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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A CASE STUDY OF A K-12 LEARNING CENTER IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:
EXPLORING STRATEGIES TO SUSTAIN LEARNING CENTERS FOR STUDENTS WITH
LEARNING DISABILITIES

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy

by

Rebecca Michelle Cohen

June, 2018

Paula Thompson, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Rebecca Michelle Cohen

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Yermie, who has stood by me and supported me through my entire post-graduate journey into the world of education. Thank you for all of the advice, love, and humor you shared each day to propel me to be the person I am today.

VITA

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The Learning Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, December 2015 – Present

- Provide educational therapy to students one-on-one in home and at the learning center
- Individualize instruction for each student to cater to their specific learning styles
- Work with students academically, socially, and behaviorally to achieve positive results

Private Instructor and Learning Specialist

Los Angeles, CA, June 2014 – December 2015

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- Incorporation of the latest educational technologies and practices
- Communication with families of students including reports, assessments, and meetings

Director of Day School Programs***Reading Specialist and Homeschool Teacher***

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- Incorporation of online learning applications in the classroom
- One-to-one teaching students to state standards and overseeing classroom management
- Execution of reading remediation programs

- Administration and analysis of a variety of reading diagnostics

Behavior Therapist

Inclusive Education and Community Partnership (IECP), Los Angeles, CA,

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- Provided school-based behavioral services to individuals with disabilities
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ADDITIONAL RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- Educational Program Proficiencies: Lindamood Bell; Phonetics; Whole Language; Common Core
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ABSTRACT

The varied academic needs of students with learning disabilities throughout the U.S. and in Southern California, specifically, have driven demand for private learning centers. For the purposes of this study, a learning center refers to a private business that teaches primary and secondary school students with learning disabilities outside of the school system. However, these centers often struggle with business success and the retention of employees and clients. Little research exists to address this topic. Therefore, there is a need to explore strategies to sustain these centers for students with learning disabilities. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their business. Data was collected from interviews with four employees, observations from four visits, and seven types of archival data. The data were analyzed and grouped into the five deductive themes found in the literature review: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Five new inductively developed themes resulted from the analysis of the data: Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders; Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement; Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience; Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset; Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow. Aspects such as innovation, flexibility, and intentionality proved to be beneficial to improving student outcomes and sustaining a learning center. Three conclusions were made from the study: Conclusion 1: A learning center can be sustained through a focus on the five literature themes of training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development; Conclusion 2: Flexibility allows for individualization, and continual improvement; Conclusion 3: Learning centers seeking a competitive advantage should focus on innovation.

Chapter One: The Problem

Background of the Study

In the United States, students are continually placed under pressure to fulfill academic requirements and meet state standards (Segool, Carlson, Goforth, von der Embse, & Barterian, 2013). The standards, labeled the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), are detailed, academic standards that relate to the real world and are meant to give students the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in future schooling and careers. The CCSS provide detailed descriptions for parents and teachers so that they can better assist the students (Caruana, 2015). These standards present an especially monumental challenge for students with learning disabilities (Caruana, 2015; Haager & Vaughn, 2013). The current methods to help these students in the school system involve Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), resource rooms with special educators, and differentiated instruction (Caruana, 2015; Haley, Hammond, Ingalls, & Marín, 2013; Sadioglu, Bilgin, Batu, & Oksal, 2013; Strogilos & Xanthacou, 2006; Zickel & Arnold, 2001).

Unfortunately, many students with learning disabilities, especially those in public schools, are not always able to get the attention they need during the school day and are in need of additional support (Haager & Vaughn, 2013; Haley et al., 2013; Sadioglu et al., 2013). Even though the IEP has been included in education since 1975, it was not until the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) in 2004 that more of a focus was placed on students with disabilities. IDEA requires public schools to have an IEP for every student with disabilities who meet the special education requirements for federal and state standards. Since IDEA, IEPs contain goals that are based on state standards, some of which require an overwhelming amount of progress for students to meet. Due to IDEA, more teachers are asking

parents to seek support and accommodations (Caruana, 2015). Teachers recommend that their students are aided by academic professionals beyond the school environment (Haager & Vaughn, 2013; Haley et al., 2013; Sadioglu et al., 2013). As a result of this growing need, learning centers, providing professional support and accommodations for students with learning disabilities outside of school hours, have become an integral part of the education system.

Learning center is a broad term and can take on many meanings with regards to primary and secondary school students, college students, and even those in assisted living situations (Stahl & Henk, 1993). Learning centers are a place where individualized learning is available for students based on their needs (Christ, 1971). Current research on learning centers is limited and is generally based on higher education facilities attached to universities (Norton, 2002; Payne, Hodges, & Hernandez, 2017; Truschel & Reedy, 2009, Truvert, 2014). For the purposes of this study, a learning center refers to a private business that teaches primary and secondary school students with learning disabilities outside of the school system. As an example of the growth of learning centers over the 21st century, Park, Buchmann, Choi, and Merry (2016) calculated how many fifteen-year-old students participated in academic assistance outside of school in the years 2003 and 2012 in various countries. In the nine-year span, the amount of fifteen-year-old students in supplementary education rose significantly in each country. In the United States, the percentage of these students in tutoring rose from 11.7% to 17%. This shows the growth of students participating in tutoring as well as the growth of accessibility for supplementary education centers. While plenty of learning centers for students with disabilities are available, these centers are created by educators who may not have the entrepreneurial or business mindset needed to sustain and grow their centers in order to give their students opportunities to succeed.

In relating business to education, schools are run both as educational institutions and as businesses to keep their facilities updated and their staff employed (Baker, Campbell, & Ostroff, 2016; Levine & Levine, 2014). When it comes to the three main types of schools, public, private, and charter, a bountiful amount of research exists on what is needed from a business perspective to keep these schools running. Public schools receive money from the government through the help of tax dollars and allow children to attend for free (Cornman, Zhou, Howell, & Young, 2017). Private, or independent schools receive money from tuition, grants, donations, and endowments and are not free to the families whose students attend (Baker et al., 2016). Charter schools are a hybrid of public and private schools. They are technically public schools and children may attend for free, but there is limited space. Charter schools receive money from the government and are sometimes associated with for-profit organizations (Levine & Levine, 2014). The business aspects that each of these schools have in common are that there are a team of staff hired to attend to business management and monetary allocation. This allows these institutions to educate their students and care for their employees (Baker et al., 2016; Cornman et al., 2017; Levine & Levine, 2014). However, this is not the same for learning centers. Learning centers, unlike school models, resemble the model of small businesses (Aurini, 2012; Christ, 1971; Stahl & Henk, 1993).

Though there is currently a lack of research on the success and needs of learning centers from a business perspective, plenty of prior research demonstrates what is needed to operate small businesses in other industries (Gerhardt, Hazen, & Lewis, 2014; Huang & Cho, 2010; Oana, 2012; Omri, Frikha, & Bouraoui, 2015; Philip, 2011; Rese & Baier, 2011; Simpson, Tuck, & Bellamy, 2004; Walker & Brown, 2004; Yang, 2016; Zapalska, Brozik & Zieser, 2015). As learning centers are a type of small business, information learned from other types of small

businesses may be relatable. Research on the success of these businesses may provide insight into the needs of the operation of learning centers. However, there is a gap in the literature not only about the success of primary and secondary school student learning centers in general, but also detailing the business strategies of these centers in order to sustain their business.

Problem Statement

Currently, the varied academic needs of students with learning disabilities throughout the U.S. and in Southern California, specifically, has driven demand for private learning centers. When student needs are not fully met within the school system during school hours, teachers recommend and parents seek outside help from learning centers (Park et al., 2016). However, these learning centers often struggle with overall business success and the retention of employees and clients alike. Therefore, there is a need and an opportunity to explore strategies to sustain learning centers for students with learning disabilities through the study of one successful learning center.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their businesses. This case study took place at one purposefully selected learning center catered to students with learning disabilities in Southern California that was currently successful in their ability to sustain their business. This qualitative case study incorporated data collection through interviews, observations, and archival data (Yin, 2014).

Importance of the Study

This study is an important addition to the educational literature for several reasons: the current lack of research on this topic, the increased need for learning centers for students with

disabilities, and the potential strategies for owners of learning centers to assist in the growth of their businesses. Currently, a lack of empirical research has been conducted on learning centers and similar educational businesses directed toward primary and secondary school students.

There is limited data about learning centers, what makes them high-performing, and what strategies they use to sustain their current businesses in order to assist students academically. The most recent study depicting the details of a private learning center for K-12 students is a dissertation discussing an assessment tool for the center that was written over two and a half decades ago (Zoll, 1990).

With the increased need for these centers, educational therapists, tutors, and learning center owners and managers may benefit from this study by understanding the contributing factors that allow these businesses to sustain and grow. In addition to teachers benefitting, students with learning disabilities may benefit as well through the expansion of centers created to assist them. By exploring successful business strategies for learning centers, current centers may have a better chance of survival and new centers may emerge, fulfilling the need for assistance outside of the classroom. Through the study of centers that are currently successful in their ability to sustain and grow, the findings of the research have the opportunity to provide helpful strategies to learning center business owners. These strategies may assist in recruiting staff and successfully sustaining their businesses. The findings of this study could lead to beneficial strategies for owners of centers to assist in their business growth. It could also lead to the opportunity for education entrepreneurs to create new learning centers, which paves the way of benefiting a larger population of students with learning disabilities.

Definitions of Terms

The following are conceptual and operational definitions of terms as they relate to this study:

- *Customer development.* Customer development is one of the five literature themes used in this study. Customer development is understanding the needs of a client base to better serve the population of a business (Bush, 2016; King-Sears, 2007; Yang, 2016; Zickel & Arnold, 2001).
- *Educational therapist.* Educational therapy refers to the broad practice of activities ranging “from academic tutoring to psychotherapy” (Radecki, 1984, p. 7). An educational therapist focuses on the best learning process for students. They use specific goals and techniques catered to each students’ needs, especially involving students with learning disabilities (Radecki, 1984).
- *Entrepreneurship.* Entrepreneurship is seeking out new and unknown opportunities beyond what one currently possesses (Kellermanns, Walter, Crook, Kemmerer & Narayanan, 2016).
- *Innovation.* Innovation is one of the five literature themes used in this study. Innovation is the creation of new ideas, concepts, structures, and resources in order to have a unique business that provides services unparalleled to others (Bond, 2012; Omri et al., 2015; Petersen, 2014; Rese & Baier, 2011).
- *Learning center.* For the purposes of this research study, a learning center is a small business that may or may not be a franchise. Learning centers are independent from school systems and give primary and secondary school students the opportunity to

advance their learning and receive extra academic support (Aurini, 2012; Christ, 1971; Stahl & Henk, 1993).

- *Learning disability.* A learning disability is a condition involving difficulties in gaining knowledge and abilities at the same rate as one's peers. These disabilities are generally not associated with a physical handicap but does not necessarily exclude those with such handicaps (Cornucopia of Disability Information, 2007; Haager & Vaughn, 2013; Radford et al., 2015).
- *Relationships.* Relationships is one of the five literature themes used in this study. Relationships refers to networking and making a connection with individuals through varying mediums both digitally and in person (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Epstein, 2002; Jochims, 2016).
- *Resource-based theory (RBT).* RBT is a business theory with conditions related to the use of diverse resources that are theorized to lead to business success (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001; Kellermanns et al., 2016).
- *Small business.* For the purposes of this research study, a small business is classified as a company that is independently owned and operated that may or may not be franchised (Simpson, Tuck, & Bellamy, 2004).
- *Structure.* Structure is one of the five literature themes used in this study. Structure refers to the established rules, goals, and norms of a business (Aurini, 2012; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Coulter, 2013; Gostick & Elton, 2012).
- *Successful learning center.* For the purposes of this research study, a successful learning center is defined as one that has been in operation for five or more years and is profitable (Yang, 2016).

- *Training.* Training is one of the five literature themes used in this study. Training refers to the instruction, guidance, and support given to employees in order to improve learning outcomes (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005; Raley, Grossman, & Walker, 2005; Schumann, Peters, & Olsen, 2013).

Theoretical Framework (Summary)

The theoretical framework for this study is a two-part compilation of a business plan approach compiled by a UNESCO team called *The Smartest Investment: A Framework for Business Engagement in Education* and the resource based theory of entrepreneurship.

The Framework for Business Engagement in Education is a guide for education businesses to create learning opportunities for students while identifying the business case. Part of the business model includes a three-step process for engagement in education. Step one, “Make the business case,” refers to aligning education with long-term growth and business strategy. This involves fostering innovation, addressing operational risks, improving reputation, boosting employee morale and retention, and professional development. Step two, “Identifying activities,” refers to realizing which activities benefit both business and education challenges on a local level. Lastly, step three, “Be smart,” implies the use of best practices in education and business, including social engagement (UN Special Envoy for Global Education, UNICEF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, & United Nations Global Compact, 2013, p. 12). This framework is well suited to this study because it involves the integration of education and business strategies in order to assist a larger number of students and pave the way for new private education businesses.

The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship is a theory that stems from resource based theory (RBT). RBT is a theory with four conditions that led to business success: diversity

of resources, use of resources that limit competition, limiting imitation of resources, and using innovation and ambiguity to limit competition. RBT in relation to entrepreneurship boasts two more concepts in addition: recognition of opportunities and organization and analysis of resources. (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001; Kellermanns et al., 2016). Similar to the Framework for Business Engagement in Education, the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship also makes connections to the literature themes and sub-research questions found in the following section. This theory relates to the study through the use of innovation in order to sustain businesses and lead them to success. RBT provides insight for the use of innovative resources and practices for entrepreneurs of any type of business to create business success. This includes entrepreneurs of education businesses, such as private learning centers.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this purposefully selected case study was the following:

1. What strategies does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use to sustain their business?

The sub-questions for this study were:

- A. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use training to sustain their business?
- B. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use relationships to sustain their business?
- C. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use innovation to sustain their business?

D. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use structure to sustain their business?

E. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use customer development to sustain their business?

The sub-questions were created and chosen based on the information and five themes discovered in the literature review: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. These five themes, described in detail in the following chapter, guided the direction of the research and the data collection in order to explore strategies for learning centers to sustain their businesses.

Limitations

The ability to infer data across the population was limited because the sample for this study was taken from one learning center in Southern California as a case study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). To generalize study results, participants from other learning centers for students with learning disabilities outside of Southern California would need to be included. Access to participants was also limited due to their work schedules. Tutors and staff members of the learning center did not work at the center every day and many of the employees are part-time. Willing participants may not have been available during the days and times agreed upon by the researcher and the owner or manager of the learning center.

In gathering interview responses, there may have been limitations in asking participants to recall past experiences, as well as concerns for truthful responding. Participants may have recalled events based on emotions rather than lived experiences (Fowler, 2008). Employees who participated may have chosen to only share information that reflects positively upon them and their place of employment. Participants may not have had the ability to answer all of the

questions asked of them or may have chosen to refrain from answering questions. Participants may have also chosen to remove themselves from the study at any time.

Limitations may have also involved the ability for the study to be replicated due to the number and location of participants. This includes limitations of the replication of a case study based off of an example of one learning center. Lastly, time was a limitation based on participant and researcher availability.

Delimitations

The main delimitation was the purposefully small sample of gathering data from one learning center in Southern California. With a singular case study, collecting in-depth data from one location over a course of time, the sample size remains small and may have not reflected the population of learning centers in Southern California as a whole. The learning center selected had a focus on students with learning disabilities, which means that there was purposeful exclusions of other centers that also catered to this demographic. The selection was made from centers that are currently performing well and are popular in their area. Another delimitation is that the literature themes discovered through research were what the researcher saw as the most profound themes to center the study around. Time was also a delimitation in that the researcher was looking to complete their data collection in a timely manner, over several months.

Assumptions

The researcher had assumptions based on her own background as an educational therapist with a learning center for elementary and middle school students in Southern California. The researcher assumed that learning centers are run as small businesses and that they are continually working to improve their business. The researcher also assumed that learning centers are looking specifically to assist students academically and are beneficial for students outside of regular

school hours. As an educational therapist and owner of her own learning center, the researcher is both an educational colleague and a competitor of other learning centers in Southern California. The researcher used reflexivity to her advantage in order to control biases. She did so by practicing non-judgement through her own biases and knowledge and used that knowledge to help inform the types of questions and observations that she felt were beneficial to exploring the strategies of the learning center involved (Creswell, 1998).

The researcher assumed that learning centers are used to help students improve their academics and that the learning center involved in this study will continue to stay in business throughout the study. The researcher also assumed that learning centers play a valuable role in education and that the theoretical frameworks researched for this study are applicable to sustaining and learning center business. An assumption was made that the instruments used for data collection were accurate. Lastly, an assumption was also made that the participants had a sincere interest and were motivated to answer any questions truthfully.

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter One includes an introduction to the topic. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature, which includes five themes: social network, education, management experience, financial capital, and environment. Chapter Three describes the research design, the type of study, and the approach. Chapter Four presents the study's findings. Chapter Five provides a summary of the entire study and a discussion of findings.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter will present a review of the literature that is related to strategies used to sustain small businesses. As there is very little research directly related to the problem of the study, strategies to sustain learning centers for students with learning disabilities, this literature review takes a broader look at the literature themes discovered through reviewing the research on education businesses and the success of other types of small businesses. Research of education businesses includes schools, after school programs, learning centers, and research regarding educators. The related literature looks to assist in the identification of commonalities between strategies for education and other types of small businesses.

This literature review explores the two theoretical frameworks involved in the research: The Smartest Investment: A Framework for Business Engagement in Education and the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship. The literature review continues by exploring the historical aspects of learning centers and then includes five key literature themes. These literature themes are all related to strategies that are designed to sustain businesses and include training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Each of these literature themes are described in detail by examining their empirical research. Sources for this literature review were found using Scopus and a variety of EBSCOhost electronic databases such as Academic Search Complete, Business Source Premier, and ERIC. Other sources for this review include several recently updated academic texts with themes that include the topics of education, leadership, and management.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study involves two different theories detailing a mixture of business and education, and a theory of entrepreneurship. These two theories, A Framework for Business Engagement in Education and the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, relate to the intersection between business strategies and education. As a combination, they provide insight into methods and principles that may be used to sustain a business that specializes in education.

A Framework for Business Engagement in Education. The Framework for Business Engagement in Education (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013) integrates theories of education and business. This framework was created as a collective initiative by groups from the UN, UNICEF, and UNESCO in 2013. The initiative was created to aid in solving the problem of a “global learning crisis” (p. 6) and states that over 57 million children of primary school age across the world are currently not attending school. Of note, part of the solution to this crisis lies in the private sector as opposed to entrusting all of education to resources and institutions with public funding. More specifically, private education businesses are seen as a key component of helping improve education overall. For this reason, the Framework for Business Engagement in Education was created to assist private businesses that are involved in education to better grow their companies by detailing and sharing business strategies specially targeted towards the needs and challenges of education.

The framework includes three main sections: the business case, aligning business and education priorities, and the three-part process for engagement. The “business case” (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013, p. 12) is a small section of the initiative which introduces why education businesses are important. Specifically, this section details the

importance and potential impacts of growing education businesses. The section entitled “aligning business and education priorities” (p. 10) discusses how companies, whether directly or indirectly involved in education, may still have a sphere of influence that impacts education in meaningful ways. This sphere is constructed through their core business, philanthropy, engagement, and partnerships that each contribute to varying degrees. The last main section, “three-part process for engagement” (p. 12), is the main focus of the initiative. It is also the portion of the framework that is most relevant to and therefore incorporated into this study.

The three-part process for engagement was created for two main reasons: to benefit businesses and to realize educational goals. In order to have a positive effect on the largest number of businesses, the process was designed for nearly any type of business looking to be involved in almost any aspect of education. This makes it especially appealing and relevant for private education businesses such as learning centers. The three components of this process are as follows: make the business case, identifying activities, and be smart. The synergy of these three components is designed to lead to a successful integration of education and business.

Step one, “make the business case,” is directly related to the first section of the Framework for Business Engagement in Education, entitled the “business case” (p. 12). Step one asks the participant to establish a reason to be involved in education that aligns with the goal of growing the business. To assist with establishing this reason, five components are offered as a means to benefit the growth of businesses pertaining to education: Fostering innovation in education, Addressing operational risks, Improving brand leadership and enhancing corporate reputation, Boosting employee morale and retention, and Developing capacity of future employees.

Step two, identifying activities, refers to actions that can be taken that can be specifically matched with each of the five components detailed in step one. The first component, “fostering innovation in education” (p. 14), has broad scope and includes technology, tools, distribution, and methods. For example, new educational technologies make it possible to innovate the delivery and management of education at the level of an individual student in a classroom, an entire school district, or as a global phenomenon with hundreds of millions of users. Additionally, the rise of virtual reality field trips, smartphones, youtube, and online portals of teachers sharing and selling resources are just a few ways that teaching methods can be innovated, distributed, and applied at scale.

The second section, “addressing operational risks” (p. 18), includes educating management and staff on internal policies and the creation of policies that are morally sound, understanding and utilizing a safe and clean learning environment, and the respect and support of human rights. The third section, “improving brand leadership and enhancing corporate reputation” (p. 20), involves using marketing campaigns that highlight the importance of education, sharing educational activities and outcomes with the community, and encouraging continued education for future leaders. The fourth section, “boosting employee morale and retention” (p. 24), involves offering ongoing training and education for employees and encouraging employees to volunteer for educational causes. Lastly, the fifth section, “actions taken toward developing capacity of future employees” (p. 28), includes the creation of training programs for future employees, expanding opportunities by providing vocational training and support for youth, and collaborating with other educators to design and inform one another of new educational opportunities. Each of these actions work toward the goal of making the business case.

Step three, “be smart” (p. 12), involves understanding human rights and responsibly applying best business practices according to the needs of the business. The business practice recommendations are to be applied to the five components from step one. There are six recommendations included to follow step three: respect and support education as a human right, promote equity and equality, partner with experts, be outcomes-oriented and results-driven, align with government needs in education, and be sustainable and scalable.

The Framework for Business Engagement in Education has varying connections to the literature themes identified as education and training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Table 1 distinguishes which sections of the framework overlap with which of the five literature themes.

Table 1

The Framework for Business Engagement in Education With the Overlapping Literature Themes.

Framework Sections	Framework Subsections	Overlapping Literature Themes
The Business Case	Builds sustainable societies	Structure
	Saves lives	Structure
	Promotes economic growth	Customer Development
	Strengthens the local workforce	Training
	Expands business opportunities	Training, Relationships
	Boosts wages	Structure
Aligning Business and Education Priorities	Core business	Structure
	Social investment	Relationships
	Philanthropy	Relationships
	Advocacy	Relationships
	Public policy engagement	Relationships
	Partnerships, collective action	Relationships

(continued)

Framework Sections	Framework Subsections	Overlapping Literature Themes
Three-Part Process for Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the business case 2. Identify activities 3. Be smart 	Innovation, Structure Training, Relationships Relationships, Structure

Note. (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013)

In the section of the business case, four of the five literature themes overlap with each of the subsections. Building sustainable societies coincides with the literature theme of structure in that it refers to a set of guidelines to follow to relate a business to education in order to be sustainable. These guidelines include “critical thinking, communication, and problem solving” (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013, p. 8). The subsection saves lives also refers to structure. The framework suggests that keeping employees, companies, and the general workforce healthy in a medical sense creates a stable environment. Promoting economic growth overlaps with the literature theme of customer development because it relates to reaching out to the customer base of students and increasing their educational opportunities. Strengthening the local workforce refers to how education, in general, of employees helps businesses to be productive and to grow, which overlaps with the literature theme of training. Expanding business opportunities fits with the literature themes of relationships and customer development. When businesses invest in education, it can lead to new business relationships and shareholders, along with a potentially new customer base. Lastly, boosting wages refers to the literature theme of the structure of a business. Higher levels of education leads to economic growth through wage increases, which positively affects businesses.

In the section of aligning business and education, two of the five literature themes overlap with the subsections. Core business refers to how business operations, including factors such as policies and human resources, can address challenges in education, which relates to the literature theme of structure. The next three sections, social investment and philanthropy, advocacy and public policy engagement, and partnerships and collective action, all relate to the literature theme of relationships. These sections refer to relationships and engagement with the community through volunteering, engaging in policy, and creating partnerships, like minded individuals and organizations.

In the section of the three-part process for engagement, four of the five literature themes overlap with the subsections. The section is split into three parts, with the first two parts in reference to a set of five guidelines. Fostering innovation in education means involving new technology and products to enhance educations, which directly relates to the literature theme of innovation. Addressing operational risks relates to the literature theme of structure in that it refers to carefully constructing internal company policies for best business practices. Improving brand leadership and enhancing corporate retention overlaps with the literature themes of relationships and structure. Relationships are formed by sharing activities and values with other educational organizations. Structure is created through strong brand awareness. To have brand awareness, a company and its leadership need to fully understand the rules, focus, and goals set. Boosting employee morale and retention refers to providing training for employees so that they learn and improve upon skills, which directly relates to the literature theme of training. Boosting morale also means encouraging employees to involve themselves in the community through volunteering, which boosts relationships. The last of the five guidelines for parts one and two, developing capacity of future employees, overlaps with the literature theme of training.

Developing employees' capacity refers to providing workplace training for individuals to improve the work environment and experiences for both new and future employees. The third part of the process, be smart, is mainly related to the literature themes of relationships and structure. According to the framework, being smart means aligning with government education standards, partnering with experts, and building positive relationships to improve the outcomes of companies and the education business in general. Being smart also means building accountability in a business in order to be results driven, which overlaps with the literature theme of structure (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013).

Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship. The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, briefly introduced in chapter one, is a theory that was born from two components: Resource Based Theory (RBT) and entrepreneurship. RBT is a standalone theory, with roots on the focus of resources enabling organizations. The theory was first defined by Edith Penrose in 1959. Penrose defined RBT as the physical items bought or created by a firm, as well as the people involved in the creation or execution of them for their companies (Penrose, 1959). However, the theory, with all its current components, was formalized by Jay Barney in 1991 and is also known as Resource Based View. RBT claims that the strategic resources of a business are what give it a competitive advantage over other similar businesses. The theory suggests that competitive advantages can be found and innovated from within a company using the resources available (Barney, 1991).

RBT is characterized by four learning objectives: diversity of resources, use of resources that limit competition, limiting imitation of resources, and using innovation and ambiguity to limit competition. Diversity of resources refers to the importance of heterogeneity in tools used by businesses. By having varying types of resources, or resources that other businesses do not

have or are not aware of, businesses have a better chance at succeeding in innovative opportunities. Use of resources that limit competition also refers to using resources in innovative ways that differ from other businesses. Limiting imitation of resources means to create innovative practices in such a way that business competition cannot replicate the same strategies. Lastly, using innovation and ambiguity to limit competition is directly related to limiting imitation of resources. If a business innovates new strategies to help them succeed, they can limit imitation of their strategies by being ambiguous about them, or not sharing specific details with their competition.

RBT also makes a distinction between tangible and intangible resources. Tangible resources are those that are clearly seen with the ability to be quantified. Intangible resources are those that are not quantifiable, including aspects such as knowledge, skills, reputation, and culture. Both types of resources are necessary for businesses to follow RBT and hold a competitive advantage over others (Kellermanns et al., 2016).

Sharon Alvarez and Lowell Busenitz published an article in 2001 combining RBT with entrepreneurship to create the resource based theory of entrepreneurship. When RBT is transformed into resource based theory of entrepreneurship, all of the aspects of RBT still apply and two additional concepts based on entrepreneurship are added: recognition of opportunities and organization and analysis of resources. Recognition of opportunities refers to the fact that searching for and discovering new opportunities as an entrepreneur acts as a beneficial resource. The analysis of resources includes the entrepreneur's organization and combination of resources as a resource in itself (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001).

The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, similar to the Framework for Business Engagement in Education, has varying connections to the literature themes and sub-research questions identified as training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Table 2 distinguishes which sections of the theory overlap with which of the five literature themes, relating it to the literature researched for this study.

Table 2

The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship With the Overlapping Literature Themes.

Theory Concepts	Overlapping Literature Themes
Diversity of resources	Structure
Use of resources that limit competition	Innovation
Limiting imitation of resources	Innovation
Using innovation and ambiguity to limit competition	Innovation, Relationships
Recognition of opportunities	Innovation, Relationships
Organization and analysis of resources	Structure

Note. (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001)

The six concepts in The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship overlap with three of the literature themes. The diversity of resources concept is related to the literature theme of structure. To have varied resources, the owner of a business must develop a plan to acquire and use the resources. In order to develop such a plan, goals must be set, which refers to the structure of a business.

The next concept, the use of resources that limit competition, is directly related to the literature theme of innovation. To use resources in new and different ways than others, business

owners and staff need to be innovative in their thinking and actions. Doing so can lead to a competitive advantage over others.

Limiting imitation of resources also relates to the literature theme of innovation. Similar to the previous concept, this concept requires a business needs to think and act in inventive ways. A business is innovative and strategic by limiting the ability for someone else to copy what a resource is and how the resource is used.

The concept of using innovation and ambiguity to limit competition relates to the literature themes of innovation and relationships. The use of innovative practices directly relates to the literature theme of innovation. This concept also correlates with the literature theme of relationships. Associations with other individuals and businesses is beneficial to business success; however, by remaining ambiguous about new and innovative practices, a business can be the first to implement a practice and gain a competitive advantage. This means that business owners should be prudent about the intensity of their relationships with other companies as to not overshare information.

The following concept, related to the entrepreneurial side of RBT, recognition of opportunities, also relates to the literature themes of innovation and relationships. An entrepreneur must be innovative to recognize and invent new business opportunities. Also, through relationship-building with other similar companies, an entrepreneur can analyze their business practices and use them to help inform new business opportunities.

The last concept, also connected to the entrepreneurial side of RBT, organization and analysis of resources, is related to the literature theme of structure. Staying organized and efficiently analyzing resources and business opportunities means that an entrepreneur and

business owner must set a plan and goals for their business. Setting a concrete plan creates a sound structure for a business to operate smoothly.

Along with each of these concepts, the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship relates to sustaining businesses, which can be beneficial in exploring strategies to sustain learning centers. By keeping the business practices of a small business innovative using the strategies provided by this theory, the business has the opportunity to sustain itself by continually changing and growing with the world around it in order to stay relevant. Along with innovation, building new relationships with similar businesses and recognizing new partnership and alliance opportunities may allow businesses to stay relevant and sustain their companies as well.

Summary. The Framework for Business Engagement in Education and the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship provide guidance as business theories to help sustain various types of business. More specifically, the Framework for Business Engagement in Education focuses on the importance of education-related businesses. The framework is meant to influence the growth and spread of private education businesses as a means to the improvement of education. In contrast, the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship is strictly a business theory that focuses on keeping a business innovative and competitive in order to reach new levels of business success. Through both theoretical frameworks differ, they are comparable in that they both strive to provide insightful business strategies that encourage businesses to sustain their practices.

Historical Context

The concept of a learning center stems from the notion of supplementary academic education. This type of education includes all types of academic assistance outside of regular school hours in the classroom. Supplementary academic education includes a variety of public

and private options such as test preparation from schools, after-school academic activities and programs, private tutoring, learning centers, test prep centers, and online tutoring options. (Park et al., 2016). When looking specifically at learning centers, there are a variety of choices for students in early education, primary and secondary school, college students, and post-collegiate assistance (Stahl & Henk, 1993). Learning centers, in general, are meant to focus on student academic needs with one-on-one instruction and individualized tutoring plans (Christ, 1971). Learning centers have the potential to benefit many types of students academically, especially those who may have fallen behind or students with learning disabilities (Park et al., 2016).

Students with learning disabilities tend to struggle in a general classroom in school systems. According to Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, learning disabled students are the largest category of students who receive special education services. Students with learning disabilities often struggle to maintain a high level of academic excellence in the school system. Overall, these students earn lower grades and one third of them have been held back a grade level at least once. Students with learning disabilities have goals similar to the general student population upon graduating high school, including going to college and joining the workforce. However, these goals are difficult to manage and achieve, especially when the students are frequently placed in a general education classroom with little to no individualized instruction. These students would benefit academically from individualized help and may receive outside of school hours at learning centers.

The successful education of students at a learning center is beneficial for both student and business success (Holliday, 2012). Student education in general is an important topic - students who do not graduate high school are at a great disadvantage when applying for jobs and working towards being productive members of society (Amos, 2008). One way to help students reach

these educational goals and learn new academic strategies is through tutoring (Anoka-Ramsey Community College, 2007). Supplementary education, such as tutoring, is beneficial to student academic outcomes and has become an integral piece in the education system (Park et al., 2016). Student education in relation to tutoring leads to enhanced learning outcomes (Truuvert, 2014).

Tutoring, assisting students with their academics outside of the classroom to gain a deeper understanding of subjects, as well as boosting academic confidence and grades, is an effective method of teaching in learning centers. As an example, Holliday (2012) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of tutoring and education at learning centers. This was examined through the results of tutoring and whether or not learning had occurred for each student involved. Participants were students receiving tutoring who were enrolled in community college science courses, along with their five tutors. The exact number of participants was not stated, however, each of the five tutors worked approximately twenty hours per week with various students. Tutors were given a set of operational definitions that defined student learning and were told to use that list to classify the effectiveness of each tutoring session. Data was analyzed using the Chi-square goodness of fit test based on student results with each tutor. Results showed that students gained a significant amount of knowledge at a faster rate from the tutoring sessions and that tutoring proved to be a successful form of education, especially as a way to benefit students who have fallen behind their classmates.

Private learning centers and businesses, those which provide supplementary academic options for students at a cost, have become increasingly popular. Park et al. (2016) adapted a table using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In the years 2003 and 2012, PISA calculated what percentage of fifteen-year-old students took part in

supplementary academic education or tutoring outside of regular school hours. PISA made this calculation for many countries, including the United States. Results showed that there was a substantial increase in supplementary academic education for many of the countries, especially in the United States. Specifically, in 2003 in the United States, just over twelve percent of fifteen-year-old students participated in supplementary academic education. In the year 2012, that percentage increased to seventeen percent.

These centers' popularity is rooted in the desire to boost student academics, as well as a way to cope with the disappointment in school systems (Amos, 2008; Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Park et al., 2016; UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013). When the needs of students are not fully met within regular school hours, especially for students with disabilities, outside help in the form of centers is a viable option for families (Park et al., 2016). Using learning centers, educators can individually help students reach their educational goals and learn new academic strategies through tutoring (Anoka-Ramsey Community College, 2007).

Literature Themes

A multitude of peer reviewed sources were gathered from books and online databases containing journal articles and research studies. From those sources, five themes emerged that support the problem of exploring strategies to sustain businesses: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. The themes are analyzed through research involving education businesses, general small businesses, entrepreneurship, and business management. Each theme is detailed thorough empirical research related to strategies to sustain businesses similar to learning centers.

Training. In the context of a business, education or otherwise, training refers to the instruction, guidance, and support given to employees in order to improve learning outcomes

(Birmingham et al., 2005; Raley et al., 2005; Schumann et al., 2013). Employees benefit from training related to their professional duties and responsibilities before beginning to work at a certain job, in addition to the knowledge and skills obtained from having completed their academic education in a related field (Simpson et al., 2004).

In regard to education businesses such as learning centers, teachers and tutors both benefit from continued job education (Hord, 1987; Radford et al., 2015; Sadioglu et al., 2013; Schumann et al., 2013). The growth of teachers' knowledge, including professional development and continually staying up to date in their understanding of educational strategies, leads to continued innovation and improvement. This betterment aids students and businesses alike in achieving positive outcomes including academic excellence and business growth (Hord, 1987). When teachers are educated about students' learning needs and taught specific skills to assist them, positive results are observed (Radford et al., 2015; Sadioglu et al., 2013; Schumann et al., 2013). More specifically in relation to learning centers, tutor education leads to student and business success as well (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Truuvert, 2014; Valkenburg, 2010). In order to educate management and staff, on the job training can be provided through various mediums, including peer and coworker observation (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Truuvert, 2014).

One well-established method of tutor training and education is through peer observations. Bell and Mladenovic (2008) studied peer observations for teachers at the University of Sydney where the university's program for tutor development conducted the study. The researchers explored tutor development through the school's academic program to understand the efficacy of peer observations. Of the 160 tutors in the program, 52 tutors elected to take part in the study and partner with another tutor for observations. Of the initial 52 participants, end results and data were collected from 32 of them. These partnered tutors were given instruction to observe one

another and provide feedback during tutoring sessions for one semester. Peer observation forms and an end-of-semester survey were sources of qualitative and quantitative data. This form, which the participants types up and sent in after class, was based on a student feedback form that the university previously used to measure the success of the tutors and their teaching sessions. After completion, each tutor was given the feedback form completed by their peer tutor partner. The tutors were then given the opportunity to meet as a group and discuss their experiences from the study with an academic assistant available for discussion guidance and resources for each tutor.

The results from Bell and Mladenovic's (2008) study from the peer observation forms depicted a collection of mostly positive feedback for their peers. Results also showed that the majority of participants found the observations to be valuable and 88% of participants planned to change their teaching as a result of the observations and feedback. When the peer observers were asked about areas of improvement, their answers fell into into one of four categories: aiding students in understanding material, student participation in sessions, presentations skills, and the structure of sessions. Following this study, peer observations were adopted as an effective part of the tutor development program at the University of Sydney.

Continuing with peer observations, Truuvvert (2014) wrote a journal article for *Studies in Higher Education* discussing a program he developed to advance the learning and capabilities of tutors. The tutors involved in the study were assisting with an undergraduate class in finance at Macquarie University in Australia. Similar to the research at the University of Sydney, the main focus of the program was to include outside observers and peer observation of tutoring sessions. It also involved third-party feedback, self-reflection, and feedback from students that was collected through surveys. These written surveys were given during class time in their final

lecture of the semester by the faculty at the university. The program was meant to assist in the consistency of the information that tutors relayed to their students. This helped to ensure that students were given the necessary tools to comprehend every portion of the lecture material for their finance class. After the learning program was introduced, students reported improvements in their tutoring sessions and the tutors improved in their teaching skills and knowledge. Tutor improvement was made clear through the student feedback stating that their tutors were more helpful in the provision and understanding of the material, along with giving practical goals for students to achieve. Students reported that the course goals and standards were made clear through the tutoring process and that the material was fully covered. Overall, the study showed a notable improvement in the learning experiences for the students due to the training of their tutors.

Similar to training educators, training also benefits the management and staff of small businesses (Belitski & Heron, 2017; Esterhuizen, Schutte, & Du Toit, 2012; Fiet, 2001; Huang & Cho, 2010; Oana, 2012; Raley et al., 2005; Simpson et al., 2004; Solesvik, Westhead, & Matlay, 2014). Job training for students, educators, and employees can contribute to a healthy and stable organization. When employees are properly trained, they have the knowledge and skills to positively contribute to the operation and growth of a business. Staff training, in general, through professional development, job training, and continued education, can encourage business success (Birmingham et al., 2005; Raley et al., 2005). On the job staff training has an overall positive effect on the ability for businesses to sustain and grow (Simpson et al., 2004).

Simpson et al. (2004) used grounded theory to conduct a research study to better understand success through education, training, and experience for employees in small businesses. They used an inductive, systematic approach with qualitative data and gathered

information from fourteen small business owners through semi-structured interviews. The owners of these businesses had anywhere from one to eighteen employees and were located in Sheffield, England. Results were gathered from the answers given during the interviews with the business owners. Each business owner had a different definition of success, meaning that each of their businesses were at varying levels of success in relation to sustaining businesses. The varying definitions of success included expansion and profit, workplace enjoyment, a feeling of achievement, and success through recognition and accolades. Results of the interviews showed the business owners felt that prior knowledge, having training and formal education in the past, was an important factor in small business success. Additionally, the training and education of employees positively affected each business' success as defined by their individual definitions. Though the results, which showed varying opinions on the definition of success for small businesses, each business owner felt as though varying forms of education and training for employees was effective for each of their businesses and related to the success of their businesses.

With respect to management and business owner training, small businesses are formed by entrepreneurs, many new to the world of business, who may benefit from education and training tailored specifically to entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial education refers to educating and training aspiring business owners about the intricacies of entrepreneurship. Aspiring entrepreneurs benefit from to understanding what it means to be an entrepreneur and how to effectively open, run, and grow a business (Belitski & Heron, 2017; Fiet, 2001; Sánchez, 2013; Solesvik et al., 2014).

Sánchez (2013), a researcher and educator from Spain, conducted a study on an entrepreneurship education program to see if it was beneficial for students who may want to be entrepreneurs and start their own small businesses. The program was added as an elective class to secondary schools in Spain. Students who took part in the study were given a pre-assessment questionnaire of their entrepreneurial inclinations, which included rating their feelings toward self-efficacy, proactiveness, risk, and intention toward self-employment. The participants in the study included 710 secondary school students who were given the option of taking the elective entrepreneurial class. Prior to taking the classes and discovered through the results of the initial questionnaire, there was no significant difference in the entrepreneurial inclinations of the students in both groups. Even though all of the students had a similar level of interest in entrepreneurship, just over half of the students chose not to take the elective and were in the control group, and just under half of the students chose to take the elective entrepreneurial program and were in the experimental group. The entrepreneurship education program, offered over eight months, involved education about financing, marketing, accounting, and managing a business.

After the 8 months ended in Sánchez's study, results were calculated based on a questionnaire comparable to the one given initially. Results showed that the students involved in the experimental group, the ones who chose to take the entrepreneurial elective, became more interested in becoming entrepreneurs with raised scores in self-efficacy, proactiveness, risk-taking, and their inclination toward self-employment. The control group, the students who did not choose to take the elective, showed no difference in their questionnaire ratings. This shows that having exposure to entrepreneurship education and training early on had a measurably

positive effect on student interest and the knowledge needed to enter the workforce as entrepreneurs.

Solesvik et al. (2014) studied three universities in the Ukraine to understand the position of entrepreneurship in education. The study involved providing students with entrepreneurship education in order to understand the impact that the education had on the students' intentions for future career opportunities. The researchers gathered survey information from 321 students involved in either bachelor or masters business programs at the universities. Entrepreneurship education was provided through seminars and lectures. The surveys were structured questionnaires and were given to students in the control group (those who did not take the class) and students who received the entrepreneurship education. The results were very similar to Sánchez's study in that the students benefitted from entrepreneurship education. They showed that students who participated in entrepreneurship education and training had a higher intention of setting out as an entrepreneur and creating their own small businesses or forming new roles in small private or public companies.

Another form of training entrepreneurs is through mentoring. St-Jean (2012) researched mentoring used as a professional development method to train and assist new entrepreneurs so that they may be successful in their chosen careers. Research was completed and participants were chosen from a business related mentor network in Québec, Canada. The network, available for beginner entrepreneurs in business, provides mentoring across the province of Québec. The participants included everyone who was taking part in the mentor network program at the time of the study. There were 981 individuals in the program, and 360 of them chose to take part in the study. The participation sample was approximately half male and half female. Each participant was paired with an available mentor, with about 80% of the mentors being male and the rest

female. Of the participants, just over half obtained a college degree and ranged in age from young adults to middle and older adults. Over half of the participants had less than 5 years of experience in their chosen field, and 24% did not have any prior experience in their chosen field. The participants were given an online questionnaire in French that was later translated to English. The results of the study showed that the most effective factors of the mentoring process were how the mentor's career related to that of the mentee, as well as a psychological connection and their ability to serve as a role model for the mentees. In the mentoring process, the pairs who felt most successful built trust between one another. Trusting a mentor is a critical step to taking advice and learning from strategies. When two individuals in a mentoring scenario trust one another, they have confidence in each other and are more willing to be guided into new learning situations.

A study conducted by Cunningham, Huchting, Fogarty, and Graf (2017) proved another form of professional development to be successful. Their study was conducted at a Catholic PK-8 school where a professional development program was used to train teachers. The purpose of the study was to analyze the professional development program to understand its impact on educator classroom instruction and student engagement. The school, following a policy change, began admitting students with moderate disabilities. The teachers at the school needed assistance in understanding how to implement inclusivity, teaching to all different types of students, in their classrooms. Therefore, a professional development program was formed as an opportunity to train the teachers by giving them the information they needed to work with every type of student. The professional development model used was designed from a framework created by Universal Design for Learning Center for Applied Special Technology (UDL). The training program included rounds of one-on-one teaching sessions with the educators. The sessions were led by

academic coaches from UDL. Prior to their training sessions, the teachers at the school had little to no experience teaching students with disabilities. The principal of the school and eight of the classrooms teachers participated in the study. All of the educators involved had an average of ten year of teaching experience.

The data was transcribed and coded qualitatively, and the coded data was member-checked by the coaches at UDL. The data analyzed from this study was taken from the one-on-one sessions and observations in the classrooms at the school. Semi-structured interviews took place during the one-on-one sessions as well. Interviews also took place prior to and after the professional development program was implemented. The results of the study found that both classroom instruction and student engagement improved after the professional development program was implemented. The teachers and staff at the school approved of the professional learning that took place and expressed their interest in further training and learning opportunities for their professional growth.

Relationships. Relationships involve aspects such as networking and making a connection with individuals through varying mediums both digitally and in person (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Epstein, 2002; Jochims, 2016). Building relationships with others through partnerships, networking, and collaboration allows for meaningful connections between businesses and their communities (Epstein, 2002). Through networking within a community, small business owners can advertise their business as a way to sustain and increase revenue. The community may include clients, families, potential employees, and other related businesses (Gerhardt et al., 2014). Networking and collaborating with other businesses and individuals can be used as a marketing technique to inform others about business goals and practices (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013).

Gerhardt et al. (2014) conducted a study about ways to increase revenue for small businesses based on marketing through networking. They chose to research an example of a successful franchise, McDonald's. This popular franchise focused on networking with the community around them through marketing to boost sales, using a three level approach that included national, regional, and local advertising strategies. The strategy at the national level involved establishing partnerships with other large, national businesses. The regional level involved all regional franchise owners meeting and collaborating in groups to plan regional advertising campaigns. Lastly, the strategy at the local level involved networking with companies and individuals in their local communities as a way of advertising. Gerhardt et al. applied what they learned from the McDonald's franchise to networking through marketing strategies for small businesses. The researchers state the importance of building relationships at the regional and local levels, depending on the size of the small business. They concluded that the most important form of advertising involves individual owners networking within their community and advertising locally to increase revenue for their businesses.

Networking with individuals outside of a company can be an effective business strategy with additional beneficial outcomes other than those from networking with coworkers or team members. Keeping an open line of communication, understanding, and sharing ideas with other businesses can be a source of the innovation of better business practices (Epstein, 2002; Lencioni, 2012; Rese & Baier, 2011; Zapalska et al., 2015). Organized methods of communication and a clear and strategic plan of action are integral components of properly networking with other individuals. For example, networking and sharing ideas with individuals in similar fields of business has proven to be a popular strategy of business growth and organization (Rese & Baier, 2011; Zapalska et al., 2015). Additionally, networking to grow a

business can be successful when a business understands the reasons behind collaborating with others and how they plan to do so (Rese & Baier, 2011).

A large part of business relationships involve networking, trading knowledge, and gaining resources through connections with others, both inside and outside of a business. Sharing ideas with others is an important step of networking that can help achieve business success (Bond, 2012; Epstein, 2002; Esterhuizen et al., 2012; Hord, 1987; Jochims, 2016). Sharing information within a company is necessary for the company to function at full capacity, otherwise communication can become lost among individuals. This is especially true in terms of sharing information about the structure, the mission and rules, that a company follows (Jochims, 2016).

Along with networking, another factor of relationship building is involving the community surrounding a business (Epstein, 2002; Hord, 1987; Paluta et al., 2016; Yang, 2016). By keeping the surrounding community involved, especially families and other businesses with common goals, a business can share ideas and gain perspective from those around them. All persons who are stakeholders in the business, such as families, clients, surrounding businesses, and neighbors should stay involved (Epstein, 2002; Paluta, Lower, Anderson-Butcher, Gibson, & Iachini 2016).

In the primary and secondary education businesses, building relationships with the community includes building a bond with the parents of the students involved. Looking further into relationships, Paluta et al. (2016) examined the relationship between the quality and the outcomes of after school programs that were a part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. The 21st CCLC model, authorized by the United State Congress in 1994, was created as a way to provide more support and opportunities for students and their

families. This model involved several types of programs including youth development, academic enhancement, and support programs for parents. Data was collected during the 2012-2013 school year from 405 21st CCLC programs in the midwest of the United States. Each of these programs served students in elementary, middle, or high school. Just over half of the programs served elementary school students. These programs were operated by community partners, such as the YMCA, by the schools or districts, and through education centers, cities, and universities. Halfway into the school year, the 405 21st CCLC programs were sent a survey as an evaluation of their programs. This online questionnaire took approximately twenty minutes to complete and paper copies were also provided as needed. Results showed a weak relationship between perceived program quality and outcomes. The strongest correlation was the relationship between family involvement and outcomes, which displayed the importance of building family relationships within the education community. The outcomes included the perceptions of student development, academic learning, and parent and family engagement. These results point to the need for positive relationships between educational programs for young students and the families of those students.

Innovation. Innovation is the creation of new ideas, concepts, structures, and resources in order to have a unique business that provides services unparalleled to others (Bond, 2012; Omri et al., 2015; Petersen, 2014; Rese & Baier, 2011). Innovation means to create something either completely new or an improved version of something already in existence (Omri et al., 2015). The theme of innovation focuses on creative people, practices, and resources.

Esterhuizen et al. (2012) state that innovation is essential for businesses to stay competitive and grow financially. The researchers break down innovation into two categories: product and process. Innovation of products involves developing tangible services. Innovation of

process involves intangibles including new ideas, improvements on current ideas, and business procedures. Along with these two categories, the researchers note the idea of strategy innovation. This idea places a focus on strategic implementation of creative business ideas in a long-term manner, giving companies a competitive edge and chances for innovative success.

Individuals can be innovative by introducing new ways of thinking to enhance a business. Petersen (2014) wrote an article for *Education Next*, a journal about educational policy, in which she studied three education entrepreneurs in order to understand what made them successful and how their success can inform future innovative endeavors in education. Petersen focused on three successful education entrepreneurs: Larry Berger, Jonathan Harber, and Ron Packard. Each of these entrepreneurs found success through innovative uses of technology in the business of education. Petersen looked at what made these entrepreneurs successful and how their success may inform innovation in future educational endeavors. Larry Berger formed a company called Wireless Generation. In the year 2000, he was an educational innovator by incorporating technology in schooling in an unfamiliar way. Technology in education at that time was mostly focused on instruction, whereas Berger's company, Wireless Generation, focused on the needs of school and teachers to organize data and customise the curriculum. Jonathan Harber, similar to Berger, founded SchoolNet in 1998. SchoolNet, a tool for educators and school districts, gathers data to support academic improvements for students and to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Harber and Berger both found innovative ways to provide schools with educational support through technology. The last educational entrepreneur discussed in Petersen's article is Ron Packard, who founded K12 in the year 2000. Packard, a former investment banker, created K12 as a virtual school for both online and blended learning for primary and secondary school

students. K12 was a company that was innovative for its time and fulfilled a need for more innovative learning options that can be customized for students.

From her research on each of these entrepreneurial individuals, Petersen (2014) summarized what we can learn from their success in order to understand future innovation in education. Each of the entrepreneurs had a scalable, positive impact on the education community through patience, creativity, and adjustments. A commonality between the entrepreneurs is that they each were relentless in their task to solve an intellectual problem and were inventive in their solutions. Another commonality Petersen found is that these successful education companies created, along with others in similar positions, discovered a new way to gain revenue through technology and innovation. This differs from the common way through the state and district school systems, where most K-12 companies are situated.

Other than innovation through technology, businesses can find innovation through other types of resources. Omri et al. (2015) define innovation as “newness” (p. 1082). For businesses, this includes factors such as introducing new products, new methods and procedures, and new marketing strategies. The researchers conducted an empirical study to determine factors that affect the success of small businesses. They used qualitative and quantitative methods to gather their data through questionnaires given to their participants, 228 Tunisian businesses. The researchers first surveyed the businesses in the years 2010 and 2011. Then, using the data gathered from the surveys, questionnaires were created discussing human, social, and financial aspects of the businesses. More specifically, the researchers asked about innovation. Questions about innovation included asking about new products, new versions of products, new production methods, new versions of production methods, new markets, new strategies, new supply sources, new ways to manage finances, and new structures, systems, and procedures. The researchers

discovered that small businesses with great accessibility to financial and human resources are more likely to be innovative in their businesses practices, which can be a source of business success. Financial capability can assist in innovation by being able to produce new products and new marketing strategies. Having human resources and a collaborative team means that innovation can happen through new business methods and procedures.

In further exploration of innovation through management, Rese and Baier (2011) conducted research involving success factors in small and medium size businesses through innovation management in Germany. In this study, innovation management is described as tangible and intangible tools that enable management and employees of a business to work together under a common goal. The researchers compared success factors proven empirically with traditional factors discussed by the businesses. The empirical factors were network-related and involved networking through team organization and cooperation. The traditional factors included aspects of marketing and technology. In gathering participants, 271 German firms and research institutes received and returned a questionnaire in both the summer and fall of 2005 discussing network-related success factors. The participating firms were ones that developed innovative products, creative in either process or procedure. The managers of each of the firms and research institutes were the ones to respond to the survey. Results showed that along with traditional factors of success working for these businesses, networking was also an equally important factor to maintain an innovative environment through small business management. Each of these factors were shown to support the businesses by aiding in smooth operation and providing potential opportunities for expansion.

Innovation has a unique place in small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures in that there is more room for flexibility and creativity. This is due to the smaller business size and the

opportunities to recreate the structure of a business regarding aspects such as goals and customer development (Bush, 2016). Oftentimes, innovative opportunities are not sought out by businesses due to the fact that they tend to focus on their current resources and guidelines instead of venturing out to create new ideas and visions (Hsiu-Li Chen, 2005). By embracing an innovative mindset, educators, business owners, and entrepreneurs can set out to create positive changes in new and competitive ways.

Structure. Structure includes the established rules, goals, and norms of a business (Aurini, 2012; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Coulter, 2013; Gostick & Elton, 2012). The theme of structure discusses the importance of clear, shared business norms that integrate well with one another. Bolman and Deal (2017) discuss the importance of the structure of a business in their book, *Reframing Organizations*. They reference the four frames of an organization as the structural frame, the human resource frame, the political frame, and the symbolic frame. The structural frame is viewed through structure and order, reward and punishment, and following rules based on company handbooks, contracts, and other important documents. The human resource frame is centered on human interaction, interpersonal relationships, and managing relationships. The political frame involves decision making, uses the power of politics, negotiation, and bargaining to achieve the desired results. The symbolic frame embodies true meaning through belief, faith, mission, and values. This frame involves the inclusion of events in a business such as rituals and ceremonies as a way to make members feel included. Though each frame helps to build the structure of a business, the structural frame is most directly related to the literature theme of structure. When changes are made through the structural frame, it means that adaptations are made through rules and regulations. Ensuring a solid structural frame of a business means placing an emphasis on productivity and standards, along with having clear goals

and tight coordination through teamwork and understand roles in a business. Bolman and Deal believe that people are generally goal oriented. By having clear, easy to understand, measurable goals, the structure of a business is clearer and employees are more willing to work towards their goals.

Structure can be beneficial in both generic small business environments and educational business environments. When there is a lack of structure, the unclear business arrangement can lead to a stressful work environment as shown by a study conducted by Norton (2002) looking into learning center managers' job stress. Norton stated that the stress of center managers is comparable to the stress of other employees in academic roles and institutions, with several unique differences. While learning center managers do not necessarily have the stress of working with faculty members, the managers do have the stress of taking on many types of roles at one time. These roles may include teaching, accounting, office management, and advertising. Norton looked to identify the sources of stress for managers, contributing stress factors, and strategies to cope with the stress. The researcher gave 60 participants The Job Stress Survey, created by Vagg and Spielberger in 1999, during the spring semester of the year 2000. The participants varied in age, demographic, and levels of management experience. Ages ranged from young adults to middle and older adults. The majority of participants held at least their master's degree, while twenty percent held a doctoral degree. As for levels of experience, time spent in their current position ranged from one to twenty-two years and learning center management experience ranged from one to twenty-six years. Results from Norton's study showed that the most severe stressor was problems with management supervisors, lack of support from supervisors, and negative relationships between coworkers. Norton suggests that improving functions and the structure of the workplace including tasks, pace, and the physical environment, would enhance

relationships and improve the learning centers. When the structure of a business is well-defined, employees have the opportunity to understand their work relationships with one another, which can alleviate stress.

For a company to have a cooperative coworking space and working structure, a shared set of social rules and norms should be recognized between all individuals involved (Jochims, 2016; UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013; Yang, 2016). When everyone on a team is working toward a common goal, the team can find it beneficial to recognize and support the rules and morals of the company, as well as human rights in general. Promoting equality and teamwork through shared social rules strengthens teams and businesses (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013). Best practices and social rules for coworkers can be followed through understanding the goals of the company they are associated with (Jochims, 2016).

Another crucial way to enforce a strong business structure is to have the leadership of a business understand the environment. When a company is formed, the leaders and management involved need to be educated on the intricacies of running a business to understand the focus of their business and the rules given to employees (Oana, 2012). This includes being educated on leadership, knowledge management, and business operation strategies. To run a successful business, leaders need to be aware of effective operating practices (Covey & Merrill, 2006; Esterhuizen et al., 2012; Ferdowsian, 2016; Gostick & Elton, 2012; Holliday, 2012; Lencioni, 2012; Oana, 2012; Simpson et al., 2004). For example, in a learning center, administration need to be aware of best tutoring practices to effectively support students and to find success through positive student outcomes (Holliday, 2012). Even though prior knowledge and experience are beneficial to the success of a business, education and on the job training for management also have a positive effect on business success, including business growth and expansion (Simpson et

al., 2004). Company leaders have the responsibility to acquire, share, and utilize management strategies through education and practice (Esterhuizen et al., 2012). Management strategies to ensure a solid business structure include but are not limited to education of organizational trust, focus and intention of business practices, and organizational health (Covey & Merrill, 2006; Gostick & Elton, 2012; Lencioni, 2012). Education about organizational trust focuses on understanding how to trust the opinions and suggestions of team members in order to successfully and smoothly work together (Covey & Merrill, 2006). In order to understand the focus of a business, leaders need to educate their employees about a clear mission and goals set to continually improve the business (Gostick & Elton, 2012). Through being educated about organizational health, business owners will have a better understanding of the morality and integrity of their businesses (Lencioni, 2012).

When all of these structural aspects are brought together cohesively, the result is called tight coupling. The concept of tight coupling is one stream of thought and action that fits well with the structure of a successful business. In reference to businesses, tight coupling means having an organizational structure with rules and norms that are mutually understood and are enforced through observation and management. This means that clear goals are established and rules are set that everyone in the business is aware of and can follow (Aurini, 2012).

Ferdowsian (2016) found success in tight coupling when he conducted a study addressing issues that prevent companies from sustaining success. Success, or excellence in this study, is defined by ten critical factors: products, financials, stakeholders, employees, leadership, societal, operational, innovation, alignment, and ethical excellence. The researcher gathered data from firms through a multiple case study. The firms involved included three groups that represented a variety of outcomes: firms who were recipients of various rewards related to success and

business excellence, Fortune-500 companies that have proven their success and responsibility, and firms with known ethical violations. Data was collected through the case studies, research, and field observations. Each of the firms were assessed based on an eleven point scale involving eleven different factors: meeting or exceeding the organizational excellence as defined by a variety of business award standards, following the criteria for being a socially responsible business, a compliant and ethical management approach, adding societal value and meeting the needs of an ever-changing business environment, delivering results with little to no internal conflict, providing a meaningful business purpose, providing professional development for employees, developing leadership that serve as positive role models, effectively collaborating with team members, demonstrating leadership and initiative, and displaying ethical and social responsibility. The firms were assessed based on each of these criteria through the three methods of data collection. Results from the data collection showed that to obtain business success, each of the eleven factors must play a role in the structure of a business. The results also highlighted the importance of the tight coupling, especially when relating to the categories of ethics and excellence.

Customer development. Customer development is focused on understanding the needs of a client base to better serve the population of a business (Bush, 2016; King-Sears, 2007; Yang, 2016; Zickel & Arnold, 2001). The theme of customer development is about understanding the needs of clients, putting the needs of clients first, and relating to a client base and gaining customers through marketing. Customer development in relation to education, specifically learning centers, includes tending to the needs of the client families and the students gaining academic support from the centers. In regard to learning centers, the staff must be educated about the needs of the clients to grow a customer base (Amos, 2008; Anoka-Ramsey Community

College, 2007; Holliday, 2012; Park et al., 2016; Truuvert, 2014). When creating a learning center business in which the clients are students with learning disabilities, the center should cater to the students' specific needs. In learning centers for students with disabilities, students must be educated both academically and socially about their own specific needs (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD], 2011; Merlone & Moran, 2008; Radford et al., 2015; Sadioglu et al., 2013; Valkenburg, 2010; Zickel & Arnold, 2001). Teaching students with disabilities how to self-advocate will help them become more successful and, in turn, create a successful business that students with learning disabilities can benefit from (Merlone & Moran, 2008; Zickel & Arnold, 2001).

Merlone and Moran (2008) conducted a study about the importance of students with learning disabilities understanding self-advocacy. The study involved fifth grade students with learning disabilities. The fifth graders were taught about learning styles and the intricacies of special education over a ten week period. Their lessons included information about strategies to cope with learning differences and how to advocate for themselves. Surveys were given at the beginning and end of the unit to assess student knowledge and attitudes about the subject. At the end of the ten week unit, students were assessed on knowledge gained from the course, asked what they found most important, and asked their opinions if the unit would be beneficial to other students with learning disabilities. The results showed that the students, in general, had a more positive attitude and better understanding about their disabilities after the unit. Initially, students felt as though their future career options were limited, but after the unit, their opinions made a positive change. The unit gave the students with learning disabilities more confidence in their abilities to learn and succeed, resulting in a positive academic experience.

Along with giving student clients the tools they need to succeed in learning centers, students and businesses also benefit from educating tutors on strategies and teaching methods for working with students with learning disabilities (Merlone & Moran, 2008; Radford et al., 2015; Sadioglu et al., 2013; Valkenburg, 2010). One way for educators to help the clients of learning centers, in this case students with disabilities, recommended by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD, 2011), is to give a comprehensive assessment as a way for teachers to understand student strengths and weaknesses to better individually assist their learning needs. Educators who have not been provided with strategies to help their students have been shown to have a negative reaction toward inclusion of students with disabilities. This negative reaction includes an unwillingness to learn new teaching strategies or adapt classroom lessons to fit the needs of students with disabilities. By understanding the needs of these students, teachers become more open and available for assistance (Sadioglu et al., 2013).

Customer service, in general, is about putting the needs of customers first. Bush (2016) completed dissertation research at Walden University detailing strategies affecting the ability for small businesses to sustain and be successful. The researcher gathered data through a qualitative, multiple case study to gain a better understanding of what makes small businesses long-lasting. Data was collected from six small retail businesses in Georgia through semi-structured interviews and field notes. Results of the data collection showed three key themes, one of which was supplying strong customer service. When the needs of customers are put first, a business can gain customer loyalty, leading to customer advertising, repeat business, and positive experiences. Customer needs may include factors such as personalized assistance, product or service individuality, competitive pricing, and ease of experience including proximity and process. If a small business does not choose to put customers first by catering to their needs, then

they will most likely have a much more difficult time selling their product and sustaining financially.

Yang (2015) also completed dissertation research at Walden University on the topic of key success factors for small businesses. The study focused on ways to identify strategies so that small businesses may successfully stay in business beyond five years. The research took place in Southern California and involved small retail businesses. The participants were two owners of small businesses in San Diego, California that had been in business for five or more years. The qualitative, multiple case study gathered data from the participants using semi structured, open-ended interviews. Results of the study founds themes including client loyalty and brand awareness, both of which are related to customer development. Client loyalty includes repeat business and strong customer relationships. Clients who trust a business and have seen positive results such as satisfaction of products and services, are more likely to advertise to their own network through word-of-mouth, increasing growth of a business. Brand awareness, increasing the visibility of a company to potential clients, helps build a client base. One can build brand awareness by targeting advertising to the needs of potential clients.

One way to target potential clients through advertising is to use social media to build online relationships with a customer base (Calderwood, 2009; Gerhardt et al., 2014). Social media is a successful online marketing technique that can inform a large, diverse group of people about a particular type of business in a timely manner (Gerhardt et al., 2014). Social media tools are not only beneficial for a variety of businesses, but can also be of great assistance to teachers and learning professionals (Calderwood, 2009).

Summary

The review of the literature, including the theoretical frameworks, historical context, and the literature themes, serves as a foundation of exploring strategies to sustain businesses, namely learning centers for students with learning disabilities. The theoretical frameworks provided, the Framework for Business Engagement in Education and the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, are two business related theories that are meant to guide businesses through sustaining businesses in order to be successful entities. The Framework for Business Engagement in Education provides an educational perspective to business, while the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship guides businesses in the direction of innovation and gaining a competitive edge. Through the guidance of these two frameworks and the literature reviewed, the five literature themes emerged: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development.

In regard to the literature theme of training, employees have the opportunity to excel in their jobs through professional development and continued education, leading to business success. Employees who work for an education business, such as tutors, benefit from peer observations as a way of developing their job skills. Along with employees, leaders and entrepreneurs gain from training as well. When entrepreneurs are provided with specific entrepreneurial skills, they have a higher chance of starting their own businesses and taking on leadership roles. Also, when entrepreneurs are mentored by trustworthy, career-driven individuals, they are given the confidence to positive steps in the initiation of their businesses. On the job training for employees, business leaders, and entrepreneurs has a positive effect on business success.

Relationship building is a vital component to the creation of a viable business and its expansion. The business should maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders which could include clients, families, neighbors, community members, and other similar businesses who are either in partnership or competition. For an education business, it is especially important for family members to stay involved in the academics of their students and the details of their educational paths. Attentive client relationships lead toward positive attitudes, client interest, and business success.

The third literature theme, innovation, allows for creativity and new products to emerge in businesses. Entrepreneurs in education have found innovative paths through creating new learning technologies, which set them apart from other K-12 ventures on their paths to success. Businesses with plentiful resources, financial and otherwise, have room for creativity and innovation to reach new levels of success. When these types of resources are made readily available, businesses have more options to innovate through testing out new ideas and new types of products. Another way to achieve innovation is through networking with other businesses and making collaborative connections. These connections may allow a business to grow their resources significantly and may also help provide the business with expansion opportunities.

The literature theme of structure shows how clear, measurable goals and well-defined roles leads to business success. Employees are ready to work toward goals that are measurable and can easily take action when guided in the right direction by management. Teams within a company better understand their work relationships with one another when the mission and goals are clear, which leads to a stress-free environment. Tight coupling, referring to having all of the

structural aspects of a business aligned including streamlined norms and rules, is a beneficial way to successfully structure a business in order to sustain and grow.

Lastly, the literature theme of customer development plays a role in assisting business success through making customer needs a priority. A strategy of putting customers first for educational businesses such as learning centers is to keep customers well informed about their needs. For example, tutors should be attentive to the needs of students with learning disabilities by teaching them how to advocate for themselves in a scholastic environment.

The results showed that the students, in general, had a more positive attitude and better understanding about their disabilities after the unit. Initially, students felt as though their future career options were limited, but after the unit, their opinions made a positive change. The unit gave the students with learning disabilities more confidence in their abilities to learn and succeed, resulting in a positive academic experience. Customers, meaning students, families and a variety of business clients, support businesses financially and socially. By providing clients with attentive customer care, business owners may increase their brand awareness and bring new opportunities for business expansion.

The themes of training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development, along with the two theoretical frameworks, A Framework for Business Engagement in Education and the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, encapsulate the literature reviewed for exploring strategies to sustain learning centers and small businesses. These themes and frameworks will serve as a guide to inform my data collection from learning centers for elementary students with disabilities.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Three provides a description of the methods for the study, including the purpose statement, research questions, research design and rationale, design validity, setting, population, sample, and sampling procedures, human subject consideration, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data management, data analysis, and positionality sections.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their businesses. This case study took place at one purposefully selected learning center catered to students with learning disabilities in Southern California that was currently successful in their ability to sustain their business. This qualitative case study incorporated data collection through interviews, observations, and archival data (Yin, 2014).

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this purposefully selected case study was:

1. What strategies does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use to sustain their business?

The sub-questions for this study were:

- A. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use training to sustain their business?
- B. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use relationships to sustain their business?
- C. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use innovation to sustain their business?

- D. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use structure to sustain their business?
- E. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use customer development to sustain their business?

Research Design and Rationale

This study was a retroactive case study that, using a constructivist worldview, looked at archival data and ongoing practices of one learning center for students with disabilities in Southern California. A retroactive case study, looking at past and ongoing data, allows the flexibility to study each learning center on a timeframe that is beneficial to both the researcher and the center. This type of study also allows the ability to explore what has already made the learning center a successful business (Yin, 2014).

The constructivist worldview is defined as knowledge created socially (Creswell, 2014). Reality is up to interpretation and is discovered by individuals and groups. In this qualitative study, the focus is on gathering in-depth data measured by quality rather than quantity. Yin (2014) describes constructivism as an epistemology fitting for qualitative case studies, as qualitative researchers are also seen as interpreters. This means that researchers involved in qualitative case studies gather the knowledge around them to construct a viewpoint based on their investigation. The researcher is an educational therapist with her own learning center and is both an educational colleague and a competitor of other learning centers in Southern California. In line with the constructivist worldview, the researcher used reflexivity to her advantage. She practiced non-judgement through her own biases and knowledge and used that knowledge to help inform the types of questions and observations that she felt were beneficial to exploring the strategies of the learning center involved (Creswell, 1998). In this study, the researcher was seen

as an interpreter who gathered knowledge about the learning center and used a variety of methods to construct a new viewpoint on strategies used to sustain the center.

Setting

The study took place at one K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California. The learning center was located in an urban area in Southern California. The center served about 100 students total in grades K-12, but primarily catered to secondary school students. The students and staff were all English-speaking individuals.

The researcher traveled to the learning center four separate times over the course of two months to conduct interviews, observe their environments, and collect data. Four visits over a total of eight hours took place in order to allow enough time to gather the necessary data. The visits took place during normal business hours and after school hours while students were in tutoring sessions. This timing allowed for observation of interactions between management, employees, and client families. There were no observations of or interactions with children during the study.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures

The population for this study included all K-12 learning centers for students with learning disabilities in Southern California. The inclusion criteria involved learning centers that are located in Southern California, have a majority of English speaking individuals, work with K-12 students, and work specifically with students with learning disabilities. The sample was one purposefully selected learning center which caters to students with learning disabilities in Southern California that is currently successful in their ability to sustain their business. For the purposes of this research study, a successful learning center is defined as one that has been in operation for five or more years and profitable (Yang, 2015). The researcher reached out to K-12

learning centers for students with learning disabilities within Southern California. In order to recruit potential participants, individuals in leadership roles at the learning centers, including owners and managers, were contacted through emails and phone calls. A recruitment form was sent out to potential participants as well (Appendix A). A total of five learning centers were contacted, the last of which became a willing participant in the study.

Human Subject Considerations

The researcher asked the operations manager and the owner of the learning center for permission to conduct the study at their learning center. The researcher reached out to the operations manager with a phone call. The discussion continued through the phone call, texts, emails, and an in-person meeting. At the in-person meeting, the operations manager of the learning center accepted to be a part of the study and the next steps were discussed, including permissions involved and beneficial meeting times. These permissions were obtained in writing on company letterhead of the center (Appendix B). Identifying information of the learning center has been removed from the copy of permissions to protect privacy. Permission to have access to the learning centers and participants must be obtained from an authority figure at the center (Creswell, 2014). The learning center business name is not revealed to protect the privacy of the center and the employees. Employee names and personal information are not mentioned to protect their privacy as well. Informed consent forms were provided to the participating owner and the operations manager (Appendix C). Participants were asked to be interviewed, observed, and to share archival data of their learning center in order to explore strategies to sustain their businesses.

Participants in the study, including the business owner, operations manager, and other employees who took place in the interview process, were made aware of the option to opt out of

the study at any time without penalty. Study participants were made aware of the minimal risks of the study through the informed consent form including possible fatigue, boredom, and discomfort sharing information related to their work environment. The owner and the operations manager of the learning center were made aware of the risks to the center. Risks include the fact that the learning center may be identifiable, even with a fictitious business, name based on the information given to the researcher for the study. This may put the center at risk if any negative information surfaces during the interview or observation process. A negative portrayal of any of the aspects of the learning center may affect business practices and hiring in the future. Also, proprietary information that is shared through the study may affect the learning center's competitive advantage.

The researcher did not record data in any way that may identify clients or families that are onsite at the learning center to protect their privacy. No information about specific students, their sessions, or their families were recorded. During the interviews, participants were given the option for breaks if needed and were notified of the right to refuse to answer any question. Both types of participants, managers and employees, were reminded that their answers are confidential and their participation in the study will not negatively impact their role at their learning center. Participants also had the option to have the study findings sent to them.

The records of this study, including all data collection and personal information, will be kept confidential. As per request, the audio files of the interviews were shared with operations manager for archival purposes. The operations manager secured and stored the audio files on his password protected computer at the learning center. The data is also stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. A copy of Pepperdine's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is included (Appendix D).

Instrumentation

Three methods of data collection were used to explore strategies used by one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their business: interviews, observations, and archival data. Three types of instrumentation were used in order to gain a substantial understanding of the learning center. Yin (2014) states that case studies benefit from multiple sources of data and that the variety allows the researcher to learn about and understand cases from multiple perspectives.

The researcher conducted an expert review of the data collection tools through an education colleague familiar with aspects of education learning centers, small businesses in general, and the small business management side of learning centers. This colleague reviewed the data collection methods to be used for this study, along with their details and the data collection plan. She agreed with the format of data collection and ensured that the essential details of sustaining a small business were incorporated in the plan for interviews, observations, and archival data.

The researcher followed preset interview protocols to conduct open ended interviews. Four participants were interviewed, including the operations manager, the chief of academics, the receptionist, and a new tutor. Interviews were selected to include both top-level management and employees serving in a tutoring role. The operations manager and the chief of academics, both tutors as well, received a set of interview questions directed toward their leadership roles (Appendix E). The other employees, including the receptionist and the new tutor, received a different set of questions regarding their roles at the center (Appendix F). These in-depth interviews will be open ended, leaving room for thick and rich descriptions. The researcher

prepared the interview questions based on the literature themes previously discussed in order to explore strategies used by each learning center to sustain their businesses, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Relationships among Guiding Questions, Interview Questions, and Literature

Guiding Questions	Interview Questions	Literature Sources
RQ1: What strategies do successful K-12 learning centers for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use to sustain their learning centers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your role at [learning center]? • How did you create the learning center? (If applicable) 	Bolman & Deal, 2017
Sub RQ A: Use of workforce training to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your approach for hiring and training employees? • Do you participate in professional development or training for work? 	Birmingham et al., 2005
Sub RQ B: Use of relationships to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you manage relationships with customers? 	Bolman & Deal, 2017; Epstein, 2002; Jochims, 2016
Sub RQ C: Use of innovation to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role does innovation play in the operation and growth of your learning center? 	Bond, 2012; Omri et al., 2015; Rese & Baier, 2011
Sub RQ D: Use of workplace structure to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the rules and protocols that you have in place for your employees to follow? • What are the rules and protocols in place at the learning center? 	Aurini, 2012; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Coulter, 2013; Gostick & Elton, 2012

(continued)

Guiding Questions	Interview Questions	Literature Sources
Sub RQ E: Use of customer development to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you reach new customers? • Do you measure client success and what role does that play? • What steps do you take, if any, to ensure customer satisfaction? 	Bush, 2016; King-Sears, 2007; Yang, 2016; Zickel & Arnold, 2001

These in-depth interviews allowed for detailed descriptions and details with real accounts provided by leaders and employees of the centers. The open-ended interviews were beneficial to the study in that they provided thick and rich descriptions through the lens of the participants (Yin, 2014).

The researcher also collected observations through field notes to observe the daily operation and environment at the learning center, while keeping in mind the five literature themes found to help explore strategies to sustain learning centers: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. The researcher took detailed notes of these observations in order to qualitatively measure the business operations of the learning center. The researcher was given permission to take photos at the learning center. The photos were used to assist in recollection of environmental details. The method of observation helps the researcher gain a better understanding of the business environment (Yin, 2014). The results of the data gathered from observations may differ from that of the interviews due to the fact that observations are seen through the lens of an observer instead of an employee.

The final method of data collection, archival data, included records from the learning center data stored in physical files and on computers. The researcher kept track of the data found

using the archival data collection guide (Appendix G). The researcher prepared the archival data collection categories based on the literature themes previously discussed in order to explore strategies used by the learning center to sustain their business, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Relationships among Guiding Questions, Archival Data Collection Categories, and Literature

Guiding Questions	Archival Data Collection Categories	Literature Sources
RQ1: What strategies do successful K-12 learning centers for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use to sustain their learning centers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning center website • Other available information on the internet 	Omri et al., 2015
Sub RQ A: Use of workforce training to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-boarding • Professional development 	Birmingham et al., 2005; Raley et al., 2005; Schumann et al., 2013
Sub RQ B: Use of relationships to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyers/brochures 	Bolman & Deal, 2017; Epstein, 2002; Jochims, 2016
Sub RQ C: Use of innovation to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of technology used 	Omri et al., 2015; Rese & Baier, 2011
Sub RQ D: Use of workplace structure to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyers/brochures • Learning center website 	Aurini, 2012; Bolman & Deal, 2017; Coulter, 2013; Gostick & Elton, 2012
Sub RQ E: Use of customer development to sustain business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyers/brochures • Learning center website 	Bush, 2016; King-Sears, 2007; Yang, 2016; Zickel & Arnold, 2001

The archival data collected included aspects such as website information, internet search results, information from the learning center's online blog, on-boarding, professional development, flyers and brochures, and information about technology used. Looking at archival data gives the researcher an understanding of the flow of business operations from the past to the present (Yin, 2014).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began in early January 2018, soon after the owner and operations manager at the learning center gave written consent to take part in the study. The researcher scheduled appropriate days and times with the operations manager of the learning center to make in-person visits. Four visits to the learning center took place over the months of January and February 2018, each visit lasting a total of two hours to account for eight total hours of time spent at the center for data collection. The first visit involved a tour of the learning center and an introduction to the employees. During the second visit, center and employee observations and the collection of archival data in print form were collected. Lastly, the third and fourth visits involved the collections of the rest of the archival data and the four interviews. During each of these visits, the researcher spent an appropriate amount of time at the learning center to gather all necessary data.

In regard to interviews, the researcher was equipped with the lists of open-ended interview questions for management and employees, notebook paper, the archival data collection guide, and a recording device. The researcher interviewed four participants, including the operations manager, the chief of academics, the receptionist, and a new tutor. The interviews were selected to include both top level management and employees serving in a tutoring role. The interview questions were presented in the same manner for each of the participants in the

study. Two sets of interview questions were used with one type of questioning for owners or managers and one type of questioning for employees. The operations manager and the chief of academics, both tutors as well, received a set of interview questions directed toward their leadership roles and the receptionist and the new tutor received a different set of questions regarding their roles at the center. The two sets of questions are similar and both follow a structure involving the five literature themes. The interview questions for the owners and managers ask about details regarding their leadership roles such as how their learning center began, how they acquire and train employees, and how they work with their client base. The employee interview questions focus on their contributions and how the employees view their work environment. The notebook paper was provided for the researcher for taking notes during the interview. The recording device was used to record each interview, which later was transcribed to a written record through the use of HyperTRANSCRIBE.

During the learning center visits, observations were made by the researcher in order to understand the environment and day-to-day operations of the learning center. The researcher made field notes with each of the five literature themes and sub-research questions in mind during the visits. The researcher also received consent from the operations manager to take photos. A camera was brought to the learning center to take pictures of the center in allowable locations to assist in later recollection of the visit. No clients or family members or employees were included in the pictures to protect their privacy. During the first visit, the operations manager gave the researcher a tour of the facility. During each visit, observations were also made by watching the communication and relationships between the management and employees, as well as employees with each other.

Archival data was also collected during the visits to the learning center and over the computer through the use of internet searches and email exchanges between the researcher and the operations manager. During center visits, the researcher gathered print archival data including brochures and a sample of the employee timesheet. Through an internet search, the researcher gathered data through the learning center website, their blog, and results when typing the name of the center into an internet search engine. Through email, the operations manager provided the researcher with the teacher training manual and the operations manual given to the employees of the learning center. The researcher was given permission to collect this information through email and to store it securely on the private computer.

Data Management

The researcher used HyperRESEARCH, Researchware, to analyze the data of the study, and well as member checking to ensure validity of the data collected. Outcome validity of the study was defined through triangulation of the data and interrater reliability. Triangulation is defined as combining various sources and methods of data collection in order to find common themes (Creswell, 1998). For dialogic validity, the researcher recorded the interviews using a personal recording device. The researcher will also take handwritten notes while recording as needed in order to follow the guide of interview questions. The researcher used HyperTRANSCRIBE, Researchware, to play back and transcribe the four interview that took place at the learning center. Once the transcription was complete, the researcher listened to the audio recordings while reading the transcriptions of the interviews to ensure accuracy.

The researcher obtained audio recording permission from all of the participants who were interviewed prior to collecting data. Those with access to the data include the researcher, interrater, and dissertation team. The operations manager was given access to the recorded

interviews for the learning center's own archival purposes. The data will be destroyed five years after completion of the study.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the learning center through interviews, observations, and archival data was analyzed through HyperRESEARCH. The data was separated into three cases, one case for each data collection method including observations, interviews, and archival data. Each of the three cases included sources relevant to the data collection method. The observation sources included a document of all observations written by the researcher during the learning center visits. The interview sources included four separate documents for each interview: the operations manager interview, the chief of academics interview, the receptionist interview, and the new tutor interview. The last type of data collection, archival data, included the archival data sources found: website information, blog information, customer reviews, a tutoring session and class brochure, the employee timesheet, the teacher training manual, and the operations manual. Within each case, the data were coded into five code groups including the five literature themes: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Through analysis of the data, inductive codes were found and categorized by each code group. Coding is an essential method of data analysis for qualitative research in that it breaks down detailed descriptions through structured themes (Creswell, 1998). Once the data was coded, the researcher compared the code lists of the three data collection methods in order to find potential commonalities. The researcher used the software to find common words and themes, thick and rich descriptions, and memorable quotes that relate to exploring and describing strategies to sustain learning centers in relation to the research questions and literature themes. Each group of archival data was compared with one another and common themes were accounted for.

Once these data were analyzed, the results were interpreted through a variety of means. The findings from the data were triangulated and grouped into the five literature themes: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. These deductive themes were born from peer reviewed sources and books that were presented in Chapter Two's literature review. The literature themes were used as code groups for the data analysis to understand how the findings of the study connect to the findings from the literature. Each of the five groups were compared and studied to find consistencies between the various types of data to establish validity.

After coding the data set for the deductive literature themes, the researcher began an inductive coding process and thematic analysis. Creation of themes was done by analyzing the data from the ground up by organizing the information into progressively more abstract components (Creswell, 2014). The researcher analyzed the coded quotations, notes, and varying types of artifacts to find commonalities in each of the five code groups. Common words, phrases, and concepts were discovered and shared amongst the five groups and further dissected to understand why they were prominent components of the learning center. These shared concepts were thoroughly analyzed and formed into five, peer reviewed themes. These themes are presented in chapters four and five. By triangulating the data gathered from interviews, observations, and archives, the researcher validates the findings by showing their overlap between the literature themes (Creswell, 1998). The findings are presented through the discovery of themes, thick and rich descriptions, and figures, tables, and charts of the data.

Positionality

The researcher is an educational therapist with her own learning center for elementary and middle school students with learning disabilities in Southern California. The researcher has

the opportunity of benefitting her own learning center through conducting research to explore and describe strategies to sustain learning centers similar to her own. The researcher has a vested interest in the success of learning centers in the area through connections to families, communities, and schools. As an educator, the researcher may have biases of her own related to how learning centers should sustain themselves. As a competitor to the learning center recruited for this study, the researcher will notify the owner or manager involved in the study of her current position and described the potential benefits for all parties involved in the study. To manage her biases, the researcher will follow a specific guideline of open ended interview questions that follow the literature themes. No leading questions will be asked of the participants.

Chapter Four: Report of the Findings

Chapter Four provides a brief overview of the study, interviewee demographics, a description of the artifact collection, observations, and a data summary. This chapter also discusses the five sub-research question topics in relation to the data analysis: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Lastly, themes discovered through the data collection are introduced. The themes are as follows: Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders; Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement; Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience; Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset; Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and themes.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their businesses. This case study took place at one purposefully selected learning center catered to students with learning disabilities in Southern California that was currently successful in their ability to sustain their business. This qualitative case study incorporated data collection through interviews, observations, and archival data (Yin, 2014).

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this purposefully selected case study was the following:

1. What strategies does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use to sustain their business?

The sub-questions for this study were:

- A. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use training to sustain their business?
- B. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use relationships to sustain their business?
- C. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use innovation to sustain their business?
- D. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use structure to sustain their business?
- E. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use customer development to sustain their business?

Interviewee Demographics

Four participants at the learning center were interviewed: the operations manager, the chief of academics, the receptionist, and a new tutor. Interviews were selected to include both top level management and employees serving in a tutoring role. Table 5 summarizes basic information about the participants who were interviewed.

Table 5

Interviewee Information

Participant Title	Time at the learning center	Gender
Operations Manager	2 years	Male
Chief of Academics	6 years	Male
Receptionist	3 days	Female
Tutor	1 month	Male

Artifact Collection

Along with interviews and observations, seven different types of artifacts were gathered from the learning center, including the website, blog, employee timesheet, class schedule flyer, operations manual, teacher training manual, and customer reviews. The website, blog, and customer reviews were easily accessible online. The employee timesheet and class schedule flyer were artifacts that were readily available at the front desk at the learning center. The operations manual and teacher training manual were two sources obtained by the operations manager and not available to the public. Each of these artifacts provided information about the learning center through the varying perspectives of customers, employees, and management. Table 6 displays each type of artifact, the locations they were acquired, and whether the artifacts were digital or print sources.

Table 6

Artifact Information

Artifact Type	Location Acquired	Digital/Print
Website	Search Engine	Digital
Blog	Search Engine	Digital
Employee Timesheet	At the center	Print
Class Schedule Flyer	At the center	Print
Operations Manual	Email	Digital/Print
Teacher Training Manual	Email	Digital/Print
Customer Reviews	Search Engine	Digital

Observation

The learning center was observed on four different occasions, including two days in January and two days in February. Observations were collected through the use of photography to aid in recalling the physical structure of the center and hand-written notes taken in the researcher's observation notebook. Eight pages of notes were recorded in the observation notebook by the end of the data collection in February. Figure 1 is an example of one of the pages of hand-written notes during time spent observing the learning center, including information about the physical space and employee interactions.

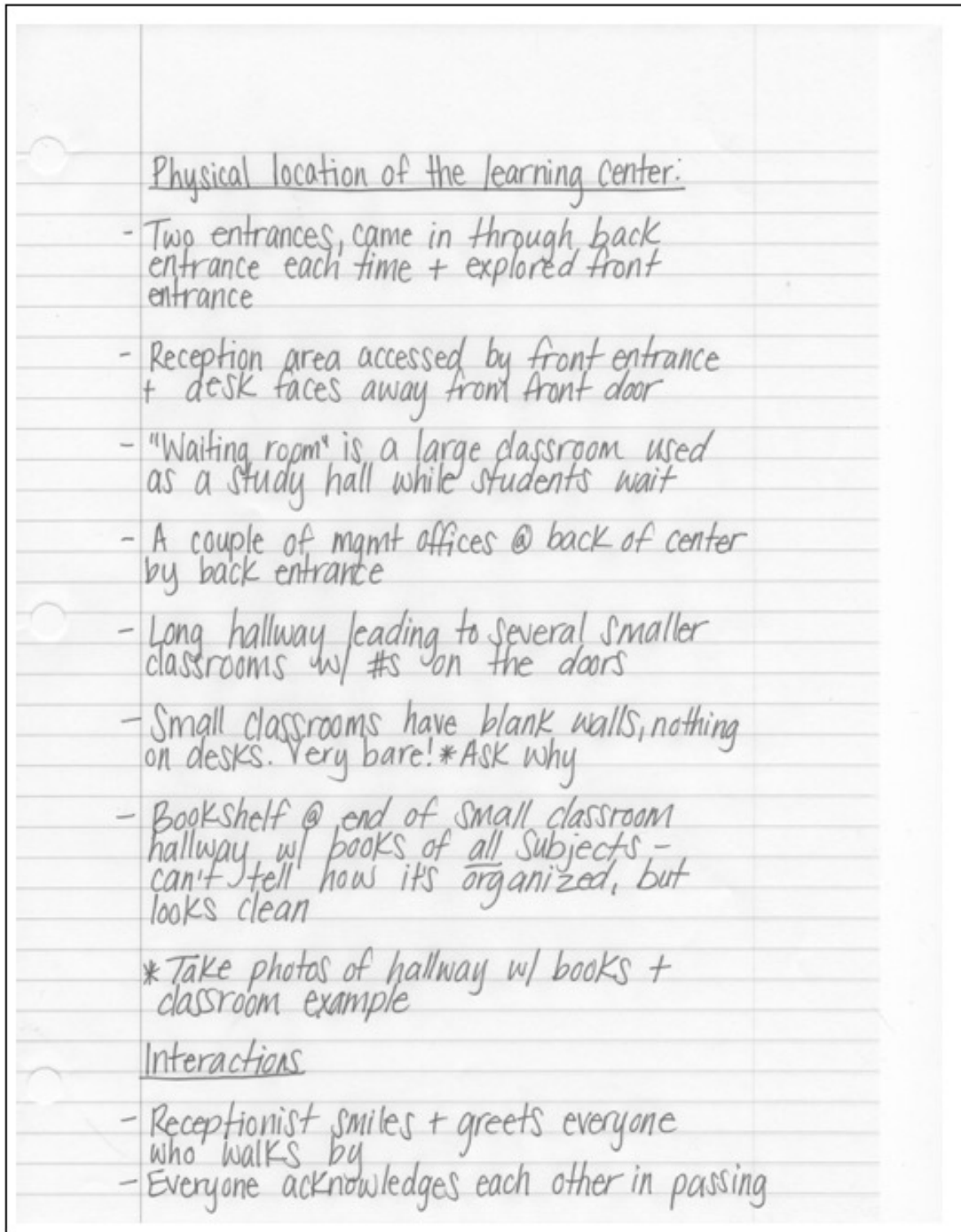


Figure 1. Hand-written observation notes.

Data Summary

Once the data from interviews, observations, and artifacts were combined and coded using HyperRESEARCH, 22 new codes were developed and categorized into five code groups reflecting the sub-research questions: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Each code group contains a set of codes found inductively by the researcher through the analysis of the data. At least three codes and up to six codes were inductively found for each code group, showing a strong connection between the data collected and the sub-research questions acting as code groups. Table 7 shows the code groups, each with the corresponding inductively developed codes found and their frequency within the dataset.

Table 7

Code Groups and Inductively Developed Codes

Code Group	Number of Code Tags in Group	Code Name	Code Count
Training	61	Orientation	18
		Teaching Learning Styles	16
		Teaching Motivation	9
		Peer Observations	7
		Lectures	6
		Feedback	5
Structure	49	Location and Space	14
		Scheduling	12
		Hiring Process	9
		Vision	9
		Report System	5
Relationships	35	Making Connections	13
		Building Confidence	8
		Consultation	8
		Motivation	6

(continued)

Code Group	Number of Code Tags in Group	Code Name	Code Count
Innovation	25	Technology Integration	12
		Embracing Change	7
		Neuroscience	6
Customer Development	25	Marketing	9
		Customer Reviews	7
		Discounts	5
		Student Improvements	4

The text from all of the interviews, observations, and archival data was also placed into HyperRESEARCH and the word counter tool was used to find the amount and order in which descriptive words were used. The descriptive words include all adjectives, nouns, and action verbs found in the data. Table 8 displays the top 25 descriptive words used as well as their word count in the combined texts.

Table 8

Data Word Count – Top 25 Descriptive Words Used

Word	Word Count
Student/students	101
College	37
Tutor/tutoring	36
Teaching/teachers	33
Needs	28
Class/classes	26
Time	18
Technology/tech	14
Parents	14
Self	14

(continued)

Word	Word Count
Give	14
Academic	14
Study	13
Learning	12
New	12
Change	11
Education	11
Confidence	10
Care	10
Motivation	9
Different	9
Difficult	9
Science	9
Available	8
Provide	8

The top 25 descriptive words used ranged from being in use in the data eight times to 101 times. In order to understand the importance placed on the descriptive words in the data, a word cloud shows a conglomeration of the words presented visually, showing their amount of use by the size of the word. Figure 2 shows each of these words in a visual representation of a word cloud.

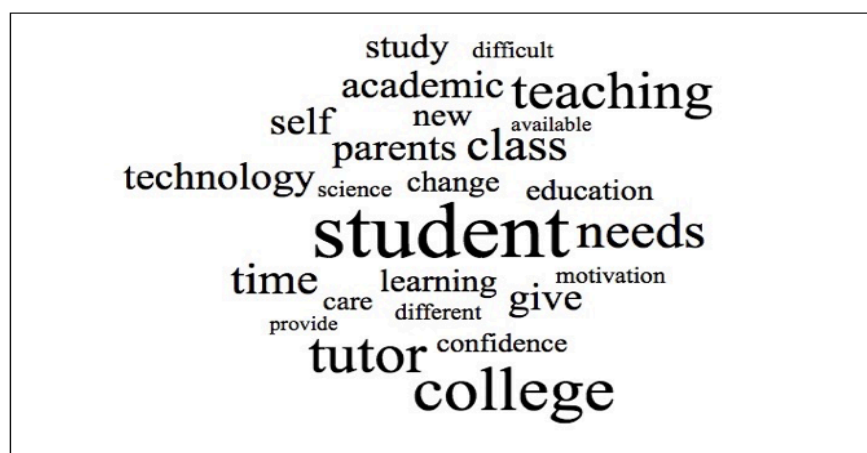


Figure 2. Word cloud: Top 25 descriptive words used.

The descriptive words displayed in Table 8 and Figure 2 provide an example of the words and ideas that the learning center placed a great importance on through their manuals, center information, and their own words (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2017). The words student and students were brought up the most and to a large degree, showing that the learning center is student-focused and places student needs first, before the needs of teachers, tutors, and parents. Along with student and students, the highest counted verb is the word need, as the needs of the students come first.

Research Sub-questions

Each of the research sub-questions served as code groups, deductively used for data collection and entered into HyperRESEARCH prior to inductive coding. Those code groups are: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. This section reports the codes that were inductively found in the analysis of the learning center data that correspond with each of the research sub-questions.

Research sub-question 1: Training. Research sub-question 1 asked, “How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use training to sustain their business?” This question is paired with the literature theme of training and data collected in reference to this question was placed in the code group, “training.” Within the code group of training, six new codes were discovered: feedback, lectures, orientation, peer observations, teaching learning styles, and teaching motivation.

Feedback. During their interviews, the operations manager and the chief of academics at the learning center both discussed the importance of getting feedback on tutor performance. The operations manager stated that the optimal way to receive feedback on tutor performance is by speaking with the students and their parents, and not by “self-report” of tutors assessing their

own performance. The learning center also has security cameras in each tutoring room for safety. If a problem arises, they have the opportunity to review the footage from the tutoring room.

Lectures. The chief of academics discussed training tutors through lectures at his interview. “Philosophical motivational speeches” are given, as well as teaching seminars. The chief of academics plans to grow the seminar program to give the tutors more opportunities to learn. In a separate interview, the new tutor discussed a meeting that he attended where he listened to information about teaching and where the company is headed in the future.

Orientation. The main form of tutor training at the learning center is called orientation. The center uses their teacher training manual to train tutors and the operations manual to train other members of the staff in leadership positions. The teacher training manual contains information about company rules, regulations, and expectations. The manual also provides information about teaching, classroom management, and a tutoring session breakdown, describing how to start, continue, and end an hour tutoring session. The operations manual trains the staff about rules and regulations, expectations, communication, and scheduling.

Along with the training manuals, when a new tutor begins working at the learning center, they are given a tour and they meet with an employee in a leadership role to discuss the training manual and any other pertinent information. When the receptionist was hired, she had a meeting with the operations manager about greeting others, handling calls, constructing conversations with students and parents, and leading with a positive attitude.

Peer observations. Peer observations also take place at the learning center to train new and current tutors. The chief of academics has tutors observe on his sessions with students and says that this type of observation is the “easiest method to teach them.” The new tutor stated in

his interview that he sat in on a session with a tutor who has been with the center for a while to help him understand what is expected of him. During company meetings, tutors also share their personal experiences with one another so that they can learn from each other.

Teaching learning styles. The learning center trains their tutors by teaching them the importance of understanding each student as an individual through learning styles. The teacher training manual contains a section with resources about learning styles and teaching styles. The company website acknowledges the importance of learning styles and understanding “that every student is unique.” The chief of academics discussed training about teaching styles in the form of understanding the specific needs of each student. When tutors begin working with a new student, the chief of academics aids them by sharing information about the student’s specific needs and how to assist them. He stated:

I do psychological evaluations and counseling here, and because of [the students’] psychological issues, we have a lot of students that are not diagnosed for special needs but need special education care. I have their special stories ready for the individual tutors. They get individual care.

The new tutor also discussed how he was given information about his students before working with them. He “taught a student with autism” and was prepared with information about the student and his needs before teaching.

Teaching motivation. Teaching tutors about the power of motivation is a notion that appears numerous times in the teacher training manual. The training manual has a section about teaching motivation and how to be an effective teacher by motivating students. The manual urges the tutor to “find out what drives a student” because “without motivation, they will not retain the information.”

Research sub-question 2: Relationships. Research sub-question 2 asked, “How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use relationships to sustain their business?” This question is paired with the literature theme of relationships and data collected in reference to this question was placed in the code group, “relationships.” Within the code group of relationships, four codes were discovered: building confidence, consultation, making connections, and motivation.

Building confidence. One aspect of creating strong relationships found in various sources of archival data from the learning center is building confidence. The blog talks extensively about the importance of confidence building for students. Self-confidence can be achieved by praise and respect from authority figures. The center believes that confidence and academic success are linked and that helping students build confidence will guide them to achieving their academic goals. In one of the customer reviews about the learning center, a student felt successful because her tutor gave her confidence.

Consultation. Consultations are also a vital part of relationship building, according to the operations manual and the interviews with those in leadership positions. The operations manual has a full section on consultations, including managing relationships with parents, tutors, and their students. Before a student is enrolled, the chief of academics has a “minimum one hour [consultation] with their parent and the student to have an analysis” that acts as an academic and personal profile analysis. Parent consultations also take place during the student’s enrollment and throughout their time at the center to discuss goals and any concerns that may arise.

Making connections. A key component of relationship building at the learning center is making connections between the tutors and the students. Several of the customer reviews stated that students made positive connections with their tutors and that it helped them learn the

material and succeed. Students were able to open up to their tutors and felt comfortable in the learning environment. The chief of academics stated that “the most important thing is the chemistry with the students.” He shared that the goal is to make sure the students want to attend their sessions and if a student has not built a connection with their tutor, they will not want to continue. The operations manager looks at how the students engage with their tutors. On the topic of matching students with tutors, he stated:

It is completely up to us. We’re a matchmaker, we are like Uber or Tinder for education. It’s a coincidence of many things, of wants and needs. It is the teacher and the subjects they know. It’s the students and the subjects they need to be taught. We bring them together.

Motivation. Building relationships through motivation is a part of the training manual, blog, and several customer reviews. The training manual discusses that in order to have a positive relationship with a student, the tutor needs to motivate them to do their best. The learning center’s blog shares about the significance of parents and tutors building a relationship with their students through motivation. Lastly, the customer reviews revealed that tutors motivating students brought the students to reach and strive further than their academic goals.

Research sub-question 3: Innovation. Research sub-question 3 asked, “How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use innovation to sustain their business?” This question is paired with the literature theme of innovation and data collected in reference to this question was placed in the code group, “innovation.” Within the code group of innovation, three codes were discovered: embracing change, neuroscience, and technology integration.

Embracing change. Innovation, the creation and implementation of new ideas, cannot fully exist without embracing change. In his interview, the new tutor talked about how “the company is ambitious and has a lot of ideas for the future.” In his first company meeting, he said that there was a discussion about the small improvements that immediately affect the tutors, and the larger changes that are planned to take place in the future. In the interview with the operations manager, he discussed change on two levels: changing how students think and the fast-paced, changing world. On a student level, the operations manager believes that “for a student to really become different, become better, he or she has to engage changing their core.” He discussed how a student must change the way they think to change and improve their learning habits. On another level, the operations manager also stated that he wants to keep the company current with the changing technology and world around us. In reference to this, he stated:

The problem is, if you don't embrace change, change will eat you alive. The pace at which technology is moving is mind blowing. The pace at which we are changing the world around us. In the face of so much change, we have to embrace it.

Neuroscience. One innovative aspect about the learning center is the connections they make to neuroscience. The chief of academics and the operations manager discussed neuroplasticity as the way in which they work to rewire their students' thoughts in reference to motivation and needs. The operations manager stated that the company believes in “changing he fundamental core...the psyche” of students and that “the spirit of the child is more important than raising the grade.” The center is working towards hosting more seminars for their tutors in relation to the correlations made between psychology, brain science, and education.

Technology integration. The last code of innovation is the most prevalent within the company, integrating technology in their tutoring sessions. The company website mentions

striking a balance between integrating new technology “with time-tested teaching methods” to “contribute to an optimal learning experience.” Through observations at the learning center, the researcher discovered that there were televisions and touch screen computers paired with projectors in each classroom, along with use of the internet and academic websites during student sessions. The operations manager discussed the importance of embracing new technology and that “technology allows you to take small resources and make big gains.”

Research sub-question 4: Structure. Research sub-question 4 asked, “How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use structure to sustain their business?” This question is paired with the literature theme of structure and data collected in reference to this question was placed in the code group, “structure.” Within the code group of structure, five codes were discovered: employment, location and space, report system, scheduling, and vision.

Hiring process. One category of structure that affects the learning center is the center’s hiring process. New employees are found and hired by word-of-mouth or by using an online job search database such as www.indeed.com. As stated by the operations manager, the employment process is “a very rigorous, threefold process.” This involves an interview, an assessment test based on the subjects the applicant is interested in teaching, and a recorded, mock teaching session. Employees hired at the center who are full-time have roles in accordance with or separate from tutoring, such as the chief of academics and the receptionist. Those who are hired on only as tutors are part-time employees, ranging from two to fifteen hours per week. The part-time tutors are contractors, or W2 employees. The operations manager explains the tutor jobs as supplemental income and a compliment to their outside schooling and careers. Compensation for

the tutors is suggested based on the compensation of other tutors at the center, and agreed upon by the newly hired tutor and operations manager.

Location and space. the learning center is located in a busy, metropolitan area in Southern California in a large office building on the first floor. The customers of the learning center live, work, and go to school in the surrounding metropolitan area. There is no free or low-cost parking available for the learning center – the operations manager said that this does not make a difference to his customers because “if they drive, they are not coming here.” The operations manager stated this to mean that students who drive their own vehicles do not drive them to the learning center. Students arrive at the center either by being dropped off, by walking, biking, or taking a bus. The learning center has two entrances, a back entrance and a front entrance. The front entrance leads to the reception area, with the reception desk facing away from the front door. The waiting area for the students is a large study hall classroom where students can have a quiet space to study and complete assignments before and after their tutoring sessions. The learning center has a couple of business offices for management, a couple of large classrooms for meetings, lectures, and group sessions, and a handful of smaller classrooms for one-on-one and small group tutoring sessions. The operations manager noted that the walls in the classrooms are intentionally left blank to help students focus and avoid distractions.

Report system. A report system is in place for the tutors to inform management and the parents about the progress of their sessions with the students. Each tutor gives a brief report about each tutoring session. The tutors also report their time spent in sessions through an employee timesheet. This timesheet includes the date, time in and time out, and a description of the service offered. The tutor and management must sign off on the timesheet to declare accuracy of the record.

Scheduling. The operations manager revealed the significance of scheduling and that the job of the company is solve the problem of time and place to conduct sessions. He went on to say:

Scheduling is the lifeblood of a company. It is also the most difficult aspect of the matching process. The person who figures out this algorithm is the person who's going to become the most efficient [person] in this business.

The learning center allows for “a lot of slack” in their scheduling by keeping many tutors on staff to cater to the needs of the students. Tutors are scheduled to work with students based on their subject area and availability. Availability and scheduling is charted online using the program Outlook. Every member of the company has access to the scheduling calendar. According to the operations manual, when a tutoring session is set on the calendar, the tutor belonging to that session must accept the event before it is confirmed.

Vision. The learning center’s structure is based on their company vision. The vision, philosophy, goals, and mission statement are all available in the teacher training manual and the operations manual. The website also shares information about the company vision. The learning center’s vision involves focusing on specific student needs, providing high quality tutoring services, and having a passion for teaching.

Research sub-question 5: Customer development. Research sub-question 5 asked, “How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use customer development to sustain their business?” This question is paired with the literature theme of customer development and data collected in reference to this question was placed in the code group, “customer development.” Within the code group of

customer development, four codes were discovered: customer reviews, discounts, marketing, student improvements.

Customer reviews. The customer reviews, available by searching the company name online, are positive recommendations of the learning center. Several of the reviews state that they highly recommend the learning center and that it is beneficial to students who are struggling academically. With over twenty positive reviews available online, the one negative statement found was in reference to the center being too costly.

Discounts. The learning center provides price discounts in various ways. The chief of academics stated that when a student first starts at the center, they are given a large discount on a costly aptitude test. Another factor in discounts is that if a student is not reaching their goals after multiple sessions, the student and family are offered extra class sessions for free to help the student achieve their goals.

Marketing. The learning center advertises using sources such as a blog, information available on their website, word-of-mouth, and prevalence on the internet when using a search engine. The operations manual has a section about marketing online and offline, including information about seminars, emails, and social media. The researcher also observed that the company logo is clear and distinctive, making it recognizable to the public when seen various times in different mediums.

Student improvements. In the interview with the chief of academics, student improvements were discussed as a way to help develop new customers and retain current customers. Quantitative measures, such as test scores, show how students have improved over time while attending sessions at the learning center. Also, students at the center have “about a

75% to 80% of their first-choice college acceptance rate,” which plays an important role in customer acquisition and retention at the learning center.

Themes

Through thematic analysis, five key themes inductively emerged from the data collected in response to the overarching research question: What strategies does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use to sustain their business? These themes are representative of how the learning center continues to sustain their business. The themes are as follows: Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders; Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement; Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience; Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset; Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow.

Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders. Closed-loop communication means that a team exchanges information clearly, acknowledges getting the information, and confirms their understanding of the information. This type of communication means that both the sender and the receiver of the information being communicated confirm that they understand what is being asked for or stated (McIntyre & Salas, 1995). The researcher witnessed examples of closed-loop communication at the learning center through varying mediums during her four days of observation time. This type of communication was also used between the operations manager and the researcher when setting up times for data collection at the learning center. Closed-loop communication is used in areas such as feedback and consultation.

As stated previously, instead of using “self-report” of tutors assessing their own performance, tutor feedback is given through conversations with parents and students. Once

feedback is given, that feedback is shared between management and the tutor and may result in improvements to tutoring sessions or continued excellence in their teaching methods.

Student progress is also relayed to parents during meetings scheduled throughout a student's time at the center. The chief of academics described how he uses closed-loop communication with parents in relation to student progress as:

If we see improvement or if we don't see improvement, either way, we call in the parents and explain what we did, where we are, and where our goals are and why we are seeking those goals. We make sure the parents understand and confirm understanding before they leave the room.

The operations manual's section on consultations includes information on appropriate way to communicate with clients of the learning center. When consultations take place, meetings last until there is a mutual understanding of the steps moving forward between both the learning center and the client involved.

Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement. Setting itself apart from learning centers with a sole purpose of student academics, the learning center places a focus on improving students as a whole, including their motivations, behaviors, and academics. Theme 2 was prevalent in many codes, including teaching motivation, building confidence, and neuroscience.

In relation to teaching motivation, the management and tutors at the learning center focus on the students' behaviors and interests to motivate them academically. Similarly, the management and tutors use what they learn about the students' behavior and interests to help build their confidence. The online reviews show the learning center's success in motivating students. In reviews from students and parents, there is an outpouring of gratitude to the learning

center and the tutors for aspects beyond raising grades and test scores. One parent reviewer stated, “This center will help students motivate themselves to achieve beyond their expectations.” This quote shows how students can be motivated at the learning center past their own academic expectations. The learning center works towards improving students holistically, not only gaining an academic advantage, but also learning to be comfortable with who they are and what they have to offer, giving them the opportunity to enjoy themselves. A review of the learning center written by a student stated:

[The learning center] was a great experience for me because I met teachers who were so willing to help and ensure the best for me, while being easy to work with and constantly available. Without their help, I wouldn't be enjoying my second semester of senior year.

On the topic of college preparation, a student reviewer shared, “Going to [the learning center] taught me to represent myself in the most honest way possible rather than to conform in what we believe the colleges are looking for.”

The belief of the center is to understand students' motivation and needs, not just academically, but also socially in how the students relate to themselves. As the chief of academics stated, “the spirit of the child is more important than raising the grade.”

Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience. The learning center places an emphasis on differentiated instruction in order to give students a personalized experience. Instead of following the same plan for each student based on their academic subject, the learning center develops a plan for each student based on their current needs and learning styles. This theme is proven through how the learning center teaches about learning styles and their company vision.

The chief of academics has at least a one-hour session with each new parent and student to create what he calls a “personal profile analysis.” He stated, “This kind of special care is our principle value of how we train our tutors.” The chief of academics went on to describe how the “special care” includes creating plans for each student based on their individual needs.

The learning center also provides a brain aptitude test for each student to better understand their learning styles and academic inclinations. When a tutor begins to work with a new student, the chief of academics meets with them to discuss the student’s personal profile and provides them with the knowledge and advice they need to personalize student learning.

At [the learning center], we understand that every student is unique, each with a different set of skills, academic needs, and learning styles. For this reason, we design a learning plan specifically tailored to meet each student’s needs.

The reviews of the learning center also identify the center’s ability to personalize teaching for each student. On the discussion of college preparation, one student reviewer stated:

[The learning center] is really there to connect you to a range of colleges that not only fits your personal profile but the colleges' profile as well. My experience was helpful by exposing me to colleges in and out of my grasp and by preparing for my interviews. My teachers were very professional and were skilled in leading me based on what I needed.

Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset. Having a growth mindset means believing that one can continually grow and adapt through continued hard work and acceptance of change (Dweck, 2017). The learning center is innovative in their thoughts and actions and is continually looking for ways to improve its current state. Having a growth mindset means that the center is open to feedback and continual improvements and does not stay stagnant. The center is not rigid in their methods for running a business or for teaching. They are open and willing to explore

changes based on student outcomes and feedback given. This is proven through embracing change and technology integration.

The learning center embraces change by continually looking to improve their current methods and giving everyone who works at the center a chance to take part in the brainstorming process. The new tutor described a meeting with management and employees during his interview as a “place where change happens.” He said:

During the meeting they showed us how they are changing doing time logs and asked what we thought. They also told us where they are going with the company in the future and how changes are made. The company is ambitious and has a lot of ideas for the future. I’m hoping I can help out.

The learning center also embraces change in their methods and their technology. In his interview, the operations manager made references to keeping the center’s technology and methods up-to-date with current educational research and technological advances. He stated:

Technology allows you to take small resources and make big gains. In the face of so much technological change, we have to embrace it.

Observations of each classroom brought to light that varying types of technology are used with the students, including televisions, projectors, and computer resources. Tutors also use educational applications and websites that they discover through the internet to find new ways to help their students.

Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow. The learning center is very intentional in their actions and does not make decisions or changes without a specific purpose to bring success to both the students and the center itself. This theme is seen through the company’s vision and through the use of their location and space.

The vision of the learning center sets strong intentions that hold more meaning and specificity than simply having the goal of improving academics. Part of the vision of the company states:

Our goal is to empower students with the knowledge and study skills necessary to become independent thinkers and learners, helping students gain the confidence they need to find their own paths to success.

The learning center has the goal to give students confidence and independence, which in turn works to boost their academics.

The set-up of the learning center was created with the intention of giving students a variety of spaces to work with very little distraction. There are varying sized classrooms to fit singular student or group learning needs. In each of these rooms, the walls are bare and extra materials including books and school supplies are not present. The learning center purposefully gives students a bare space to help them clear their minds and focus on their current task. The operations manager stated, “The rooms are clear and blank for a reason. There is an intention behind it. Having no distractions in the room really helps the kids focus.”

Summary of Key Findings and Themes

Each of the five research sub-questions (training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development) acted as code groups during the data analysis process. Each code group was related to a set of codes found inductively during the qualitative data collection using the program, HyperRESEARCH. Within the code group training, it was discovered that tutors are trained at the learning center through rules and discussions regarding expectations and best teaching practices. In regard to relationships, the learning center places an importance on tutors making a connection with their students. Innovation at the learning center is brought about by

embracing technological change. The structure of the learning center follows their vision of focusing on specific student needs, providing high quality tutoring services, and having a passion for teaching. Lastly, customer development plays a role at the learning center by proving success with current and past students based on scores and customer reviews.

The five themes were developed inductively from the data analysis in response to the overarching research question provide clarity of how the learning center continues to sustain their business: The themes are as follows: Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders; Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement; Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience; Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset; Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow.

Chapter Five: Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

Chapter Five provides a brief overview of the study including the problem, purpose, methodology, and research questions, as well as a discussion of the key findings and themes discovered from the data analysis. This chapter also provides implications for practice, study conclusions, recommendations for further study, and a final summary.

Problem Statement

Currently, the varied academic needs of students with learning disabilities throughout the U.S. and in Southern California, specifically, has driven demand for private learning centers. When student needs are not fully met within the school system during school hours, teachers recommend and parents seek outside help from learning centers (Park et al., 2016). However, these learning centers often struggle with overall business success and the retention of employees and clients alike. Further, a lack of empirical research has been conducted on learning centers and similar educational businesses directed toward primary and secondary school students. There is limited data about learning centers, what makes them high-performing, and what strategies they use to sustain their current businesses in order to assist students academically. The most recent study depicting the details of a private learning center for K-12 students is a dissertation discussing an assessment tool for the center that was written over two and a half decades ago (Zoll, 1990). Therefore, there is a need and an opportunity to explore strategies to sustain learning centers for students with learning disabilities through the study of one successful learning center.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to

sustain their businesses. This case study took place at one purposefully selected learning center catered to students with learning disabilities in Southern California that was currently successful in their ability to sustain their business. This qualitative case study incorporated data collection through interviews, observations, and archival data (Yin, 2014).

Theoretical Framework (Summary)

The theoretical frameworks used for this study were a two-part compilation of a business plan approach compiled by a UNESCO team called *The Smartest Investment: A Framework for Business Engagement in Education* and the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship. The Framework for Business Engagement in Education is a guide for education businesses to create learning opportunities while making a lasting and beneficial business. The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship is a theory with conditions that led to business success, including use of diverse resources, limiting competition, staying innovative, and recognizing entrepreneurship opportunities.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this purposefully selected case study was the following:

1. What strategies does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use to sustain their business?

The sub-questions for this study were:

- A. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use training to sustain their business?
- B. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use relationships to sustain their business?

- C. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use innovation to sustain their business?
- D. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use structure to sustain their business?
- E. How does one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California use customer development to sustain their business?

Discussion of Key Findings

The key findings of this study include the data found supporting the five research sub-questions (training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development) and the five inductively developed themes found through the data analysis: Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders; Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement; Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience; Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset; Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow.

Summary of the five research sub-questions and code groups. Through qualitative coding, evidence was found in the data collected to answer all five research sub-questions. Code groups were deductively created for each research sub-question, with individual codes assigned to their appropriate sub-group. Within the code group training, it was discovered that tutors are trained at the learning center through rules and discussions regarding expectations and best teaching practices. The learning center trains employees to work specifically with each student and places an importance on motivation and confidence. In regard to relationships, the learning center asks tutors to make a connection with their students about academics and the students' own, personal interests. Innovation at the learning center is brought about by embracing

technological change. The learning center is also open to feedback and suggestions in order to make room for new teaching methods and technology. The structure of the learning center follows their vision of focusing on specific student needs, providing high quality tutoring services, and having a passion for teaching. Lastly, customer development plays a role at the learning center by proving success with current and past students based on scores and customer reviews.

Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders. Closed-loop communication means that a team exchanges information clearly, acknowledges getting the information, and confirms their understanding of the information (McIntyre & Salas, 1995). The learning center uses clear communication in everything they do because without it, they would not see results. When management uses closed-loop communication with the tutors, the tutors understand what is being asked of them and the steps they need to follow. When tutors communicate with the students, the students have a better understanding of what they are asked to do, which gives them a boost of confidence. When management uses closed-loop communication with clients and has meeting with parents to discuss student progress, the parents become more trusting and accepting of the work the learning center does with their children.

Closed-loop communication relates to the literature discussing the importance of relationships, especially with employees and clients. Relationships form through communication and keeping an open line of communication within a business leads to the innovation of better business practices. Also, communication with educators and parents increases parent awareness and involvement in their child's academics. When parents have a strong relationship with their child's educators, they are more willing to reinforce positive academic behaviors at home (Epstein, 2002). Closed-loop communication is also used during peer observations, a vital

educational component found in the literature and the learning center (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Truuvert, 2014). Peer observations are one way that the learning center communicates the most beneficial way to run students' sessions.

Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement. By taking a holistic approach, the learning center focuses on the academic and mental state of the students, including behaviors, motivations, and levels of confidence. They do this because they see the students as a whole person that cannot and should not compartmentalize aspects of their life, including their academics. The learning center recognizes that confidence is not only built by solving an academic problem or scoring high on a test, but also by building friendships, relationships, and positive connections with the people around them. Everyone who takes a part in a student's life, especially in a mentorship role, is a great influence to that student. In recognition of this, the learning center has made it a priority for the tutors to connect with their students in a way that builds trust, understanding, and mutual respect.

The notion of a holistic approach was not prevalent in the literature related to small businesses or educational institutions. Epstein (2002) noted the importance of making connections with individuals to build stronger relationships, but did not go into depth about how those connections should be made or if they are made by connecting to students through a level beyond their academics. The importance of a holistic approach in sustaining an educational business is a finding that makes a new contribution to the literature.

Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience. Differentiated instruction involves teaching students according to their own learning strategies and styles (Caruana, 2015; Haley et al., 2013). The learning center recognizes that not all students should be treated the same and given the same type of learning path. Understanding the

specific learning needs of each student and using individualized strategies has worked for the learning center in the improvement of student academic performance. The chief of academics educates the tutors about each new student's specific needs and how to effectively implement learning strategies for them.

The learning center places an emphasis on differentiated instruction, a method proven to effectively help students with learning disabilities improve academically (Caruana, 2015; Haley et al., 2013; Sadioglu et al., 2013; Strogilos & Xanthacou, 2006; Zickel & Arnold, 2001). The learning center follows the recommendations of the research in that it understands the importance of teaching students in a variety of ways that best suits their learning needs.

Although differentiation is an effective teaching strategy proven by the literature, it is proven to boost student academics, not proven to run a business. The researcher infers that through the use of differentiated instruction, the learning center sustains itself by achieving positive student outcomes, thus encouraging more customers to become a part of the learning center.

Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset. Having a growth mindset means believing that one can grow and adapt through continued hard work and acceptance of change (Dweck, 2017). A growth mindset, being open to feedback, suggestions, and improvement, allows the learning center to incorporate new concepts and practice flexibility of thought. The learning center follows Dweck's recommendations of a growth mindset by believing that both the employees and students at the learning center have the potential to continually expand their knowledge and adapt to change. The learning center chooses to have a growth mindset and keeps an open mind for changes in teaching methods, technology, and adapting to new information that is shared throughout the world every day. When the learning center has a growth mindset and is

open to improvements and changes, they allow room for themselves to test out new strategies for success and to see how they may benefit from these new strategies.

This finding interrelates to the literature through the concept of innovation. When innovative opportunities are sought out by small businesses such as the learning center, the business has a competitive edge to stay successful and grow financially (Esterhuizen et al., 2012). Innovation cannot exist without a growth mindset. Innovation in the learning center leaves room for flexibility and creativity. Because the learning center is a small business, they have the ability to experiment with changes in a smaller scale, leaving room to make potential errors and corrections (Bush, 2016).

A growth mindset allows the learning center to be both creative and financially competitive. Being open to new ideas and innovation is having a growth mindset and it is also a component of The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, one of the theoretical frameworks of this study. Having an open mind to explore new innovative ideas is what gives small businesses, such as the learning center, a competitive advantage over others (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001).

A growth mindset, through the use of innovation, is also mentioned in the other theoretical framework of this study, The Framework for Business Engagement in Education. One of the first components of how an educational company should “make the business case” is by “fostering innovation in education” (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013, p. 12). By incorporating innovation in a company and allowing that innovation to have room to grow, the company is in the practice of a growth mindset.

Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow. The learning center is very intentional with many aspects of their company, such as their reasoning for why they teach

how they teach, why their space is structured the way it is, and why they place an emphasis on keeping students motivated. When employees are given a task, they respond more positively when a motivation is given for completing the task.

Intentionality relates to the literature describing the importance of the structure of a business through the use of the symbolic frame as described by Bolman and Deal (2017). In the symbolic frame, it is important to have clear goals and tight coordination through teamwork and understand roles in a business. Employees have the opportunity to truly understand their roles if they understand why they are in those roles and performing their tasks. By having clear, easy to understand, measurable goals, employees are more willing to work towards their goals.

Implications for Practice

Three implications for practice are provided that were born from aspects of the five themes based on the research at the learning center. The three implications for practice are: (a) Have a clear vision statement that differentiates you from other learning centers, (b) Cultivate current clients to help the business succeed and grow, and (c) Focus beyond measurable learning outcomes and take a holistic approach to education.

Have a clear vision statement that differentiates you from other learning centers.

Learning centers have the opportunity to differentiate themselves from their competitors by making their vision statement unique to their own business and keeping the intention of that statement a part of everything happening at the center. The intention of the vision statement should be known by every employee and should be a part of their daily tutoring practice. The vision statement should clearly state the reason that the learning center continues to thrive.

A learning center can sustain itself when it has a reason and a purpose for its actions. If the vision of a learning center is simply to give students academic support and raise their grades,

then there is not enough specificity for tutors to understand how to carry out the actions of supporting the students. This is because the act of having a goal does not give the tutor instructions on the best way to reach that goal. Without its own unique purpose, a learning center does not gain a competitive advantage, which is beneficial to sustaining a business as theorized by The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001).

Cultivate current clients to help the business succeed and grow. Cultivating current clients of a learning center is more beneficial to the center's growth than searching for new clients. By providing current clients with unparalleled service and getting the students to reach their goals and potential, a learning center can gain success. When current clients are pleased with their time at the center, they are likely to continue learning at the center and recommend it highly to their peers. Positive student results lead to referrals, as demonstrated by the data collected in this study. Referrals are a successful form of advertising that not only helps the center gain more clients, but also improves the current students and environment along the way.

Focus beyond measurable learning outcomes and take a holistic approach to education. A learning center should not be solely focused on the academic achievements of their students. By taking a holistic approach, tutors see that students need more than just a passing grade at school or to get into a college. The tutor has the ability to see the student as a person with interests, unique behaviors, and motivations for succeeding not just in school, but also in life skills. Making this type of connection with a student creates trust between the student and the tutor. When students are trusting of their teachers, they become more flexible and open to growth and improvement.

Learning centers can take a holistic approach to education by having management place an emphasis on the importance of tutors getting to know their students and client families. It is

important for either tutors or management at the learning center to spend time getting to know both the student and their family or support network. When a tutor is prepared for a new student, they can be given information about the student including specifics on their academics, extracurricular interests, and personality. Tutors can also be placed with students based on shared interests as a way to build trust and a connection between the tutors and the students. This is, as stated by the operations manager, placing a focus on “the spirit of the child.”

Conclusions

Three conclusions can be drawn based on the code groups of inductively discovered codes and the themes found through the data analysis. These conclusions can be applied to the practice of sustaining the business of a K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities.

Conclusion 1: A learning center can be sustained through a focus on the five literature themes of training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. The five themes found in the literature review, which also represent the five research sub-questions and the five code groups of data analysis, each play an important role in sustaining a learning center business. Training employees through the use of feedback, lectures, orientation, peer observations, teaching learning styles, and teaching motivation give the employees a strong foundation of understanding their roles at the learning center. When relationships at a learning center are built through building confidence, consultation, making connections, and motivation, tutors and students have the opportunity to gain confidence and succeed in their given tasks. Learning centers can stay innovative through embracing change, neuroscience, and technology integration, giving them a competitive edge and keeping them current with the educational world around them. The structure of a learning center can be

sustained and continually improved by paying attention to employees, having a report system, maintaining scheduling, and having a clear vision. Finally, customers can be developed and maintained through positive customer reviews, discounts, marketing, and continual student improvements.

The theoretical framework from *The Smartest Investment: A Framework for Business Engagement in Education*, highlights the importance of each of the five literature themes for education businesses as well. Training is a vital component of an education company in order to strengthen the workforce and expand business opportunities for the company and the employees. Building positive relationships in a business helps to develop partnerships and bring the community together. Innovation is a part of making the case for why a business is necessary and that a business should have a clear vision. Having a strong structure of a business will build sustainability and potentially boost wages. Lastly, developing customer relations promotes business growth (UN Special Envoy for Global Education et al., 2013).

The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, the second theoretical framework that assisted in guiding the research for this study, connected to the literature themes of relationships, innovation, and structure. This theory established the importance of relationships in a business by stating that a business owner looking for a competitive advantage should be familiar with their competitors. Also, by building relationships, a business may gain new ideas and opportunities to benefit business growth. The theory connected largely to the concept of innovation and how the use of innovation limits competition. The structure of a business in this theory refers to the benefit of having a diversity of business resources.

The five themes developed from the research and the coding of the data also relate strongly to the literature themes and how they work to sustain a business. The first theme,

engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders, relates to both training and relationships. The learning center trained employees to practice closed-loop communication. The center also built strong relationships with employees and clients through the use of this clear form of communication. The second and third themes, taking a holistic approach to student improvement and providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience, both relate to innovation. Placing a focus on the student as a whole person, including their academics, interests, behaviors, and motivations, is an innovative concept for a learning center. This type of focus gives students personalized attention and confidence to succeed in life skills as well as academics. The fourth and fifth themes, engaging in a growth mindset and setting an intention for the learning center to follow, relate mainly to the structure of a business. The vision statement of the learning center, a key component of the structure of a business, shows the center's true intention. The vision proved that the center has a growth mindset by acknowledging the growing and changing needs of the students as a focus of the center.

Conclusion 2: Flexibility allows for individualization and continual improvement. A successful learning center cannot be rigid in its thoughts or actions. In order to achieve long term success, learning centers need to be open to adaptability, including changes in structure, management strategies, teaching styles, and technology. A willingness to accept growth and change sets a platform for endless possibilities of improvement. Flexibility leads to innovative practices, allowing a business to sustain and grow over time.

Flexibility relates to The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, as an approach to helping businesses grow, innovate, and improve. According to this theory, being flexible means being open to using diverse resources that help a business limit their competition. When a

business is flexible and open to suggestions, it is easier for the business to try new ideas that their competition are not using.

Flexibility also relates to the third theme found through the research and coding of the data, providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience. This theme emphasizes the importance of recognizing each student as more than the sum of their academic parts. The learning center used differentiated instruction by giving each student a lesson plan that suits their learning styles as opposed to staying rigid and creating one plan to fit all students learning a particular subject. The implementation of differentiated instruction shows the flexibility of an educator. When businesses are flexible, they are open to trying new methods and experiences as opposed to falling into repetitive patterns, giving them the chance to learn, grow, and improve over time. Through a flexible environment and mindset, a learning center can indefinitely find way to continually improve in all aspects of the business.

Conclusion 3: Learning centers seeking a competitive advantage should focus on innovation. A successful learning center will continually find ways to be innovative, giving them a competitive advantage. As related to the Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship, staying innovative by creating new business strategies to limit imitation from other businesses will lead to business success and create a competitive advantage (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001). Learning centers can also stay innovative through their use of technology by staying up-to-date using the latest technological devices and ever-expanding resources found through the internet. This gives students a chance to connect with the technological changes taking place in the world around them and prepares them for life outside of the classroom. Innovation also relates to the theme of taking a holistic approach to student improvement. It is a competitive advantage, a

strategy that is not commonly used by learning centers, to focus on the student as a whole as opposed to focusing solely on student academics.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study combines the topics of business and education in order to explore and describe strategies used by successful learning centers to sustain their businesses. There is very little research directly related to the problem of the study; therefore, further research is recommended to gain a better understanding of strategies used in learning centers to sustain their businesses. Researchers may consider a variety of study types for further research on this topic that include a multiple case study, a longitudinal study, and a mixed method study to involve qualitative and quantitative data.

Multiple case study. As this was a singular case study, one recommendation is to complete a multiple case study to allow for comparison of strategies between two or more learning centers. The learning centers involved in the multiple case study could be chosen from a variety of areas to broaden the scope of the study past Southern California. With the right resources, the multiple case study could also include learning centers from a variety of states across the United States. This would give the researcher a broadened perspective on whether the strategies used by one learning center translate well in other learning centers. The researcher would also be able to determine if there are consistencies in the strategies used between the different learning centers.

Longitudinal study. Another recommendation is to complete a longitudinal study. This study collected data over the course of a couple months and was not longitudinal. By collecting data over a longer period of time, such as the course of a year, the researcher may be able to see new and differing developments. Strategies may be seen to adapt and evolve over a longer period

of time. Also, strategies that are seen as successful one month may prove to be less effective over a longer stretch of time.

Mixed method study. A final recommendation for further study is to follow a mixed method approach. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research gives the researcher an opportunity to compare perspectives of the data using contrasting methods. Also, qualitative results would have the opportunity to be supported with quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). For a learning center, this may include proving success of the center's teaching methods through the academic improvements of the students based on quantitative test scores.

Concluding Thoughts

Learning centers for K-12 students with learning disabilities are small businesses in education that have the intention of improving student outcomes while also sustaining themselves as a business. There is a great need for these types of learning centers to not only exist, but to also be successful in their continued excellence. This study explored how one successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities continues to thrive and sustain their business.

The theoretical frameworks that acted as an inspiration throughout the literature and the study as a whole were The Framework for Business Engagement in Education and The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship. The Framework for Business Engagement in Education is a guide for education businesses to create learning opportunities for students while identifying the needs of education businesses. The Resource Based Theory of Entrepreneurship provides insight for the use of innovative resources and practices for entrepreneurs of to create business success and was applied to the small business of a learning center.

The five sub-research questions acted as a guide throughout the study and the data collection. They were also used as literature themes and the code groups for qualitative analysis of the data: training, relationships, innovation, structure, and customer development. Using these five components as code groups, codes from the data were inductively found and placed into the groups. The data analyzed stemmed from the three methods of data collection including interviews, observations, and archival data from the learning center.

Once the codes were analyzed and broken down, five themes emerged from the data collection: Theme 1: Engaging in closed-loop communication with all stakeholders; Theme 2: Taking a holistic approach to student improvement; Theme 3: Providing differentiated instruction for a personalized experience; Theme 4: Engaging in a growth mindset; Theme 5: Setting an intention for the learning center to follow. The five themes became the core components of the five implications for practice: (a) Practice closed-loop communication with employees and clients, (b) Focus beyond measurable learning outcomes and take a holistic approach to education, (c) Teach using differentiated instruction rather than following a set formula (d) Engage in a growth mindset for continuous improvement, and (e) Set an intention and be purposeful in your actions. The codes, themes, and implications then led to three conclusions of the study. Conclusion 1: Relationships built around communication and motivation instill confidence and improve outcomes. Conclusion 2: Flexibility allows for individualization, and continual improvement. Conclusion 3: Learning centers seeking a competitive advantage should focus on innovation.

Currently, there is very little research connecting education and business, and, prior to this dissertation, there was only one study connecting business and learning centers. That study, depicting the details of a private learning center for K-12 students, was a dissertation discussing

an assessment tool for the center that was written over two and a half decades ago (Zoll, 1990). Now is the time for educators and researchers to conduct further studies on the business of learning centers as a way to assist current and upcoming learning centers in sustaining their businesses. Giving entrepreneurial educators and businesses owners tools, such as research on the business learning centers and effective business models, will help guide them in the positive direction of sustaining their own businesses. As learning centers for students with disabilities are an important and increasing need for K-12 students, I hope to see more research about sustaining these business, along with more research combining the aspects of sustaining a successful education business in order to give students the attention, academics, and confidence that they deserve.

As the researcher and as an educational therapist with my own learning center for students with disabilities, I was eager to explore the connections between the literature on small businesses and education with the actual discoveries made from the data analysis of the study. I expected the strategies for sustaining the learning center to be more generic and centered around advertising, guidelines for employees, and customer development based on the location of the learning center. I was pleasantly surprised to come to the conclusion that aspects such as flexibility, innovation, and intentionality were the most influential findings in relation to the success of the learning center. In opposition to the generic ideas that I had of advertising, rules, and location, these intangible concepts are what make the learning center unique in its practice and what give it a competitive edge, allowing it to stand out among its competition. As learning centers for students with disabilities are an important and increasing need for K-12 students, I hope to see more research about sustaining these business, along with more research combining

the aspects of sustaining a successful education business in order to give students the attention, academics, and confidence that they deserve.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Form

Dear [Name],

My name is Rebecca Cohen, and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am conducting a research study to explore strategies used by successful K-12 learning centers for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their businesses, and you are invited to participate in the study.

This study has the potential assist learning centers, especially that of your own, in achieving business and academic goals through exploring best practices and strategies to sustain your business. The findings of this study have the potential to benefit your business specifically through the data collected and shared by exploring your learning center.

If you agree, you are invited to participate by sharing archival business data, allowing the researcher to observe your work at your learning center, and participating in an interview. The archival data collection, observation, and interview may take a minimum of two visits during the day at your learning center.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant, as well as the identity of your learning center, will remain confidential during and after the study. Confidentiality will be provided through pseudonyms for participants and a fictitious business name for your learning center. Your personal information and data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence, and will only be made available to the research team members.

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at rebecca.klein@pepperdine.edu.

Thank you for your participation,

Rebecca Cohen
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Doctoral Student

APPENDIX B

Permission to Conduct Study

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to proudly open our doors and invite researcher Rebecca Cohen, M.Ed. to study how we help, tutor and mentor students with learning disabilities at our learning centers.

Please forward any relevant information and further communications regarding this matter to XXXXX, our branch manager.

Email: XXXXX

Phone: XXXXX

Best Regards,

XXXXX

Director

XXXXX

Email: XXXXX

Phone: XXXXX

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent

Your learning center is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rebecca Cohen, M.A.Ed. and Dr. Paula Thompson at Pepperdine University. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may discuss the option of participation with family and friends as needed.

The purpose of this study is to explore strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their businesses.

Your learning center will be asked to share archival business data, allow the researcher to observe work at the center, and participate in interviews. You understand that photos will be taken of the learning center and your interview will be voice recorded if you participate in the interview process. The photos and voice recordings will be used for research purposes only. The data collected, including photos and interviews, will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence. The data collected will be coded and transcribed.

The potential risks associated with participation in this study include fatigue, boredom, and discomfort sharing information related to your work environment. In the event that you experience any of these risks, you will be given the option of a break. During the interview, you have the right to refuse to answer any question. You understand that if you are not interested in completing your participation in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time. You understand that there is no direct benefit from participation in this study.

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury.

If you have any questions regarding the study procedures, please contact Rebecca Cohen at rebecca.klein@pepperdine.edu. If you have further questions, please contact Dr. Paula Thompson, dissertation chairperson of this study, at paula.thompson@pepperdine.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University, 6100 Center Drive Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

APPENDIX D

Pepperdine IRB Approval



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: December 11, 2017

Protocol Investigator Name: Rebecca Klein

Protocol #: 17-10-624

Project Title: A Case Study of K-12 Learning Centers in Southern California: Exploring strategies to sustain and expand learning centers for students with learning disabilities

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Rebecca Klein:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol and Questions for Owners/Managers

The purpose of this study is to explore strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their businesses.

Interview protocol are as follows:

1. Introductions between the researcher and the participant.
2. Remind participant that they will be audio recorded during the interview.
3. Proceed with interview questions.
4. Thank the interviewee for their participation.

Interview question guide for management/owners:

1. What is your role at [learning center]?
 - a. How long have you worked here?
 - b. How many employees work here?
2. How did you create the learning center? (If applicable)
 - a. Why did you decide to open a learning center?
 - b. How did you decide on a name and branding?
 - c. How did you go about choosing a location?
 - d. What were the greatest struggles and frustrations when starting up?
3. What is your approach for hiring and training employees?
 - a. Where do you find new employees to hire?
 - b. How do you decide who to hire?
 - c. What's your onboarding process like?
 - d. How do you determine compensation structure?
 - e. What strategies, if any, do you employ to help employees perform better? (i.e. professional development)
 - f. How do you handle turnover?
 - g. How do you determine how well an employee is performing?
 - h. What are the biggest challenges you've faced with respect to employees?
4. How do you manage relationships with customers?
 - a. Relationships with the community?
 - b. Strategies for staying connected with families?
 - c. How do you keep clients and families happy?
 - d. How do you communicate with clients and their family?
 - e. Relationships with other businesses?
5. What role does innovation play in the operation and growth of your learning center?
 - a. Do you use technology?
 - i. How do you go about deciding on a technology tool to use and how do you implement it?
 - b. How do you go about measuring and/or improving:
 - i. Client acquisition
 - ii. Client success

- iii. Client retention
 - iv. Billing
 - v. Employee acquisition
 - vi. Employee performance
 - vii. Employee retention
 - viii. Operations / Efficiencies
6. What are the rules and protocols that you have in place for your employees to follow?
 - a. Do you have regularly scheduled meeting with your employees? If so, how often are these meetings and what do they include?
 7. How do you reach new customers?
 - a. How did you reach your initial customers?
 - b. How do you reach new customers now?
 - c. What kinds of marketing do you do?
 - d. What types of messages appeal most to new customers?
 - e. What has been the most difficult part of acquiring new customers?
 - f. What are strategies and challenges with client retention?
 - g. What are the biggest challenges or frustrations with dealing with clients and their families?
 8. Do you measure client success and what role does that play?
 - a. How do you communicate progress to clients and their families?

APPENDIX F

Interview Protocol and Questions for Employees

The purpose of this study is to explore strategies used by a successful K-12 learning center for students with learning disabilities in Southern California to sustain their businesses.

Interview protocol are as follows:

1. Introductions between the researcher and the participant.
2. Remind participant that they will be audio recorded during the interview.
3. Proceed with interview questions.
4. Thank the interviewee for their participation.

Interview question guide for employees:

1. What is your role at [learning center]?
 - a. How long have you worked here?
 - b. How many employees work here?
2. Do you participate in professional development or training for work?
 - a. If so, what does the training entail?
3. How do you manage relationships with customers?
 - a. Relationships with the community?
 - b. Strategies for staying connected with families?
 - c. How do you keep clients and families happy?
 - d. How do you communicate with clients and their family?
 - e. Relationships with other businesses?
4. What role does innovation play in the operation and growth of the learning center?
 - a. Do you use technology?
 - i. How does the center go about deciding on a technology tool to use and how do you implement it?
 - b. How do you go about measuring and/or improving:
 - i. Client success
 - ii. Client retention
5. What are the rules and protocols in place at the learning center?
 - a. Do you attend regularly scheduled meetings with other employees and management? If so, how often are these meetings and what do they include?
6. What steps do you take, if any, to ensure customer satisfaction?
7. Do you measure client success and what role does that play?
 - a. How do you communicate progress to clients and their families?

APPENDIX G

Archival Data Collection Guide

Name of learning center: _____

Data Type	Data Collected?	Location of Data	Notes
Learning center website	Yes / No		
Information available on the internet (other than website)	Yes / No		
On-boarding	Yes / No		
Professional development	Yes / No		
Types of technology used	Yes / No		
Flyers/brochures	Yes / No		
Other Describe type:	Yes / No		