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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS

Long-Term English Learner Experiences:

Discovering Pathways to Success

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

in

Educational Leadership

by

Luz Elena Perez

Committee in charge:

California State University of California, San Marcos

    Patricia Prado-Olmos, Chair
    Mark Baldwin

University of California, San Diego

    Carolyn Huie Hofstetter

2011

The Dissertation of Luz Elena Perez 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

California State University, San Marcos

2011

DEDICATION

To my husband, Dennis Derne Perez, who provided encouragement, laughter, and love during the development of this dissertation. Whether by making Wednesday nights spaghetti night because I was in class, or letting me build another room so I could have a quiet place to write, or bringing me a cup of tea at midnight; you have been my greatest love and support in all things. I am honored to have you and to dedicate my work to you.

To my older daughter, Monique Elena Carcamo, who asked me "Mommy if you don't do this how do you ever expect me to?" Thank you for riding with me to class on Saturdays and being one of my editors, but mostly, thank you for always being by my side. I hope to one day read your dissertation. To my younger daughter, Clarice Andrea Perez, for popping in my study often to give me kisses and help me set goals. I have needed every one of them. I know you will do great things with your curious mind and ever-giving heart.

To my heroes and parents, Dora and Nelson Rodriguez, who ensured that my brothers and I always had a quality education and a home filled with love and respect. Thank you for raising me tough enough to face a world of inequities and for empowering me to strive to make a difference.

To all the long-term English learners, may this be an accurate portrayal of your successes and strengths. My greatest hope is that one day we will be able to eradicate the term LTEL by providing EL students with the tools and supports earlier on their educational path so that they might access all the opportunities afforded to non-EL students.

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VITA

EDUCATION

University of California, San Diego, &   Doctorate in Educational Leadership,
California State University, San Marcos   2011
          Emphasis in Educational Leadership

California State University, Fullerton   Master of Public Administration,
          Emphasis in Urban Planning   1995

California State University, Fullerton   Bachelor of Arts in Political Science,
                                                                                  1992

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS/ CERTIFICATIONS

     California Administrative Services Credential, Certificate of Eligibility

     California State Multiple Subject Teaching Credential

     Cross-Cultural and Language Development Certification

     Bilingual Cross-Cultural and Language Development Assessment

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR EXPERIENCE

Higher Education Teaching Experience

     California State University, San Marcos   *San Marcos, CA*
                                                            January 2011 - Present

         Adjunct faculty member in the College of Education. Teaching
         the Proposal Development course in the Master's in Education
         program. Supporting students with thesis and project writing
         and completion.

Project Coordination/Professional Development Provider

     Escondido Union High School District   *Escondido, CA*
                                                            July2008-Present

         Literacy specialist for three comprehensive high schools and one
         continuation high school. Responsibilities include the
         development and presentation of professional development in-
         services for content area literacy (reading and writing in science

and social studies), including best practices for teachers of English learners for high school teachers as well as for district administrators. Serving as an instructional coach for all teachers, particularly for teachers with English-language learners. Coordination of the district's reading intervention programs, development and informing on placement guidelines for students who benefit from reading and language development intervention programs. Codeveloper of revised program for English learners. Development and presentation of bilingual Literacy Nights to parent groups.

Temecula Unified School District   *Temecula, CA*
                                                       August 2006–June 2008

Teacher on Special Assignment for English Language Learners. Responsibilities included program development for English-language learners in grades K-12 for large suburban school district, staff development for teachers and administrators, establishment of the District English Language Advisory Committee, compliance and budget management of the district's No Child Left Behind Act Title III funds, curriculum evaluation, and adoption recommendations.

California Virtual Academies   *Simi Valley, CA*
                                                       2004–2006

Master Teacher of Teacher Development. Developed and administrated a teacher training program for CAVA, an independent study virtual charter school. Developed and administrated use of virtual classrooms. Developed and delivered teacher training and best practices in synchronous and asynchronous lesson development. Responsible for the recruitment, hiring, and training of all teachers K-9. Curriculum developer — fourth grade online language arts. Assisted students and parents with curriculum, management, and motivation questions. Developed and delivered several community, parent, and student workshops.

Classroom Teaching

California Virtual Academies   *Simi Valley, CA*
                                                       2003–2004

Taught all grades K-8 as an independent study teacher with the K-12 national curriculum. Worked closely with students and parents to guide successful home-school learning experiences, including educational field trips and fitness education.

Corona-Norco Unified School District   *Corona, CA*
                                                          1998 - 2003

Taught self-contained kindergarten classroom (three years) and self-contained sixth grade classroom (two years) in a predominantly English-learner school. Taught adult ESL while concurrently teaching kindergarten. School site bilingual coordinator, set bilingual aid schedule, assisted in ELD testing. Applicant, recipient, and administrator for EISS grant. Project READ completion, History Day coordinator, grade level leader, School Site Council member. Advisory to the district ESL coordinator on dual-immersion educational programs.

Long Beach Unified School District   *Long Beach, CA*
                                                          1997 –1998

Taught in self-contained dual-immersion second-grade classroom, teaching Spanish to English speakers and English to Spanish speakers.

PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT

Presenter, American Educational Research Association National Conference, 2011

Presentation titled Pathways to Success for Long-Term English Learners. The paper presented is a synthesis of the findings from the study of my dissertation. Included in the paper are the support and barriers experienced by LTEL students, as well as the proposed model of factors the lead to success for LTEL students.

Presenter, Arizona State University Equity Alliance Leadership Conference, 2010

Presentation titled Building a Bridge Without a Toll Booth: Addressing the Professional Development Needs of Teachers of Long-Term English Learners. The presentation addressed the professional development needs of teachers of English Learners;

the research regarding expectations, beliefs, and attitudes that teachers hold of minority students; the role that coaching can play in addressing the needs of teachers of English Learners; and a tool to identify professional development needs.

Chair, Temecula Valley Unified School District English-Language Advisory Committee

Responsibilities include adherence to No Child Left Behind parent involvement guidelines, informing and training parents of English learners on the educational rights and programs for their children, setting the agenda, and conducting the monthly meetings.

Trainer, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

Responsibilities include adherence to the national training guidelines, customizing training to meet specific school needs, and providing in-class training to teachers. In this capacity, I also train administrators at the site and district levels on this lesson development and delivery model.

Trainer, University of California Professional Development Institute

Professional development provider for UCPDI, specialized in EDGE, a new high school English-language development material cowritten by Deborah Short. The training is a 40-hour institute that focuses on research based best practices and how to implement the materials with fidelity.

District Educational Consultant

Provided research and guidance to several districts including Corona-Norco, CA; Natomas, CA; and Salt Lake City, UT. Consultation has included codevelopment of dual-immersion programs, which integrates teaching English and Spanish to students of each language at magnet schools; consulting with district leadership regarding programs for English learners; and consultation with district parent groups regarding instructional coaching programs.

National Presenter at K-12 annual conference

Presented the California online teacher training program that I developed and implemented. This training model was then used to establish a national standard for K-12 online schools.

Grant Recipient: Early Intervention for School Success

Applied for and was awarded the EISS grant for El Cerrito

Elementary School, Corona, CA. Served as the grant manager for two years.

Intern, City Manager of Santa Ana, CA

Interned at the City of Santa Ana City Manager's office working in the departments of economic redevelopment and environmental planning.

Graduate Assistant, California State University, Fullerton

Assisted the Political Science Department chair, Dr. Sandra Sutphen, in the teaching of Introduction to Political Science.

Graduate Research Assistant, California State University, Fullerton

Assisted Professor Dr. Buck in political organizational research.

Member, Debate Team, California State University, Fullerton

Participated in numerous debate tournaments as a senior-level policy debater, traveling to invitational events throughout the nation. Debating included development and analysis of national and international issues, rhetoric, advanced communication skills, and rebuttal techniques. Recipient of several debate awards, including first place and top speaker at the 1990 Redlands national invitational.

EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL HONORS

California State University, Fullerton, Patricia Roberts Harris Fellowship

Award based on academic performance, master level degree promise, and potential for scholarship.

Inland Empire Social Studies Teacher of the Year

Award based on promoting history interest and program coordinator for History Day projects at El Cerrito Elementary School.

LULAC Scholarship Recipient

Award based on academic performance and potential for scholarship.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

Spanish

Fluent in academic and social Spanish in all domains, reading, writing, comprehension, and speaking.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member of the American Educational Research Association

Member of the ASU Equity Alliance

California Bilingual Educators Association (CABE)

San Diego County Bilingual Directors Network

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Long-Term English Learner Experiences:

Discovering Pathways to Success

by

Luz Elena Perez

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2011

California State University, San Marcos, 2011

Professor Patricia Prado-Olmos, Chair

The pervasive gap in achievement between minority and nonminority students is an issue of national importance. Addressing the needs of teachers of minority students, specifically Latino English learners, has received some— but not sufficient—attention in professional development research. The

research regarding teaching practices toward minority students highlights the deficit views and low expectations held by teachers; however, this is seldom accounted for in the development of reform or in the design and outcomes of professional development of teachers of minority and language-minority students. The greatest impact of teacher practices toward minority and language-minority students is how these students experience schooling, in particular how and if they experience success. This student voice research serves as a contributing component toward reform as it presents the barriers and supports that long-term English learners (LTEL) experience. The findings from this study serve to generate a framework of factors that lead to success as revealed by LTEL students. The study's implications are pertinent to school leaders, classroom teachers, and professional development providers. The study suggests areas for future research in student voice.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Class, I need to know why your work was so poor yesterday; as I read your papers I noticed how little effort you put into them." The class receives their journal entries back. The topics were of high interest; students were to write about their experiences in high school. They are mostly 10th graders, and all are English learners who have been in the United States for more than six years. All are Latino students, and most of them were born in the United States, do not speak academic Spanish, and have failed to pass the criteria to be reclassified as proficient in English. The students look at their papers—most of them have a failing grade and many red marks. The teacher asks, "Why aren't you trying harder?" A student replies, "What do you want from us, we are just a bunch of Mexicans." The teacher ignores the comment and moves on to the lesson of the day.

This scenario is based on an actual observation; this class setting plays out often in high schools with long-term English learners (LTEL). Although the educational community lacks a shared definition of LTEL, most accountability systems define LTEL as a student identified as an English learner that has been in the United States for more than six years without reclassification as proficient in English (Olsen, 2010). Other terms used to describe these students include "EL lifers" and "generation 1.5." LTEL students face tough odds to make it to graduation and onto college, and they often drop out of school (Fry, 2008; Olsen; Shettle et al., 2007; Valencia, 2002). The student comment above is troubling; it highlights low student efficacy and brings into question how teachers engage in teaching Latino students[1]. This is an urgent issue to address while schools and districts work

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[1] For the purposes of this paper the terms Hispanic and Latino(a) are used interchangeably

toward closing the achievement gap.

Statement of the Problem

In order to understand what schools need in order to achieve the results mandated by the U.S. educational federal mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), a careful analysis of the schooling experiences of English learners (ELs) is critical. Over the course of NCLB, research and implementation of new programs for students below proficiency have been adopted and even mandated. Many of these programs aim directly at meeting the needs of struggling learners, often ELs (e.g., Scholastic Read 180, Success for All, U.S. Department of Education-funded Reading First programs). Frequently, teachers participate in mandated staff development to address implementation of the programs. The research literature regarding studies of teaching methodologies and program implementation for teachers of ELs are extensive; however, the results to date on research-based effective practices for ELs remain slim (Goldenberg, 2008). Although some effective programs for teaching EL students do exist, they are designed for newcomer, immigrant ELs, and not for LTEL students (Council of the Great City Schools, 2009; Olsen, 2010). Districts and schools have little empirical evidence to draw upon in addressing the needs of ELs.

Achievement Gap of English Learners

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the school-age children

population in the United States will increase by 5.4 million from the year 2005 to the year 2020 and all of the growth will be composed of children of immigrants. Most of these children are likely to be designated as English learners (Fry, 2008). The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs reported EL growth nationwide since 1995 had increased 57% by 2005, with 15 states having an EL population growth of more than 200%, while total student enrollment has remained constant. "The majority (59%) of secondary school ELs are LTELs" (Olsen, 2010, p. 1). Olsen goes on to report, "In California the LTEL student population represents 18% of the total secondary school enrollment" (p. 6). This growing student population has struggled in academic achievement, and dropout rates are significant.

Well documented in the literature on Latino student achievement is the pervasive gap between Latino and White students (Fry, 2008; Shettle et al., 2007; Valencia, 2002). The English learner dropout rate is three times higher than compared to non-ELs. Dropout rates for U.S. first-generation Hispanic youth are 14.6%, and 15.9% for second-generation Hispanic youth (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). Academic achievement for ELs is lagging far below what is acceptable. The National Assessment for Educational Progress reports that only 4% of eighth-grade ELs scored proficient or advanced in reading (KewalRamani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007). No Child Left Behind mandates ELs meet proficiency in mathematics and reading by 2014.

Long-Term English Learners

According to the most recent research on EL students conducted by the Council of the Great City Schools (2009),

> The majority of ELLs [English Language Learners] failing to make progress or graduate high school are long-term ELLs … a majority of these students were born in the United States and have been in the education system their entire lives. Across the country, it is estimated that 76 percent of ELLs at the elementary level and 56 percent of ELLs at the secondary level were born in the United States. (p. 30)

A growing number of research institutes are taking notice of the needs of this student population. Professor Menken (2009) of the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society concurs with the urgency for further research, "There is a dearth of research on ELLs who have been mostly or fully educated in the United States, but who continue to be designated as ELLs as they enter high school" (p. 1). One very recent study (Olsen, 2010) sought to identify the causes for students remaining ELs for so many years, the characteristics of LTELs, how they are currently being served, and to uncover what works with LTELs. Chapter 2 discusses the details of this study.

As LTEL students become a growing majority in high school classrooms, their academic achievement continues to be of concern. The research reported here enhances the limited research on LTEL students by carefully examining the barriers, supports, and successes of LTEL students through a student voice initiative. Student voice initiatives have the power to impact student self-perception, change the adult-student power dynamics,

and become a truly transformational practice that empowers disengaged learners (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding, 2004; Kroeger et al., 2004; Mitra, 2008; & Roberts & Nash, 2009). Few studies have engaged minority students in student voice initiatives, and those that have yield valuable contributions to the field (Valdes, 2001). A specific focus on LTEL students is warranted as their educational experiences and backgrounds are uniquely different from that of immigrant ELs and different from that of minorities who are not EL students.

Impact of the Achievement Gap

A study conducted by the social research organization McKinsey and Company (2009) found that the achievement gap in the United States was the equivalent of a permanent national recession. According to their calculations, closing the achievement gap between Black and Latino student performance and White student performance would lead to the "Gross Domestic Product in 2008 to have been between $310 billion and $525 billion higher" (p. 17). In addition to the economic impacts, the report also addresses the health and civic engagement influences of the achievement gap. The study describes the correlation between lower education and unhealthy lifestyles as well as a lower likelihood of health insurance, which in turn can pose a higher demand on public health services. As a measure of civic engagement, the study looked at voting rates among groups, "High school graduates are twice as likely to vote as people with an eighth grade

education or less" (p. 20). The study concludes, "Lagging achievement is a problem for poor and minority children and for the broad middle class" (p. 21). Olsen found that EL students lagged significantly behind English-proficient peers; of those that make it to the 11th grade only 25% score at least at the basic level or higher in algebra and language arts. Olsen reports that many LTELs drop out because they have internalized a sense of failure.

Expectations and Beliefs of Teachers Toward Minorities

The empirical evidence of teachers' low expectations of minority students cannot be overstated. Fritzberg (2001), a former urban educator and now a researcher, conducted an in-depth literature review and confirmed the findings of other researchers regarding low expectations (den Brok & Levy, 2005; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Low teacher expectations regarding the academic abilities of minority students lead teachers to interact differently with these students than they do with middle-class White students (Fritzberg).

The schooling experiences of LTEL students were the focus of this study. To overcome the current recalcitrant trends in the academic achievement of LTEL students, transformative changes must occur. Learning as a transformative force is achieved when learners have supportive environments, which lead to high levels of self-efficacy and self-motivation (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1989). This form of teaching involves listening to

students and incorporating their lives and stories into the curriculum. Teachers need to learn from the students they teach. Teachers need to incorporate and respond to the students' cultural knowledge and their academic and social strengths and needs (Bartolome, 1994; Schultz, Jones-Walker, & Chikkatur, 2008). The need and significance of listening to students was the catalyst for this study, which engaged LTEL adolescent students in a student voice initiative.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to engage long-term ELs in a student voice initiative to address their educational experiences through appreciative inquiry interviews. The following two research questions were addressed in this study:

- Research Question 1: What are the supports and barriers that LTEL students experience in schools?

- Research Question 2: What are the successes LTEL students experience in school?

Overview of the Methods

A qualitative methodology addressed the complexity of the context and exploration of the research questions. The researcher used a grounded theory approach to explore the question of how students define and

experience success, barriers, and supports. According to Grbich (2007), a grounded theory is best suited to address questions "related to the interaction between persons or among individuals and specific environments" (p. 70). In particular, a grounded approach is appropriate when explanatory theories are weak. In this study, students' verbalization of success in their learning environments was a critical voice in the nature of the interaction between the teachers and the students, and therefore the grounded approach was appropriate. Grbich acknowledges the power of combining grounded theory with other methodologies, "In grounded theory the flexibility of the qualitative field allows you to be creative and to add aspects of other approaches in order to access the information you require and so to answer your research question" (p. 82). Appreciative inquiry was an added approach to this student-voice research study.

Significance of the Study

The pervasive gap in achievement between minority and nonminority students is an issue of national importance. Identifying and meeting the needs of Latino English learners has received some attention, but it is insufficient. An important and often overlooked critical component in addressing the needs of minority and language-minority students is how they are experiencing their learning environments, specifically how and if they are experiencing success. Researching student voice through interviews is one way to understand their lived experiences.

Long-term ELs have become the largest EL student population in California, and their schooling issues are very distinct from those of immigrant ELs where most of the educational research has focused until recently. Schooling for LTEL students has occurred almost entirely in U.S. schools. These students have not demonstrated mastery of academic English after at least six years of schooling in the United States. Failing to master academic English impacts their schooling experiences in many ways, such as limited access to higher-level college preparatory classes and options at the high school level, such as electives of interest. This translates directly to their high school experiences and dismal educational outcomes, which short-change their long-term employment and higher education opportunities.

This study informs the field of educational and social research regarding minority students, specifically LTEL students. Applications of the findings can inform professional development and teacher practices toward Latino English learners as well as development of academic programs and practices that can serve to improve the learning environments of long-term ELs.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This literature review has three sections; the first addresses the educational environment of English learners, specifically the interactions between teachers and Latino English learners. Learning environments are a critical aspect of this study; therefore, a theoretical model is presented in this section that describes the factors that contribute to the achievement gap as these are also indicators of the learning environments. Addressed in the second section is the role of student voice in research, specifically the voice of minority students. A second theoretical model is presented in this section, which proposes that students' perceptions about their teachers' beliefs has an impact on student outcomes. Student voice is a direct way to elicit the perceptions students have of their teachers' behaviors. This framework supports the third and final section, which reviews the literature of critical race theory.

Section 1: Learning Environments of Minority Students

The following is a review of the literature addressing teacher beliefs and expectations of minority students. The term *minority* is used as a broad descriptor of non-White students; this review focuses on studies where African American and Latino students are described as minorities. Although some studies also considered the experiences of Asian students as minorities, most did not. For the purpose of this section of the literature review, the following terms identified relevant studies: minority students, English

learners, language-minority students, at-risk students, and urban classrooms. Demographic studies have shown the high overlap among these student populations; therefore, the generalizability of studies regarding one of the above-mentioned groups is extended to all above-mentioned groups. This generalizability is extended solely for identifying relevant studies; it does not propose that all ELs are at risk, or that all urban students are ELs. The scant research regarding EL learning environments is a second reason for the need to draw upon research addressing several student population descriptors.

The purpose of this section of the review is to lay a foundation that discusses the research regarding the views, expectations, and beliefs of teachers toward their minority students. Views teachers hold regarding their students can have a profound effect on the learning environment; when learners have supportive environments, they experience higher levels of self-efficacy and self-motivation (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1989). At its best, a positive learning environment is characterized by supportive teachers, a risk-free environment where teachers engage students in complex problem solving, and classroom activities that draw on students' culture, experiences, and knowledge. This is especially critical for at-risk students and ELs who need environments that engage them in authentic meaningful tasks and offer them ample opportunities to develop both content knowledge and academic English (Echevarria et al., 2008; Short, & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

The experiences and background of both the teacher and the learner

influence the context of the classroom as a positive learning environment. One of the most influential research studies on the context of schooling sought to identify the major issues contributing to the achievement gap using multiethnic student voices, as well as input from all stakeholders in schools (Poplin & Weeres, 1992). This study found the following to be the seven major issues contributing to the achievement gap: (1) relationships between teachers and students; (2) race, culture, and class; (3) values; (4) teaching and learning; (5) safety; (6) physical environment; and (7) despair, hope, and the process of change. These seven issues form the theoretical framework presented in Figure 2.1.
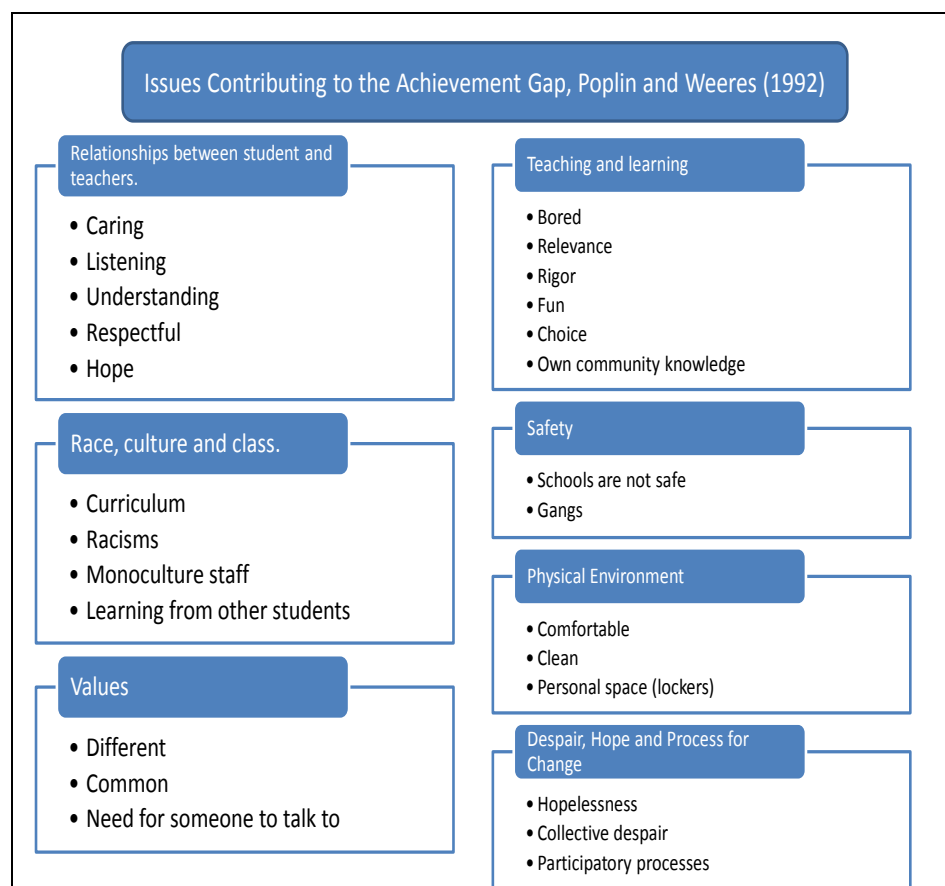
Figure 2.1 Achievement Gap Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework guided the study methodology described in Chapter 3, the findings presented in Chapter 4, and the implications discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. In other words, this theoretical framework forms the foundation and context for this study. The study results will inform this framework in multiple ways. Many of the seven issues identified by Poplin and Weeres (1992) are described and situated in this literature review under several subtopics.

Teachers' Beliefs, Expectations, and Views of Minority Students

The literature on the general topic of teacher beliefs regarding minorities can be divided into three categories: general beliefs, expectations, and deficit views. This review defines beliefs as the characteristics ascribed by a teacher to a student population. Expectations is defined as the perceived abilities of a student population. And the term *deficit view* is defined as a perceived lack or impairment in an academic capacity. These three concepts define the interactions between teachers and minority students. Teachers' expectations may influence students' future achievement through the process of self-fulfilling prophesies (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). In other words, what teachers think about their students has an impact on student performance.

Deficit thinking about ELs is part of a larger contextual setting. It is important to note that the federal government under NCLB Title III ascribes the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) to ELs. This label serves as an example of a deficit view by categorizing a student population by what they

lack, and in this case, they lack proficiency in English. This label overlooks whatever strengths the LEP population may have.

A second observation regarding descriptive language for this student population is that almost all individuals of ethnic groups born in the United States are defined as some form of American in the literature—such as European American, African American, Asian American, and Native American. The exceptions are the terms Latino, Chicano, and Hispanic (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Students who identify either racially or culturally as any form of Latino are not defined by their American status. Although the term Latin American exists, it seldom appears in the literature regarding U.S. native-born Latino student populations, and is usually a term used for Hispanic persons born outside the United States. The term Mexican American exists, yet it is not commonly used for student demographic data. Latino ELs are therefore described not by their primary language assets (their ability to be bilingual) or by belonging to their birth country (the United States for more than 60% of ELs), but instead by deficit, exclusionary descriptors. This point is raised because the literature is quite clear that negative beliefs, low expectations, and deficit views of Latinos are not exclusive to schools, but rather that schools mirror that which occurs in a larger context (den Brok & Levy, 2005; Rosenbloom & Way; Schultz et al., 2008). This demographic descriptor omits that LTEL students are often U.S.-born children. The omission might contribute to the treatment of these students as burdensome foreigners.

The research literature regarding the impact of expectations has grown considerably since the seminal work conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. In this study, the researchers falsely reported to teachers that some students were more likely to be "spurters" (high achievers) than others were. By raising the expectations of the teachers regarding the spurters, these students were favored academically. The study did not address race too deeply but the researchers did find that male students who looked Mexican and had been identified as high achieving benefited from favorable expectations from their teachers. Had these more Mexican-looking boys not been labeled as spurters, perhaps their teachers would have had lower expectations of their academic abilities compared to the predisposed expectations of non-Mexican looking boys (Rosenthal & Jacobson).

Among the studies regarding student expectations that have followed since *Pygmalion in the Classroom,* is the meta-analysis conducted by Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007). They looked at studies to address the question: Are teachers' expectations different for racial minority than for European American students? They conducted four separate meta-analyses to reach their conclusions. Teachers were found to hold the highest expectations for Asian American students and teachers held more positive expectations for European American students than for Latino or African American students. The meta-analyses concluded that teachers' expectations and speech vary with students' ethnic backgrounds. Specifically, this study

found that teachers favored one race group over minorities by making more negative and fewer positive referrals for ethnic minority children than for European American children. In addressing intellect and ability, they found teachers were more likely to refer ethnic minority children than European American children for special education and disciplinary actions. In contrast to these referral practices, Tenenbaum and Ruck also found that teachers were more likely to recommend European American than ethnic minority students when rating students for gifted evaluations. In terms of actual classroom interactions, the studies included in this meta-analysis found teachers directed more positive and neutral speech toward European American children than toward ethnic minority children.

Teacher behaviors influence students' beliefs about their teachers' expectations for learning. Weinstein and colleagues (in Tenenbaum and Ruck, 2007) have found "that children believe that teachers ask more questions of high achievers than low achievers and make high achievers feel good about their answers" (p. 267). In a related meta-analysis, den Brok and Levy (2005) concluded that teacher interpersonal behavior may be more important for minority students' academic achievement outcomes than for nonminorities. The relationship between being a low achiever and being a minority might be present in the minds of all children.

New Teachers

New teachers enter the profession with their own beliefs about urban

schools, minorities, and ELs; these beliefs influence all decisions and practices in the classroom. An understanding of how the theories encountered in their teacher education classes (such as critical pedagogy and cultural inclusion) connects with and possibly transforms their own beliefs does not occur (Schultz et al., 2008). Student teachers enter teaching careers with unchanged beliefs about learners. "They leave [teacher education programs] with little understanding of how the theories they encounter in their teacher education classes connect with and possibly transform their own beliefs" (Schultz et al., p. 157).

The Schultz et al. (2008) ethnographic study sought to investigate the ways in which new teachers made instructional decisions. They looked closely at how the teacher education program and the curriculum influenced beliefs in making instructional decisions in classes with urban children. They found that, "For some [teachers], their deficit views of urban children and families were too entrenched to dislodge" (p. 182). There is a pressing need to conduct and evaluate the research regarding preparing teachers who work in urban and/or language minority schools. The silence in the literature regarding preparation for teaching African American students (Ladson-Billings, 2000, in Schultz et al.) can be extended to include language-minority students and ELs typifying the at-risk student populations, which interact with both new and experienced teachers. New teachers are looking for the skills to teach language-minority students rather than addressing the practices that enhance learning for language-minority students (Bartolome,

1994; Schultz et al.).

Although this is a superficial review of the literature on new teacher preparation and predisposition regarding urban students and language-minority students, the cited research (Bartolome, 1994; Haberman & Post, 1998; Schultz et al., 2008) all draw from well-established bodies of research. Inclusion of this brief review informs the much deeper issue regarding instruction that minority students receive from new and experienced teachers.

Impact on Minority Students

Both qualitative and quantitative studies document teachers' low expectations of minority students. An in-depth literature review conducted by Fritzberg (2001) confirms the findings of other researchers regarding low expectations (den Brok & Levy, 2005; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). When teachers hold low expectations regarding the academic abilities of minority students, they interact differently with than they do with middle-class White students (Fritzberg). Feedback is given differently to students based on their perceived abilities by the teachers. Students perceived as academically capable receive content-related feedback; whereas students perceived to be low achieving often receive control-related feedback (Fritzberg). Fritzberg concludes that students can detect when teachers have low expectations of them. The meta-analysis

conducted by den Brok and Levy proposes that students' perceptions of their teachers' beliefs and expectations affect student outcomes, as illustrated by Figure 2.2.
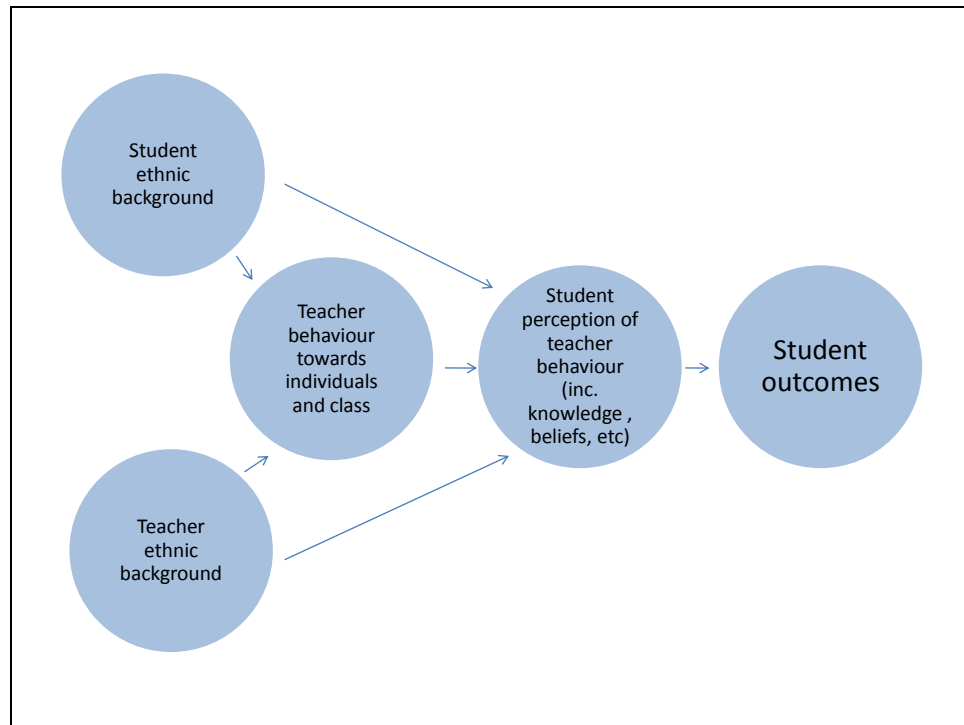
Figure 2.2 Effect of Students' Perceptions and Student Outcomes

The framework proposes that ethnicity plays a role in students' perceptions and learning outcomes. Both student and teacher ethnic backgrounds influence teacher behaviors and the student perception of those behaviors. In turn, the perceptions held by students of the teacher behaviors can affect student outcomes.

The cited research thus far is highly focused on expectations; however, views and beliefs influence expectations about minority students. Even when teachers have good relationships with their students—meaning

that students open up to their teachers and rate them favorably—teachers might base much of their actions toward students on their beliefs about the culture of their students. In a recent case study, Marx (2008) concluded that most teachers (in this case study all teachers were White females) held exceedingly deficit views about the students' home lives, cultures, and families. The teachers self-rated their ability to relate to their students as low because the teachers could not identify in their own lives or experiences the situations and experiences that their students lived in. The teachers in the Marx study typify teachers in urban classrooms across the United States and teachers working with language-minority students. Likewise, Poplin and Weeres (1992) found that when addressing values, many teachers assumed that because their students came from diverse cultures, values were perceived as being different as well. Contrary to this assumption, values are held in common regardless of culture and could serve as common ground between teachers, students, and families of students.

A study conducted by Rosenbloom and Way (2004), which directly addressed Latino and African American students' views about discrimination, found that students generally felt stereotyped as bad kids by their teachers. Students in this study cited their teachers' low academic expectations of minority students as an example of discrimination. In general, the study found that African American and Latino students viewed their teachers as "uncaring and ineffective" (p. 436). A major finding of the Poplin and Weeres (1992) study supports the theory of student perception of discrimination,

"Many students of color and some Euro-American students perceive schools to be racist and prejudiced, from the staff to the curriculum" (p. 13). These perceptions of racism and prejudice all have a very damaging impact on minority students.

Compounding the issue of beliefs, expectations, and attitudes toward minority students is the disproportionate placement of new teachers in classrooms with minority low-income students from multilingual families (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Olsen, 2010). New teachers entering the profession are "most often white, middle class, monolingual females who grew up in the suburbs and hope to return to that setting to teach" (Schultz et al., p. 159). Minority students, in particular language-minority students such as LTELs, benefit from teachers that possess the competencies to work in a culturally diverse setting and have experience in the teaching profession.

Skills vs. Practices

The difference between skills and practices is similar to the distinction between transactional and transformational learning. Transactional teaching and learning employs a skill set, the *how to* in teaching. In contrast, transformational teaching and learning calls for making meaning of the world through our experiences and leads educators to examine their practice critically (Cranton & King, 2003). Haberman and Post (1998) addressed these enhanced practices as essential elements for a successful urban teacher's knowledge base. They argued that the following characteristics are

predisposed in teachers classified as successful with urban students: (a) self-knowledge, (b) self-acceptance, (c) relationship skills, (d) community knowledge, (e) empathy, (f) cultural human development, (g) cultural conflicts, (h) relevant curriculum, (i) generating sustained effort, (j) coping with violence, (k) self-analysis, and (l) functioning in chaos. This list has little to do with skills and much more to do with practices (Haberman & Post). The distinction between skills and practices is important in order to identify why and how some teachers are successful in creating supportive learning environments for ELs. Teachers engaged in transformational teaching and learning apply supportive practices in their teaching.

Curriculum

Transformational teaching involves listening to students and incorporating their lives and stories into the curriculum. Often the mainstream curriculum presents the dominant White culture perspective and excludes curriculum of Latino culture (Valencia, 2002). This can result in a disconnect with the context and increases the gap between knowledge and the learner. Nieto argued that an inclusive cultural approach "can have a substantive and positive impact on the educational experiences of most students" (in Valencia, p. 10). In order to increase student self-efficacy, teachers need to glean from the funds of knowledge present in their students' cultures and better address their academic and social strengths and needs (Bartolome, 1994; Schultz et al., 2008).

Mandates

Returning to the distinction between skills and practices, Schultz et al. (2008) contend that it is important to address the process teachers face in negotiating between beliefs and school district mandates. The mandates are in large part a result of the No Child Left Behind accountability mechanisms (e.g., standardized testing, language proficiency requirements, and scripted language arts programs). Beliefs regarding practices can be altered by the tug to meet the accountability requirements, especially for new teachers or for teachers in schools under sanctions. One could argue that the tug exists because teachers see the accountability requirements and their beliefs as being at odds. The pressures to comply with regulations stifle practices that enhance the education of these students (Poplin & Weeres, 1992; Schultz et al.).

Relationships Between Students and Teachers

A salient feature of transformational teaching lies in the relationships between teachers and students. Positive relationships can have an affirmative impact on the schooling context, whereas negative relationships can have an adverse impact. Students identify these positive relationships with teachers that are caring, that laugh with them, relate at a personal level, and recognize them as individuals (Poplin & Weeres, 1992). An excerpt from a high school student interview indicates the power of a caring relationship:

> When I walk into my second period class, my teacher is there to meet you with a handshake and a smile which make you know it going to be a good day. He knows your name which makes you feel good (p. 20).

These types of relationships seem not to be the norm and students affirm feeling most adults in school are not caring and fail to build these types of encounters and experiences. Teachers struggle in building these relationships because they do not understand the students' cultures, are fearful of their students, and simply feel unprepared to deal with issues of racism despite the fact many have taken courses that address these issues (Poplin & Weeres, 1992). As expressed by the student in the above quote, what students desire is a simple and sincere humane approach; at times a smile and a handshake will suffice.

Teaching and Learning

The final components discussed as a transformational practice are the practices related to teaching and learning. Students thrive in environments where they have relevant choices in both the material being taught and the form of learning. Poplin and Weeres (1992) found that students preferred classes that required them to think, work with peers, engage in experiments, and discuss controversial issues. They also found that students struggle in classes they do not understand, where assistance for learning is scarce, and where the material seems irrelevant. A promising approach, but one very seldom implemented, is the placement of LTEL students in rigorous grade-level content classes, including classes often reserved for fluent English

speakers, honors, and gifted students such as Advanced Placement and college preparatory classes (Olsen, 2010).

Learning Environments of Long-Term English Learners

The issues regarding learning environments of minority students—such as teachers' beliefs, expectations and views of minority students, new teachers' preparedness to meet the needs of minorities, and issues associated with skills and practices—all contribute to inadequate learning environments for minority student populations. There are certain critical issues that LTELs experience, which are essential to understanding potential obstacles LTEL students face.

LTEL students experience a disparity of learning environments. Olsen (2010) highlights five school-based practices that are currently in place and that serve to maintain or widen the achievement gap. First is the inappropriate placement of LTEL students in mainstream classes without language support. A conclusive finding of EL student needs is that EL students require academic English language support (Echevarria et al., 2008; Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). EL students struggle with content and remain stagnant in their language development when placed in unsupportive educational settings (Menken, 2009; Olsen).

Second, the placement of LTEL students with newcomer ELs who are

at the beginning stages of language development is problematic. Such a placement thwarts language development for LTEL students as the focus on this instructional setting is initial language acquisition (Menken, 2009). LTEL students are typically very proficient with social English and do not require instruction at the beginning level of language development (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). This placement practice occurs due to a lack of understanding of language development on the part of those who make placement decisions for ELs. The consequences of placing LTEL in EL classes designed for newcomers are twofold; it thwarts language development by limiting language instruction to the early stages of language development and it causes self-esteem issues for the LTEL student who is denied access to instruction at a more appropriate level (Olsen, 2010).

The third school-based practice mentioned is the assignment of the least prepared teachers to work with LTEL students (Gándara et al., 2003); this topic is further explored later in this chapter. The fourth practice is the over-assignment of reading intervention. Erroneously placing LTEL students in reading intervention classes occurs due to their poor performance on standardized English assessments. Instruction in this setting focuses on remedial reading skills. Placement of LTEL students in remedial reading classes is a concern echoed by the National Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth. Remedial reading instruction is not sufficient for teaching the type of academic language usage that LTEL students need to succeed in school.

The final practice that negatively affects LTEL students is a lack of access to elective classes and limited access to the full curriculum. LTEL students often lack access to essential social studies, science, and math classes. Olsen (2010) asserts that this occurs due to placement in remedial classes and English language development classes that consume two class periods per day (and fail to meet their needs), where non-EL students are taking a full complement of academic courses. Even in cases where EL students are placed in academic college-bound classes, they may still lack access to adequate materials. Teachers with high percentages of ELs are far more likely to report a lack of access to adequate instructional materials and technology than teachers with low percentages of ELs (Gándara et al., 2003).

Summary of Learning Environments of Minority Students

Researchers have engaged in both quantitative (meta-analysis) and qualitative methods including case studies to address a variety of questions regarding the learning environments of minority students. Learning environments are highly influenced and even created by classroom teachers. There is a growing body of research revealing and affirming that the learning environments of minorities are not favorable for their educational success. This is highly attributed to the low expectations, negative beliefs, and deficit views held by teachers of minority students. The myth that we live in a color-blind society is dispelled by the vast body of research cited in this section of the review. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) may have addressed the

separate is not equal issue; however, in today's urban and highly segregated schools, teachers' expectations of and relationships with minority students continue to undermine the educational outcomes of these students. It is unknown how this has specifically impacted Latino ELs. Issues that affect LTELs are situated in the general context of minority students, yet they have experienced specific practices that have further impacted their abilities to succeed in school.

<div align="center">Section 2: Student Voice Research</div>

A growing educational research practice is the inclusion of students as data sources, active respondents, and coresearchers. The participant approach in student voice is far from the traditional passive role a student might play such as in taking a survey or undergoing an observation. Student voice as a research approach empowers students as they tell of their schooling experiences and propose change. Student voice is a well-documented research approach that can provide an important perspective on our schools and educational settings. Of prominence is the work of Alison Cook-Sather and Jeffrey Schultz (2001) on students' perspectives on school. Their work was specific to the writing of eight student/adult teams. Throughout their book, students offer their experiences in schools, and often share their stories of frustration with not learning and with their poor relationships with teachers. They found that by involving students through meaningful interactions, teachers and other educators could include students in school improvement efforts. They affirm that student voice can serve as a

powerful component in educational reform:

> We believe that it is crucial to listen to what students have to say because until we truly understand what students are experiencing—what and how education means, looks, and feels to them—our efforts at school reform will not go very far. (p. 2)

NCLB and Student Voice

In exploring NCLB's purpose, the U.S. Department of Education's website (2003) states that NCLB is "designed to change the culture of America's schools by closing the achievement gap offering more flexibility, giving parents more options, and teaching students based on what works" (p. 1). However, the legacy of NCLB has a strong reliance on assessments to measure schools; a change in testing culture has occurred, but not a change in flexibility. An impact of the LTEL population on NCLB accountability is that EL students can affect a school in many more ways than White, non-EL students. EL students count in several subgroups and NCLB also measures the growth of assessments specific to ELs. The impact of EL students on school accountability has often been adverse. The EL student population often lacks sufficient growth on standardized tests, which might place a school under sanctions. A perception that EL students need remediation might deter schools from focusing on the assets and strengths that LTELs can contribute to their schools. Rather than empowering EL students through student voice initiatives, many schools blame these students for the sanctions imposed. NCLB legislation states a commitment to change as expressed by the culture of multiple accountability measures. Student voice

could have emerged to a place of prominence in addressing the closing of the achievement gap in the United States, but instead the legislation omitted this level of student involvement. By omitting students' rights to be heard, educational reform keeps students captive to dominant interests such as testing, labeling, and accountability measures (Cook-Sather, 2006).

In order to provide an alternative perspective to the accountability data, a growing body of research has emerged in the last few years that engages at-risk and minority students in student voice initiatives (Mitra, 2009; Roberts & Nash, 2009; Sellman, 2009; Smyth, 2006). Building on the seminal work of Freire, a team of researchers explored the use of student voice and photo voice to better understand and provide support to a group of at-risk middle school students. Photo voice research engages students to participate as coresearchers by photographing settings, people, or items that address a research question and then sharing their stories about the pictures. The researchers found that when teachers and schools reach a point where they feel they have tried and failed at reaching students, they need to take a step back and listen (Kroeger et al., 2004).

Student Voice Initiatives

The term student voice emerged in the early 1990s as researchers recognized that those most affected by educational settings, policies, practices, and research had little say in their learning. Cook-Sather (2006) provides historical development of student voice and pioneers to this research, including Kozol in 1991, Levin's work in 1994, Weis and Fine in

1993. Driving this research movement has been Fullan's (1991) all-important question: "What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered?" (p.170, in Cook Sather). The term *student voice* was coined in the early 21st century as part of the educational research reform agenda in the United States, Canada, Australia, and England (Cook-Sather). Throughout the literature on student voice, the term *agency* appears repeatedly; thus, student voice provides a form of placing some of the power into the hands of students.

The Role of the Student in Student Voice Research

Students are typically recipients of a system designed for them, not by or with them. They make up 95% of a school's population and are passive recipients of schooling instead of active agents of change (Roberts & Nash, 2009). Students learn about democracy but are denied the opportunity to express their opinions about their schooling (Poplin & Weeres, 1992). A student's role in school changes substantially when asked to provide an opinion about their schooling. Student voice initiatives enable youth in areas of their academic development, ownership over process, and increased agency (Mitra, 2008). Students are rich sources of information regarding their communities and often bring otherwise overlooked issues to the surface. In a study notated by Mitra, a teacher commented that, "Maybe they're [students] going in a way that seems totally frivolous, and it's actually what needs to be happening … let it be what they want it to be" (p. 319). In schools, teachers and leaders have assumed to know what students

need and want without ever asking them. What this teacher discovered after engaging in a student voice initiative is that students will surprise teachers and school leaders with original ideas.

In contrast to NCLB legislation, policies in the United Kingdom policies exist that require schools to listen to students (Roberts & Nash, 2009); this has led to both positive and adverse effects for students. Roberts and Nash conducted research on a students-as-researchers initiative; they identify the role of the student in this process as having high agency. In their study, the researchers asked students for their opinions, and more deeply, asked them to identify aspects of their schooling where they wanted to make a difference. This reconstructed the students involved as creators of knowledge. The researchers identified this shift as a change in student role, by supporting students "in taking action to change their school rather than simply to describe it" (p. 185). This change in role was substantiated in the study conducted by Flutter (2006), where students were actively engaged in making decisions about designing and improving their school buildings. Student participation as clients led to statements of increased efficacy. Fielding (2004) points out that often student voice is omitted because there are some voices that systems do not want to hear and systems then miss out on understanding the deeper issues, which leads to a "challenging of conventional wisdom at a profound level" (p. 308). Cook-Sather (2006) echoes the importance of student perspectives.

At-risk students involved in student voice research. Findings from

student voice research come in stark contrast to the traditional studying of students that lead to "accumulation of information about the lives of oppressed groups … which results in surveillance and regulation rather than empowerment" (Humphries, 1994, p. 198, in Fielding, 2004). The Kroeger et al. (2004) action research project sought precisely to engage in student voice research with identified at-risk students. Through their students, the researchers identified many concerns that often go unnoticed such as whom to ask for help, keeping up, peer status, and fear of not understanding. Cook-Sather (2006) emphasizes that if students speak, adults must listen. This is especially true of adolescent-oppressed and at-risk students who have disengaged from learning for some time. Fielding highlights the work of Alcoff in this area—engaging in student voice research is a *speaking with* rather than *speaking for* practice that allows "the possibility that the oppressed will produce a counter sentence that can produce a new historical narrative" (Alcoff, 1991/92, p. 23, in Fielding).

Fielding (2004) continues this review of student voice for oppressed students and goes on to push the boundaries of existing realities. Citing Lincoln's work, Fielding argues that a transformation can occur whereby the silenced become producers; their position as objects of research transforms into an active role as agents for what is produced and consumed about them. Roberts and Nash (2009) were cautious in avoiding "the temptation to work with those students whose voices we wanted to hear" (p. 177) and included working with more challenging students. This led to many challenges as it

was difficult to engage them in student voice. Some students had such strong negative images of themselves that they struggled to view themselves as contributors, yet ultimately their participation changed how they viewed themselves. They began to see themselves as change agents. Student voice initiatives have the power of impacting student self-perception (Cook-Sather 2006; Fielding; Kroeger et al., 2004; Mitra, 2008; Roberts & Nash,). An acknowledgement of power differentials between oppressed youth and their teachers is critical to this transformation. This discussion now turns to the change in relationships between students and adults when student voice is an inclusive element in school decisions.

The Link Between Student Voice and Teacher Expectations, Beliefs, and Practices

Youth-adult partnerships are the foundation of effective student voice initiatives, where each has the potential to learn and promote change (Mitra, 2008). It should come as no surprise that adults have noticed that having fun fosters this relationship. However, there are those that fear that students could become one more source of teacher criticism (Roberts & Nash, 2009). When adults were clear that the locus of control would be shared, roles became more fluid and the work more creative (Kroeger et al., 2004; Roberts & Nash). The research on student voice initiatives did not yield many results directly linking student voice to teacher expectations, beliefs, and practices. In fact, what is revealed is a fear of an application of student voice to address teacher practices (Roberts & Nash). Instead, student voice is accepted in areas such as improving schools' physical environments but not

regarding the dynamics that truly hold students back. "Inviting students to comment on teaching can be difficult for both teachers and students in schools where consultation is new and where the necessary climate of trust and openness have yet to be built" (Flutter, 2006 p. 191). When asked to participate as coresearchers into issues of teacher bias, Cook-Sather and Reisinger (2001) found students very open to thinking, observing, and writing deeply about this topic. Student authors could quickly recall a vast number of incidents of biased treatment toward themselves and others.

Smyth (2006) provides a very thoughtful perspective on student voice that could help researchers understand how student voice can influence teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and expectations. Smyth builds his research using Erickson's theory on student disengagement whereby students "refuse to accept the negative identity assigned by the school by refusing to learn" (Smyth, p. 350). Student voice and teacher beliefs collide when students articulate why they experience failure in school. Engaging students in researching their learning experiences and environments can yield true reform and build the trust of disengaged students. This may serve as well to dispel the negative beliefs, attitudes, and low expectations teachers may have of disengaged students.

Summary of Student Voice

Returning to Fullan's (1991) all-important question—What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered (p.170, in Cook Sather) —we must also ask "Are the least served students

being heard?" The use of student voice is a powerful transformational practice that is becoming well documented as a promising practice in student engagement, and indicates that engaging students in researching their own environments results in a positive change in the adult-youth relationship (Mitra, 2009), as well as changes in how power is distributed (Mitra; Roberts & Nash, 2009). Utilizing student voice in researching oppressed and at-risk student populations is considered a powerful alternative in the field of educational research. Rather than passively researching the less powerful, which can undermine empowerment, student voice enhances empowerment. According to Fielding (2004), capturing the voices needed requires an alternative epistemology. This approach changes both the student and the researcher. Students become the producers, analysts, and presenters of their own narratives. They become the agents of their own change.

Section 3: Critical Race Theory

The research questions in this study derived from a critical race theory (CRT) perspective. Ladson-Billings and colleagues agree that CRT recognizes that society is shaped by racism, that racism is deeply embedded in normal activities, and that it is helpful in education to unmask and expose racism (in Patton, McEwen, Rendon, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007). Minority students have lagged significantly behind White student populations in the United States and the achievement gap continues to widen for many. As described in Chapter 1, the growth of minority students, specifically LTELs, and their dismal academic outcomes call for a research approach that identifies race

issues as a part of the context of this study. CRT studies in education were not "merely descriptive of racist acts, policies, curriculum or teachers and administrators, they helped to explain how a critical analysis of racism in education could lead to the development of new ways to think about the failure of schools to properly educate minority populations" (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 266). Qualitative research approaches and CRT can provide an epistemological approach to the study of oppressed populations perhaps in a way that quantitative research cannot. As stated by Ladson-Billings, "The 'gift' of CRT is that it unapologetically challenges the scholarship that would dehumanize and depersonalize us" (in Lynn & Parker, p. 271). The application of CRT in qualitative studies cannot only transform research practices, but can also serve as an important alternative to inherently racist practices (Lynn & Parker).

Researchers Poplin and Weeres (1992) applied a multiethnic student voice initiative deeply grounded in the principles of CRT and concluded that educational reform depended in part on developing a "productive participatory process by which all the participants inside schools can name for themselves the problems and promises that exist at each school site" (p. 17). Research into the learning environments of minority students can certainly benefit from the harmonizing of student voice initiatives and CRT.

Summary

This literature review encompassed three distinct yet interrelated

bodies of research, which laid the foundation for the methodology, the analysis, and the findings of this study. Two theoretical frameworks were presented. The Poplin and Weeres (1992) framework (See Figure 2.1) encompasses many of the aspects of transformative teaching and the presence or lack of practices, which Haberman and Post (1998) outline as critical in working with at-risk students. It specifies the contributors to the achievement gap; these factors demarcate certain aspects of schooling that LTELs experiences. The den Brok and Levy (2005) framework (See Figure 2.2) focused on the implications of race and student perceptions as contributing factors to student outcomes by highlighting home language, years in the host country, and student perceptions of teachers' behaviors as aspects of CRT. Each framework played a critical role in this study; the den Brok and Levy model served to guide the development of the interview protocol, whereas the Poplin and Weeres framework served in the analysis of the data generated by the interviews.

The role of the use of student voice in researching specific aspects of CRT, such as the implications of language status for minority students, is illustrated in Figure 2.3. The figure also takes into account the contributors to the achievement gap as part of the narrative of this student population.
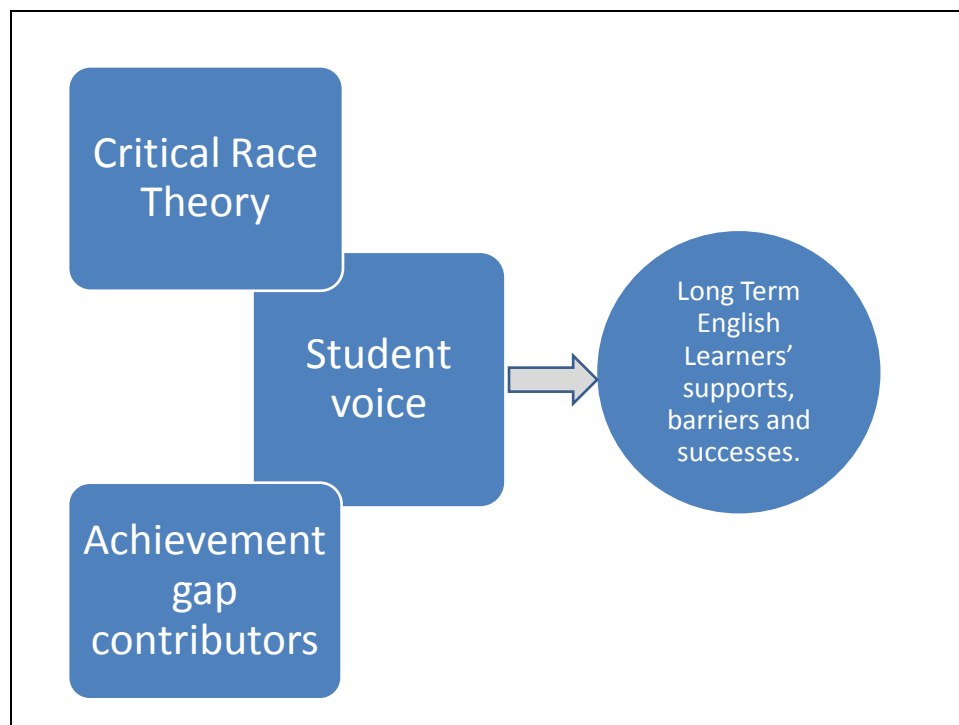
Figure 2.3 Theoretical Framework Relationships

Through a student voice methodological perspective, this research study was able to identify supports, barriers, and successes of LTEL students. Together, both the den Brok and Levy (2005) and Poplin and Weeres (1992) frameworks provided the researcher with a detailed set of factors to consider in understanding the findings.

Conclusions

Latino students continue to outgrow any other student population in many states. A growing percentage of English learners are U.S.-born Latinos. The academic achievement of Latinos and Latino ELs has lagged considerably when compared to nonminority students (Fry, 2008; Kewal Ramani et al., 2007; Shettle et al., 2007; Valencia, 2002). Teacher beliefs, expectations,

and views regarding minority students are often deficit views (den Brok & Levy, 2005; Fritzberg, 2001; Marx, 2008; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Schultz et al., 2008; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). While focusing on the negative assumptions and misconceptions about Latinos and Latino ELs, teachers have lowered their academic expectations of these student populations (Fritzberg). This limited view of Latino student ability impacts students and their views about themselves (den Brok & Levy; Towns, Cole-Henderson, & Serpell, 2001). These issues are deeply rooted in race relations described in CRT. Incorporating student voice into the understanding of the educational experiences of LTELs allows this student population to serve as coconstructors of educators' knowledge about them.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This study employed student voice interviews to examine how long-term EL students are experiencing school. The study employed a CRT-grounded theory approach. The study addressed the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What are the supports and barriers that LTEL students experience in schools?

- Research Question 2: What are the successes LTEL students experience in school?

The theoretical framework provided by den Brok and Levy (2005) provides a model to explain, or attempt to explain, the effect of ethnicity on students' perceptions and their learning outcomes. The authors propose that while both student and teacher ethnic backgrounds influence teacher behavior toward students, the students are also influenced by their teachers' and their own ethnic background as well as teacher behaviors toward them. It is the students' perceptions of the teachers' behavior that influences student outcomes.
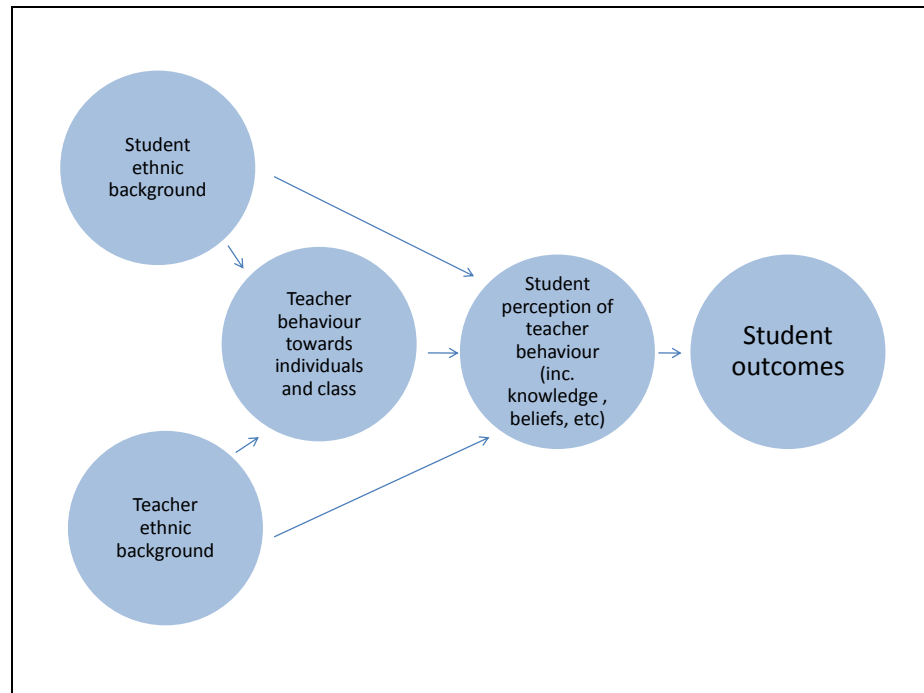
Figure 3.1 Effect of Students' Perceptions and Student Outcomes (den Brok & Levy, 2005)

The framework relates to issues of ethnic background; however, den Brok and Levy (2005) included studies in their meta-analysis where ethnicity was defined by the home language and studies in which ethnicity was defined by number of years in the host country. Both language status and years in the United States encompass the definition of being an LTEL student.

Overall Research Design

Semistructured Interviews

The study utilized semistructured interviews based on appreciative inquiry protocol. Person-to-person interviews provide a tool for researchers

to acquire information as to what is "in and on someone else's mind" (Patton, 1990, p. 2). Semistructured interviews allow the researcher to "respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to the new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Patton wrote about gaining understanding of views and thinking of another by using interviews:

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe … We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and its meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. (p. 196)

The use of a semistructured interview format allowed the researcher to utilize a mix of more- and less-structured questions. The semistructured interview was guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions was predetermined. This format allowed the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). The use of semistructured interviews, along with follow-up questions or probes, allows the researcher to enter into the perspectives and thoughts of the study participants. This interview approach is also supported as an important way of gaining clarity into the research topic, as Weiss (1994) states, "Interviewing is our only defense against mistaken expectations" (p. 52).

Appreciative Inquiry Protocol

The research question specifically seeks to identify how long-term EL students experience success. The question itself is born out of looking at relationships from a positive perspective, rather than a focus on the problems LTELs face. This study seeks to identify success as expressed by the students interviewed. The researcher based the approach on a longitudinal study in Canada called "Imagine Student Success". The project sought to identify student success from a student perspective. The use of an interview protocol structured around appreciative inquiry ultimately led to more than 1,000 student interviews (Anderson, McKenna, & Watkins, 2005).

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) define appreciative inquiry (AI) as the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. AI involves asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. In the case of the proposed study, the system is defined as the educational settings of long-term Latino EL students. Instead of asking questions that are problem-solving oriented—such as "why do you think you have not been able to reach EL reclassification?" whereby the students' language classification is viewed as a problem to be solved—AI seeks to bring out the best of this student population and their educational setting. The AI approach envisions what might be and dialogues what should be. The designing of the unconditional positive question is fundamental for students to talk about their achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, elevated thoughts,

opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, stories, and visions of valued and possible futures.

Theoretical Framework for the Interviews

Returning to the framework proposed by den Brok and Levy (2005), the researcher designed the study interviews on the theory that students' perceptions of their teachers' behavior might influence student outcomes. The AI-based student interviews provided a description of the student outcomes specific to stories of success. How and if students' perceptions of teachers impact their experienced success was revealed through data analysis. The framework in this case allowed the researcher to look at student outcomes through the stories shared by the students, not by accountability measures of achievement.
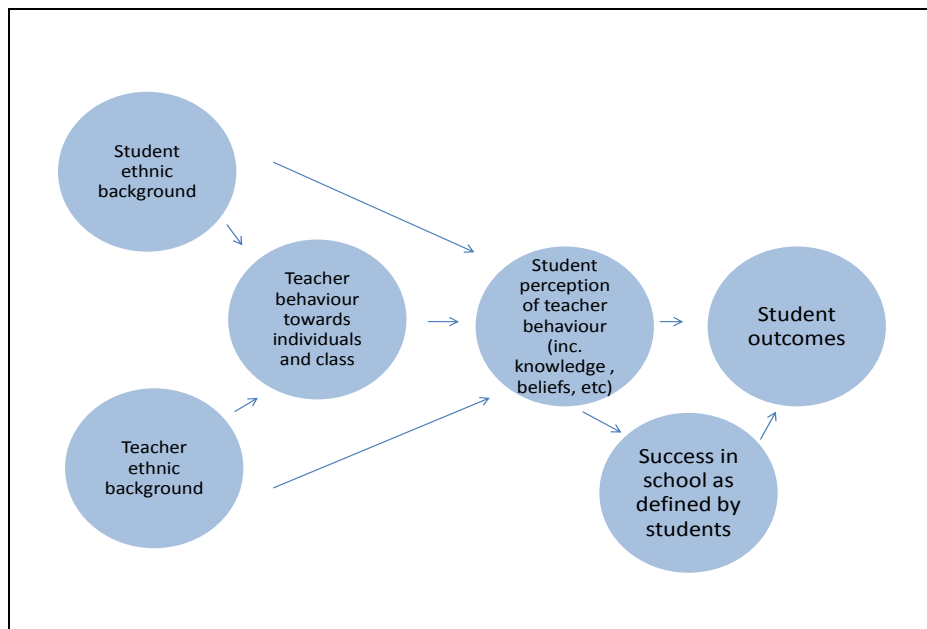
Figure 3.2 Effect of Students' Perceptions and Success on Student Outcomes

The new framework adds the component of success as defined by the students as both an outcome of student perceptions of teacher behavior and as a contributor to student outcomes. The use of AI interviews supports the added layer of success to the framework. AI is a valuable method to uncover the successes in what otherwise might be a setting filled with deficit language and stories of failure.

Participants

Weiss (1994) supports the use of a study's substantive frame to decide who should be interviewed and what they should be asked. The reason for targeting this specific population is that the focus of the study was to gain insight regarding the learning environments of long-term English learners via student voice. Their voice was researched through interviews, as they were the targeted population to be studied. Requesting at-risk students to articulate stories of school success benefited the students by providing them an opportunity to reflect on these times. Purposeful sampling for "typical cases" (Seidman, 2006) occurred because of an established student criteria.

LTEL students share several distinct characteristics—they struggle academically, and they have weak academic language yet they can engage socially in English and at times in Spanish. LTEL students often have gaps in content area knowledge and they are "stuck" at the intermediate level of language development. Most LTEL students have a grade point average of

2.0 or lower (Olsen, 2010). The participants for this study typified the LTEL descriptor and met the following criterion: California public high school student, identified English learner as determined by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), enrolled at least six years in U.S. schools, identified as either Latino/a, Hispanic. Students limited in oral English yet fluent in Spanish were included in the participant population.

Obtaining participants for the study took place by first obtaining a list of LTEL students from the participating high school district (See Appendix A). The data included: number of years in the United States, race, gender, grade level, class schedule, CELDT data, standardized test scores, grade point average, and home language.

The researcher narrowed down each list to meet the desired participant profile and then narrowed the study to two schools in the district. The researcher presented the study in classes that had a variety of students, and included the desired population for the study. The researcher explained the purpose of the study was to access and to disseminate the expressed experiences with school success for LTEL students (See Appendix B). During the class presentations, it was made clear that the study sought to discover their successes and to capture the voices of those who had not experienced success in an educational setting. Students were encouraged to ask questions during the class presentations. The researcher had the assent/consent forms distributed to the identified students the following day in a variety of classes; the invitations came in envelopes that simply stated

the student's name, which was to protect the identity of identified potential participants. The invitations included instructions for students to turn the signed assent/consent forms in to a specified school staff member by a specified date (See Appendix C).

Upon receipt of consent and assent forms, 22 students were invited to participate in the interviews. Selection of the final 22 was random. A number was assigned to each student to allow for anonymity. Interviews were set up with each selected student.

Location of the Study

The study was conducted in a high school district located in Southern California, which includes comprehensive high schools and a continuation high school. The district has more than 9,300 students—1,600 of whom are English learners, and 80% of whom are LTEL. The EL student population consists of 95% identifying Spanish as their home language. Demographic data is consistent with the trends in this geographic area with more than 55% of the students identified as Hispanic and 35% identified as White.

The main purpose of this study was to identify contributors of school success for Latino English learners in order to build on these for further success. Hearing stories of successful moments from the students provided a much-needed perspective in an arena otherwise filled with deficit language. Treating the students as participants in school research whose opinions matter not only added to the literature regarding this student population but

also the literature on student voice in educational research.

Instrumentation

For this study, the instrumentation was a semistructured interview protocol, which included specific AI questions. The AI questions enhanced the study voice research study because it elicited personal stories of success (Mitra, 2009). Student participants were asked a series of questions regarding their schooling experiences. Most interviews included questions on six topics. The six topics were: (a) experiences in the classroom, (b) supports as a student, (c) barriers, (d) teacher characteristics, (e) three wishes, and (f) feelings as an English learner. The interviews also included questions regarding general demographics and their Spanish fluency (See Appendix D). The demographic data was asked at the end as Weiss (1992) encourages this approach to allow for a more organic interview in which the participant does not feel that they are answering a questionnaire with predestined responses.

To allow for purposeful analysis, the topics addressed delved into finding the supports, barriers, and successes of LTEL students (See Table 3.1). As a semigrounded research study, it was not possible for the researcher to be certain exactly which questions would address supports, barriers, and successes, and Table 3.1 demonstrates how interview questions and research questions are interrelated.

Table 3.1 Interview Topics and Research Questions

Interview topic	Supports	Barriers	Successes
Experiences in the classroom	x	x	x
Supports as a student	x		x
Barriers		x	
Teacher characteristics	x	x	
Three wishes	x	x	
Feelings as an EL	x	x	x

There was considerable overlap and multiple opportunities for a variety of data to emerge that addressed the supports, barriers, and successes. The questions were purposefully designed to ensure that stories of success and support would emerge by using a modified appreciative inquiry protocol.

Data Collection Procedures

Students were interviewed individually at their schools during a time that was convenient to them and noninterruptive of their education. All interviews were recorded electronically with each participant identified by their assigned number. All interviews took place in May 2010. At one school, the interviewer used a private room to conduct the interviews; at the other school, students were interviewed in a quiet setting on the school grounds. Both settings allowed students to feel free to respond to the questions, the settings were distinctly different from the school offices and classrooms and were the types of places students gathered with friends. Interviews were approximately 20 minutes in length. Several students required probing and an explanation of the questions. The researcher made every attempt to ensure the students felt comfortable sharing information and constantly

reassured them that the information was anonymous. In order to obtain the very best data possible, the researcher obtained descriptions of specific incidents by asking the respondents to particularize. Many students shared information after the tape recorder was turned off; the researcher took notes and asked students to retell the story with the recorder on only if they felt safe to do so. Student participants were intrigued with the research study; for this reason the researcher gave each student a copy of the questions and encouraged them to contact a teacher to email the researcher if the student had more information to share and wanted a second interview. The researcher transcribed interviews in June 2010.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interview data were analyzed using the Glaserian approach to grounded theory. "Grounded theory is an approach which was developed in the 1960's in order to generate theory from observations of real life as these were occurring" (Grbich, 2007 p. 70). Two prominent schools of thought are prevalent in the application of grounded theory—Straussian and Glaserian. The study applied the Glaserian approach because of its open features: "constant comparison of incident to incident, and incident to emerging concept" (Grbich, p. 72) so that new theoretical explanations can emerge. The process followed the Glaserian approach to grounded theory as outlined by Grbich. Theoretical sampling consisted of ongoing collecting, coding, and analysis. Memoing, which is the development of theoretical and conceptual links and their relationships within the empirical data, served to

transcend the data and were made each time the researcher moved into coding of data collected. Saldaña (2009) describes a variety of memos and purposes for memos. The researcher used memos as an opportunity for reflecting and writing about how she personally related to the participants, the study's research questions, the code choices, the links, and the connections among codes and memos about the final report for the study.

Some early categories for coding were identified prior to data collection and were either confirmed as valid or dispelled. Substantive coding emerged through the apriori theoretical codes. These codes conceptualized how codes related to each other and consolidated the story emerging from the data. These stories formed the basis of the findings. Saturation, an awareness that no new information is emerging, signaled the final process of coding and memoing. Several phases of coding ensured that saturation was achieved in regards to the research questions. The researcher took very purposeful steps during the coding process; Figure 3.3 illustrates the steps taken.
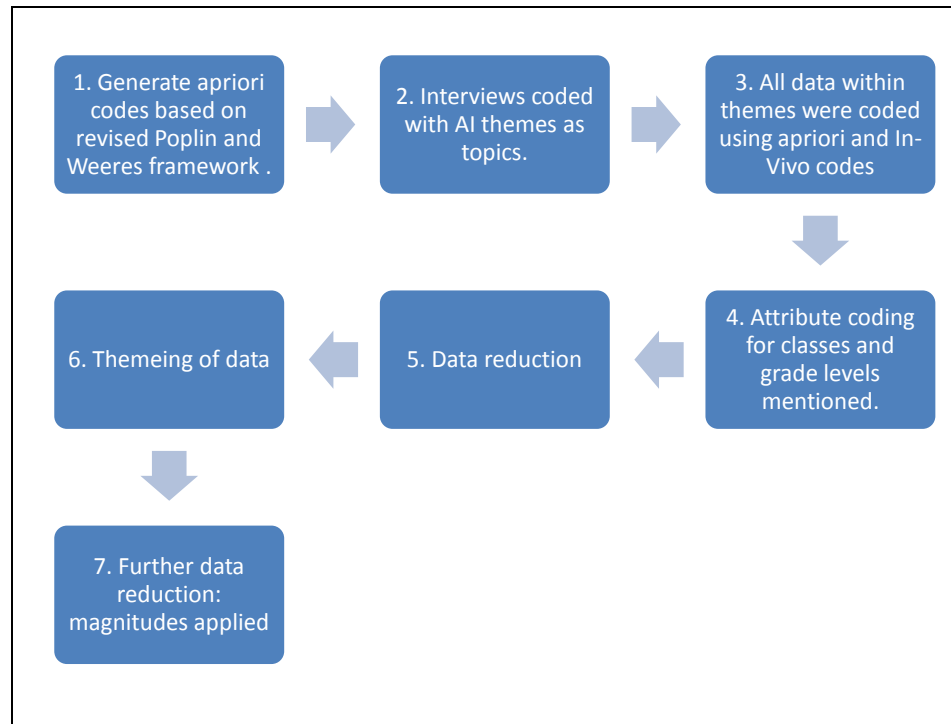
Figure 3.3 Steps in the Coding and Data Reduction Process

First, the researcher adapted the Poplin and Weeres (1992) theoretical framework. Figure 3.4 illustrates the seven issues identified by the Poplin and Weeres study and the adaptations. The framework needed revisions in order to focus on the issues and context of LTEL high school students. A cursory review of the data revealed that the issues of safety, physical environment, and despair were not present.
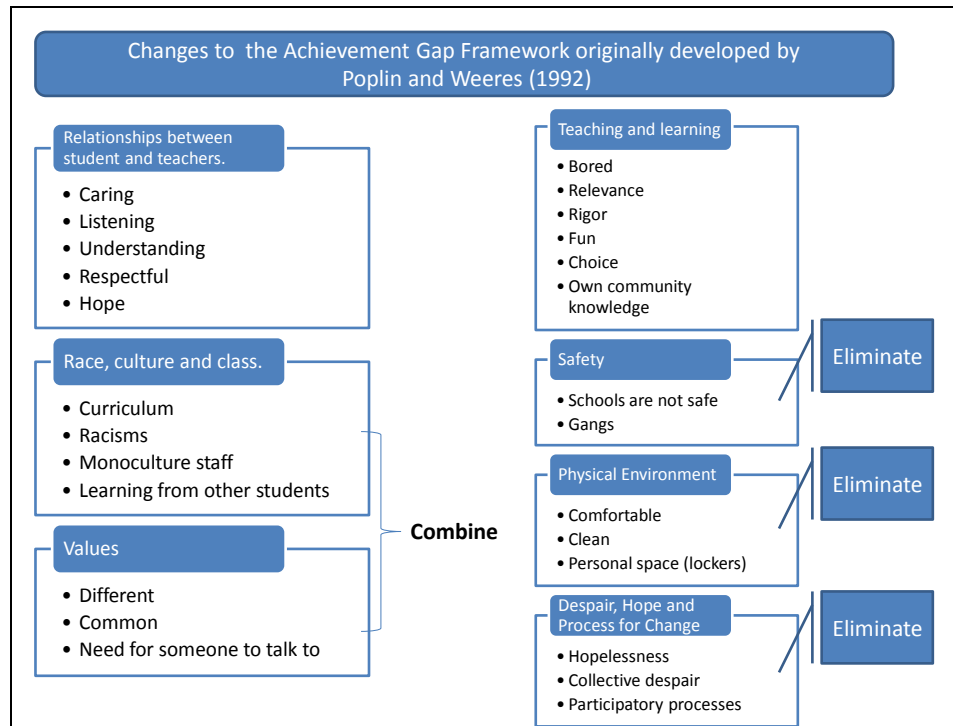
Figure 3.4 Process of Adapting the Poplin and Weeres (1992) Framework to Eliminate Factors

The adaptations made to the framework were necessary given the context of the study; Figure 3.5 illustrates the new framework. Other present factors were added, including language, support systems, and barriers. Thirty-three apriori codes surfaced from the adapted framework, and were entered into the computer-assisted program, NVIVO, so that they could be applied as codes.
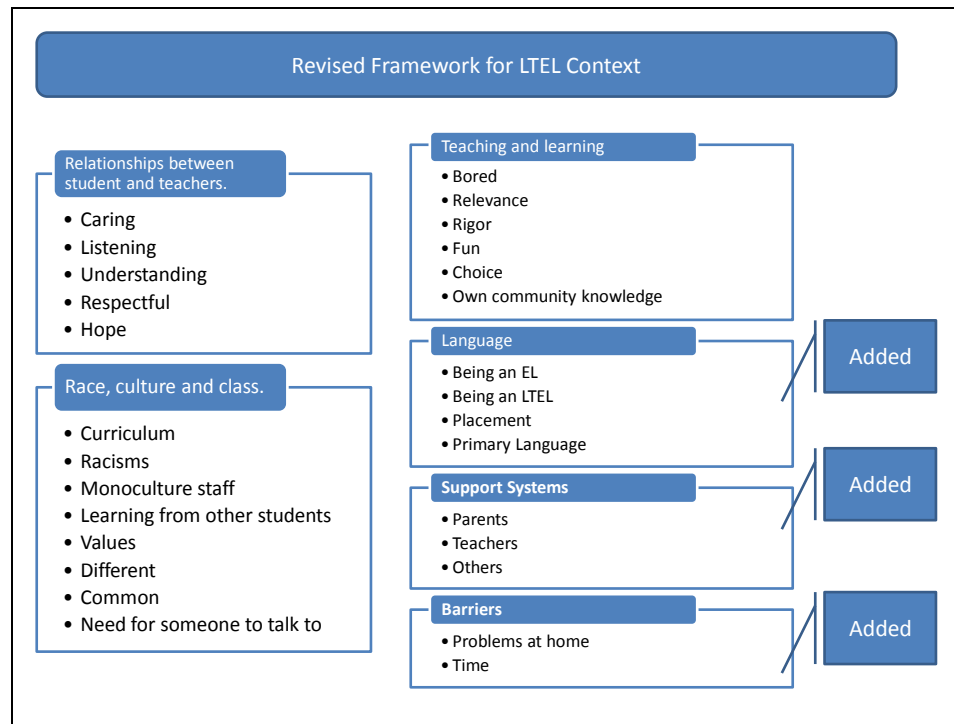
Figure 3.5 Adapted Framework for LTEL Context

Following the creation of apriori codes, the researcher applied the topics of the AI interviews as codes. Next, all the interviews were coded with the AI questions as topics. Coding occurred at the topic level rather than applying codes to each interview as a whole. This is commonly referred to as thematic coding. The themes were related to the interview questions. Three of the themes overlapped with the LTEL experiences framework, as illustrated in Figure 3.6.
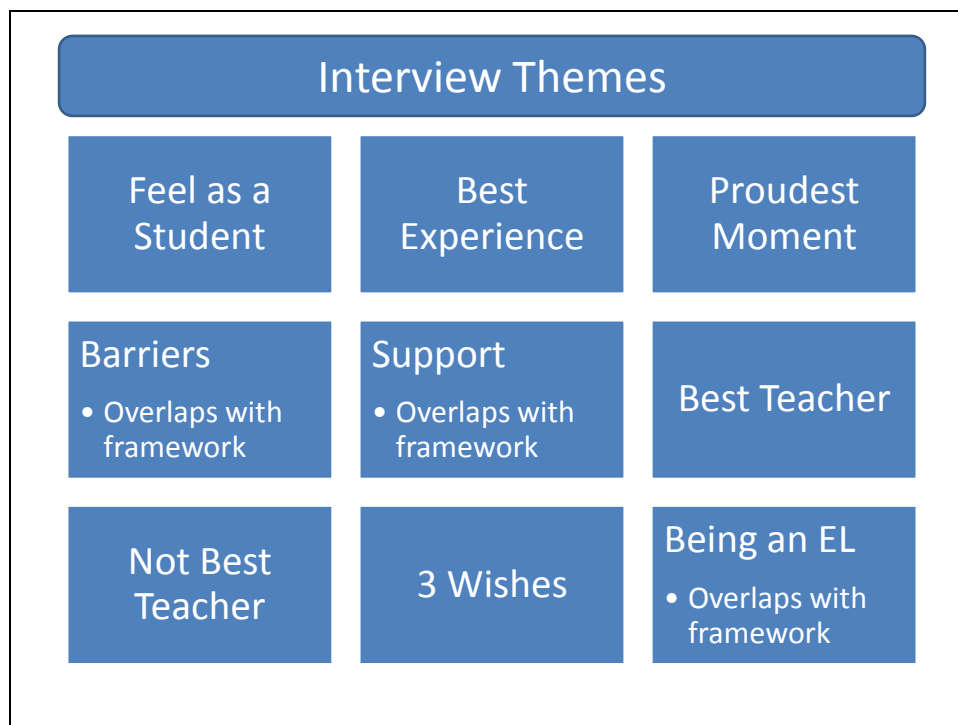
Figure 3.6 Interview Themes

A second pass of coding was done using the codes from the framework where applicable. All framework codes were used as applicable with all AI topics. In-Vivo codes (codes that carry the exact terms used by students) were used extensively as part of the grounded theory approach; these codes were always kept in lowercase or began with I (i.e., I still get confused, low-key student) so that the researcher could easily distinguish them from other codes. Attribute coding was also applied for the classes and grade levels mentioned. Often, a particular story would have several applicable codes. Simultaneous coding served to highlight all the layers, particularly for relationships between teachers and students.

The researcher was able to apply structure to codes by creating a

hierarchy structure using NVIVO (such as child nodes, tree nodes, and free nodes). As the researcher finished each round of coding for each topic, she moved all free nodes to a fitting tree node, thus categorizing as the process went along. By sequentially coding the topics, the researcher was able to use the codes created for one topic in the coding of the next topic. Many codes created for "Best Experience" were used for "Proudest Moment." The researcher noticed similarly applied codes between "Not Best Teacher" and "Barriers." The process described resulted in 322 codes.

In order to begin the process of data reduction, the researcher turned to a more organic process and used highlighters to color-code the codes and structures. All the while, the framework and research questions guided the process of data reduction. The data was then organized into sets around themes in a table. Each theme had subthemes that contained specific codes and the number of references made to each code. The researcher then considered how closely related the subthemes were to the main theme and applied a magnitude scale from one to three—with one being low proximity to the main theme, two being medium proximity, and three being high proximity.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the study. Limitations included sample size, participant bias, researcher bias, duration of the study, and convenience. The size of the sample—22 students in total—inhibited the potential for generalization of the findings beyond the context of the schools

attended by the participants. Secondly, only students who attended the informational meetings and assented to the study are included. This limits the research finding to students who already have some level of school engagement, which impacted the potential for generalization of the study.

The researcher recognized that the study participants were aware that they were participating in a study and, therefore, there was the possibility that they may behave unauthentically. As students preconditioned to roles of authority, they at times responded with the intent of pleasing the researcher with their responses or in rebellion to roles of authority. This limitation was addressed early on in the informational meetings and at the onset of each interview in order to stress the importance of participant honesty in their responses. Additionally the researcher dressed in a manner that was not in keeping with her administrative role in the district—in jeans, a university shirt, and a baseball cap—leading the students to identify the researcher as a university student. The researcher did state her role in the district, and this added to the openness of the participants who were pleased to be talking to a person who trained their teachers and was helping to develop ELD programs.

The researcher created all the data collection instruments associated with the study and was the sole gatherer of data. Miles and Huberman (1994) point out two forms of researcher bias: The first stems from researcher effects on the site and the second stems from the effects of the site on the researcher. In each form, the site influences the researcher and

the researcher influences the site. The researcher—fully aware of these affects and explicitly focusing on the purpose of the study to identify how LTELs experience school success—worked with the participants and the site to ensure that there were no hidden agendas behind the research. As a form of appreciative inquiry, this research helped to identify what was working rather than a focus on deficit language and findings. Undoubtedly, the researcher was impacted and influenced by the process, yet a strict adherence to the outlined analysis methods and purpose of the study was maintained.

The study took place over a month. The duration of the study limits the degree to which findings can be generalized. The study sample was based on convenience related to students who assent to participate, time at which students could meet, and location at the schools of participating students. Samples of convenience can produce an overreliance on accessible and "elite" informants.

Summary

The methodology for this student voice study was based on grounded theory and appreciative inquiry. Twenty-two high school LTEL students were interviewed regarding their experiences in school. Two theoretical frameworks guided the development of the interview protocol and served to generate a priori codes. Extensive use of In Vivo codes ensured that the study maintained authentically grounded in the words of the student

participants.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to identify the successes that long-term English learners (LTELs) experience in high school. Additionally, the study looked into the barriers and supports that LTELs encountered in their schooling. The study aimed to answer two research questions: What are the supports and barriers that LTEL students experience in schools? What are the successes LTEL students experience in school?

Data Presentation and Analyses

The study employed both student voice and appreciative inquiry (AI) as the foundation for the development of the interviews and the coding methodology. Twenty-two high school Latina/o LTEL students were interviewed. The interviews were coded using primarily In Vivo codes and a priori codes based on the theoretical framework. In Vivo coding is the use of participants' own words as codes (Saldaña, 2009). The use of In Vivo codes provided the researcher with a constant connection to the actual words used by the participants regarding their experiences. As the researcher coded the transcribed interviews, participants' exact words were frequently used to identify and label the data such as behaviors, problems, practices, and successes. The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 provided a solid foundation for the concepts that related directly to the schooling of minority students. Seven main issues identified by Poplin and Weeres (1992) were restructured to represent the issues identified by the LTEL students. This new

framework (discussed in Chapter 3), along with the research questions, provided the necessary structure for the processes of collapsing and themeing the codes.

Context

Participants for this study were all high school students that had been identified as Latino/a long-term English learners. Table 4.1 provides the demographic information about this student cohort and their educational setting as EL students.

Table 4.1 Demographic and Educational Setting of Participants

Demographic Data									
Age				Gender		Grade		School	
15	16	17	18	Male	Female	10	12	Comprehensive	Continuation
5	11	3	3	13	9	18	4	18	4

Educational setting					
Number of Sheltered Classes				ELD Classes	
None	1	2	3+	Not Placed	Placed
4	1	2	11	6	16

The majority of the participants (73%) were 16 years old, and gender distribution was close to equal with 60% male and 40% female participants. More than 80% of the participants were in the 10th grade, and the same percentage of participants came from the comprehensive high school. One

10th-grade student was enrolled at the continuation high school, and likewise one 18-year-old was enrolled at the comprehensive high school. Less than 20% of the students had been completely mainstreamed, which means that their language status was not a factor in their content course placement. The remaining majority (80%) were in sheltered courses. Sheltered classes could be in a variety of content areas such as science, social studies, health, and math. The instructional goal of sheltered courses is to present material using strategies designed to promote language development. Most of the students (72%) were enrolled in English-language development (ELD) classes. The purpose of ELD courses is to address the ELD instructional standards, which progress from beginning to advanced levels of language acquisition. All of the participants in ELD were also in one or more sheltered classes. Not all students in sheltered classes were enrolled in ELD.

Procedure

Data were organized following a hierarchy as presented in Figure 4.1. The hierarchy arrangement was helpful in identification of the salient findings that addressed each of the research questions.

Theme 1: Teachers as sources of supports or barriers.	Theme 2: Other sources of supports and barriers.	Theme 3: LTEL Success

• **Subtheme A**: teachers behaviors towards students.
  • Supportive teacher behaviors
  • Unsupportive teacher behaviors
• **Subtheme B:** relationships between teachers and students.
  • Supportive relationships
  • Unsupportive relationships
• **Subtheme C:** instructional practices
  • Supportive practices
  • Unsupportive practices
	• **Subtheme A:** students
	  • High self-efficacy
	  • Low self-efficacy
	• **Subtheme B:** school
	  • Unsupportive school policies
	• **Subtheme C:** parents and home
	  • Supports from parents
	  • Barriers in the home
	• **Subtheme D:** peers
	  • Negative peer influence
		• **Subtheme A:** proudest moment
		• **Subtheme B:** contributor to success
		• **Subtheme C:** effect of successful moment

Figure 4.1 Hierarchy of Themes, Subthemes, and Data Sets

The data presented in this chapter is organized according to the two research questions. Figure 4.2 illustrates how each theme addresses a research question. The first section presents both the supports and barriers related to interactions between LTELs and their teachers, and then the data regarding other barriers and supports is presented with a strong focus on parents and home issues. The final section presents the data regarding the successes that LTEL students expressed experiencing along with data regarding how teachers supported that success.
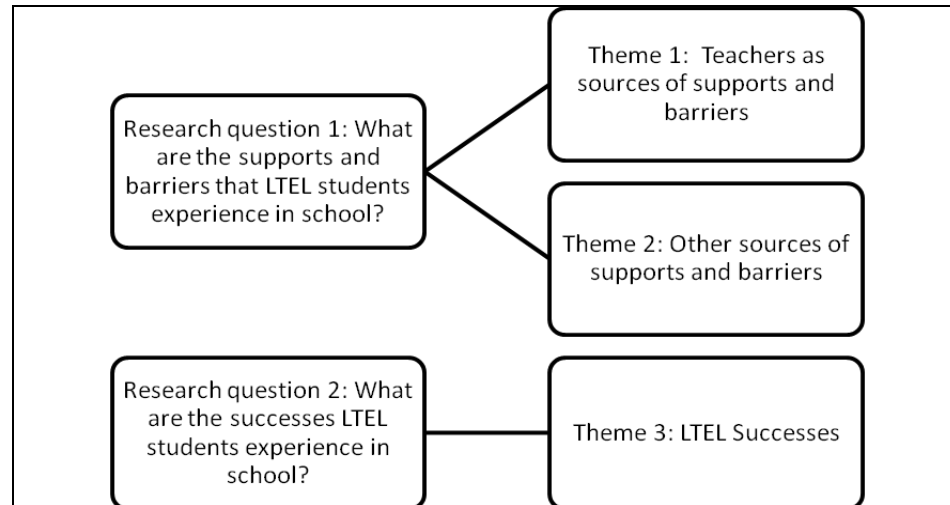
Figure 4.2 Themes Related to the Research Questions

Research Question 1:

What Are the Supports and Barriers LTEL Students Experience?

The participants of this study engaged in very open descriptions of their schooling experiences. The researcher asked many AI-based questions to attain the very best experiences that students could share about their schooling. Although some participants struggled to share a "best moment" or describe the characteristics of the "best teacher for them," most participants did have stories that identified times when they had felt successful and proud as learners and could clearly articulate the qualities of teachers that empowered them to succeed. Participants also shared stories of their struggles as students, mainly in regards to relationships with their teachers. The majority of the students discussed the practices and policies of their teachers that made their success challenging. Participants identified several ways in which teachers were supportive; participants also vividly described

the many barriers placed before them by teachers. The majority of the data related to supports and barriers ties directly to teachers. Additional sources of support or barriers were identified as coming from their internal struggles and strengths, from parents, from their homes, and less often from their peers. Students identified ways in which the school created barriers, but not ways in which the schools provided support.

Theme 1: Teachers as Sources of Support and Barriers for LTEL Students

Themeing of the codes led to identification of three main areas in which students discussed their teachers as either providing support or, inversely, as creating barriers to their learning. Table 4.1 presents these three areas and the number of codes that were aligned with each area.

Table 4.2 Teachers as Sources of Support and Barriers for LTEL Student, All Codes

Identified support or barrier		Number of codes related to this area
Teachers' behaviors towards students	Supportive	77
	Unsupportive	58
Relationships between teachers and students	Positive	60
	Negative	21
Instructional practices		
	Supportive	143
	Unsupportive	30

Table 4.2 shows that the students identified more sources of support than barriers in all three areas: (a) the researcher identified 14% more codes related to supportive behaviors than unsupportive behaviors in the category of teachers' behaviors, (b) the researcher identified 48% more codes related

to positive relationships than negative relationships between teachers and students, and (c) the researcher identified 66% more codes related to supportive instructional practices than unsupportive instructional practices. The researcher found the AI/student voice interview method advantageous in providing students with opportunities to identify this amount of support within their schooling experiences. AI questioning allowed many of the positive perceptions of teachers' behaviors to arise. Students provided many anecdotes representative of positive relationships with their teachers and could articulate the many supportive instructional practices their teachers employ. The student interview methods also allowed the opportunity for the counter narrative to arise. Students shared many of the barriers they encountered. Both the positive and negative stories shared by the students helped address the research question: What are the supports and barriers that LTELs experience in school?

Table 4.2 represents all codes related to each of three main areas in which students discussed their teachers as either providing support or, inversely, as creating barriers to their learning. Not all codes within each area were of equal propinquity to the main issue. As discussed in Chapter 3, part of the process of working with the data would be to consider the "raw" codes and the "closeness" or propinquity of each to the main issue. This was done by giving the codes a magnitude score of one to three, with one being weakly related and three being strongly related. Once magnitudes were applied, the data became condensed and more focused for analysis. Table

4.3 presents the main areas again, but only the magnitude three codes were counted for each.

Table 4.3 Teachers as Sources of Support and Barriers for LTEL Student, Magnitude 3 Codes

Identified support or barrier		Number of "magnitude 3" codes related to this area
Teachers' behaviors toward students	Supportive	67
	Unsupportive	32
Relationships between teachers and students	Positive	49
	Negative	17
Instructional practices		
	Supportive	109
	Unsupportive	13

Codes that had a magnitude of three—the highest magnitude—represented data identified as best addressing the issue as either a source of support or a barrier. Table 4.2 continues to show that the students identified more sources of support than barriers in each of the three areas: (a) the researcher identified 52% more codes related to a supportive behaviors than unsupportive behaviors, (b) the researcher identified 65% more codes related to a positive relationships than negative relationships, and (c) instructional practices revealed the greatest difference between identified supportive and unsupportive practices with 89% of the codes related to supportive practices.

The narrowing of the data served to maintain the most salient codes for each theme and subtheme. Several of the codes were also collapsed as they expressed essentially the same idea. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present the

number of codes within a theme or subtheme, but not the number of references of each code. Quantifying the references of each code is discussed as each theme and subtheme is presented.

Subtheme 1A: Teachers' Behaviors Toward Students

As identified in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, students had both positive and negative perceptions of the attitudes of their teachers toward them and of how their teachers felt about them. Perceived behaviors are important in identifying supports and barriers for LTEL students. The impact these perceptions have on students can serve to either create future positive experiences or be a source of future adverse experiences. Students' perceptions of teachers' behaviors may influence the students' experiences.

The framework illustrated in Figure 3.1, and further described in Chapters 2 and 3, allowed the researcher to focus on student perceptions of their teachers' behaviors through their stories. This study did not directly collect data on teacher behavior; rather, it collected data regarding student perceptions of teacher behavior.

Perceptions of teacher behavior, according to the theoretical framework, can be influenced by ethnic background including home language and years in the United States. These perceptions can affect student outcomes, such as motivation and achievement.

Data set: Supportive teacher behaviors. Students discussed positive feelings and attitudes in four areas: (a) positive teacher actions and

attitudes, (b) teachers that inspire hope, (c) teachers that motivate students, and (d) teachers demonstrating positive attitudes toward English learners. Examples of the codes for each of these subareas are presented and discussed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Data Set Identifying Supportive Teacher Behaviors Toward Students

Supportive teacher behaviors toward students	Codes
Supportive teacher actions and attitudes	don't be mean she doesn't get mad not screaming she would be smiling always happy never in a bad mood she's nice caring teacher takes a joke cheers me up
Teacher inspires hope	really believes in me he's there fighting for us
Teacher motivates students	some teachers motivate you they like push you
Teacher has positive attitude towards ELs	helps me understand

The codes themed together under *supportive teacher behaviors* are overwhelmingly In Vivo codes. Several of these codes represent actions *not* taken by teachers, such as not getting mad, not being in a bad mood, and not screaming. The following quote exemplifies what the students perceived as teachers having supportive behaviors:

> If I could pick the best teacher, the teacher of the year I …
> [would pick my] 6th grade teacher because Mrs. Heart—that's
> her name—she was always there to support me like support,
> help me, and [pause].

She was willing to help, what other things did she do?

When I was giving a speech she was in the back of the classroom and she would be smiling like you know you could do this and like in my mind I know I could really do this because she's like smiling and I'm like yes I could do this and I could talk to her like about anything like problems like or something. That's what makes the teacher like the best teacher of the year.

Have you had some teachers with some of those characteristics in high school, that are very helpful and smiling and are encouraging?

Um, it will be my science teacher, she is helpful and always smiling, she never screams and if she has a problem she'll be talking like in like a serious voice, but not screaming so I think she's like a positive happy person. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant # 1)

Through this quote, Participant #1 demonstrated the emotional impact that the teachers' actions (smiling, not screaming) and attitudes (supportive, positive happy person) had on her. This quote was the response to the interview question "If you could pick the teacher of the year, the best teacher for you, what would that teacher be like?" For this student, as well as several other participants, the act of a teacher smiling was identified as a desired characteristic for "the best teacher for them." Several students discussed the action of screaming as well and, as evidenced in this quote, the absence of screaming is singled out as being an important characteristic.

The codes related to inspiring hope and motivating students comprised over half of the data in the area of *supportive teacher behaviors toward students*. Inspiring hope is one of the key elements identified by Poplin and Weeres (1992) as central to solving the learning gap crisis experienced by

minority students. The theoretical framework discusses these behaviors as an issue of relationships, though the researcher chose not to discuss these issues as components of student/teacher relationships. Issues of relationships were best exemplified by other data sets. When students talked about hope and motivation they did so with gratitude toward the teacher for believing in them and pushing them to do their best even when the student wanted to give up.

> *What would you say are some of the things that let you know that a teacher really cares about you?*
>
> Um, when they like sit next to you or something and go "how's everything" or "what are you doing" or "do you need help", or um, "are you stuck somewhere," or "how can I help you finish your work," or stuff like that. Or they are just like "oh, good job Janet." (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)
>
> They help me do my work they were cheering me up that I could do it. They were saying that I could have a decent life or accomplish something and they were like if I wanted to give up they say not to, this is easy, the simple thing is to do this and like I could do it, every time they told me to not give up.
>
> *If they were not telling you that...*
>
> I would have given up and yeah. (Interview, May 5, 2010, Participant #22)
>
> Right now I have to turn in an essay [and] I told Ms. Jefferson that I would turn it in the next day and she said if I don't she's worried about me passing the class. She's pushing, telling me to do it, to do it. She makes me hope, she gives me like hope to do it. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #20)

Each of the quotes related to hope and motivation demonstrated that without the teacher's motivation and encouragement, the student might have given

up hope to accomplish a task, such as with Participant #22: "I wanted to give up, they say not to" (Interview, May 3, 2010). LTEL students by definition have experienced years of school failure and are prone to giving up by the time they reach high school. For LTEL students, it may very well be that hope is only possible through consistent motivation provided by a trusted teacher.

The final subtopic in the area of *supportive teacher behaviors* directly relates to the language status of the students as identified English learners.

> Like I tell her I don't know this word, and she tells me that its fine and she understands that I'm still learning and getting better at my English.
>
> *Do you have some teachers that don't understand that?*
>
> Well not really, almost all, mostly all my teachers do because I have sheltered classes and most of my teachers do. (Interview, May 3, 2010,Participant #27)

Participant #27 received the help she needed to feel confident as an English learner. Many of the students viewed positive treatment as supportive. In this case, the student made a link between having sheltered classes and her teachers being helpful.

As shown in Table 4.2, 67 codes referenced the supportive behaviors that students perceived about their teachers. These accounts stemmed from responses to a variety of questions, although the majority did result from a response to the question about "the best teacher for me." The follow-up to that question sought the opposite narrative as the researcher asked, "Not

every teacher would be the best teacher for you … what are they doing or not doing that would keep them from being the best teacher for you?" (See Appendix D). This counter-narrative generated the data sets presented in Table 4.5, which have a striking polarity to those in Table 4.4.

Data set: Unsupportive teacher behaviors. The researcher again grouped the codes into two subtopics: (a) negative teacher actions and (b) teacher has a negative impact on student learning. There were half as many negative codes as positive codes (Table 4.5), yet these codes represent the strong negative impact that teachers can have on the schooling experiences of LTEL students.

Table 4.5 Data Set Identifying Unsupportive Teacher Behaviors Toward Students

Unsupportive teacher behaviors toward students	Codes
Negative teacher actions	teacher yells teachers get mad kicked out
Teacher has a negative impact on student learning	don't care about you passing hopes fall down can't get the flow then you're stuck students stress out not comfortable it's not about me it's about work work not done if don't like teacher

Codes under the theme of *unsupportive teacher behaviors* were descriptions of explicit acts that occurred and left a lasting impression on the students. There were a total of 58 codes that fell into this data set, of which

55% were determined to have a high magnitude. Teachers yelling, getting mad, and removing students from class were very strong explicit acts that had a negative impact on the participants' schooling experience. A few of the students shared these occurrences as being recent and recurring. Although students from the continuation high school expressed these experiences, it was in regards to teachers from their previous schools.

Teachers yelling was mentioned by a third of the participants. Each instance described by the students took place in a classroom setting. For each student, the yelling had an impact on the relationship with the teacher. Some students described yelling in general where others described specifically being yelled at by a teacher. "He always talks about the bad kids in the class. *Give me an example.* The kids always talk back to him and he'll just scream across the room" (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #11). Participant #11 provided a more general situation of yelling, and in this case, the teacher's yelling is in response to other students' behavior. The yelling across the room as described affected Participant #11 although he was not the target of the negative action.

What leads you and a teacher to not get along?

Like them being on my back all the time or like when if I'm talking they don't, like they are only yelling at me telling me to shut up when there are so many people in front of them talking doing the same thing, or being even worse than me and they don't tell them anything but they tell me something. That makes me think like, that they are always on my case, like telling me what to do but they don't tell them what to do, like picking on me more and like I don't like that.

So that doesn't help the relationship with the teacher, if they

single you out like that.

Or if they just start yelling at you for nothing, that too. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)

"What are some things that teachers do that doesn't make things good for you? Cuando me gritan, (when they yell at me) oh, I just hate that so much" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #7). Participants #211 and #7 each expressed how much they disliked being yelled at by the teacher and thus considered the yelling unnecessary. Participant #7 shared this in Spanish; during the interview she would use Spanish to describe strong emotions as she did in the above quote.

More than a third of the participants shared that at some point they had been kicked out of class. This is perhaps the most extreme measure a teacher can take toward a student.

She stopped me before I even got in the class and told me to go back to the office and, [I said] what the fuck did I do? She told me I was doing this and that and [I said] I wasn't even here that day. She said do you got proof, and [I said] no, [she said] so go back to the office. She dropped me from the class, I got dropped from all the classes. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #213)

This student was expelled from his school and shared that he had not received any advance notice or counseling. As stated in his quote, he found out upon attempting to go to one of his classes that he was being removed not only from the class but also from all his classes. He was then sent to the continuation high school.

Codes regarding teachers having a negative impact on student

learning were distinct from those related to direct actions in that these had an outcome directly related to learning. Thirty codes fell into this subtheme. Highly descriptive In Vivo codes provide the essence of this subtheme: "teachers don't care about you passing" and "hopes fall down" are words of despair. Yet other codes identified a more specific impact: "can't get the flow," "then you're stuck," "students stress out," and "not comfortable" were used to identify these situations. Lastly, students shared how they related work to their relationship with their teacher: "it's not about me it's about work" and "work not done if don't like teacher."

> *How does that affect your learning, when you don't have a relationship with your teacher?*
>
> If you don't feel comfortable in the class, you feel like, I shouldn't be doing this or like she's not like this, it's the kind of thing that in a strict class if you don't feel comfortable you don't feel like learning 'cause like, teachers don't make you feel comfortable, like they are probably nice, but teenagers these days they like to have fun and sometimes if you are stuck in a class then you can't do anything.
>
> *So you feel kind of like you can't be yourself?*
>
> Yeah. 'Cause if she is not teaching right, or she is, but we are not getting the flow of it, the teacher, yeah. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10)

Here, the need to feel comfortable is clearly linked to a desire to learn, and the lack of comfort leads this student to feel less inclined to want to engage in learning. The student expresses a desire to have fun, which is a key component in the framework developed by Poplin and Weeres (1992) as a part of teaching and learning.

When describing and discussing relationships, the students had a very specific set of criteria that they found would lead to a positive relationship. Part of the impact of a less than favorable relationship is a lack of desire on the part of the student to learn and/or do work in a class.

> *So, that doesn't sound like a good relationship, does that affect your learning, when you don't have a good relationship with a teacher?*
>
> Yeah, 'cause then you don't want to do anything, you are like "I don't want to do your work," so you don't do it, so they don't pass you and then you fail, or you wouldn't get your credits then that goes to something else. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)
>
> I don't like her [the teacher], I don't like going to that class, I just ditch sometimes.
>
> *So if the class is like that, you might ditch?*
>
> Everybody does that, if you don't like it, you just go somewhere else you go to PE or whatever class.
>
> *What ends up happening?*
>
> Nothing, you just ditch the class and that's it, you just don't go to the class. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #26)

As illustrated by the quotes from both Participants #211 and #26, some students shared that they stopped attending a class where they felt they did not have a relationship with the teacher.

> They really don't care if you are failing a class, they don't tell you "oh you're missing some work here's a little bit of extra credit," like those teachers don't really care, if you don't pass they just see you next year. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #22)

"And when a teacher is not really helpful, what does that look like? Just

giving you an assignment and just saying 'do it,' and then that's it, you're just there stuck" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211). Several students felt that their teachers did not care about their learning nor did the teachers offer extra help or support.

Summary of teacher behaviors. Teachers' behaviors toward students were described in many references as both supportive and very unsupportive. There were twice as many codes and instances of students sharing positive perceptions about their teachers' behaviors toward them. The instances shared about unsupportive teacher behaviors were fewer yet had dire consequences for students' attendance, work, and learning.

Subtheme 1 B: Relationships Between Teachers and Students

Students see themselves in school as more than just being there for an education. They come desiring connections with their peers and with their teachers. These relationships can be highly supportive and beneficial to students and, conversely, the lack of a positive relationship between a student and a teacher can have an adverse impact on the schooling experience of LTEL students. As with the previous subtopic of *feelings and actions*, the researcher saw polarity in the data and will present first the positive aspect of the relationships and then the negative.

Data set: Positive relationships between teachers and students. Some students expressed a desire and a need for teachers to get to know them better. It was important that teachers listen to them, and for a few of the

students the actual physical act of a teacher sitting next to them mattered tremendously. Table 4.6 summarizes the key codes in this subtopic.

Table 4.6 Data Set Identifying Positive Relationships Between Teachers and Students

Positive relationships between teachers and students	Codes
Teacher demonstrates being understanding	teacher gets to know students, teacher listens to students they are like right there next to you

Students expressed that teachers demonstrated understanding by getting to know students. Although only three students mentioned an explicit need for teachers to get to know them better, it became evident that when teachers did know their students they were in a better position to help with learning.

> Talking to students more, getting to know their other side, not just the student but the way they live and stuff, nothing too far you know, just to get to know the person I think helps. Teachers knowing "oh this is the student I am going to be teaching," I think it needs to go farther than that, to be a friend it helps. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #210)

> Because some kids like, at home, their parents just don't care about anything they do so maybe when they come to school, the teacher just like being their friend, like that helps them a lot because teachers are always older and they know more than you. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)

Participants #210 and #211 were among the few students to use the word "friend"; both participants were from the continuation high school and older than many of the other participants. The question of the academic implications of friendship between students and teachers was not explored

further.

More than half of the participants described the importance of teachers listening to students. This finding is in keeping with the research on which this study is framed. Poplin and Weeres (1992) highlight the significance of listening in describing the features of effective student-teacher relationships. The students in this study connected "listening" to "being understood." The data presented 24 references by LTEL students regarding the importance of being understood: "She like understands where we are coming from, like the students, she understands the obstacles that we go through and she understands what we wanna say and feel" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212). Listening contributed to a stronger connection to the learning environment, although often this was an isolated experience:

> She cares about me I know she does. She's asking me, she is always asking me like how I'm doing, she's the only one that does that. Mrs. Tanner, I really like her, she's like one of the best teacher's I ever had. She's super, she is (Interview, April 3, 2010, Participant #26).

Being listened to also contributed to improved learning opportunities for students:

> I would describe her as a great teacher, she listens and teaches very well, and gets to know you, she is a person that would get, that knows how to talk to you about stuff, knows how to talk to you so you get it. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #5)

> You get a little bit more comfortable and to know them you can talk to them.

> *So how would you say that helps you learn better, when they take the time to do those things?*

'Cause you know if they could help you, if you are like a shy person and you don't want sometimes to raise your hand they probably would know and they would help you and just like talk to you closer or just they would try when something is wrong. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #9)

Students discussed a third dynamic in describing positive relationships with teachers, the significance of physical proximity. A few students expressed the importance of teachers sitting directly next to the students. "He's cool, he is, he'll be like right here [points to the area next to him on the bench], he'll be like a teacher right here … he understands" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #213). One student saw physical proximity as evidence that the teacher cared "'Cause they are like right there, they could be somewhere else, but they are like right there next to you, talking" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211).

Students shared several additional dynamics regarding the impact of supportive relationships; these are presented and discussed in Theme 3 as a contributor to success.

Data set: Negative relationships between teachers and students. In describing the negative aspects of teacher/student relationships, the students were in disbelief that teachers could engage them with such negative attitudes and behaviors.

Table 4.7 Data Set Identifying Negative Relationships Between Teachers and

Students

Negative relationships between teachers and students	Codes
Negative teacher attitudes	what type of teacher are you being mean can't take a joke
Teacher is not respectful	teachers puts you down, judged by my looks, look at us as lazy
Teacher is not understanding	uncaring teacher doesn't pay attention to students teacher talks but doesn't listen

Negative teacher attitudes included ignoring students, denying access

to restroom facilities, overloading work, and expressing anger:

> He's not those type of teachers that you know, that listen to the
> students, [he] pays attention just to people who do as he says
> and leave him alone. You know, I'm like, what type of teacher
> are you? (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #12)

When students encounter teachers that only pay attention to certain

students, they feel disengaged from the learning process and, when this is

coupled with the teacher behavior of not being available to all students, then

a negative relationship develops.

> They [teachers] don't let you stand up, or not let you go to the
> bathroom. They are just being mean, not letting us do anything,
> like just gives us the work and not explain or not let us work
> with partners, 'cause that helps a lot working with partners. It
> does. I don't like that some teachers are just mean. (Interview,
> May 3, 2010, Participant #26)

Access to explanations or peer support were often mentioned as positive

attributes and teaching practices, yet in this instance a student encountered

a lack of access to explanations or the opportunity to work with a peer. Teachers that "just give work" were mentioned in seven references. "Well sometimes it's like their attitude. They can't control their anger or pressure, sometimes teachers just send you to the office, like can't you take a little joke for once" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #2). As evidenced in this quote, anger can also affect the student-teacher relationship. This student perceived that the teacher is under uncontrollable pressure; the student tries to diffuse the pressure with humor and is then punished. Nine students mentioned teachers' sense of humor as an important trait.

Respect can help form positive relationships; therefore, disrespectful behavior can hinder a positive relationship from forming. Instances of disrespect mentioned by the students included humiliation:

> And she got mad and there's a part in the back of the school that nobody sees and she told us get a chair and go over there, everybody, and we were in the middle of the sun for a while. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #213)

Stereotyping and judging based on looks:

> 'Cause I'm nice, I try to be good with the teachers, but some teachers they don't understand that 'cause I look mean, some teachers don't understand.
>
> *So you think some teachers look at you and think certain things about you?*
>
> Yeah, 'cause if you see someone dressed like a gang then he's bad, I have a friend and he dresses like he's bad but he's actually smart and some teachers don't think that way they just think he's a trouble maker. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10)

And deficit views when requesting assistance:

> I think some teachers could be more like actually improve, like actually listen to the students, not look at them as lazy 'cause they want to know like more details and be specifically on what they are studying and what it is. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #2)

Humiliation, stereotyping, and deficit views affect student-teacher relationships and are indicators of disrespect that impact the learning environment because it creates a barrier and impedes access for support.

The third set of codes that identified negative relationships between teachers and students is teachers not understanding of students. Students desired teachers that would understand them and the LTEL learning environment, which would be more favorable for the LTEL student. Negative teacher attitudes, such as yelling and judging, can serve as examples of teachers inaccessible to building positive relationships, as well as acting mean and eliciting negative feelings in students "There are some teachers that are really mean, they're just like, treat students with *mala cara todo el tiempo* (a mean face all the time). And you can't be nice to them because they are just really mean" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #6). Building trust and mutual understanding is crippled by the perception that the teacher is mean and uncaring since students are less likely to approach such teachers.

While some teachers do talk to their students at a personal level, they sometimes use their position in the classroom to share about their personal lives without allowing for reciprocity in the personal exchanges. "In my

experience, I have teachers that are, just like tell us things about their family, we care but then they don't hear us so like when we have a problem they don't listen" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10).

Summary of relationships between teachers and students. Participants were able to clearly articulate the characteristics that facilitated positive relationships between teachers and students, teachers that got to know them better, listened to them and engaged in physical proximity had set the stage for a caring learning environment. The positive narratives presented were then followed by the descriptors of negative relationships and the contributing factors. Students who encountered mean, impatient, judgmental, and uncaring teachers indicated that these characteristics were hurtful and impeded learning. Far more descriptive and layered language is present when discussing the negative relationship factors versus the positive relationship factor*s.*

Feelings, actions, and relationships all contribute either as a support or as a barrier to learning. The following data will present the discussion of the actual instructional practices that either support or serve as a barrier to learning. Although the data is presented in sections, the reality is that all these factors are at play in varying degrees and often all occur in the same context. The multiple coding of the data sets resulted in several utterances, sentences, and paragraphs being coded under multiple themes.

Subtheme 1C: Instructional Practices

The third and final data set under the theme of supports and barriers that teachers create describes the instructional practices that teachers engage in as described by the LTEL students. This subtheme consisted of more apriori codes derived from the framework than the other two subthemes presented. Although the researcher did utilize in vivo codes to analyze this subtheme, many of the labels came from the researcher's educator language and less from the language used by the participants. This resulted primarily because many high school students interviewed lacked the insight to identify and label instructional practices; however, they did provide detailed descriptions of the practices they had observed and lived. The polarity in the data is again present here; some practices were supportive while other practices were barriers to learning and success.

Data set: Supportive instructional practices. Students described the many ways in which teachers used effective strategies, scaffolded instruction, and differentiated instruction. These practices fell into three general categories: supportive teaching practice, teachers being helpful, and teachers providing extra help. Table 4.8 lists the variety of codes that comprised each category.

Table 4.8 Data Set Identifying Supportive Instructional Practices

Supportive instructional practices	Codes
Supportive teaching practices	do more like hands on doing projects in class relevance rigor takes the time to explain it to you teach it more than one way step-by-step help
Teachers being helpful	she will help you helped me get organized he helps us a lot she comes to me and helps me asking for help and getting it
Extra help	after school support

Supportive teaching practices included a variety of strategies, such as making project-based learning a part of the curriculum and engaging students in lessons that were relevant to their background and age:

> Over there where I was going to she was always like all work, like in the book like all work, work, that was it, but here she has you like do more like hands on, she has animals all over and when we're talking about certain animals she'll have it, she'll talk about it like right there at labs she actually lets you use like everything. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)

Participant #211 provides a comparison between two learning environments in science, one where she was assigned work and a very different instance at the continuation high school where the learning was more didactic and relevant.

Students also shared that teachers delivered lessons that ensured exposure and mastery of grade-appropriate state standards through rigorous and relevant coursework:

Well in Mr. Mark's class right now, I was like, he teaches something new and I'm always excited like we are going to learn this on Thursday or on Friday, like that. I just, I'm excited.

What did your teacher that made that experience special for you?

Well, he speaks with emotion; he makes you feel like it feel that you are actually in there. He tells you, like he tells you in our words right now, not the word like other people, he makes it exciting to learn about it.

So you said he puts things in your own words.

Yeah, we are young so he tells it that way. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10)

Rigor was expressed in both the classroom context and as part of teachers' high expectations of students by giving them challenging assignments and requiring hard work:

The teachers is pushing me and always there you know checking up on me if I need help, because there are sometimes that I do and I get shy to ask him a question and I'll be like how can you not know this, but I thank Mr. Swan for that 'cause he's been trying everything to help us out especially I see that help on me, he's there fighting for us … he's the one that has been pushing me a lot. (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #12)

Students complain a lot about her class, they'll be like "she's so hard I'm not gonna pass, she gives so much homework, so much work, how is this gonna help us out?" well it helped me out and it helped some of my classmates too, I mean we did good on the CST's. I mean, I improved. (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #12)

In addition to proving meaningful, rigorous, and relevant lessons, students expressed that a teacher who takes the time to explain concepts and assignments proves a very helpful practice: "She always explain things

like really careful and has patience for students" (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #13). This ensures that every student can be successful: "When we don't know, he actually explains, he sits down and he explains everything to you more easier like part by part by part and I understand" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #2).

For some students this practice was very helpful in learning vocabulary and key terms: "When we are reading and we don't understand the words she takes the time and describes the word, what it is, what it means um she also, she helps us a lot, single person and the group" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #20). Explaining the vocabulary for an assessment helped students feel supported and allowed for success:

> Some of the questions were like confusing, with long words that I never saw in my life and like, what does what is this question asking.
>
> *How did you figure that out?*
>
> I asked my teacher, could you like um, could you tell me what this question is asking in different words and she did and I got the question right, so I was proud of that. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #1)

Some teachers do this by building background and providing support throughout the lesson:

> Helpful teachers explain it before they give it you and go over it with everybody so everybody understands it and then like help you learn. If you have a question about something like, they know how to help you, they know. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)

Taking the time to explain can have a very positive effect on learning, "I understand a lot, more than [with] the other teachers 'cause he takes the time to explain it to you" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #27).

Teaching concepts in more than one way and giving step-by-step instructions were the final two supportive teaching practices from the data. LTEL students expressed the need to have concepts presented in a variety of ways:

> Some teachers don't know, they'll teach it one way and that's it, that's the only way they know how to teach it, and what if you don't get it that way, then you don't learn anything, 'cause they don't know any other way how to teach it. Most teachers that I have had, they are like, they teach you one way, the way that they know or whatever, but if you don't get it, they will explain it another way. But some of them only know one way and then you're stuck. They will try and explain it to you but you can't understand. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)

Not only is presenting a variety of ways to attain mastery of concepts essential for learning, it can also help students stay motivated and prevent boredom:

> He explains to you the things and then if you don't get it he'll go over it one more time till you get it. And he won't say it the same way, he'll say it different ways so you don't get bored. He'll try to change the ways. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #213)

Receiving step-by-step help was mentioned by nine of the participants when describing the things that teachers do to help them with learning. "That

helped me a lot because it told me the steps so I could do it perfectly and not mess up" (Participant #14).

> The way she explains to me, 'cause other teachers just go through it really fast, tell you what to do and that's all. They give you the paper and that's all. Mrs. Taylor knows, she helps you, she tells you step by step. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #26)

The second supportive instructional practice mentioned was "teachers being helpful." Students described the way teachers assisted them with organization:

> Well, when Mrs. Blanca started helping me out, getting all my stuff together, getting organized and everything, I felt more confident in doing more. Like I felt more responsible as a student.
>
> *Had anyone else ever taken the time to do Mrs. Blanca did?*
>
> Not really, no, just her.
>
> *And that made a big difference?*
>
> Yeah it made a big difference, it helped. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #210)
>
> Proximity was again mentioned, this time in the context of receiving

help: "When he comes to me and helps me" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #26). Teachers circulating to provide help involved proximity: "Sometimes she goes around and she says 'need help' and you say yeah and she'll help you, she'll stay with you" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #26) Proximity was also mentioned for personal assistance: "We can go ask her or if we have a problem we can tell her and she will help you out"

(Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #27).

Students mentioned the work they are assigned and certain grading practices as a form of help. Grading practices were mentioned in relation to helpful practices by assigning a high point value to quizzes, typically, quizzes occur more often and the tested material is that which was recently taught:

> He helps us a lot, he uses a lot of homework but it's really helpful 'cause that class is really hard, like the big test don't count the little ones do count, he lets us study like every day he gives us packets and projects. We do all this stuff, he's really chill with us. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #3)

Helpful teachers assisted their students with organizing their work, provided help to students when they needed it, had physical proximity to the students who needed assistance, and designed grading practices aligned to ensuring success. Not all of the supportive instructional practices occurred during the school day; as seen in the following section, after-school support was one of the most important instructional practices mentioned by LTEL students.

Extra help provided after school was mentioned 20 times by 11 participants as a highly supportive practice. This code appears far more than any other code in the study. Students mentioned after-school support provided by their classroom teacher, or in a homework club setting and for credit recovery. The following participant explained that she had failed algebra in the previous school year and she wanted to move on to geometry

to stay on track to complete the required courses for college eligibility. Her teacher encouraged her to take an after-school credit recovery course in algebra while supporting her in geometry.

> It was actually in algebra and I was never any good at it and I was failing it with F's and what helped was I had geometry and I've been passing them with B's and C's and well you know, I still stay after school to do my Algebra. (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #12)

LTEL students use the after-school support to catch up on work they were unable to complete in class.

> Like my teacher she would tell me to come after school 'cause I would be doing poorly in that class and she would tell me to come in after school and I would get my work done the ones I didn't get done and it would help me lift up my grade and she would tell me that I would be doing better now and when I have like work that I haven't finished I would come after school and she would help me with it and I would get it done and then the next day I will have to turn it in and it would be complete. (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #14)

For the following participant, the after-school support was a better alternative than going home early.

> I usually don't stay, but when I do stay I catch up on my work that I'll be missing, when I went home early but I thinks that's it. Students probably don't want to get home early so they just stay and go with their friends and I think they should come to school for a little bit and catch up on their stuff that they are missing. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #20)

Several students mentioned having one teacher that was their primary after-school support for all courses.

I believe it was my social studies teacher and um she would like help me a lot and then I was staying after school and just do all my homework for all my classes in her class, like I wouldn't go to my other teachers, I would just go to Mrs. Young.

She helped you with all your classes.

Yeah, if I needed help with them, yeah. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)

A few students linked after-school support to graduation.

It's helpful if they have tutorial after school and teachers help you even if they are not in that class, they still help you. They help you do your work, sometimes if you need help they help you. They have a lot of things that help you get your grades up so you can graduate. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #9)

Who helped you accomplish that moment of graduating from Middle School?

My teacher Mrs. Rose, my English teacher.

What did she do?

I was failing her class and she gave me some packets to raise my grade, she helped me, she made me stay after school she also helped me in math and in social studies and all other subjects. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #22)

This support was also linked to assisting in making progress with English.

She would tell us OK, or meet us after school and would explain to us and stuff and mostly because I'm still learning my English, I am an ELD student so like I'm like Spanish speaking more and more, and she helped me a lot and I learned a lot. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #27)

Of all the stories that students shared regarding the significance of after-school support, the following one was very moving. In the instance described below, the teacher was fully aware of the cultural implications of living on

both sides of the border and extended this understanding to assist a student who otherwise would have experienced isolation and failure.

> I left for Mexico for a month, or three weeks and then I lost my homework and when I came from my vacation I lost it and the teacher, she's like, I told her what was my problem and she said "well if you want to you can come right after school and I can give you the homework" that's all, *me dio la tarea para que yo la hiciera* (she gave me the work so that I would do it) and then she helped me to do my homework. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #7)

Students mentioned three forms of supportive instructional practices. The first one described in this section was in regards to supportive teaching practices such as projects, relevance, and presenting material in a variety of ways. The second supportive practice was helpful teachers; students found it very helpful when teachers assisted with organizational skill building and provided assistance in class by approaching students who needed additional help. The last and most mentioned of the three supportive practices was teachers providing after-school support.

Data set: Unsupportive instructional practices. Students also shared the practices that were unsupportive and how these unsupportive practices often resulted in barriers to their learning. Quantitatively, there were fewer shared instances of unsupportive practices than supportive ones. This is partially due to the appreciative inquiry approach that guided the interview process. Of the 30 unsupportive practices identified, 13 were coded as most representative of this subtheme. The codes under this subtheme are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Data Set Identifying Unsupportive Instructional Practices

Unsupportive instructional practices	Codes
	ignore the slower students not getting help when needed teacher unaware that kids are stuck they keep going relying on classmates

Some of the unsupportive practices were acts of neglect such as ignoring students:

> Well sometimes the students learn at a faster rate than others and sometimes like, it's like some teachers ignore the other students. That's what I think. Well sometimes like I ask questions and it would be like they ignored me so I felt like they helped the ones that learn faster than the other ones. (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participants #21)

Another set of unsupportive practices had to do with students not getting help when they needed it, even when they asked for help. "I asked them [for help]. They [teachers] like barely talk, and I say you didn't want to help me. *And what do they say?* Nothing. They quiet" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #8). Some teachers are completely unaware that students are struggling in class with concepts and/or assignments:

> *So you had a lot of words that you didn't know?*
>
> Yeah.
>
> *So did the teacher realize?*
>
> No, 'cause I really didn't tell her to help me about it.
>
> *Do you think some of these teachers, when that happens do they realize that kids have gotten stuck?*
>
> No, 'cause the kids usually don't open, like tell them about it so they just move on. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #5)

There are negative consequences to student learning when teachers move on with new content while some students are still struggling with the material already covered: "Yeah like [the teacher] just keeps going on and on and I'm lost. That's the main thing, [teachers] not stopping and just keep going" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212). Not only do students feel "lost," they also are keenly aware that they are not learning: "They [teachers] just pass through the subject if you don't understand, if you don't talk to them about it, they just move on and you just not learn a lot" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #5). When students could not count on their teachers to assist them with clarification of a task or concept, they turned to their peers, and this could lead to being disciplined for talking in class.

> *So what do you do when you're not getting your questions answered and you feel that only the faster learning kids are getting help from the teachers, what do you do as a student when that happens?*
>
> Ask the people around me.
>
> *So you rely on your classmates?*
>
> Yeah.
>
> *And does that ever cause problems?*
>
> Yes sometimes they think we are talking about something else and like last time I got a referral 'cause they thought I was talking about something else.
>
> *But you were talking about getting help?*
>
> Yeah. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #21)
>
> *Summary of instructional practices.* Overwhelmingly the findings in

this area were most strongly related to the supportive instructional practices. LTEL students felt mostly supported in classes that had projects, had relevant curriculum, and presented material in a variety of ways. They struggled when teachers ignored them and failed to recognize that they were stuck. Teachers who were helpful with organizational skill building and assistance in class were countered by stories of teachers that just continue teaching regardless of whether students were learning. Teachers who offered after-school support provided the most mentioned supportive practice.

Summary of Theme 1: Teachers as Sources of Support and Barriers for LTEL Students

The findings of this study revealed both the ways in which teachers of LTEL students provided support and created barriers. The findings were all drawn from data gathered through student voice interviews. Students described the many impacts of teachers' supportive behaviors. Teachers inspired hope, increased motivation, provided a welcoming environment by smiling, and demonstrated an understanding of the LTEL students. When describing the contributors to good relationships with teachers, students shared times their teachers listened, sat next to them, and strived to get to knew their students.

The most prominent positive support present in the data was in the context of instructional practices, which are the strategies and skills that

teachers employ during teaching and to support learning. Strategies mentioned included providing hands-on experiences, taking the time to explain and reteach concepts in a variety of ways, providing rigor and relevance during instruction, and helping students in a variety of settings and ways. Students discussed how very important these positive behaviors, relationships, and instructional practices were for them in improving their schooling experiences.

A parallel yet converse theme that arose from the data set, the barriers teachers create for LTEL students. As presented in Table 4.10, each subtheme had data that contained evidence of support as well as barriers.

Table 4.10 Teachers as Sources of Support and Barriers for LTEL Students, With Data Sets

Subthemes	Supports teachers provide LTEL students	Barriers teachers create for LTEL students
Teachers behaviors toward students	a) Supportive teacher actions and attitudes b) Teacher inspires hope c) Teacher motivates students d) Teacher has a positive attitude toward ELs	a) Negative teacher actions b) Teacher has a negative impact on student learning
Relationships between teachers and students	a) Teacher demonstrates being understanding	a) Negative teacher attitudes b) Teacher is not respectful c) Teacher is not understanding
Instructional practices	a) Supportive teaching practices b) Teachers being helpful c) Extra help	a) Unsupportive instructional practices

Students described the many adverse impacts of teachers'

unsupportive behaviors. Teachers yelled, got mad, and kicked students out of class. Student learning was impacted by these behaviors and students felt that teachers didn't care about their learning; they identified times they felt stuck, uncomfortable, and stressed out. When describing the contributors to negative relationships with teachers, students shared times their teachers were mean, lacked a sense of humor, put them down, judged them, were uncaring, and simply did not listen to their needs.

Considerable barriers present in the data were in the context of poor instructional practices; these are the negative strategies and skills that teachers employ during teaching. Practices mentioned included ignoring students, failing to taking the time to explain and reteach concepts in a variety of ways, denying assistance when it was requested, and reprimanding students who resorted to relying on classmates for support. Students discussed how very harmful and painful these negative behaviors, poor relationships, and disparaging instructional practices were for them; these barriers clearly were factors that had an adverse impact on their schooling experiences.

Theme 2: Other Sources of Support and Barriers for LTEL Students

The findings presented in Theme 1 address how teachers are sources of supports and barriers, thus addressing part of Research Question 1: What are the supports and barriers that LTELs experience in school? Students identified the following additional sources of supports and causes of barriers

in their schooling experiences: student self-efficacy, school, parents and home, and their peers. Theme 2 describes and labels the findings from these additional sources of support and barriers. Table 4.11 presents these areas and the number of codes that were aligned to each area.

Table 4.11 Other Supports and Barriers LTEL Students Experience

Identified support or barrier	Number of codes related to this area
Student self-efficacy	
Positive	37
Negative	30
School policies	
Support	11
Barrier	35
Parents and home	
Support	24
Barrier	11
Peers	
Support	3
Barrier	11

As seen in Theme 1 (see Table 4.2), some of the subthemes in Theme 2 hold a greater number of positive/support codes than negative/barrier codes. In discussing self-efficacy, 55% of the codes were positive references and 45% of the codes were negative references. In the areas and parent/home support, 69% of the codes were positive references and 31% of the codes were negative references. However, there are more barriers than supports mentioned regarding school policies—24% of the codes were positive references and 76% of the codes were negative references. Likewise, there are more barriers than supports mentioned regarding their peers—21% of the codes were positive references and 79% were negative references.

The researcher applied a magnitude scale to the codes, as not all codes within each area were of equal propinquity to the main issue. Once magnitudes were applied, the data became condensed and more focused for analysis. Table 4.12 presents the main areas again, but only the magnitude three codes were counted for each.

Table 4.12 Other Supports and Barriers LTEL Students Experience, Magnitude 3 Codes

Identified support or barrier		Magnitude 3 codes
Student self-efficacy	Positive	31
	Negative	13
School policies	Support	0
	Barrier	22
Parents and home	Support	24
	Barrier	11
Peers	Support	0
	Barrier	11

Within this theme some subthemes remained unchanged once the magnitude scale was applied, such as with "parents and home." In other subthemes there were implications with the application of the magnitude scale; in fact, once the magnitudes were applied not a single code for school policies support rated a 3. Likewise, not a single code was rated a 3 in the area of peer support.

Subtheme 2A: Student Self-Efficacy

As identified in Tables 4.11 and 4.12, students revealed how their own self-efficacy served as a support in their schooling and also revealed how

their own low self-esteem affected their schooling and served as a barrier. These findings were unexpected by the researcher. The Poplin and Weeres (1992) framework did not identify these highly personal, internal factors when looking at the key elements impacting minority students. Students took ownership of their own goals and the importance of being self-reliant; they also internalized stress and took personal responsibility for their negative behaviors.

Data set: Positive student self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief a person has in his or her own ability to succeed at a task. Table 4.13 labels the two areas in which students discussed their self-efficacy: (a) resiliency and (b) personal goals. Students spoke of resilience as a survival skill. Despite years of failure, low standardized tests, lack of progress toward mastery of academic English, low GPAs, and insufficient credits, these students spoke of how much they relied on themselves and spoke of their academic goals.

Table 4.13 Data Set Indentifying Positive Student Self-Efficacy

Positive student self-efficacy	Codes
Resiliency	self-reliance
Goals	my goals
	graduate

For some, student self-reliance was important because they had found no other source of support:

Only thing is to hang on 'till graduation, that's it. That's what I'm trying to do right now. I mean, people think that like

counselors help us, but they just talk about it. I prefer to do something about it instead of just talking about it. Like I want to get stuff done and turn it in, like that [snaps fingers]. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #2)

Participant #2 needs to see action associated with assistance and perceives his counselor is not effective in providing the support that he needs. During the interview, he also discussed what self-improvement meant to him:

Well sometimes you get this feeling and you feel good inside when you are able to get something right and for me it's trying to improve everything 'cause when I'm done with this I want to try and improve it like keep on doing it and doing it and trying to improve every single homework or anything and it makes me feel good. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #2)

There were 12 references to self-reliance. Students engaged in self pep talks, "I just try to talk to myself, like 'you can do this don't give up, always put your head up and reaching for your dreams" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #1). They expressed a realization that they needed to grow up, "You have to take responsibility, get more stuff done and I don't know, you start growing up and stuff" (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #13). Some students mentioned the importance of listening to their teachers: "I just need to do good in school and listen to whatever the teacher said, at least try and pull my grades up" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #3). Another example of self-reliance is the importance of taking responsibility for attending class and completing work: "Trying hard, not missing the class, doing my work, homework, everything" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #8). Taking responsibility for their role in learning was coupled by

the significance of having academic goals.

Students described the importance of their roles in setting and reaching their goals, which all centered on graduation. The students at the continuation high school expressed feeling behind and trying to catch up. Several students talked about their goals and plans after graduating from high school. One student talked about the importance of sharing goals with his teachers:

> *Do you think most teachers know what kids' goals are?*
>
> Some of them do because we would do assignments in the classroom and they would tell us "tell me about your goals that you want to achieve and how some things will help you so you can achieve them."
>
> *And the teachers that do that, are they the better ones?*
>
> [student chuckles] Yeah. (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #14)

Participant #14's quote about sharing goals is congruent with the findings in the subtheme of positive relationships. When teachers listen to their students—including listening to their goals, hopes and dreams—then students feel supported. Students as sources of their own support was an unexpected yet important finding. LTEL students by definition have struggled academically and are not on the path to graduation. In fact, only three of the participants had passed the high school exit exam, and very few had the needed credits completed to be on track for graduation. Their resiliency is perhaps their strongest asset.

Data set: Negative student self-efficacy. Often, students discussed taking personal responsibility for struggles with school. School brought about negative feelings for students, feelings of being stressed and being overwhelmed with work. Table 4.14 contains the most salient codes for this data set. Two categories arose: (a) negative feelings and (b) negative behaviors.

Table 4.14 Data Set Identifying Negative Student Self-Efficacy

Negative student self-efficacy	Codes
Negative feelings	I was stressed giving up wanting to drop out it's just too much like work
Negative behaviors	just being lazy my bad attitude

Negative feelings were commonly expressed from the interviewed participants; very few felt completely positive about their schooling experiences. This data set contains negative feelings that were considered internal; instances where students shared their own negative feelings and experiences were a barrier to success in school. "When I don't get it, I just give up. I just give up and just stare off and don't do my work" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #5). Graduation was discussed as well: "My freshman year to sophomore year I was like, I really didn't care about school I could really care less if I graduate or not" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212).

'Cause I haven't passed it yet, so for me it's just like saying if I

get all my credits and I haven't passed my CAHSEE then I don't get my diploma it's like, I've been wanting to like drop out too sometimes. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #211)

Only the 12th-grade students expressed negative feelings regarding the high school exit exam in California (CAHSEE). At the time of the interviews, the 10th-grade students had not received their results. Students first attempt to pass the CAHSEE in 10th grade; they have seven additional opportunities to pass during 11th and 12th grade. In this district, less than 4% of LTEL students pass the CAHSEE on their first attempt. Not all LTEL students pass the test by the eighth and final attempt. Passing the CAHSEE is a graduation requirement.

One participant was unable to describe any positive experiences in school:

What has been the best experience you have had in school as a student?

I don't think I've ever had that, I don't remember ever.

Never?

Nah, I don't remember ever.

Do you think that that's something students should be experiencing?

Yeah, I guess yeah.

But that's not happening for you?

No. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #213)

The inability to describe any positive schooling experience indicates that schooling has been either dull or difficult for this student.

A second set of data revealed some of the negative behaviors that

students disclosed about their actions and attitudes in school. There were nine references in this data set. Four students shared that they just felt lazy about going to school and/or doing schoolwork. "I'll be too lazy to do the work and then I just get bored and just turn around, look at something else, fall asleep, that's all on me" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #213). Students also shared that their negative attitude toward school was a barrier: "Yeah, it was my own attitude I guess yeah, oh my God it was" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212).

Summary of student self-efficacy. Students' internal feelings could serve to be a support in their schooling experience. Their drive and resiliency to reach their goals are highly relevant findings because they demonstrate the level of awareness that students have about their own role in success. Likewise, the negative feelings and unhelpful behaviors also serve as an indicator of the level of self-awareness. These behaviors and feelings could be among the most momentous barriers LTEL students face.

Subtheme 2B: School

School policies and programs were mainly identified as barriers for students. Although there were some initial codes that identified supports (Table 4.11), only codes associated with barriers were of a magnitude 3 (Table 4.12). Only the students from the continuation high school discussed supports provided by the school, and they were in reference to highlighting the marked differences between the continuation high school and the

traditional high schools they had attended. Students indicated that their status as English learners and placement in school programs because of their language status was a barrier. The researcher grouped these comments under "school barriers" as the placement of English learners is based on school policies (although often driven by district placement suggestions). From the students' points of view, these placement decisions were "blamed" on the school. Table 4.15 contains the codes that comprise this data set. The majority of these codes are in vivo codes. The researcher felt in vivo codes were essential because they allow students to label their own experiences as EL students. As this study was unique to a subset of the EL student population, their lived experiences with the LTEL label served as a strong contributor in addressing Research Question 1: What are the supports and barriers that LTELs experience in school? Clearly, their language status serves as a barrier.

Table 4.15 Data Set Identifying Barriers at the School Level

Barriers at the school level	Codes
Negative about being an EL	ELD is a waste of time being low class like I'm dumb Oh my gosh, pain!

The researcher heard this statement from one-fourth of the participants: "ELD is a waste of time." They felt this way for several reasons. ELD repeats information already known or covered in English classes, "A lot of times you learn the stuff you already know, well you do know more but you already know the stuff so basically it's just like having a second English

class" (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #13). ELD takes the place of

taking other classes, "Well, I would rather take other classes, I kinda feel like

it's a waste of time" (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #13). "'Cause I

could be talking other classes instead of this" (Interview, May 21, 2010,

Participant #212). Students have already spent years in ELD,

> But it's like it's been too long, and I was like "oh my God can I
> get out of here?" You know, I just don't like it, especially high
> school it's just like a waste of time, yeah my time! They
> shouldn't have it, it really needs to stop because like I've been
> here in the US for how long and I'm still in those classes, like
> I'm really tired of it. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant
> #212)

Another aspect of LTEL student placement in ELD and sheltered classes is the

impact it has on how students view themselves. There were seven references

to feeling "low class" as a result of language status. "I wish I wasn't [an EL]

so I could be at the level of others. We feel offended in ELD and want to get

another class like everyone regular and then other stuff" (Interview, April 30,

2010, Participant #13). Clearly, students see that placement in ELD and

sheltered courses is not equal to placement in other classes,

> Some students think that they are not as smart as other
> students they probably give failing up or they probably think "oh
> I'm low classes, what's the point of getting good grades I'm not
> as high as other classes, I'm not going to be as good as other
> people so I'm not going to have as good as a job as they are.
> (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #13)

As shared by Participant #13, language status could affect some

students' decision to stay in high school and even influence their view of the

future. Students were aware that rigor was much lower in these classes,

"Well, just it just feels like if I'm not as high of level as other students, when the work is easy and I know it's easy then I can't get out of it I feel like I need to be higher and I shouldn't be here (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #210)." An adverse impact of the feelings associated with ELD and sheltered placement is anger: "It gets me really mad because of that I was really behind, I get in the sheltered classes they are the low classes but I didn't like it" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212). Several students shared that these placement decisions were holding them back.

Two participants articulated that they not only felt ELD placement was a waste of time and denied them access to higher courses, they also felt that they were perceived as dumb,

> I don't know, maybe because it's too slow and it just makes me feel dumb, that's how I feel, if I'm dumb then what's the point in trying. When they think I'm already dumb as it is.
>
> *So this label of being an English Learner has led you to be put in certain classes where you feel …*
>
> Dumb, and I know I'm not, Ok?
>
> *Alright.* (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212)

Participant #212 became very defensive and felt that she had to justify that she was in fact not dumb; for some students this comes after years of knowing their language status. Amazingly, a few LTEL students were unaware of their language status: "*So, you are still considered and EL, but you didn't know that.* No. *What are your first thoughts, now that I have told*

you this? Um, that I'm not intelligent, I don't know, not normal. I feel badly (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #6)." Of course, those that were aware did not see this favorably, "*Did you know you were an EL?* Yeah. *What has that been like for you?* Oh my gosh, pain" (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212).

Several LTEL students felt that ELD and sheltered classes would better serve students new to English,

> I know that there are other people that really need it instead of me and they don't put them in there, you know? I just think like, maybe I could be wrong but like, that the people that just came from Mexico they really need it instead of me, but I could be wrong. I don't need that class but I can't really say anything about it. (Interview, May 21, 2010, Participant #212)

The absence of identified supports specific to their language status is important; this demonstrates that the intended population does not identify any possible supportive school policies and procedures toward LTELs. When asked, students failed to properly identify why they were still considered EL students after so many years. As Participant #212 mentioned, they did not feel empowered to advocate for themselves and request different placement in their core and English classes.

Subtheme 2C: Parents and Home

Thirty references from 16 participants described the support that parents provided LTEL students. Parents were not mentioned as barriers; the only reference coded as a parent-related barrier was a student sharing that the passing of her father was a huge obstacle for her to overcome as a

freshman in high school. Problems at home surfaced as a data set of barriers.

Table 4.16 contains the collapsed codes for both the supports and barriers

present for students in relation to home life.

Table 4.16 Data Set Identifying Supports and Barriers From Parents and

Home

Parents and Home	Codes
Support	Parents
Barriers	Problems at home

Data set: Parents as a source of support. Most students mentioned

their parents when asked "What or who are the people or things that help

you be better as a student?" Students mentioned the considerable impact

their parents have on their success in school. Students used strong

descriptors of what this support meant to them, "They have my back"

(Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #1). When probed further, this

student revealed the outcome of having open conversations with his parents,

> I think the kids and the parents have to work together as a team and be honest with each other and talk about their problems. That's why I think if you are honest with your parents your parents will have your back, same thing as the parents have to be honest with their kids so they could like work together and talk to each other. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #1)

Participant #20 shared a similar reference to the importance of having open

communication with parents, "Well, when we have a problem we talk to each

other and she [mom] just keeps me on task about being at school, coming to

school every day, and she supports me when she can" (Interview, May 3,

2010, Participant #20).

Students enjoyed coming home and sharing their knowledge with their parents, "I just tell my mom what we learn like she didn't know this happened on this year" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10). Several students mentioned that when they did well at school on a test they would share this with their parents to make them proud, "Back in middle school I used to get a lot of awards, 'cause my parents were very happy with me, so I felt happy too" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #21). Students could recall far back into their elementary school years how important it was to make their parents proud, "I think this was in fourth grade, I got a diploma and my mom was there I and I just felt so proud to make my mom happy" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #26). Many LTEL students have parents that struggled in school, "Every time I feel like giving up she's like always there telling me, 'oh you could do better than this,' and tells me 'I don't want you to be like me, I want you to have things that I didn't'" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #21). Children of immigrants are often told that they came here to have a better life and that having a better life is connected to success in school,

> She's like well "we came here to um, to um, to have like que estes bien en la school [for you to do well in school]so tienes que echarles muchas ganas [you have to apply yourself] cause if you don't we are going to live in Mexico and then you'll have to be working like us", she's like "tienes que agarrar buenos grados, ni no nos vamos a ir [you need to get good grades, or else we are going back]" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #7)

Data set: Problems at home. Although the majority of the students identified having supportive parents, they also described the problems at home that impeded their success. These problems stayed on their minds while they were at school and served as a distraction: "Like you can't concentrate good 'cause you are thinking about your family like things happening in your home or like you just get distracted" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10). Family problems mentioned by LTEL students included siblings with drug problems, family members with problems with the law, worries about parents being deported, and the loss of a parent. Students were impacted greatly by these issues and felt that their teachers were often unaware of their struggles at home, "Some teachers don't understand how us the kids have problems with families and like that, some teachers don't understand that. They think everything is okay but no" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10). Problems at home strongly affected at least seven of the participants.

Summary of parents and home. LTEL students overwhelmingly mentioned the major effect of parental support; they also were riddled with a variety of very devastating home problems. They were able to make connections between school success and making their parents proud, as well as being distracted at school due to home problems.

Subtheme 2D: Peers

Students generally spoke of the negative influence that peers had on their schooling. The only instances in which peers were identified as a

support were where students belonged to a church group or sports team—and in these cases the peers were not necessarily classmates, therefore these codes were not considered part of a data set where peers were a support. Table 4.17 includes the codes that comprise the 23 references to peers serving as a barriers mentioned by LTEL students.

Table 4.17 Data Set Identifying Peers as Barriers

Peers	Codes
Barriers	Peer pressure—negative
	goof balls in class

For some students, the negative impact of peers led to an increase in self reliance, "Mostly I got friends in the class and they distract me but in that class I don't care about no one so I just do my work" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #20). However, for several students their peers served as a distraction from school and peer pressure, which seemed impossible to overcome. They shared instances of this occurring in after-school activities: "Well, my friends 'cause they always call me to go out and just to like be with them and I don't do my homework just because of that, like I go out and I just don't come back like till l late" (Interview, April 29,2010, Participant #3). During school hours the act of ditching class was often a group activity, "Like before I used to ditch with my friends and they used to get in my way a lot, that's why I have bad grades too" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #21). When students were able to resist peer pressure, it was at the expense of friendships,

> When they notice you doing good, and you know they don't do good so they start talking bad to you, or they start saying stuff, they stop talking to you, 'cause you're not doing what they are doing, you just doing well for yourself. (Interview, May 21, 210, Participant #210)

Most students who overcame the peer pressure saw their act of independence as a positive move.

Summary of Theme 2: Other Sources of Support and Barriers for LTEL Students

Supports and barriers experienced by LTEL students extended beyond the classroom setting. Students had both positive and negative internal sources. Self-efficacy clashed with low self-esteem. While students had goals and self-reliance, they also revealed being stressed, and at times wanting to give up and drop out. School placement decisions for LTEL students overwhelmingly served as a barrier. Placement in ELD and sheltered classes led students to feel their time was wasted. These placements led students to deduce that language status was interpreted by their school as an intellectual deficiency. Clearly, there is a relationship between the negative feelings mentioned and the placement issues discussed.

Parents, home life, and peers all form part of the student's sphere of schooling experiences. Fortunately for the LTEL students interviewed, their parents provided them with encouragement and support; unfortunately, they experienced extreme home issues that consumed them even when away from home. Peer pressure was identified as a substantial barrier, and overcoming this peer pressure could be one of the ways in which students

grew into their self-reliance.

Research Question 2: What Are the Successes LTEL Students Experience in

School?

Theme 3: LTEL Successes

Whereas Research Question 1 was highly discussed through Themes 1 and 2, Research Question 2 directly relates to Theme 3 (see Figure 4.2). Research Question 2 inquires about the successes of LTEL students. Students were asked a number of AI-based questions to uncover these stories; the researcher's goal was to elicit the very best moments students could share about their schooling experiences. Students primarily shared moments of success highly driven by their own efforts.

Several students in the pilot study had struggled with the concept of having a story of success; therefore, the researcher asked the students to share their proudest moment as a student. As students shared these moments, the researcher probed for contributors to that moment and the effects of that moment. This led to three distinct sets of codes: proudest moment, contributor to success, and effect of success. Table 4.18 illustrates the number of codes for each subtheme.

Table 4.18 Successes of LTEL Students

Subthemes	Number of codes related to this area
Proudest moment	35
Contributor to success	32
Effect of successful moment	28

It is important to note that the stories students shared were not all from their high school experiences. As seen in table 4.19, 40% of the proudest moments had occurred prior to high school, with half of those occurring in elementary school.

Table 4.19 Grade Level at Time of Proudest Moment

Grade level	Number of codes related to this area
High School	13
Middle school	5
Elementary school	5

The researcher asked students who shared a proud moment prior to high school if they could recall a time in high school when they had felt proud or successful, and only one student could. Close to half of the participants could not recall a time in high school when they had felt proud or successful.

As with the previous themes, the codes were rated according to the propinquity to the subtheme. This process served in the analysis and in the narrowing of the data. This theme is specific to stories of success and, therefore, the polarity of data present in Themes 1 and 2 is absent in this theme. Table 4.18 presents the number of codes that were determined to be the most critical in addressing Research Question 2.

Table 4.20 Successes LTEL Students Experience, Magnitude 3 Codes

Subthemes	Codes	Number of codes related to this area
Proudest moment		
	Awards & recognition	9
	Grades	9
	Performance on a test	6
Contributor to success		
	Applied good study skills	15
	Teacher helped	6
	Motivated by others	5
Effect		
	Positive feeling	11
	Parents were proud	7
	Desire for continued success	3

Subtheme 3A: Proudest Moment

Several participants felt the proudest when they had received an award, been invited to a special meal, or recognized in the school announcements. Awards mentioned included: best student, improvement on a standardized test, attendance, and improvement in grades. Recognitions served as an extrinsic motivator for LTEL students. Participant #20 shared that her proudest moment was receiving an award for improving on the California Standards Test: "The CST test, I really got an award for it, for improving in English and in Math. It is the second award I got in high school, first one was for perfect attendance" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #20).

Grades also were mentioned as a source of pride. For some students it was in increasing their grades overall: "Cause in the last weeks I've been

doing bad and have four F's, I'm just trying to pull them up, I brought two up already and I'm trying to bring up two more" (Interview, April 29,2010, Participant #3). Other students mentioned feeling proud when they were not failing, "When I don't have any F's or nothing" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #8). While others were very proud to have an A or a B for the first time, "In this class I got a B+ and I never got a B, I get like a C- or a C+ … 'cause like I got an A too in this semester" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10). A smaller group of students mentioned feeling proud when they did well on a test, "A test, I got a good grade which I never get a good grade on a math test" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #6). Similar to awards, grades were extrinsic representations of success that were important to the students.

Subtheme 3B: Contributor to Success

Students found that applying good study skills contributed to moments of pride and success. Study habits and skills—such as finishing their work, behaving in class, getting work done, studying, applying what had been taught, and paying attention in class—were all contributors to their attainment of good grades, passing tests, and receiving awards. Students made the decisions to apply these skills and habits. These decisions paid off for them as they led to proud moments.

Teachers served as supports to students in many ways, as presented in Theme 1. In addition to being a source of support, teachers were

determined to be influential in students successes, "And the teacher said if I need help to go to her room and that's what I'm doing, like going to her room whenever I need help. She does help, she helps me out" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #3). In addition to after-school support, students mentioned teachers helping them with organizing their work. Teachers also served in motivating students to reach goals, as mentioned in Theme 1.

Motivation was a contributor to successes. Teachers were not the only sources of motivation; in fact, the main sources of motivation mentioned by students were their parents. For one student, it was important that his parents feel proud of him: "And I would always be the one like getting D's and not that I was jealous, I just wanted to get good grades to show my parents that I could do good in school" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #6). Words of affirmation had a positive impact on students and influenced their ability to have proud and successful moments, "When people tell you it's easy it makes you feel like oh you can do it and you actually did it and you can do more" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #10).

Subtheme 3C: Effect of Success

For each pride-filled moment shared, an effect of that moment was shared as well. Most students described positive feelings such as the experience being "really cool," exciting, and causing the students to feel good, surprised, happy, and proud. For one student in particular, the effect was redefining himself, "I was really excited … it makes me feel proud … Yes, it makes you feel like that's you, that is who you are" (Interview, April 29,

2010, Participant #10). Being recognized in class for a special honor had a very positive and surprising effect as demonstrated by this quote:

> It was really cool 'cause I was in my classroom and then the teacher came and then "oh you're the one student for eating at the pizza party" and I'm like "why?", and he's like "'cause you have changed your grades so you are doing everything great", so I went.
>
> *Did you feel really proud?*
>
> Yeah, 'cause I was like "what?" and yeah, I was really happy. (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #7)

Another student shared being surprised by their success, "When I took it [a test] I got an A on it, that really happened, for once I actually did really well" (Interview, April 29, 2010, Participant #5). Each student that had a positive, successful, proud moment shared it with high enthusiasm. The researcher asked several students if these moments happened often, and most students replied that they did not happen often.

Parents served to motivate students, and making parents proud was a very important effect of their successful moments. Seven students mentioned that they had made their parents proud in these moments, even in the absence of a parent, "I felt really proud, so then my mom she was really impressed, she said she knew that I could do it and I also thank my dad, shall he rest in peace" (Interview, April 30, 2010, Participant #12). Some students needed their parents' approval for their own self-satisfaction, "'Cause my parents were very happy with me, so I felt happy too" (Interview, May 3, 2010, Participant #21). As mentioned in Theme 2, parents

were always described as a source of support and encouragement. When students were able to show their parents that their efforts were paying off, then the effect of the success was extended beyond the student and to the family.

Summary of Theme 3: LTEL Successes

LTEL students were able to describe success moments in school by describing the times when they had felt proud of themselves. For some students, these moments occurred prior to high school. Students were proud when they received a form of recognition, when they received good grades, and when they did well on a test. Several factors contribute to these successful moments. Quantitatively, the strongest finding was that success was a result of application of good study skills and habits. Motivation that led to the successes came from teachers and from parents. Teachers played a role in supporting these moments by offering additional assistance. The effects for students of these moments of pride were positive feelings, making parents proud, and a desire for continued success.

Summary of Data Analysis

The findings of this study address the two research questions it sought to investigate through qualitative methods. Themes 1 and 2 addressed Research Question 1: What are the supports and barriers that LTEL students experience in schools? Theme 1 explored the supports and barriers that teachers create for LTEL students. Theme 2 explored other sources of

supports and barriers for LTEL students. Theme 3 addressed Research Question 2: What are the successes LTEL students experience in school?

The findings from Theme 1 included the supports and barriers that resulted from: (a) teacher behaviors, (b) relationships between teachers and students, and (c) instructional practices. The findings revealed the impact that teachers have on the schooling experiences of LTEL students. Teachers' behaviors can be factors of success for LTEL students when they inspire, motivate, and have a positive attitude toward students. Teachers that display negative behaviors create barriers and can serve to have a negative impact on student learning. The findings regarding the relationships between students and teachers revealed that teachers who had negative attitudes and were disrespectful toward students failed to support LTEL students. Teachers that understood provided LTEL students with a path to success. The majority of data for Theme 1 were in regards to the instructional practices of teachers, and again the findings included both supportive and unsupportive practices.

The findings from Theme 2 included: (a) student self-efficacy, (b) school policies, (c) parents and home, and (d) peers. Students with low self-esteem had self-imposed barriers. Conversely, some students shared how their resiliency was a result of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy presented students with a support toward success. School policies directly related to placement of LTEL students served as a barrier to student learning and had an impact on student self-image. Data regarding parents were overwhelmingly positive; parents served as a substantial source of support, yet issues and problems in

the home were distracters and barriers. The findings revealed that peer pressure was a barrier; students expressed how hard it was to overcome peer pressure and that peers often encouraged negative behavior such as ditching class.

Theme 3 explored the successes experienced by LTEL students. Theme 3 echoes many of the findings from Themes 1 and 2. Students were positively impacted by recognitions and good grades that resulted from application of good study skills and habits, as well as from teacher support and parents.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The final chapter presents a review of the study and the major conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter 4. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the previous chapters, including an overview of the problem, a review of the methodology, and a summary of the major findings. The chapter contains a discussion of the findings, the study's limitations, implications for practice, implications for future research, and concluding remarks. The findings of this study are presented with support from the available research on this topic. Disparities between the literature and the findings are presented as well. Implications for both practice and research are addressed further in this chapter with a focus on leadership and social justice. Finally, this chapter proposes an area of future research of professional development through coaching teachers to address, enact, and reflect on practices that enhance the learning environment of long-term ELs.

Overview of the Problem

As stated in Chapter 1, there is a significant gap in achievement between minority and nonminority students. This study focused on language-minority students known as long-term English learners (LTEL). LTEL students face tough odds to make it through school and obtain a high school diploma; often they drop out and those that persist through high school find that diploma to be the culmination of their academic careers (Fry, 2008; Olsen,

2010; Shettle et al., 2007; Valencia, 2002). As this student population continues to grow, research focused on their learning environments has remained sparse (Callahan, 2005; Menken, 2009).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the learning environments of LTEL students through student voice. The research questions were:

- Research Question 1: What are the supports and barriers that LTEL students experience in schools?

- Research Question 2: What are the successes LTEL students experience in school?

This was a student voice study. The researcher employed interview questions, including appreciative inquiry (AI) techniques with a purposeful sample of participants. The researcher then analyzed participants' narratives guided by two theoretical frameworks presented in Chapters 2 and 3. The first framework is a model proposed by den Brok and Levy (2005). It was modified as illustrated in Figure 3.2 to include the opportunity for successes to be a part of the contributions to student outcomes and also so that successes could be constructed as an outcome of student perceptions of teacher behavior. This framework guided the development of the interview protocol. The impact that perceived teacher behaviors had on LTEL students was evidenced in the findings.

The second guiding framework is an adaptation of the factors

contributing to the achievement gap as proposed by Poplin and Weeres (1992). Figure 5.1 illustrates the adapted framework, which includes aspects specific to the context of this study.

Revised Framework for LTEL Context

Relationships between student and teachers.
- Caring
- Listening
- Understanding
- Respectful
- Hope

Race, culture and class.
- Curriculum
- Racisms
- Monoculture staff
- Learning from other students
- Values
- Different
- Common
- Need for someone to talk to

Teaching and learning
- Bored
- Relevance
- Rigor
- Fun
- Choice
- Own community knowledge

Language
- Being an EL
- Being an LTEL
- Placement
- Primary Language

Support Systems
- Parents
- Teachers
- Others

Barriers
- Problems at home
- Time

Figure 5.1 Revised Framework for LTEL Context

This second framework guided the coding process and the data reduction process. The researcher employed the use of qualitative research software to aid in the storage, coding, and analysis of the data.

Findings Related to the Literature

The findings of this study answered critical aspects of the research questions. This section provides a summary and discussion of the findings for each research question using the themes from the theoretical framework.

Figure 5.1 combines the LTEL context theoretical framework (Figure 3.2), the themes derived from the study (Figure 4.2), and how these address the two research questions of this study. This graphic representation presents the congruency between the framework and the themes as a viable framework in identifying the links between the findings and the literature.
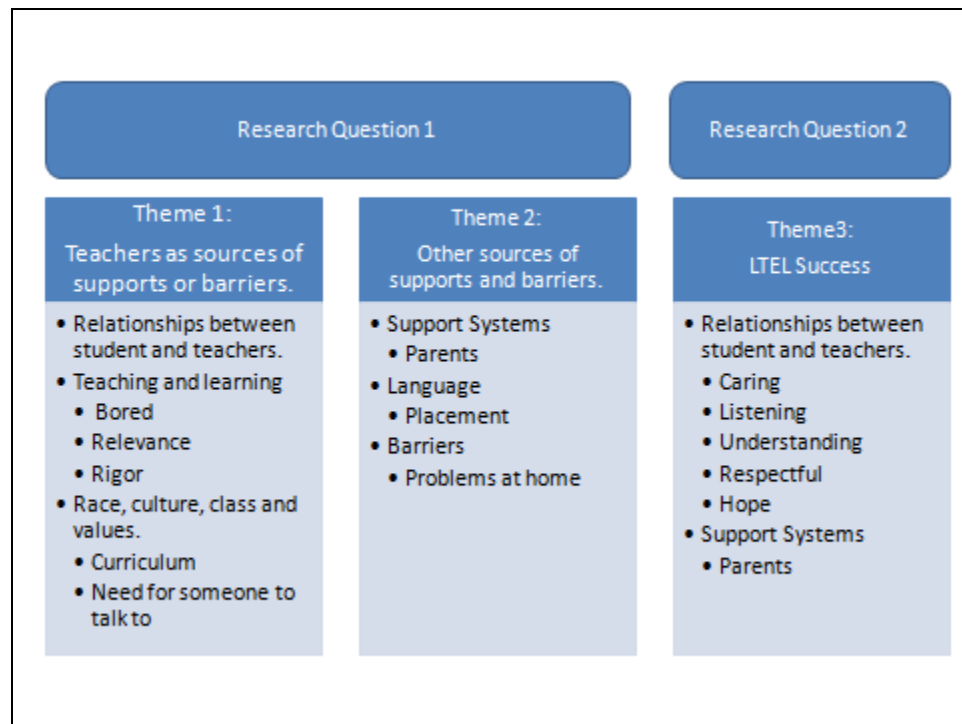
Figure 5.2 Themes and Theory to Address the Research Questions

Supports and Barriers That LTEL Students Experience in Schools

As illustrated in Figure 5.2, the supports and barriers were addressed through two distinct categories, those having to do with teachers and those having to do with other sources of supports and barriers. Relevant literature discussed in Chapter 2 informs the findings from Theme 1, in particular the teacher-related supports and barriers. Findings from Theme 2 were not as

evident in the literature reviewed, although there were findings in the area of placement that had been identified in the relevant literature.

Teachers as Sources of Supports and Barriers

Findings from this study support that teachers can serve either as sources of supports or as sources of barriers for LTEL students. Three distinct subthemes arose from the data: behaviors, relationships, and instructional practices. The study did not directly measure or identify teacher behaviors, but instead revealed students' perceptions of teachers' behaviors. In their framework, den Brok and Levy (2005) propose that perceptions have an impact on student outcomes such as in achievement and motivation. Their framework serves to support the significance of engaging students in research so that students' voices about their perceptions can be unveiled.

Students perceived both supportive and unsupportive behaviors from their teachers. They described the traits of what they would consider the best teacher for them. Some characteristics desired in a teacher included smiling, caring, and joking; these actions and attitudes helped create the supportive learning environments discussed by Rosenbloom and Way (2004) and by Poplin and Weeres (1992). When students experienced these positive actions and behaviors, they expressed the positive impact these had on their learning outcomes. Additionally, they described the significance of having teachers that they knew believed in them, fought for them, motivated, and understood them. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1989) and den Brok and Levy (2005) support that the beliefs teachers hold of students can have a

profound effect on their learning environment. Research overwhelmingly supports that caring teachers who believe in their students and create supportive learning environments contribute to higher student self-efficacy and self-motivation (Bereiter & Scardamalia; den Brok & Levy; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007).

Unsupportive teacher behaviors such as yelling, getting mad and expelling students from class led to students feeling that some teachers make school all about work (impersonal), caused their hopes to fall down, stressed them out, and left them feeling stuck and unable to learn. Students perceived to be low-achieving often receive control-related feedback (Fritzberg, 2001). Research supports that these unsupportive behaviors are more likely to be experienced by minority students with White teachers (den Brok & Levy, 2005; Marx, 2008; Schultz et al., 2008; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). The demographic setting of this study was similar to that of the cited research.

The findings of this study strongly support the vital implications of relationships between LTEL students and their teachers. When relationships between students and teachers were poor, the students ditched class, refused to work, failed classes, and used cuss words to describe their feelings. One of the contributing factors to poor relationships was lack of respect. Students described the way teachers put them down, judged them by their looks, and accused them of laziness. Community knowledge on the part of the teachers is a critical aspect in closing the achievement gap (Haberman & Post, 1998; Poplin & Weeres, 1992). Several of the issues

associated with lack of respect and poor relationships stem from teachers' lack of knowledge of their students' communities.

Students also described many instances in which they had good relationships with teachers. Physical proximity, the act of being near a student while assisting them or conversing with them was an important contributor to a positive relationship. Students were not looking for their teachers to be their friends, but they were looking for their teachers to be friendly. When teachers listened to their students and got to know them, strong relationships formed and facilitated the learning process. Relationship building is a transformational practice, one that is at the heart of closing the achievement gap (Haberman & Post, 1998).

Instructional practices are typically the transactional practices in a classroom. They constitute the skills applied when teachers convey lessons, assess, and grade students. Students appreciated opportunities to work in groups, the step-by-step help provided, presenting material in a variety of ways, hands-on projects, and even assistance with organizational skill building. These are salient features in good instruction for EL students as they provide opportunities to build language while learning content (Echevarria et al., 2008). Students felt empowered and more likely to take risks when teachers added transformational practices, such as taking the time to explain things and walking around the classroom to check for understanding. These are transformational practices because they are instances in which teachers go beyond the application of skills and engage with students in very meaningful ways (Cranton & King, 2003). Another

important example of transformational teaching mentioned by several students was the availability of after-school support; in fact, it was the most frequent practice mentioned. Instructional practices also encompassed the rigor and relevance of the lessons. When engaged in meaningful tasks, students once again had enhanced opportunities to develop language (Echevarria et al.; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007) and build stronger relationships with teachers. Students felt neglected and left behind in the absence of supportive instructional practices. Students felt frustrated when their teachers moved on to new information while they still needed support with previous material.

In summary, the most noteworthy findings of this study regarding the supports and barriers that teachers provided LTEL students were strongly related to the literature. Supports included positive relationships with students, physical proximity when explaining concepts, reteaching, believing in the student's ability to learn, listening to students, and offering after-school support. Barriers included teachers' lack of respect toward students, yelling at students, failing to demonstrate that teachers care about students, inability to teach in a variety of ways, and ignoring students. LTEL students are in the process of acquiring academic English, they wither in environments where concepts are taught only once and in only one way. Often, they shy away from requesting assistance, and thus fail when teachers are not proactive about identifying their needs. The barriers attributed to teachers are overwhelmingly issues of connecting with students, listening to their needs and, when needed, differentiating instruction.

Other Sources of Supports and Barriers

Students talked about concerning home issues on their minds at school. These issues presented a barrier to the ability to focus on school. Home issues can contribute to academic struggles (Morrison & Redding Allen, 2007). LTEL students in this study depicted problems in the home such as immigration issues, drug issues, and loss of a parent. Overcoming these issues often requires resiliency on the part of the student. Returning to supports that LTELs experience, the students identified their parents as sources of motivation and encouragement. LTEL students expressed a strong desire to make their parents proud.

Issues of placement due to language status as ELs were identified as a barrier. This barrier is situated at the school site level. Students felt that placement in ELD and sheltered courses (designed to scaffold language in content areas such as social studies, math, and science) was demeaning. When placed in these courses, students perceived that teachers thought of them as dumb. Tracking in ELD and sheltered courses—which is common— can have a devastating effect on the educational opportunities of LTELs.Callahan (2005) asserts that this "systematic tracking of English Learners results in a lack of access to high quality content-area instruction" (p. 307). She cites a wealth of research findings regarding the adverse impact tracking has on academic achievement. Olsen (2010) laid out the five practices that have served to maintain or even widen the achievement gap; each one addresses inappropriate placement for LTELs.

Low-track classes also affect the student-teacher relationship.

Attitudes and expectations vary dramatically from high-track to low-track classes. Valenzuela (in Callahan, 2005), cites the lack of respect and understanding on the part of teachers in low-track classes. Typically in ELD classes, teacher's expectations are low, and negative student-teacher relationships are common (Gándara et al., 2003). Even as students discussed placement, the issue continues to revolve around teacher-student relationships. Callahan's findings were conclusive—track placement was a better predictor of achievement than proficiency in English. The findings of this study regarding placement and negative teacher-student relationships as barriers for LTEL students are strongly supported by the above-cited research. The demographic data presented in Table 4.1 serves as further illustration of the EL tracking that the participants of this study experienced at the time.

Peers were tremendous barriers for those students who gave into peer pressure to ditch class and neglect their studies. Overcoming negative peer influence required self-regulation. "Youth high in self-regulation are more able to resist temptations of peers and keep track of long-term goals despite opportunities for short-term high intensity social rewards often provided by the adolescent peer networks" (Gardner, Dishion, & Connell, 2008). Gardner and colleagues found self-regulation to be a resiliency factor.

Students were self-reflective and identified how their own attitudes could serve as barriers and how their self-efficacy and resiliency were supportive characteristics in their learning environments. For many LTEL students, resiliency is a survival skill. Franquiz and Salazar (2004) define

academic resilience as "students sustaining high levels of academic performance despite the presence of adverse conditions in their lives at home or at school" (p. 38). Placement issues for LTEL students, as well as their history of low scores on achievement tests, serve as evidence that students have not experienced high levels of academic performance; however, they have not dropped out and their goal is to graduate from high school. For LTELs, having the goal of graduation, their continued attendance in school, and their ability to resist peer pressure can all serve as evidence of some level of resiliency. Further evidence of their resiliency was the many instances of success that they shared. Resiliency in LTEL students was an unexpected and important finding. It is important because the type and quality of relationships between students and teachers are factors that influence resiliency in minority students (Franquiz & Salazar; Lock & Janas, 2002; Morrison & Redding Allen, 2007).

Successes Experienced by LTEL Students

Several students struggled to share a story of success and several of the students that had a story to share had to think back to elementary and middle school. Considering the above discussion regarding placement and tracking, the students' lack of wealth in stories of high school success could be attributed to sheltered and ELD course placement. The findings regarding poor relationships with teachers and lack of exposure to consistent supportive practices can also serve to explain this phenomenon. This was so prevalent that in order to uncover stories of success, the researcher had to

modify the interview protocol after a few students reacted with a blank stare to the question, "What has been the best learning experience you have had in high school?" One student even said, "What the heck are you taking about" (pilot study participant). Olsen (2010) found that "many LTELs have not developed the behaviors associated with academic success" (p. 24). The stories that participants were able to share were those of moments where they had felt proud as students.

LTEL students felt the proudest when they received an award or recognition, when they earned a good grade, and when they performed well on a test. Students cited their teachers and others, such as parents and siblings, as contributors to these proud moments; however, overwhelmingly they attributed their successes to the application of good study habits, which led to very positive feelings about themselves and their abilities. Their ability to see the affect of applying themselves academically served to promote resiliency. Interestingly, success came as a surprise to many of the students. Making their parents proud was very important to LTEL students. Awards and recognitions served as important artifacts to share at home. Positive phone calls were also mentioned as a source of pride shared with parents.

Summary

Considering the many supports and barriers that LTELs experience, as well as their self-revealed successes, the den Brok and Levy (2005) model lacks the critical factors to explain the learning experiences of LTEL students that lead to success. The Poplin and Weeres (1992) framework explains the

barriers students spoke of, but it serves to highlight deficits in the learning environments of LTELs. A model inclusive of the most salient factors that contribute to success as revealed by the LTEL students in this study includes positive student-teacher relationships, supportive teaching practices, resiliency, motivation and encouragement from parents, and appropriate placement.
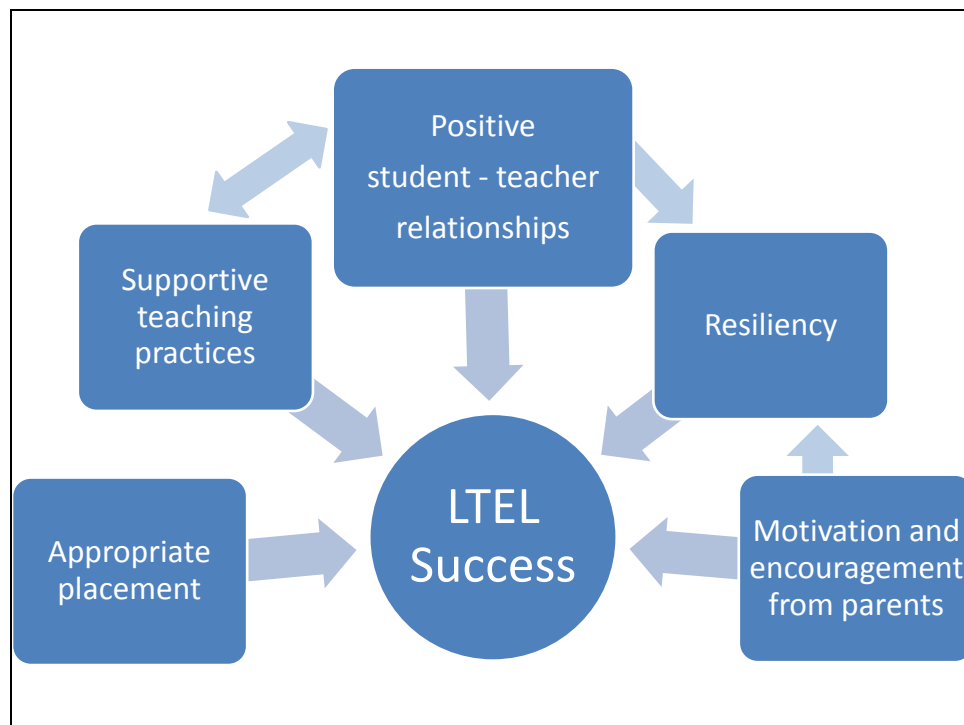
Figure 5.3 Factors That Lead to Success as Revealed by LTEL Students

The most salient factor in this model is the importance of positive student-teacher relationships as seen in Figure 5.3. Relationships between teachers and students set the tone for the learning environment and facilitate the implementation of supportive teaching practice. In turn, teachers that engage students through supportive teaching practices affirm a positive

relationship with their students. Positive relationships with teachers and parents were found to be factors that stimulate and support resiliency. Resiliency in LTEL students is a characteristic present but in a low degree, just enough to keep some of them from dropping out, yet not enough for them to experience consistent academic success. Students clearly articulated the role their parents play in their success; in fact, many defined their successful moments as those where they had made their parents proud. Parents have instilled the importance of succeeding in school in their LTEL students; whether parents possess the skills required to succeed in their host country was not within the scope of this study. The final factor, and perhaps the one students spoke most passionately about, was placement. LTEL students wither in the ELD tracks, and many LTEL students have been tracked in a segregated low-rigor setting since kindergarten. Placement of LTEL students in high-rigor, grade-appropriate content classes where teachers engage in supportive teaching practices and foster positive relationships with students is essential for LTEL students to succeed academically (Olsen, 2010).

Limitations and Generalizability of the Findings

The findings of this study are limited by the factors outlined in Chapter 3. The limitations included sample size, participant bias, researcher bias, duration of the study, and convenience. Despite these limitations, the study findings serve to inform the educational and research community regarding the supports, barriers, and factors that lead to success for the LTEL student

population.

Weiss (1994) outlines five arguments to support generalizing the findings of a convenience sample such as the one in this study. First is the respondents' own assessment of the generalizability; to satisfy this argument the researcher often asked students, "Do you think other kids feel the same way?" Many times the students felt their responses were typical, they shared the fact that many of their friends are also LTEL students and that they often discuss their teachers and other aspects of their learning environments. Often, their accounts related to experiences in the classroom that affected all the students in the room.

The second argument is the similarity of dynamics and constraints. the study was situated in a demographically typical setting with a high percentage of LTEL students, which met the terms of this argument. The interviewed students were, in almost every way, highly typical of the LTEL student population described in the reviewed literature. The third argument is similar to the second one—depth. The issue to satisfy here is whether the phenomenon of the learning environments of these participants is a function of their being LTELs or if it is something else. Although several of the findings could be attributed to their positionality as minorities, or high school students, or both, the findings revealed unique aspects of LTELs such as the issues of placement. The fourth argument to justify generalizability is whether the theory is independent of qualifiers. The researcher acknowledges that the sample might not be entirely representative of all LTELs, but there is

no reason for the findings and the factors outlined in Figure 5.5 to be limited to the sample from which it was developed.

The final argument, which this study satisfies, is that its findings serve to corroborate those of other studies of this student population, namely the studies conducted by the Council of the Great City Schools in 2009, the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society in 2009, and Dr. Olsen in 2010. It is reasonable to suggest that the findings of this study can be generalized to the high school Latino/a LTEL student population at large.

Implications for Practice

LTEL students have experienced schooling in the United States as English learners for five or more years; many of them have been in enrolled in U.S. schools since kindergarten and many were born in the United States. Their educational outcomes are plagued with deficit language, poor test scores, and limited opportunities for success. LTELs have not had access to the factors that contribute to attaining an education equitable to that of their non-EL counterparts. As illustrated in Figure 5.5, there are specific factors that could enhance the attainment of success for LTELs. Schools and the community at large can contribute greatly to increase application of the factors that support success and in eliminating the barriers that lead to failure.

Leadership

In light of discrepancies in the educational programs that LTELs

encounter, there are a few important implications for state and federal leaders. Mandates from both levels need to take into account the presence of LTELs and their distinct needs. A step in this direction was made recently as federal mandates require that all states disaggregate their EL data by forming two cohorts of ELs, those that have been in U.S. schools for less than five years and the LTEL cohort. The ability to analyze EL data as two distinct cohorts honors the differences in these two student populations and their need for different instructional settings.

At the local level, the use of this disaggregated data can serve to highlight the specific needs of a school district and to set goals backed by detailed plans for this specific cohort of students. Districts can and should establish distinct language (ELD) programs and classes for newcomer ELs and LTELs. Likewise, content area instructional planning should be differentiated for LTELs and newcomer ELs; the best setting for LTELs is in mainstream content areas that support language and move students away from tracking.

Prevention of reaching LTEL status is paramount. At the elementary school level, efforts must be made to prevent the continued cycle of maintaining EL status for a prolonged number of years. The number of EL students in elementary schools continues to rise. New testing mandates require that any student coming to public school with a home language other than English must pass a rigorous language assessment in writing, reading, listening, and speaking at the time they enter kindergarten or be labeled as an EL. This new mandate has resulted in a growth in the kindergarten EL

population. For EL students born in the United States and those that enter U.S. schools in kindergarten, a supported expectation of language proficiency by the end of elementary school, with clearly established interventions for those students at risk of completing the fifth grade as ELs, must be ensured. Elementary schools that exit students with low academic English proficiency who entered as ELs in kindergarten should be held accountable for their failure to adequately meet the language needs of these students.

When prevention fails and students enter middle school as identified LTELs, it should be clear to the student, their parents, and their teachers that intense language intervention is required. Implementation of the practices and policies that support the factors illustrated in Figure 5.5 can serve as a driving philosophy and educational programming for all LTELs in middle school. Intense language intervention should not deter students from access to grade-level content or electives.

When students enter high school as LTELs, their ability to access courses comparable to their non-EL peers is negligible. This study focused on this specific group of students—high school LTELs. High school leaders need a heightened awareness of this student population, specifically regarding their communities, strengths, and needs. The importance of positive teacher-student relationships was a finding that surfaced in many aspects of this study. Creating and supporting these types of relationships is essential for LTELs to experience success.

Professional development regarding the academic language needs of LTELs should take place for curriculum developers and site leaders.

Counselors and others that play a role in the course placement of LTELs should also receive training to understand the distinct needs of this student population. Each LTEL should have a detailed plan of study to ensure that tracking and placement in low-rigor courses is avoided.

Teachers of LTELs must be well versed in understanding the needs and abilities of their students. They should be well trained in how to build strong relationships with minority students, the importance of building students' resiliency, application of supportive practices as part of their daily teaching, and in reaching out to parents as sources of motivation. Teachers need to have incentives and support to be available for after-school assistance as many students mentioned this as an important contributor to their success.

Social Justice and Policy

Until we address the recalcitrant realities of Latino LTEL students in America, we will continue to have an educational system that widens the achievement gap. EL students born in the United States, and those in U.S. schools for more than five years should have access to the same opportunities as their non-EL counterparts. As the high school LTEL student population continues to grow, the opportunities of the Latino community at large are diminished. With fewer Latino high school graduates and college-ready students, the Latino community faces a potential educational drought. Many of the issues addressed in this study stem from issues of segregation and discrimination. Poor relationships with teachers occur more often when

teachers who are unaware of the needs and supportive practices to address teaching minority students are placed to teach ELs. As mentioned, the importance of valuing the community, getting close to students, and honoring and supporting resiliency are rare traits found in teachers working with LTELs.

Access to higher education is paramount for the Latino community to overcome the social, political, and economical barriers outlined in Chapter 1. The continued growth and unmet needs of the LTEL student population will only contribute to these issues. The Latino community needs access to education that will allow for civic engagement such as voting, workplace readiness, higher education, and more Latino/a educators and educational leaders.

Policy changes are necessary to support the leadership and social implications of this research. There needs to be explicit early intervention to prevent LTEL status. The master plan for English learners of every district with elementary ELs could serve as the document that outlines these interventions and the monitoring process for the implementation of the outlined plans. Intervention and planning for success of ELs should include the factors outlined in Figure 5.4. Along with including explicit plans for LTEL prevention and LTEL intervention in the Master Plan for English Learners, other important documents that drive school goals should also include such components. Every accreditation plan (i.e., W.A.S.C. plan), school plan (i.e., Single Plan for Student Achievement), district plan (i.e., L.E.A.P. plan, Categorical Plan), program improvement plan (i.e., Title I and Title III plans),

and local school board policy can incorporate and align the plans and monitoring of LTEL and at-risk LTEL students.

Implications for Research

This study contributes to a growing body of student voice research. Empowering students to describe their educational environments provides the field with input from the most important stakeholders in education the students themselves. Among the least-heard students are those stuck in the achievement gap. This study focused on a very specific subset of that student population—the LTEL students. Their narratives help to clearly define their realities, needs, and factors that support their learning.

Leadership and Social Justice

Educational leadership research focuses primarily on the importance of identifying and promoting the factors of strong leaders. There is an emphasis on building opportunities for collaboration among key stakeholders; this is most prevalent in the rise of professional learning communities. An important area for future research would be to study how educational leaders can incorporate *students* as collaborators. The United Kingdom has done this through mandates; mandates in the United States have failed to acknowledge that students should have a voice. The policies and mandates of No Child Left Behind left the students voiceless. The educational and social justice research community can support the inclusion of students in every

movement of educational leadership and reform. Whether it be in areas of collaboration, curriculum, teacher effectiveness, or assessments, students should be included in the development and evaluation of each type of reform. The achievement gap has remained unaltered; we have not given the students most impacted by this reality an opportunity to help close the gap. LTEL students will eagerly share their stories and provide suggestions; they desire the opportunity to inform the educational leadership community and the research community regarding the types of supports that lead to their success as well as the barriers they need removed.

Another important area for further research is to investigate the factors that lead students to becoming LTELs from an early age. Predictor data and factors have not been identified in early grade EL students for becoming LTEL. A mixed-methods study that analyzes student data could yield a set of factors that are likely to lead a student on the path of LTEL ,as well as identifying the factors in early grade ELs that lead to proficiency in English and success in school in later years.

Conclusion

Returning to the opening statement made by an LTEL student when asked why he and the rest of the class did not try harder, he responded, "What do you want from us, we are just a bunch of Mexicans." Curiosity about the root of this statement led the researcher to investigate the experiences of LTEL students. Upon review of highly pertinent studies regarding minority students, EL students, and LTEL students, what remains

conclusive is that LTEL students are experiencing unprecedented academic failure. Studies regarding the academic achievement of ELs highlight the gap in achievement between EL and non-EL students. The majority of ELs failing to make progress are the LTELs. Infused with appreciative inquiry, this student voice research study sought to identify the supports and barriers as well as the successes that LTELs experience. Their narratives serve as a counter stance to the highly deficit data presented in most research studies regarding this student population. Rather than focusing on their academic results, the study revealed the educational environments from the perspective of the student.

The findings of this study served to generate a model of the factors that lead to success as revealed by LTEL students. The model proposes that the most salient factors that contribute to success include positive student-teacher relationships, supportive teaching practices, resiliency, motivation, and encouragement from parents, and appropriate placement.

The implications of these findings include a need for professional development for teachers working with LTELs. In particular, workshops on explicit teaching practice that foster rigorous language development, skills, and practices that foster positive teacher-student relationships and identifying, supporting, and building resiliency. Placement issues remain a concern to be addressed by school leaders. Equally important is the need for further research and practice on the application of student voice inquiry. This study serves as a call for proponents of school reform to include the students

most impacted by the achievement gap to become coconstructors of their successes.

APPENDIX A: SCRIPT FOR COMMUNICATION

Hi _____,

You have been identified as a possible candidate to participate in a research study. The Escondido School District has given permission for a researcher to recruit students for a study conducted by a student from California State University San Marcos.

The study consists of a 20 minute interview to identify how students have experienced (or not experienced) success in school. The study will take place at your high school during non-class times.

If you agree to participate then change your mind, you may end your participation with no consequences. Your decision to participate will not have any influence on your school work, grades, etc. Participants will not be identified by name in the study.

Thank you,
LuzElena Perez
Doctorate Student
California State University San Marcos, School of Education

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

IRB #:   2010-038

Cal State San Marcos

Institutional Review Board
California State University San Marcos
San Marcos, California 92096-0001 USA
Tel: 760-750-8820; Fax: 760-750-3150 www.csusm.edu/irb

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Research Approval Form

To: Patricia Prado-Olmos
        Luz Elena Perez

Project Title: Voices of Long Term Latino Adolescent English Learners

The letter certifies that the above referenced project was reviewed and approved by the
University's Institutional Review Board in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Federal
Regulations on Protection of Human Subjects(45 CFR 46), including its relevant subparts.

This approval is valid through the expiration date shown below. If this research project will extend
beyond that date, a continuing review application must be submitted at least 30 days before this
expiration using the Continuing Review form available on the IRB website. (www.csusm.edu/irb)

Changes to this protocol (procedures, populations, locations, personnel, etc.) must be submitted
and approved by the IRB prior to implementation using the Minor Modification Form available on
the IRB website.

The Cal State San Marcos IRB must be notified immediately of any injuries or adverse conditions.

☑ *Approved Information Sheet or Consent Form(s) are attached. Only approved consent forms
    may be used to obtain participant consent.*

Approval Date: 3/5/2010

Expiration Date: 3/4/2011

Approved by:
Todd Astorino, Ph.D, IRB Chair

The California State University
Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • Dominguez Hills • East Bay • Fresno • Fullerton • Humboldt • Long Beach • Los Angeles • Maritime Academy • Monterey Bay
• Northridge • Pomona •Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San Jose • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Cal State San Marcos

March 12, 2010

Dear Parents/Caretakers,

Invitation to Participate and Purpose of Research

LuzElena Perez, a doctorate student at California State University San Marcos, is conducting a study to identify experiences of school success for English learner students who have not reached English fluency. This research has the approval of the Escondido Union High School District. Your child is being asked to participate in this study because she/he is one of the students identified as a long term English learner at _____ school.

For the purpose of this study, a long term English learner is a student who was identified as an English learner over 6 years ago and has not reached English fluency on the State language test (CELDT).

Procedure

If you and your child agree to participate in this study, your child will be asked to:

1. Participate in a recorded appreciative inquiry interview conducted by the researcher who will ask questions about your child's experiences with school success. The total time the interview may take is expected to be no more than 20 minutes.
2. Your student will have the opportunity to review the transcribed interview for corrections.

Risk and Inconveniences /Safeguards

The following risks are not anticipated to adversely affect your student; however every precaution has been taken to mitigate any possible risks:

1. To avoid adversely affecting your child during school-time, the interviews are not expected to last longer than 20 minutes. Participation is voluntary and your child may skip any question or end the interview at any point with no consequences. The interviews will not be scheduled during instructional times or during extracurricular activity times that your child wants to attend. Interviews can be scheduled before school or after school.

2. Difficulty recalling successful experiences in school may cause distress and even some level of suffering for your child. A list of counseling and tutoring services will be made available to all participating students. The purpose of this study is to specifically focus on positive aspects of the school experience and focus on successes.

3. Because the study is interested in language development and school success, your child may feel uncomfortable with the "long term learner" label. This term will be clearly defined to your child to avoid such feelings. All research participants will be given counseling information in case they want to contact school counselors to discuss any negative feeling that may result from the interview.

4. In discussing their expriences at school, it is possible that your child may worry that answers will get her/him in trouble with their teachers, school administrators or others of authority at their schools. I will assure your child that identities will be kept confidential and, if any reference is made of comments, examples will be used pseudonymously as to prevent any identification. In all cases, I will inform your child that the recordings will only be used to analyze the narratives and that answers are confidential and will be destroyed after the completion of the study. Again, participation is voluntary and your child may end the interview with no consequences. If your child chooses to end the interview, you or your child may request all related interview material. To further insure confidentiality, interview transcripts tapes and related material will be kept on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked cabinet.

Benefits

Your child's participation will help the school and educational research community to better understand individual long term English learner student needs and how to best meet those needs.

Questions

This study has been approved by the California State University San Marcos Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about the study, you may direct those to the researcher, LuzElena Perez, leperez@ucsd.edu , (951) 704 -0733 or the researcher's advisor/professor, Patricia Prado-Olmos, CSUSM College of Education, Associate Dean, pprado@csusm.edu, (760) 750-8530. Questions about your child's rights as a research participant should be directed to the IRB at (760) 750-4029. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Check one:

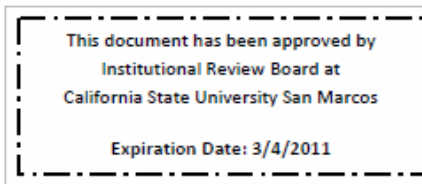_____Yes, my child may participate in this research study.

_____No, I would prefer my child not participate in this research study.

_____   _____

Participant's name (printed)   Participant's signature

_____

Parent/Legal Guardian's signature   Date

```
This document has been approved by
Institutional Review Board at
California State University San Marcos

Expiration Date: 3/4/2011
```

_____

Researcher's Signature

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant #_____ School: _____

Date:_____

1. How do you feel as a student? Are you a "good" student, a "struggling" student, "not a good student".	
2. Tell me about the best experience you have had in a classroom. • What/who contributed to that? • When have you felt the proudest as a student? • What/who contributed to that? • What else has contributed to your successful experiences in school?	
3. What are some barriers that have prevented you from achieving more successful experiences in school?	
4. Tell me of a time when a teacher contributed to a successful learning experience for you. • In what ways do teachers contribute to your successful experiences in school? • What are some characteristics of teachers that create successful experiences for students?	
5. What are some barriers that teachers either create or fail to address that prevent you from having more successful experiences?	
6. If you could make three wishes come true that would make you have more of successful/positive experiences happen for you, what would you wish for?	
7. Describe how you feel about being identified as an English learner.	
8. Demographic data: How old are you_____ How do identify yourself racially _____	

Validation of the captured student voices will be including in the protocol such as "I heard you say … is that accurate?"

APPENDIX E: SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

Southern California Union High School District

Educational Services

To: Luz Elena Perez

From: Assistant Superintendent

Date: March, 2010

Subject: Research Project in SCUHSD

Promoting life-long learning is a core value in the Southern California Union High School District. Being part of a research study is a valuable learning opportunity for both the district and the doctoral student. I have reviewed your research proposal and you have permission to conduct your study in our district. I wish you the best of luck and look forward to reading your research findings.

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