacher planning meetings concerning the instruction of Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
Q24 My principal suggests specific ideas to improve my instruction of Hispanic English learners.	1 2 3 4 5
	Open-ended Questions
Q25 Please describe an instructional strategy, approach or tip your principal shared with you that you believe helped strengthen your instructional repertoire to meet the needs of English learners.	
Q26 Please write the name of your school.	
Q27 List the languages in which you are fluent.	
Q28 What is your race or ethnicity?	African American / Black Hispanic / Latino(a) Native American Asian White Other
Q29 How long have you been teaching?	
Q30 We are conducting a focus group at your school. Your participation will be a valuable addition to our research. The discussion will take around 30-40 minutes and will be very informal. Participation and responses will be kept confidential. If you would like to volunteer, please provide your, 1) email address, and 2) a telephone number where you may be reached.	
This survey has been adapted from Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., Anderson, S. E. (2010). *Learning from Leadership: Investing the Links to Improved Student Learning: Final Report of Research to the Wallace Foundation.* www.wallacefoundation.org.	

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Teacher Survey for Cultural Growth Mindset Study: Questions Organized by Conceptual Framework

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Cultural Growth Mindset

Toward teachers

Q15 It is the principal's responsibility to work with the teachers to ensure that all of their students achieve at a high level.

Q16 As a school we are making important strides toward increasing the achievement of English learners.

Q17 Working together, it is possible for the principal and teachers to change a low achieving school into a high achieving school.

Toward Families

FQ2 My principal listens to teachers' ideas as a way to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners.

FQ3 My principal works to create ways to involve parents of Hispanic English learners.

FQ19 I have many parents of Hispanic English learners attending parent-teacher conferences because of principal outreach to parents.

Positive School Leadership

*Q1 My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts.

*Q4 My principal develops a caring atmosphere built on trust.

*Q5 My principal models a high level of professionalism.

Q6 My principal effectively taps into the instructional strengths of teachers.

*Q7 My principal promotes leadership opportunities among teachers.

*Q8 My principal ensures wide teacher participation in decision making around school improvement.

Instructional Leadership

Q9 My principal is knowledgeable of best instructional practices for Hispanic English learners.

*Q12 My principal ensures that all students are taught by high quality teachers.

*Q13 My principal clearly defines standards for instructional practices to support the learning of Hispanic English learners.

*Q14 My principal supports teachers when they are struggling to raise the achievement of Hispanic English learners.

Q18 My principal ensures intervention for Hispanic English learners is embedded into the school day.

*Q20 My principal provides resources to help staff improve their teaching for Hispanic English learners.

*Q21 My principal encourages data use in planning for individual student needs.

*Q22 My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement.

*Q23 My principal participates in teacher planning meetings concerning the instruction of Hispanic English learners.

*Q24 My principal suggests specific ideas to improve my instruction of Hispanic English learners.

Open-ended Demographic Questions

Q25 Please describe an instructional strategy, approach or tip your principal shared with you that you believe helped strengthen your instructional repertoire to meet the needs of English learners.

Q26 Please write the name of your school.

Q27 List the languages in which you are fluent.

Q28 What is your race or ethnicity?

Q29 How long have you been teaching?

Q30 We are conducting a focus group at your school. Your participation will be a valuable addition to our research. The discussion will take around 30-40 minutes and will be very informal. Participation and responses will be kept confidential. If you would like to volunteer, please provide your, 1) email address, and 2) a telephone number where you may be reached.

*Questions were adapted from the Leadership for Learning Study

APPENDIX C: PILOT RESULTS

Pilot Survey Results				
How the Principal Builds a Community of Learning	**Mean**	**SD `**	**SE**	**Variance**
Q1 My principal is effective in building community support for the school's improvement efforts.	3.533	0.819	0.150	0.671
Q2 My principal listens to teachers' ideas as a way to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents of Hispanic English learners.	3.500	1.075	0.196	1.155
Q3 My principal works to create ways to involve parents of Hispanic English learners.	3.667	1.093	0.200	1.195
Q4 My principal develops a caring atmosphere built on trust.	3.767	0.971	0.177	0.944
Principal Practices				
Q5 My principal models a high level of professionalism.	4.300	0.952	0.174	0.907
Q6 My principal effectively taps into the instructional strengths of teachers.	3.700	0.837	0.153	0.700
Q7 My principal promotes leadership opportunities among teachers.	3.733	0.944	0.172	0.892
Q8 My principal ensures wide teacher participation in decision making around school improvement.	3.533	1.224	0.224	1.499
Q9 My principal is knowledgeable of best instructional practices for Hispanic English learners.	3.367	1.066	0.195	1.137
Q10 My principal believes teachers can be effective in helping all Hispanic English learners master grade level standards.	4.300	0.952	0.174	0.907
Q11 My principal sets high learning expectations for all students.	4.433	0.728	0.133	0.530
Q12 My principal ensures that all students are taught by high quality teachers.	4.267	0.828	0.151	0.685
Q13 My principal clearly defines standards for instructional practices to support the learning of Hispanic English learners.	3.267	1.081	0.197	1.168
Q14 My principal supports teachers when they are struggling to raise the achievement of Hispanic English learners.	3.533	0.937	0.171	0.878
Principal Role				
Q15 It is the principal's responsibility to work with the teachers to ensure that all of their students achieve at a high level.	5.467	0.730	0.133	0.533
Q16 As a school we are making important strides toward increasing the achievement of English learners.	4.700	1.208	0.221	1.459
Q17 Working together, it is possible for the principal and teachers to change a low achieving school into a high achieving school.	5.700	0.466	0.085	0.217
Q18 My principal ensures intervention for Hispanic English learners is embedded into the school day.	4.233	1.135	0.207	1.289
Q19 I have many parents of Hispanic English learners attending parent-teacher conferences because of principal outreach to parents.	3.633	1.450	0.265	2.102
Instructional Leadership				
Q20 My principal provides resources to help staff improve their teaching for Hispanic English learners.	3.133	0.937	0.171	0.878
Q21 My principal encourages data use in planning for individual student needs.	4.100	0.995	0.182	0.990
Q22 My principal supports collaborative work among staff to improve student achievement.	4.367	0.850	0.155	0.723
Q23 My principal participates in teacher planning meetings concerning the instruction of Hispanic English learners.	2.900	1.125	0.205	1.266
Q24 My principal suggests specific ideas to improve my instruction of Hispanic English learners.	2.467	1.008	0.184	1.016

NARRATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

TO THE
RIO GRANDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (PSEUDONYM)

A
DISSERTATION STUDY
BY
JANE TORRES CLARK
ENTITLED

THE CULTURAL GROWTH MINDSET OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND
THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
HISPANIC ENGLISH LEARNERS

SUBMITTED WITH THE
REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MULTIPLE SCHOOLS

STATEMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

The distinct demographic landscape reflected in our classrooms reveals an increasing number of Hispanic English learners enrolling in our schools who are struggling academically. It is at the elementary school level, where learning gaps begin to surface for Hispanic English learners. Demonstrating a range of learning and language experiences, English learners are gifted with possibilities, yet accompanied by challenges as they set foot in the classroom. Added to the challenge is the academic progress or lack thereof, English learners are experiencing in our schools. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, recognizes the changing dynamics in U.S. schools and the growing numbers of English learners (Department of Education, 2016). This increasing challenge in U.S. schools presents educators with the task of providing English learners with a proper education (Hopkins, Thompson, Linquanti, Hakuta, & August, 2013; Padrón, & Waxman, 2016; Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls, & Cumiskey, 2010), and merits a closer examination.

In the state of California, the state with the highest number of English learners, numbering at 1,271,150 or 20 percent of the student population, 82.19 percent of English learners are Spanish speakers (California Department of Education, 2018). Hispanic English learners lag far below their English-only peers in reading, mathematics, and science attainment (Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Gandara, 2012; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005). As an illustration, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a congressionally mandated project under the National Center for Education Statistics, has been administering a standard assessment in every state to fourth, eighth, and twelfth-grade students.

In 2017, the underachievement of English learners and Hispanic students persisted nationwide in reading, mathematics, and science, perpetuating the trend that has existed since 1969 (NAEP Report Card, 2018). Increasing the level of academic success for Hispanic English learners is a national imperative.

Through their actions, principals inspire learning for all students when they believe in, invest time, and focus on, high expectations for student learning. Although this may be true, among the extant literature on leadership, less is known about how principals influence the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners within the school setting. Additionally, little research has been conducted that considers and analyzes how school principals model their leadership beliefs and set up deliberate managerial practices and actions to create conditions in their schools that influence the achievement of Hispanic English learners.. Examining the perceptions, views, actions, and behaviors of principals will lead to actionable knowledge contributing to the body of study on principal leadership and the effects of this role on the academic advancement of Hispanic English learners.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In his groundbreaking work, James Coleman and a team of researchers, in response to Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, delivered an extensive study known as "Equality of Educational Opportunity" (1966). Coleman's study set a precedent for improving education. A cornerstone attempt, Coleman and his team of researchers addressed: 1) the segregation of ethnic groups in public schools, 2) the offering of quality educational programs in schools congruent with select criteria, 3) student performance and achievement as measured by standardized assessments, and 4) the relationship between academic attainment, the influence of peers, and the home and school learning environments. Coleman argued that the lack of achievement among minority students was affected by familial influences and the schools minority students attended. Since the release of the Coleman study, researchers have argued that learning gaps begin early in life, contending that inequalities for language minority children develop before they reach school, hold a strong correlation with the child's social class and socioeconomic status, and persist over time throughout a student's lifetime (Garcia, 2015).

Challenging Coleman's perspective, social scientists from Michigan State University studied eight Michigan elementary schools from a mix of rural, small town, urban, suburban, and small city schools. Two schools were low performing, and six were considered "high improving" schools (Brookover & Lezotte, 1971, p. 2). In May 1971, these researchers published their study. This research revealed a compelling story countering Coleman's views on the limited influence of schools and suggest there is an interrelationship of distinctive school conditions and attitudes that affect student achievement. This study contributed to the birth of the Effective Schools Movement (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). Endorsers of the effective schools research called for educational reform and argued that "all children can learn," (Brookover et al. 1979; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1982; Edmonds, 1983). These researchers challenged society to examine societal inequities, and the need for betterment in poor urban communities with children who lacked a quality education (Edmonds, 1979).

A counter-argument disputed the results as having gaps in many regards, including a failure by the researchers to consider how the findings on effective schools affected policy and

disrupted districts as organizational systems (Purkey & Smith, 1982; Cuban, 1983). Other researchers argued that the effective schools movement had many weak areas and the claims made by the pioneers of the movement reduced the intricately complex problem of education to a general formula for the improvement of schools (Purkey & Smith 1982). The effective schools research, nevertheless, highlighted the vital role of the school leader and the impact of the school principal on student performance, which then led to increased attention from researchers. Some researchers argue that a school leader's actions are interdependently linked to, and influence, student achievement (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Spillane & Hunt, 2010). Others posit that teacher perceptions of a principal as being a weak, mediocre leader, negatively affect the achievement of students (Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls & Cumiskey, 2013; Andrews & Soder, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Likewise, teacher judgment of a school leader can be interpreted as an indicator of the leader's influence on the school community. In schools where teachers perceived the principal to be a strong instructional leader, academic achievement was significantly higher compared to the scores of students who attended the schools of weak principals (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989).

As in the 20th century, scholars of the 21st century continue to wrestle with issues of equity and equality in education (Zamudio et al., 2011). Historically, in U.S. schools, Hispanic English learners have been confined to marginalization as socially disadvantaged students (Hernández & Daoud, 2014). Careful examination of leadership practices is central to providing insights that will help reverse the persistent academic deficiencies which surface for Hispanic English learners in elementary school (Genesee et al., 2005; Reardon & Galindo, 2009). In searching for factors affecting the educational disadvantage of Hispanic children in high-poverty schools, students who entered kindergarten with limited English proficiency were considered at risk resulting from the reading challenges they faced, and the compelling instructional needs they experienced (Keiffer, 2008). Similarly, Hispanic children demonstrated signs of achievement gaps resulting from their growth and development (Reardon and Galindo, 2009). Prevalent research findings indicate that in schools where Hispanic English learners were immersed in English-only mainstream classrooms, meaningful learning was limited, owing to a lack of comprehension – at a minimum – of the instructional content (Olsen, 2010). The notion that in-school characteristics affect an English learner's language proficiency and achievement is also postulated by researchers who argue that English learners demonstrate significantly lower test scores than do native English-speaking students (Gándara et al., 2003; Portes & Schuffler, 1996; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

In a partnership with a local university, two principals from a rural community with a high population of Hispanic English learners, Standard English learners, and socioeconomically challenged students were studied. The principals were trained to become instructional leaders. Findings indicated that initial teacher resistance declined with principal support. Teacher perception of the principal role changed as a result of conversations emphasizing non-evaluative and collaborative professional learning. Additionally, principals benefited from the support provided by the university faculty, and teacher leaders emerged from this professional learning experience. More importantly, students projected to fail exceeded state growth progressions (Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls & Cumiskey, 2013).

A study focusing on the leadership practices of a principal who inherited a high poverty consistently underperforming school with a significant population of Hispanic English learners showed the principal demonstrated a deep understanding of effective linguistic strategies. By incorporating careful planning, and discussions with teachers and parents, the principal set out to change the school culture. For the instructional leader, focusing on increasing student achievement was a top priority. The administrator established student achievement goals, conducted daily observations, and studied weekly student academic data. Holding teacher dialogue and offering professional development encouraged a climate change where respect and academic success replaced low expectations. Utilizing distributive leadership practices enabled the school leader to enact another significant change - the involvement of parents who later became parent leaders (Reyes & Garcia, 2013).

Engaging a broad spectrum of leadership behaviors at several levels, a large-scale study spanning six years, incorporated an in-depth examination of leadership behaviors. Leadership practices were examined for material evidence of accepted outcomes. Factors directly linked to student learning were, most notably, teacher perception, student and teacher backgrounds, the professional learning community, in-classroom conditions and out of school environs (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Researchers have also shown that high trust environments nourish a host of favorable effects for teachers and encourage student achievement, and argue that a strengths-based approach to leading is necessary for 21st century schools led by supportive leaders who optimistically embrace learning, establish a climate of trust, and endorse individual and collective competence (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008).

Leadership behaviors affecting teacher efficacy may have a direct or indirect impact on student learning (Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam & Brown, 2014). Recent research suggests the need for district leadership and school principals to work in partnership to outline learning conditions that support English learners. Additionally, all students benefit when district and school leaders commit to planning, supporting, and developing opportunities for teachers to learn highly effective strategies. Instructional focus and school direction are essential. Setting expectations for high-quality instruction, monitoring student progress, and utilizing data to change instructional practices are equally significant. Similarly, fomenting a collaborative community environment, leveraging resources to invest in professional development, and establishing a climate of exceptional learning, stimulates, motivates, and engages teachers and students (Elfers, Lucero, Tritikus & Knapp, 2013).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY / RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to examine the cultural growth mindset of two elementary school principals, their behaviors and their leadership practices with teachers that directly influence, enhance and motivate the academic performance of Hispanic English learners. The research proposition of this case study is that elementary school principals who embrace the challenges of an open system, leading their schools with a sense of self-efficacy, a cultural growth mindset and a strengths-based approach coupled with a deep understanding of effective instruction for English learners are able to meaningfully influence the learning and progress of Hispanic English learners. The following research questions provide a deeper understanding of principal attitudes and behaviors with teachers that support English language learners from the perspective of principals and teachers.

The overarching question for this study is: How do elementary school principals' perceptions, practices, and behaviors influence the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners? This research question includes two sub-questions:

1.   How do principals and teachers describe the principal's leadership to influence learning opportunities for Hispanic English learners?

2.   How do the strengths-based theoretical constructs of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and instructional leadership illuminate principals' ability to influence and enhance the learning opportunities of Hispanic English learners?

These questions will highlight the key qualities of school principals that distinguish and shape their leadership practices in schools with high populations of Hispanic English learners..

METHODOLOGY

Three interrelated theories addressing aspects of leadership serve as the conceptual foundation for this study and form the essential components to guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation. These concepts or theoretical perspectives are cultural growth mindset, positive, strengths-based leadership, and instructional leadership. Although these concepts focus on different aspects of leadership, they are all anchored within a positive construct (Hoy & Tarter, 2011). This case study is guided by a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) framed by a mixed methodological lens of quantitative and qualitative data collection analysis and results that will be used to explain the observed phenomenon (Hancock, D. R. & Algozzine, B., 2006).

A mixed methods approach for this study was selected to better understand in what ways principal beliefs, their attitudes and behaviors, directly influence and motivate the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners, and how principal behaviors are linked to the academic progress of Hispanic English learners. This design allows for a complete understanding of the problem and involves the accurate collection and analysis of quantitative (numeric) and qualitative data.

The study consists of two distinct phases. The first phase involves collecting quantitative data. The second phase entails gathering qualitative data to help explain the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data will provide a general picture of the research problem. Qualitative data refines, extends, and explains the general quantitative picture. Moreover, this analysis will refine and explain the statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth. The priority in this study is given to the qualitative data since the two phases are connected in the intermediate stage of this research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell, 2015; Jang, McDougall, Pollon, Herbert & Russell, 2008; Ivankova & Stick, 2007). (See "Research Design" attached as Appendix A.)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the Rio Grande Unified School District (RGUSD), an ethnically diverse district, and the second largest district in California, Hispanics comprise 46.5 percent of the student population (Fast Facts, 2019). According to the California Department of Education, in San Diego Unified, Spanish is the No.1 language spoken by students grades kindergarten to 12, or 72.79 percent (California Department of Education Data Reporting Office, 2019).

This case study will examine the academic achievement of Hispanic English learners through the role of the school principal, and will bring awareness to the importance of examining the patterns and practices of two school principals whose leadership practices are motivating the achievement of Hispanic English learners in the RGUSD. Drawing from evidence that illustrates the effective instructional leadership of two RGUSD principals leading schools with high populations of Hispanic English learners, this study will highlight two RGUSD quality schools whose students are demonstrating progress toward the District's Vision 2020 goals, is relevant to public education, and merits consideration.

One of the ways to study the behavior of principals is to evaluate their interaction with teachers (Brookover et al., 1979; Andrews & Soder, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Chrispeels, 1992). As such, this study includes multiple sources of data to identify critical beliefs and behaviors that lead to the success of Hispanic English learners: a survey administered to 50-60 teachers in two elementary schools (approximately 25-30 teachers per school), two one-time-only teacher focus groups consisting of 4-5 participants in each group. To gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics associated with the sustained improvement of Hispanic English learners, the researcher will observe principal behavior in the natural setting - the campus where principals conduct their work. The function of the analysis of documents is to strengthen the collection of data with a review and evaluation of credible documents gathered. This explanatory sequential mixed methods case study will be conducted in two phases with one form of data collection following, connecting, explaining, and informing the other (Creswell, 2015).

Research Sites

Studying two principals in their real-world environments will contribute compelling evidence of effective leadership practices influencing the learning of Hispanic English learners. Three steps were followed in obtaining participants for this study. First, an Area Superintendent was contacted to recommend principals for the study. Next, from the RGUSD website, a list of Rio Grande Unified schools was studied for schools that met the research criteria. From the list of schools studied, Galveston Hill Elementary fit the research criteria.

Additionally, a search of the California Distinguished Schools (News Release #18-24) listed Edmonton Elementary as a school that was making academic progress. Upon researching the data of Edmonton Elementary, three-year academic growth trends demonstrated that this school met the research criteria. Both principals were contacted via email and have agreed to participate in the study, Appendix B. Upon approval from the RGUSD, principals will receive an email, Appendix C. Principals will recruit teacher volunteers to take the survey, and teachers will volunteer to participate for the focus group discussion.

Data Collection / Research Design

       The strength of this study lies in the collection and careful analysis of data (Yin, 2018). Phase One of this research queries the teaching staff of these two principals, including classroom teachers and resource teachers, selected from schools with over 50 percent Hispanic English learners demonstrating a 2-3-year academic growth trend of 4.0% or higher (Hattie, 2009). Phase Two consists of individual interviews of the two principals. Additionally, observations of the principals and collection of documents will uncover the real-world experiences of these leaders as they interact with teachers and Hispanic English learners. Holding one focus group in each school will allow for the exchange and collection of relevant information from the participants (Morgan, 1996).

Phase One

       Instruments. One cross-sectional design questionnaire (Appendix D) adapted from the Learning from Leadership (LfL) study (Seashore Louis et al., 2010) have been adapted and modified to fit the requirements of this study. The term, "Hispanic English learner," has been added to some of the questions, and additional questions have been added to include parents of Hispanic English learners. The LfL - Teacher - queries the teaching staff of the two schools studied. The teacher survey (LfLQ-T) encompasses 30 questions. The survey has a predicted short duration. For the LfLQ-T instrument, completion is estimated at approximately 10-15 minutes. The instrument will be administered online via *Qualtrics; a web-based survey instrument that will assign a random number to all participants*, to measure predictor variables suggested by the theories of cultural growth mindset, positive school leadership, and instructional leadership. Reliability will be calculated, and the instruments will be revised before the administration of the instruments for this study.

       Teacher surveys. The researcher and principals will coordinate a date and time for teachers to complete and sign the consent form. Upon receipt of the consent form, the researcher will schedule an agreed upon date of completion of the teacher survey and will send the principal a link with the Qualtrics teacher survey via a reminder email. A copy of the teacher consent form is found in Appendix E.

Phase Two

       Instruments. Data gathering in this study includes interviews, observations, the collection of documents, and focus group interviews. *All participants will be assigned pseudonyms.*

       Principal Interviews. This study will include individual interviews with two principals. The first interview with each principal will take place at a mutually agreeable date and time once the District has approved the study. The principal consent form is found in Appendix F. Participants will engage in a 30-40 minute semi-structured interview. (Interview Protocol, Appendix G).

       The second interview will take place after scheduled observations have been completed to better understand the cultural growth mindset, behaviors, beliefs and practices of the principal, and to engage in more in-depth inquiry, which will, in turn, unveil more information regarding the participant's views. In the second interview (Interview Protocol 2, Appendix H), participants will be able to respond to questions posed by the researcher, followed by sharing other experiences that were not previously mentioned.

Observations. Social interactions are essential to this study since observations of the principals will uncover the social reality of their experiences. Two days will be scheduled with the principals during the first two quarters of the 2019-2020 school year to observe the principals. Walking the school grounds and sitting in the school office will help the researcher see, experience, and listen to the participants in their workspaces. Observing how the principal interacts with students on the playground, including Hispanic English learners, in the cafeteria, and during assemblies will help to tell the story of these principals; together with, observations of their conversations with teachers at staff meetings.

Teacher Focus Groups. Focus groups, in this study, are defined as a research approach to obtain data (Morgan, 1996) and are conducive to the collection of extensive and valuable information from study participants (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 1996). The researcher's interest in holding focus groups is for the sole purpose of this research - to allow for the exchange of information from more than one participant within a specific length of time. Carefully planned group study (Krueger & Casey, 2015) serves as a forum to gather in-depth information on the views and shared understanding of the participants where the researcher will ask a small number of questions resulting from participants' responses on the survey (Morgan, 1996; Creswell, 2015). Participants will be asked to volunteer to participate. Focus groups will be comprised of 4-5 participants and will meet at an agreed upon location at the school site to explore each participant's experiences and perceptions of principal behavior directly motivating the academic progress of Hispanic English learners.

Data Analysis

Principal and Teachers. In Phase One, the analysis of quantitative data, utilizing JASP, a standard analysis procedure using descriptive subgroup analyses (e.g., means tables, cross tabs), will capture teachers' perception of principal behaviors directly affecting the achievement of Hispanic English learners. Analysis of quantitative data will examine how teachers describe principals' beliefs related to the attributes and abilities of Hispanic English learners and will facilitate the selection of the participants for Phase Two of this study. Capturing major themes is vital in order to understand the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2015).

All interviews, including focus group interviews and discussions, will be recorded, with permission, transcribed, and coded for themes. Appendix I (principals) and Appendix J (teachers) are matrices developed to be used for categorizing, displaying, and developing the themes arising from participants' concepts and beliefs (Maxwell, 2013). To carefully analyze the qualitative data gathered to answer the research questions, Dedoose, a web-based application will help to organize the research data, including text, audio, images, and spreadsheets. Participants will be provided with the transcripts of interviews to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of data collected.

Documents. Data sources include:
1. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)
    a. English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science Data
2. California School Dashboard
    a. Student Group Reports - ELA, Mathematics
    b. English Learner Progress Placement Report

c. Attendance / Suspensions / Truancies

3. Select Dataquest - California Healthy Kids Survey - Hispanic English learners' sense of belonging

4. School Related Documents

a. Website - Mission / Vision

b. Celebrations / Announcements

c. Select ELAC meeting announcements / minutes / agendas

d. Communications with parents, including website information in Spanish, translations of documents. These documents will show how the school provides access to parents of Hispanic English learners, in their primary language, to school information and activities related to Hispanic English learners.

e. Extended Day Intervention Schedules for English Learners

f. School Announcements

g. Select current year staff meeting agendas, professional development handouts related to Hispanic English learners

Internal Validity. The quality of this research design will entail minimizing errors and biases, including making unfounded inferences. Seeking to explain why Hispanic English learners are progressing academically, and how principal behavior influences the academic progress of Hispanic English learners, is significant in this explanatory case study design, since the participants studied may contribute information that "establishes a causal relationship" (Yin, 2018, p. 42). Moreover, valid collection and organization of data, the analysis of data, and the writing of this study are interlinked with three important details:

1. utilizing multiple sources of evidence to ensure that all probabilities are studied,

2. maintaining a chain of evidence to make certain all explanations are considered, and

3. working closely with the participants of this case study to allow them to review the study (Yin, 2018).

Limitations. Inherent limitations that may affect the results of this study could be the challenge of collecting data that adequately documents a cultural growth mindset, belief systems and behaviors of elementary school principals that influence the academic progress of Hispanic English learners. This limitation is being addressed by (a) using a survey specifically designed to address a growth mindset and strength-based approach; (b) conducting interviews and focus groups on exploring the presence and demonstrations of these beliefs; (c) observing principals in the educational setting; and (d) reviewing documents that reflect these belief systems.

Generalizability. Findings from this case study will bring empirical awareness. The case study will yield leadership behaviors and practices that can be replicated in future and larger scale studies (Yin, 2018). Through grounding the study in significant leadership theoretical perspectives, the study will add to the limited body of knowledge on cultural growth mindset and instructional leadership and the achievement of Hispanic English learners, and offer a degree of theoretical generalizability.

Definition of Terms. The following definitions help clarify how the study will utilize the terms.

Achievement gap: When the academic results for students are inequitable, unfair, and discriminatory.

Culture: The behavioral patterns developed by people as participants in their cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003).

Cultural Growth Mindset: I define cultural growth mindset as the broadening of an understanding of the mores, language, customs, and traditions of peoples originating from diverse cultures and heritages. A person with a cultural growth mindset considers English learners as linguistically gifted instead of linguistically deficient (Vargas, 2018). A person with a cultural growth mindset appreciates the richness and diversity of human qualities and culture and is oriented toward valuing, affirming, and learning about others' cultures, assets, and abilities as well as their own.

Hispanic: While the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" may be used interchangeably in many studies, the term "Hispanic" is characterized in this paper as a person of Spanish origin or descent, who speaks Spanish, or has immigrated from a Spanish speaking country, including Spain.

Hispanic English learner: The term Hispanic English learner is defined as an English learner with Hispanic parentage whose mother tongue is Spanish.

Learning gap: When the learning achieved by students does not reach to the learning performance levels expected.

Opportunity gap: When educational opportunities for students are inequitable, unfair, and discriminatory.

PROCEDURES OF THE PROJECT

In case study research, boundaries for the case must be set, and the study must be carried out to its entirety (Yin, 2018). The general procedures followed by the researcher will agree with RGUSD priorities and protocols, school expectations, and leadership expectations for professional conduct, including all legal procedures as outlined by the Board of Education, Superintendent, and Area Superintendent. A research timeline follows:

Timeline / Time Commitments–School Year 2019-2020 (First Two Quarters of the School Year **ONLY**)

2019

July – August	1st Principal Interview (30-40 minutes) Teachers will take a survey (10-15 minutes, preferably given at the beginning of a staff meeting)
August – October	One-time-only Teacher Focus Groups – 1 in each school – teachers representing lower, upper and middle school; timeframe 30-40 minutes on a date and time most suitable to volunteers
August – December	2 Scheduled Observation Days of the Principal (possible sites: ELAC meeting,

	professional development, PLC meetings that principal attends, office, playground)
August – December	Collection of relevant school documents (ELAC meeting minutes, school newsletter, professional develop materials relevant to Hispanic English learners, staff meeting agendas, Extended Day Intervention Schedules for English learners)
November	2nd Principal Interview (30-40 minutes)
2020	
May	Completion of study. Report results to RGUSD, principals and their staff

The projected completion date of this study is May 1, 2020. Dissemination and disposition of the research results will be provided to the University of California San Diego, California State University San Marcos, the Rio Grande Unified School District, the Principal and the staff at Galveston Hill Elementary and Edmonton Elementary. The research will also be reported in a research publication.

APPENDIX E: PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

**Human Research
Protections Program**

UC San Diego

IRB Project # 190396

1
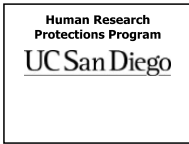
These risks include the following:

- There exists a potential for the loss of confidentiality should the research information become known to others; however, it will be protected by the use of study codes to protect your responses. In addition, pseudonyms for participants in this study, their positions, school, and district will be used to minimize the risk of identification.

- The primary risk of participation is that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the research questions and may feel a loss of the time committed to this study.

- There is a potential for boredom, fatigue or emotional distress.

To minimize these risks, you will be provided with time, as needed, to stop, take a break, respond or not respond to questions.

In addition, there may be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant risks should they arise in the course of the study.

Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board.

Procedures and safeguards have been put in place to minimize risks to you, as a participant. You may end the interview at any time for any reason. Your interview data will be kept confidential and will not be shared with your Area Superintendent, Superintendent, or anyone in your District. The data will be available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. The school district will not have access to your data. The audiotapes of the interviews will be destroyed following final analysis no later than one year after the conclusion of the study. All digital files will be erased and all paper records will be shredded. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current position with the San Diego Unified School District or future relations with the University of California, San Diego or California State University, San Marcos. Pseudonyms for participants, in surveys and interviews, positions, school, and district will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the verbatim transcribed interview. You may choose to eliminate any comments or references. The recording may be stopped at any time upon your request as a participant in this study. The entire audiotape or portions of it will be erased upon your request.

There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from participating in this study. The main benefit is to the field of education because this work may further understandings of how principals work to increase student achievement.

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw or refuse to answer specific questions in an interview. An alternative to participation in this study would be to not participate and you may share this with the principal investigator at any time.

Human Research
Protections Program

UC San Diego
Approved
Current Approval: 07/05/2019
Do not use after 07/03/2020

2

The researcher may remove you from the study without your consent if the researcher feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given to you by the study personnel.

There is no compensation for being a part of this study. There are no costs associated with the study with the exception of your time used to participate in the survey and the interview process.

This study has been approved by the University of California, San Diego and California State University, San Marcos Institutional Review Board (IRB). You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records. Jane Clark has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Jane Clark at 619-820-0747 or the researcher's advisor/professor, Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, 858-822-6688, or chofstetter@ucsd.edu. You may also call the Human Research Protections Program Office at 858-246-HRPP (858-246-4777) to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Your Signature and Consent
You have received a copy of this consent document.

You agree to participate.

_____   _____
Subject's signature   Date

As part of this project, an audio recording will be made of you during your participation in this research project. Please indicate below the uses of these audio recordings to which you are willing to consent. This is completely voluntary and up to you. In any use of the audio recording, your name will not be identified. You may request to stop the recording at any time or to erase any portion of your recording.

1.The audio recording can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.   _____
                                                                                                                                      Initials

2.The audio recording can be used for scientific publications.   _____
                                                                                                 Initials

3.The audio recording can be reviewed at meetings of social scientists interested in the study of

 principal leadership.   _____
                                            Initials

Human Research Protections Program
UC San Diego   3
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Current Approval: 07/05/2019
Do not use after 07/03/2020

You have the right to request that the recording be stopped or erased in full or in part at any time.

You have read the above description and give your consent for the use of audio recording as indicated above.

_____   _____
Signature   Date   Witness   Date

APPENDIX F: TEACHER SURVEY CONSENT FORM

IRB Project # 190396

INFORMED CONSENT AND RELEASE CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Cultural Growth Mindset of Elementary School Principals and their Influence on the
Academic Achievement of Hispanic English Learners
TEACHERS

Jane Clark, a doctoral candidate with University of California, San Diego and California State University, San Marcos, Joint Doctoral Program, is conducting a research study as a primary researcher to find out more about the influence of principals on the achievement of Hispanic English learners (HisELs). Your school was selected for this study because your school has consistently demonstrated an increase in the achievement of Hispanic English learners. You are invited to participate in a research study examining your principal's leadership efforts at increasing student achievement. There will be approximately 60 persons who will be participating in this research. The total length of the study will be 10 months.

The purpose of this study is to determine in what ways principal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors at the elementary school level have a direct influence on the learning opportunities and achievement of Hispanic English learners, and how these characteristics are linked to the achievement of HisELs.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a one-time-only survey. This survey will ask about your principal's leadership practices and will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. There are some minimal risks to participation and may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include:

- There is the potential for the loss of confidentiality should the research information become known to others; however, your responses on the survey will be protected by the use of numeric codes and encrypted to protect your responses. In addition, pseudonyms for participants in the study, their positions, school, and district will be used to minimize the risk of identification.

- The primary risk of participation is that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the research questions and may feel a loss of the time committed to this study.

- There is a potential for boredom, fatigue or emotional distress.

To minimize these risks, you will be provided with time, as needed, to stop, take a break, respond or not respond to questions.

In addition, there may be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant risks should they arise in the course of the study.

Procedures and safeguards have been put in place to minimize risks to you, as a participant. Your survey data will be kept confidential, and will not be shared with your principal, Area Superintendent, Superintendent or anyone in the District. It will be available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. The school district will not have access to your data. Leaving

144

the study will not result in any penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current position with the San Diego Unified School District or future relations with the University of California, San Diego or California State University, San Marcos. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board.

You may go back and review your responses while you are still taking the survey. Before submitting your responses, you will have an opportunity to review your responses to the survey. You may choose to eliminate any comments or references. At any time, you may request that your survey responses not be used for the study. You may ask to be released from taking the survey at any time for any reason.

There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from participating in this study. The main benefit is to the field of education because this work may further understandings of how principals work to increase student achievement.

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw or refuse to answer specific questions in the survey. An alternative to participation in this study would be to not participate and you may share this with the principal investigator at any time.

The researcher may remove you from the study without your consent if the researcher feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given to you by the study personnel.

There is no compensation for being a part of this study. There are no costs associated with the study with the exception of your time used to participate in the survey.

This study has been approved by the University of California, San Diego and California State University, San Marcos Institutional Review Board (IRB). You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records. Jane Clark has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Jane Clark at 619-820-0747 or the researcher's advisor/professor, Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, 858-822-6688, or chofstetter@ucsd.edu. You may also call the Human Research Protections Program Office at 858-246-HRPP (858-246-4777) to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Your Signature and Consent
You have received a copy of this consent document.

You agree to participate.

_____   _____
Subject's signature   Date

Human Research
Protections Program
UC San Diego
Approved
Current Approval: 07/06/2019
Do not use after   07/03/2020

145

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Principal Interview Protocol

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: Jane Clark

Interviewee: _____

Position of Interviewee: _____

Description of the Study – The Cultural Growth Mindset of Elementary School Principals and their Influence on the Academic Achievement of Hispanic English Learners

Among the extant literature on leadership, less is known about how principals influence the academic achievement of Hispanic English Learners within the school setting. Additionally, little research has been conducted that considers and analyzes how school principals model their leadership beliefs, set up deliberate managerial practices and actions to create conditions in their schools that influence the achievement of HisELs. The purpose of this study is to determine in what ways principal beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, at the elementary school level, have a direct influence on the learning opportunities and achievement of HisELs, and how these characteristics are linked to the achievement of HisELs.

Questions:
1. Can you tell me a little about your background?
2. What brought you to this school?
3. What has been your role here?
4. How long have you been in your current position?
5. What do you see as learning opportunities for Hispanic English Learners?
6. What do you as strengths Hispanic English Learners bring to this school?

Thank the individual for participating in the interview. Assure him / her of confidentiality of responses and future interview.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of Focus Group: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: Jane Clark

FOCUS GROUP Participant: _____

GRADE LEVEL of Participant: _____

**Description of the Study – The Cultural Growth Mindset of Elementary School
Principals and their Influence on the Academic Achievement of Hispanic English
Learners**

Among the extant literature on leadership, less is known about how principals influence
the academic achievement of Hispanic English Learners within the school setting.
Additionally, little research has been conducted that considers and analyzes how school
principals model their leadership beliefs, set up deliberate managerial practices and actions
to create conditions in their schools that influence the achievement of HisELs. The purpose
of this study is to determine in what ways principal beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, at the
elementary school level, have a direct influence on the learning opportunities and
achievement of HisELs, and how these characteristics are linked to the achievement of
HisELs.

Questions:
1. Tell me your name, where you teach, and what you most enjoy doing when you are not
teaching.
2. How did you come to work at your school?
3. Think back to when you first began working with your current principal. What were
your first impressions?
4. How would you describe the belief system of your principal with regard to the
academic progress of all students, particularly Hispanic English learners?
5. When dealing with the academic challenges of Hispanic English learners, what type of
support do teachers receive from the principal?
6. Was there a time when you felt teaching was challenging for you and you approached
your principal for support? What happened?

Thank individuals for participating in the discussion. Assure participants of confidentiality
of responses.   (Krueger & Casey, 2015)

APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

IRB Project # 190396

INFORMED CONSENT AND AUDIO RECORDING RELEASE CONSENT FORM
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Cultural Growth Mindset of Elementary School Principals and their Influence on the Academic
Achievement of Hispanic English Learners
FOCUS GROUP

Jane Clark, a doctoral candidate with University of California, San Diego and California State University, San Marcos, Joint Doctoral Program, is conducting a research study as a primary researcher to find out more about the influence of principals on the achievement of Hispanic English learners (HisELs). Your school was selected for this study because your school has consistently demonstrated an increase in the achievement of Hispanic English learners. You are invited to participate in a research study examining your principal's leadership efforts at increasing student achievement. There will be approximately 60 persons who will be participating in this research. The focus group is limited to only one (1) group meeting. The total length of the study will take ten (10) months to complete.

The purpose of this study is to determine in what ways principal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors at the elementary school level, have a direct influence on the learning opportunities and achievement of Hispanic English learners, and how these characteristics are linked to the achievement of HisELs.

Your participation will greatly aid the study. Participation in research is entirely voluntary. An alternative to participation in this study is simply not to participate, and you may share this with the principal investigator at any time.

- If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to volunteer as a focus group participant. The one-time-only focus group discussion will be conducted with a group of 4-5 participants at your school. The focus group discussion will be centered on the decision-making process at your school around increasing the achievement of Hispanic English learners, its relationship to the school context, and principal support of Hispanic English learners.

- If you agree, this one-time-only focus group meeting will be restricted to last 30-40 minutes and will be audiotaped with your permission and transcribed verbatim. We will agree upon a place and time that is convenient to hold the group discussion.

There are some minimal risks to participating, and participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include the following:

- A potential for the loss of confidentiality should the research information become known to others; however, it will be protected by the use of study codes to protect your responses. In addition, pseudonyms for participants in the focus groups, their positions, school, and district will be used to minimize the risk of identification.

- The primary risk of participation is that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the research questions and may feel a loss of the time committed to this study.

- There is a potential for boredom, fatigue or emotional distress.

1

To minimize these risks, you will be provided with time, as needed, to stop, take a break, respond or not respond to questions.

In addition, there may be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant risks should they arise in the course of the study.

Procedures and safeguards have been put in place to minimize risks to you, as a participant. You may ask to be released from the focus group discussion at any time for any reason. Your focus group data will be kept confidential, and will not be shared with your principal, Area Superintendent, Superintendent or anyone in the District. The data will be available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. The school district will not have access to your data. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board.

In focus group discussions, pseudonyms for participants, positions, school, and district will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the verbatim group discussion transcription. You may choose to eliminate any comments or references. The recording may be stopped at any time upon your request as a participant in this study. The entire audiotape or portions of it will be erased upon your request. The audiotapes of our focus group discussion will be destroyed following final analysis no later than one year after the conclusion of the study. All digital files will be erased and all paper records will be shredded.

You may refuse to participate or withdraw or refuse to answer specific questions in the focus group discussion. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current position with the San Diego Unified School District or future relations with the University of California, San Diego or California State University, San Marcos.
There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from participating in this study. The main benefit is to the field of education because this work may further understandings of how principals make decisions and work to increase student achievement.

The researcher may remove you from the study without your consent if the researcher feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given to you by the study personnel.

There is no compensation for being a part of this study. There are no costs associated with the study with the exception of your time used to participate in the survey and the focus group process.

This study has been approved by the University of California, San Diego and California State University, San Marcos Institutional Review Board (IRB). You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records. Jane Clark has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Jane Clark at 619-820-0747 or the researcher's advisor/professor, Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter at, 858-822-6688, or chofstetter@ucsd.edu. You may also call the Human Research Protections

2

Program Office at 858-246-HRPP (858-246-4777) to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Your Signature and Consent
You have received a copy of this consent document.

You agree to participate.

_____   _____
Subject's signature   Date

As part of this project, an audio recording will be made of you during your participation in this research project. Please indicate below the uses of these audio recordings to which you are willing to consent. This is completely voluntary and up to you. In any use of the audio recording, your name will not be identified. You may request to stop the recording at any time or to erase any portion of your recording.

1. The audio recording can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.   _____ Initials

2. The audio recording can be used for scientific publications.   _____ Initials

3. The audio recording can be reviewed at meetings of social scientists interested in the study of

 principal leadership.   _____ Initials

You have the right to request that the recording be stopped or erased in full or in part at any time.

You have read the above description and give your consent for the use of audio recording as indicated above.

_____   _____
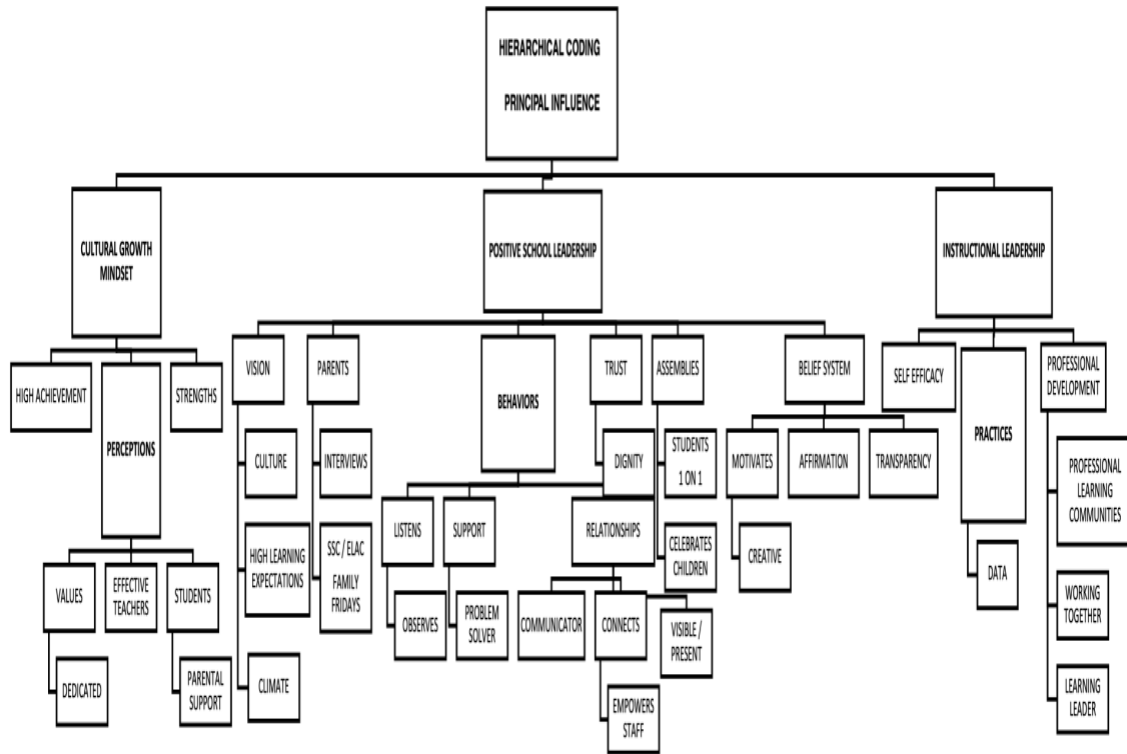Signature   Date   Witness   Date

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Current Approval: 07/05/2019
Do not use after   07/03/2020

3

APPENDIX I: HIERARCHICAL CODING OF THEMES

APPENDIX J: EDMONTON FAMILY INTERVIEW FORM

Edmonton Family Interview Form

1. Where did they go to school previously? (I ask for every grade level if it seems they've moved around a lot.)
2. What did the teacher tell you about your child academically?
3. What did the teacher tell you about your child's behavior?
4. What does your child like to do in his/her spare time?
5. What are some things s/he doesn't like?
6. How is your child's health?
7. Does your child have an IEP?
8. Are there any other siblings?
9. Who will be picking your child? If not you, did you write them down on the enrollment form?
10. Is there anything you would like me to tell the teacher about your child right away?
11. If the child isn't too shy, I try to engage with them as well and ask them what they like, what they're good at in school, what they've learned recently, is there anything they want their teacher to know about them?
12. Inform parents all about our school and the programs we have available. Take them on a tour.

Questions translated into Spanish (Jane Torres Clark)

1. ¿A dónde asistieron a la escuela anteriormente?
2. ¿Qué le dijo la maestra acerca de su hijo académicamente?
3. ¿Qué le dijo la maestra sobre el comportamiento de su hijo?
4. ¿Qué le gusta hacer a su hijo en su tiempo libre?
5. ¿Cuáles son algunas cosas que no le gustan?
6. ¿Cómo está la salud de su hijo?
7. ¿Tiene su hijo un programa de educación individualizado?
8. ¿Tiene otros hermanos?
9. ¿Quién vendrá a buscar a su hijo? Cuando esas personas no pueden venir a buscar su hijo, ¿Anotó en el formulario de inscripción quién vendrá por su hijo?
10. ¿Hay algo que le gustaría que le contara al maestro sobre su hijo de inmediato?

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