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An Analysis of Teacher Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in
Working With English-Language Learners

by
JoAnne M. Negrín

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
2014

Approval Page

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Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author's ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author's ideas by citing them in the required style.

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Acknowledgments

No one succeeds in doing anything of value alone. I have many people to thank for making this achievement possible.

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My parents hung a cartoon poster above the kitchen table when my brother and I were growing up. The poster said, “Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence.” I hope this research study is a reflection of the ethics that they instilled in me. I was fortunate to be raised by people who not only loved deeply, but also autographed everything they did with excellence.

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Abstract

An Analysis of Teacher Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Working With English-Language Learners. JoAnne M. Negrin, 2014: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. ERIC Descriptors: Self Efficacy, Teacher Education, Professional Development, English Language Learners

This applied dissertation was designed to provide insight into teachers' perceptions of their ability to work effectively with limited English proficient (LEP) students. Data from the writer's district, as well as state and national data, show a persistent achievement gap between the academic performance of LEP students and non-LEP students on various indicators. LEP students are dependent upon their classroom and subject-area teachers for their academic growth. However, these teachers are generally unprepared to meet the academic needs of LEP students.

Established instruments were used to survey the 895 teachers in the research district to determine how teachers across a large school district in New Jersey felt about their ability to teach LEP students effectively. This study also sought to determine whether there were pockets of greater self-efficacy by establishing whether there is a relationship between reported teacher self-efficacy and independent variables such as demographic category or area of specialization and to discover which initiatives or training teachers report as contributing to greater self-efficacy in working successfully with LEP students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The question of how to effectively educate children who are limited English proficient (LEP) is one of the defining issues for American public education in the 21st century. According to the state in which the research is being conducted, a LEP student is identified as a student in prekindergarten through Grade 12 whose native language is other than English. The student must also have sufficient difficulty reading, writing, speaking or understanding English so that it is impossible for the student to receive quality instruction in classrooms where the medium of instruction is English.

State and federal mandates governing LEP students. State and federal mandates concerning the education of LEP students were formulated in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964), Title VII of the Bilingual Education Act of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1968), and numerous U.S. Supreme Court decisions, including the landmark decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). Further guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of programs for LEP students were provided in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981).

Lau v. Nichols (1974) was filed against the San Francisco, California, school district by students of Chinese ancestry who did not speak English. Of the 2,856 students of this classification in the school system, approximately 1,000 received supplemental instruction in English as a second language (ESL). This class action suit sought relief from unequal treatment in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment but did not request a specific remedy other than to ask the school district to use its expertise to resolve the problem. The Supreme Court decided that equal treatment did not necessarily constitute equal opportunity to learn if the students were effectively barred from receiving an

education because of their lack of ability in English (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974).

Because the court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) did not offer specific guidelines for remedying the inequities deemed present, the Office of Civil Rights created the Lau Remedies in 1975 to address this policy vacuum. However, the remedies were never implemented because they were judged to be too intrusive on the rights of states and districts (Kober, 2010). The remedies were intended to develop a national set of guidelines for identifying, providing services for, and eventually mainstreaming LEP students. They also established standards for the training and development of bilingual teachers (Ovando, 2003). Although the *Lau* Remedies were not applied on a national basis, LEP student policy in the subject state closely mirrors the findings of the court in the *Lau* decision and subsequent proposed remedies.

The U.S. Federal Appellate Court decision in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981) also influenced state and district policies for educating LEP students. In this case, the Raymondville Independent School District in Texas was accused of violating the rights of LEP students under the Equal Education Opportunities Act (1974). A group of Mexican-American parents argued that their children were being segregated into classrooms based on racially and ethnically discriminatory criteria. Lawyers for the parents also argued that although *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) established a right to language support, there was no way to gauge the effectiveness of the district's program.

As a result of this lawsuit, a three-pronged test was established to gauge whether a school district was effectively serving LEP students. First, the programs must be based upon sound educational theory. Second, they must be implemented effectively, which was determined to include adequate resources and personnel. Finally, after a trial period, the programs must be evaluated and determined to be effective in overcoming language

handicaps (*Castaneda v. Pickard*, 1981).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not directly address the issue of bilingual education. However, the law prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. As a result of the passage of this legislation, school districts must ensure that all groups of students have equal access to programs and curriculum. Students whose home language is not English are considered a protected group under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and, as such, would be critical constituents in future court decisions concerning bilingual education and the rights of LEP students.

Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1968) is known as the Bilingual Education Act. This act recognized that LEP students have special educational needs. This legislation also provided federal funding for bilingual programs, including the development, implementation, and maintenance of programs and staffing and professional development for bilingual educators and teachers of LEP students. The Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized and renamed Title III, Language Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Identification of LEP students. The U.S. Department of Education (2004) allows states considerable latitude in defining a LEP student and, therefore, each state may have a separate definition of what constitutes a LEP student. Comparison of LEP student data across states is further complicated by rapid changes in the numbers of LEP students in some states. These fluctuations in enrollment may be attributed to changes in immigration patterns or demographics, changes in testing policies, or changes in policies and procedures that determine which students are classified as LEP. Between 2006 and 2008, the number of students who were classified as LEP increased by more than 20% in

19 states (Kober, 2010).

In addition, the percentage of LEP students considered proficient on state standardized tests varies widely from state to state. For example, in one state, 87% of LEP students scored proficient in reading, whereas in another state only 6% scored proficient in reading (Kober, 2010). However, even when controlling for differences in standards, testing procedures, demographics, and other variables, the discrepancies in the data from state to state and the generally low performance of LEP students remain a source of concern for researchers and practitioners.

In addition to the variation in the definition of a LEP student and the data collected on LEP students across states, another complication faced by those who wish to examine the performance of LEP students is the fact that these students represent an ever-changing subgroup of the student population. New students who have little to no command of English enter the group intermittently throughout the school year, whereas students who do master English, and therefore are more likely to receive a proficient score on standardized tests, are frequently removed from the subgroup in many districts across the United States. This phenomenon is particularly evident in those districts that do not have bilingual programs (Kober, 2010). The movement of new students into LEP status and proficient students out of LEP status can make it appear that LEP students consistently fail to improve.

As a result, in the 2004 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) revisions, the approach to the analysis of LEP student data was modified. Examples of these modifications included collecting data on students for 2 years after they exit LEP status for the purpose of including their performance in LEP student data. Recent arrivals were also exempted from testing in English language arts for the first year that they are

enrolled in U.S. schools. These newly arriving students are still required to take the mathematics portion of their state-standardized achievement test with appropriate accommodations, such as extra time and bilingual dictionaries (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), but their scores do not need to be counted toward adequate yearly progress (AYP).

States have used several other techniques to improve the chances of having a subgroup such as LEP students make AYP, such as raising the required enrollment numbers for schools in order for their LEP population to be counted so that few schools meet the criteria. States also use statistical confidence intervals that allow a subgroup to perform slightly below AYP and still make AYP. There is also a provision of NCLB called Safe Harbor, whereby a subgroup can be considered to have made AYP if its population not making AYP decreases by 10% or more from the previous year (Kober, 2010). The variance in the use of these techniques from state to state is an additional confounding factor in comparing states' data on LEP students.

By 2010, 5.3 million children, or 10.7% of students in American public education, were identified as LEP. It is estimated that the figure will reach 25% by 2030 (Migration Policy Institute, 2010). From 1998 to 2009, the LEP student population in the U.S. increased by 51% from 3.5 to 5.3 million, whereas the total prekindergarten through Grade 12 population, which includes LEP students, grew by 7.2% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2011).

The LEP student population has been growing at a rate that is almost six times the 10% growth rate of the general education population, defined as students who are neither designated as LEP nor enrolled in special education programs (O'Conner, Abedi, &

Tung, 2011). These percentages include only students currently enrolled in LEP programs or who are still being monitored. If former LEP students who have passed proficiency tests but are still struggling with academic English were included, these percentages would be substantially higher (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013).

Assessment of LEP students. The National Assessment of Academic Progress (NAEP) is a nationwide, continuing assessment of what United States students know and can do across various subject areas. It is administered through contracted agencies by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2012a). The NAEP is often referred to as the nation's report card because unlike the state-standardized tests, NAEP tests are uniform across all states. Therefore, they provide a metric of student progress nationwide in Grades 4, 8, and 12. They also provide information about the progress of groups of students within those grade levels, including LEP students (NCES, 2012b).

NAEP reading-level achievement descriptors present expectations of student performance, eliciting cognitive processes and reading behaviors that are deemed essential to successful comprehension of texts. NAEP achievement is reported at three levels: Basic, Proficient, and Advanced (NCES, 2013). The achievement levels are cumulative, with an Advanced designation including all elements of Basic and Proficient. Furthermore, these processes and reading behaviors involve different and increasing demands from one grade and performance level to the next (NCES, 2012b).

In 2011, the national average score of a fourth-grade LEP student on the NAEP reading assessment was 36 points lower than the average score for a non-LEP student (NCES, 2012b). The 2011 NAEP data showed that 70% of fourth-grade LEP students scored below the Basic achievement level, whereas 30% of fourth-grade non-

LEP students scored at that level. Furthermore, 71% of LEP students scored below the Basic achievement level on this assessment, whereas 23% of non-LEP students scored at the same level (NCES, 2011).

The NAEP data provided evidence of an achievement gap between LEP students and non-LEP students in all areas tested, with that gap widening in areas in which language demands are particularly high (Strickland & Alvermann, 2004). Across the United States, the percentage of LEP students who reach proficiency (as defined by each state) is 20% to 30% lower than the proficiency performance for non-LEP students (Abedi & Dietel, 2004).

The academic discrepancy between LEP students and native speakers of English frequently continues into their high school experience. In many states, LEP students score 40 points or more below non-LEP students on their first attempt at the language arts portion of their high school exit exams (Center on Education Policy, 2005). Nationally, more LEP students fail high school exit exams despite fulfilling all other graduation requirements since NCLB was implemented in 2001 (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Kober et al., 2006; McNeill, Coppola, Radigan, & Vazquez Helig, 2008). As a consequence of this failure and many other factors, LEP students are the least likely group to receive a high school diploma (Dianda, 2008).

For Hispanic students, many of whom are classified for at least part of their education as LEP, the consequences of this achievement gap are severe and life altering. According to Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst, & Usdan (2005), only 61% of Hispanic LEP students are projected to complete high school and only half of those who do complete high school will obtain some form of postsecondary training or education. It is estimated that only 16% of those who do complete high school will obtain a bachelor's degree.

The lack of a high school diploma is costly to states and to society as a whole. In August 2012, the unemployment rate for those over 25 and without a high school diploma stood at 12%, compared with 8.8% for high school graduates, 6.6% for those with some college or an associate's degree, and 4.1% for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Some estimates are \$200 billion in lost earnings and unrealized tax revenue for each high school dropout over the course of a lifetime. One state estimated savings of \$130 million annually if high school dropouts had graduated and received public assistance at the same rate as other high school graduates. Adults without a high school diploma had a median income of under \$12,000 in 2001, only \$3,000 over the federal poverty level (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2004).

In order to gauge student progress in meeting the curriculum content standards, students in each state take standardized tests. Students in Grades 3 through 8 take a standardized test each school year, the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge. All of the mandated examinations include items assessing language arts/ literacy and mathematics each year. Students are tested in science in Grades 4 and 8. In addition, all students must pass the high school proficiency exam in order to receive a high school diploma. These standardized tests provide a raw score and a scaled score. The scaled score removes the effects of test length and item difficulty and facilitates the comparison of students and cohorts of students who may have taken different

versions of the test (Tan & Michel, 2011).

Based on test results, student scaled scores on these standardized measures are categorized into one of three levels: (a) partially proficient, (b) proficient, or (c) advanced proficient. Performance-level descriptors explain what each designation means in a particular content area and on a particular skill and are aligned with the state core curriculum content standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science. A scale score of 200 marks the cutoff between partially proficient and proficient, and a scale score of 250 is the minimum score required to be designated advanced proficient (New Jersey Department of Education, 2011).

In New Jersey, LEP students' performance has improved every year from 2002 to 2009 on the state-standardized tests in language arts and mathematics, with the highest gains seen in the younger grades. Although there remains a substantial gap between LEP and non-LEP test scores, that gap appears to be narrowing across most grade levels and subjects (O'Conner et al., 2011).

LEP student identification at the state and local level. In New Jersey, the parent or guardian is required to complete an intake form at the time of enrollment. The intake form provides important data for placing the student in the appropriate program or school. If the parent or guardian of the student indicates on the intake form that a language other than English is spoken in the home, an evaluation of that student's English language proficiency is automatically initiated. A student who scores below a given level on the assessment instrument used by the school district is classified as LEP and thereby is entitled to receive ESL services (O'Conner et al., 2011). In the subject district, the WIDA-Access Proficiency Test (W-APT) for English (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment [WIDA], 2011) is the assessment instrument used to

make decisions about student eligibility and program designation. A student with a raw score below 25 on the W-APT is designated entitled and eligible for ESL services.

New Jersey is one of the five states in the United States with the largest percentages of immigrant residents and one of the states in which the largest percentage of people 5 years of age and older reported not speaking English very well (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2005). In this state, the enrollment of LEP students increased by 6.6% between 2002 and 2009, from 61,079 to 65,080 students. Concurrently, non-LEP enrollment increased by less than 1%, from 1,306,170 to 1,312,648 students. During that same period, LEP student enrollment increased from 4.5% of total student enrollment in the state to 4.7% (O’Conner et al., 2011).

New Jersey is ethnically and linguistically diverse. According to O’Conner et al. (2011), LEP students spoke 187 languages in the public schools of the state in 2009, an increase from 151 languages identified in 2002. Spanish was spoken by 68.8% of LEP students in the state, followed by Arabic (2.6%), Korean (2.5%), and Portuguese (2%).

The Research Setting

The subject district is located in a small city in New Jersey. This city has a population of approximately 61,000, a 7.9% increase from 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). An examination of these statistics revealed salient differences between the research district and state averages in several demographic categories (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics of Research District and State (in Percentages)

Location	Under 18	Born outside U.S.	Home language not English	High school diploma	Bachelor’s degree or higher	Living in poverty
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District	24.5	12	32.7	77.9	15.6	12.8
State	23.5	20	28.7	87.3	34.6	9.1

Within the subject school district, 48% of students are Hispanic, 29% are White non-Hispanic, and 20% are Black non-Hispanic. The populations of Asian, Native American, and students who identify themselves as two or more races each represent less than 2% of the school district population. In the research district, 62% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch through the National School Lunch Program, compared with a statewide average of 30%. The National School Lunch Program (2011) is a federally assisted meal program providing nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches in public and nonprofit schools in the United States. It provided meals for more than 31 million children in 2010. In order to qualify for the program, a family of four must have income no greater than 120% of the poverty level to be eligible for free meals and 180% of the poverty level to be eligible for reduced-price meals. These data suggest a much higher-than-average incidence of poverty in the research district as compared to the state average.

In the research district, 588 students are classified as LEP. On the 2010 state-standardized test in language arts, 11% of LEP students ($n = 65$) scored at or above proficient. In third grade, 20% of LEP students scored at or above proficient in language arts. That percentage declined to 12% in eighth grade, and 24% scored at or above proficient on the language arts portion of the 11th-grade state-standardized test, on which a passing score is required for graduation.

The topic. This research study examined the background, training, and attitudes

of teachers of all subjects and at all levels in a culturally and linguistically diverse suburban school district of approximately 900 teachers and 11,000 students in New Jersey. The general teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy in working with LEP and non-LEP students were collected and analyzed to determine whether the perception of teacher self-efficacy varies according to grade level, subject, or teacher characteristics. A survey instrument and follow-up interviews provided data for this study.

The research problem. Cummins (1979) divides language into 2 complementary dimensions. Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) represent social communication and can generally be acquired within 2 years of learning a new language. BICS is the language of the casual conversation. It is context embedded and cognitively undemanding (Cummins, 1981a). The second dimension of language competence is identified as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which is the ability to use a language to express higher level academic thought. Research suggests that CALP, which is an essential element in academic success, takes 5 to 7 years to attain (Cummins, 1979).

When teachers and schools are unwilling or unable to distinguish between BICS and CALP, students may be subjected to discriminatory psychological assessment and premature removal from language-support programs based on oral fluency in everyday conversation (Cummins, 1984). School districts in the United States generally provide students who are defined as LEP with ESL classes. These classes are designed to support the instruction of LEP students (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). Even when students are found to be no longer entitled to these supplementary services and are exited from ESL classes, they require support in order to develop their CALP, especially for the complex academic language required for higher education opportunities (Francis,

Rivera, Leseaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). All too frequently, that critical support is provided by teachers with little specialized knowledge of the needs of LEP students (August, 2006).

Although the development of the CALP dimension of language competence requires considerable time and persistence, school districts are obligated to report the results of LEP students' standardized test scores in language arts after only a single year of schooling (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Thus, closing the gap between what students are able to do when they leave their ESL program and meeting the benchmarks for grade-level proficiency is largely the responsibility of their regular or special education teachers.

Researchers have found that teachers in the United States are generally not prepared by their preservice training or by their districts to effectively teach LEP students (Echevarria et al., 2013). Whereas 40 states currently require that their teacher education programs provide some form of preparation to teach LEP students, the requirements vary widely, with only four states requiring separate coursework or certification (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008). New Jersey is not one of those four states.

Recent graduates of teacher preparation programs frequently arrive at their first jobs with little knowledge of effective education practices for LEP students, and they appear to receive very little guidance once they are hired. A 2001 NCES study (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001) of staff development revealed that training in the needs of LEP students was the least likely area of focus for inservice professional development. Durgonoglu and Hughes (2010) found through a series of surveys and classroom observations that preservice teachers were not well prepared to teach LEP students and received little to no guidance from their mentoring teachers. Byrnes, Kiger, and Manning

(1998), who surveyed 191 teachers in Arizona, Utah, and Virginia, found that “teachers have not typically received formal training in second-language learning, there are inadequate resources available to these teachers, and they often engage in well-meaning practices that are detrimental to the academic and personal development of language-minority children” (p. 26).

According to the NCES (1999), teachers were least likely to report feeling well prepared to meet the needs of LEP students and culturally diverse students. In the most recent survey of this issue, 47% of teachers surveyed reported that they were either somewhat prepared or not at all prepared to meet the needs of these students, and only 20% considered themselves very well prepared. These data illustrated a critical situation in United States schools, where 56% of teachers have at least one LEP student in their classrooms and fewer than 20% of teachers teaching LEP students are certified or qualified in this area (Waxman, Téllez, & Walberg, 2006).

The inadequate preparation of teachers with regard to LEP students is exacerbated by the fact that poorer schools and school districts, where LEP students tend to be enrolled, are less likely to have teachers with strong academic backgrounds and who are highly qualified under NCLB in the area in which they teach. In the state in which the research was conducted, 9% of teachers in low-income schools were teaching a subject they were not highly qualified to teach. In contrast, 3% of teachers in higher income schools were teaching an area that they were not highly qualified to teach (Peske & Haycock, 2006).

At the national level, there is a lack of training for teachers in the area of effectively serving linguistically and culturally diverse student populations. This dearth of training is further exacerbated by a lack of school district personnel who are trained to

distinguish between language acquisition issues and special education or language disorder issues. One result of these gaps in educator knowledge is that many LEP students are inappropriately referred for special education, speech therapy, or other services (Koelsch, 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006). The same situation exists in the subject district. As the numbers of LEP students in the subject district in particular and in United States public schools in general continue to increase, the importance of having teachers who are able to effectively address the needs of LEP students will be critical for the success of those learners (August, 2006).

National data show a clear need for improved teacher education in the area of LEP instruction. However, the training and course of study in many nonlanguage teacher education programs in New Jersey do not effectively address language acquisition and the needs of students who are learning English. A survey of the course descriptions for required courses in the undergraduate education programs of five preeminent schools of education in the state revealed that all schools currently satisfy the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2012) Standard for Diversity by requiring some training in diversity or differentiation in instruction in the form of a three-credit class. However, LEP students are considered only one subset of the population for which the teacher will be expected to differentiate or recognize diversity. Additionally, only one of the five universities surveyed offers a one-credit course dedicated to the needs of LEP students, but that course is part of a combined bachelor's and master's degree program.

A review of course descriptions and requirements at major schools of education within the state revealed that teachers currently entering the profession have received at least cursory training in the needs of LEP students. However, teachers who received their certification before the mid- to late 1990s, when an accepted academic interest in the

teaching of LEP students began to develop, may have had little or no preservice training at all (Cummins, 1997). Therefore, it is possible that most inservice teachers in the state have received minimal to no explicit instruction in the teaching of LEP students as part of their academic formation. This assessment of the state of mainstream teacher preparation statewide is consistent with the assessment of the superintendent of the research district, who surmised that district teachers are “in the dark” about effective methods for teaching LEP students.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The most widely used method of instructional differentiation for LEP students, SIOP, was developed by Echevarria and Vogt of California State University-Long Beach and by Short of the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC, under the auspices of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013). The development of the SIOP protocol was funded by the U.S. Department of Education from 1996 to 2003 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2009). SIOP consists of eight interrelated components including lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, application, delivery, and assessment. Teachers use instructional strategies related to each of these components to design and deliver lessons that attend to both the academic and linguistic needs of LEP students (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2009).

The SIOP model differs from other instructional programs and reform efforts because it serves as an overarching framework for integrating sound practices and organizing teaching methods and techniques to ensure that effective practices are implemented in a quantifiable manner. SIOP originated as an observation protocol but has since evolved into a model of instruction in which the focus is on the concurrent

teaching of language and content objectives (Echevarria et al., 2013).

SIOP has been shown to be effective in increasing teacher self-efficacy with LEP students (Miner, 2006). Miner (2006) examined teacher perceptions of self-efficacy for instruction in reading and mathematics in Grades 3 through 5 in a school district in the Pacific Northwest. Using a teacher efficacy survey, a teacher self-report on the effectiveness of their SIOP implementation, and qualitative interviews, Miner determined that teacher self-efficacy in instructing LEP students had increased as a result of SIOP training. In the preintervention survey, only 43% of general education teachers ($n = 20$) reported that they possessed strategies that could effectively help LEP students. After the intervention period, 100% of teachers reported that they possessed such strategies. Although the small sample size of this study made generalization difficult, it is reasonable to believe that training in a well-established method of working with LEP students would raise teacher perception of self-efficacy.

In the researcher's district, a limited number of teachers received introductory training in SIOP. The researcher did offer several after-school workshops during the 2012-2013 school year on the topic of SIOP, but few district teachers received inservice information about second-language acquisition and the complex interaction between students' first and second languages in the development of CALP. The research district has yet to provide widespread or sustained training to its staff.

This assessment of the research district is consistent with the conclusions of August (2006) and Echevarria et al. (2013), who argued that many teachers in the United States whose primary responsibility is not ESL have received little or no training in working with LEP students. Therefore, it appears that the level of knowledge among the teaching staff in this district about how to effectively address the needs of LEP students is

fairly representative of the general level of knowledge of teachers in districts across the state and the country.

Background and justification. The modern study of self-efficacy can be attributed largely to Bandura. According to Bandura (1986), individuals have a sense of self that allows them to exert some control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. This self-system provides individuals with a lens through which they perceive, evaluate, and regulate behavior, and provides an interface between the self-system and outside influence. An individual's sense of self-efficacy provides people with the capability to alter their environments and influence their own actions, which Bandura (as cited in Pajares, 1996) claimed are the key agents in the exercise and control of personal agency. Self-efficacy beliefs determine motivation. In other words, the more a person believes that he or she can be successful at something, the more likely he or she is to persevere in the face of adversity. This willingness to persevere is likely to result in greater success (Bandura, 1989).

The concept of self-efficacy has important applications in the school setting. Student self-efficacy has been shown to predict achievement across academic areas and levels (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). According to Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), self-efficacy beliefs determine interests because individuals tend to gravitate toward the skills and activities they feel they do well. In turn, this additional practice builds skill in the chosen area and consequently increases the individual's feeling of self-efficacy in the chosen skill or activity.

Lent, Brown, Tracey, Soresi, and Nota (2006) replicated in northeastern Italy a study of self-efficacy conducted with secondary students in the United States (S. D. Brown & Lent, 2006). They found that in both national contexts secondary students'

feelings of self-efficacy about given competencies were predictive of college major and career choices. They also found that student perceptions of self-efficacy were malleable, thus allowing for the possibility of widening a student's perceived realm of possibilities by increasing their self-efficacy beliefs in desired areas.

However, the importance of self-efficacy is not limited to students. Teacher self-efficacy is defined as teachers' belief in their ability to affect the outcome of student performance through the successful execution of courses of action and specific instructional tasks (Bandura, 1977, 1995). Teacher self-efficacy beliefs can affect the instructional choices a teacher makes, whether the teacher is willing to persevere under adverse conditions, and how much effort the teacher is willing to expend. High teacher self-efficacy has been shown to be directly related to student achievement. Moore and Esselman (1992), for example, found that teacher self-efficacy correlated directly with student performance on state-standardized tests.

Effective teaching is the most important in-school variable in determining student success (The Education Trust, 2005). Furthermore, teachers' perception of self-efficacy has an impact on teacher effectiveness. Tella (2008) found that teacher perception of self-efficacy was the most important factor in predicting student achievement. Therefore, it is important to measure teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy with LEP students.

Deficiencies in the evidence. Teachers are being held increasingly accountable for the performance of all students, including LEP students. They are being asked to reduce and erase gaps in learning and achievement between their LEP and non-LEP students. However, a sizeable body of research suggested that many professionals are not being given adequate tools and training with which to accomplish this objective.

The studies that have been completed examine teacher self-efficacy with LEP

students in a given department or educational level (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006; Hoover, 2008; Miner, 2006). The goal of this research study was to provide additional information about how teachers feel when faced with the challenge of educating LEP students, what types of experiences make them feel more prepared to meet those challenges, and what types of training they need in order to increase their effectiveness in working with LEP students.

Audience. This research study has directly benefited the subject school district. The research district has employed the information from this investigation about what teachers know, what they feel has been helpful, and what supports or structures they would like in the future to plan and implement professional development and curricular changes. However, this district is by no means unique, and therefore, the research findings will have relevance in a much wider context.

For example, suburban school districts across the country are seeing large increases in LEP student enrollment. Seven states (Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) have experienced more than 300% growth in their LEP population between 1998 and 2008, and 16 other states where LEP students have not been traditionally concentrated have seen growth in their LEP population of between 100 and 300% during the same time period (Freeman Field, 2008). This research will help to address the growing need for well-prepared teachers of LEP students.

Much of the growth and expansion of the LEP population coincides with the growth and expansion of the Hispanic population, who compose 73% of LEP students in United States schools (Migration Policy Institute, 2010). In 1980, Hispanics were concentrated in the 47 counties that had more than 50,000 Hispanic residents. Because

The United States contains more than 3,100 counties, the Hispanic population had been confined to fairly homogeneous areas. By 2009, there were 1,455 counties with at least 1,000 Hispanic residents; in about half of those counties, the Hispanic population had grown more than 60% since 1990. The counties that experienced the greatest growth in their Hispanic populations were suburban and rural counties located in the states of Georgia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Illinois, and Tennessee (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).

The growth of the Hispanic population in suburban and rural areas is pertinent to understanding the environment of the district that is the subject of this study, where 48% of students are Hispanic as compared to a state average of 20%. Because districts across the United States have experienced similar population shifts, this research may be of interest to suburban districts that are experiencing similar demographic trends throughout the United States (Freeman-Field, 2008; Migration Policy Institute, 2010; Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this applied dissertation, several terms are defined.

ESL refers to classes that are designed to support the instruction of LEP students (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). In New Jersey, an ESL program is defined as a daily developmental second-language program of up to two periods of instruction based on student language proficiency. The program teaches aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in English using second-language teaching techniques, and also incorporates the cultural aspects of the students' experiences in their ESL instruction (New Jersey Administrative Code, 2008).

LEP is defined by the state as a student who is in prekindergarten through Grade 12, whose native language is other than English, and who has sufficient difficulty

speaking, reading, or writing the English language as measured by his or her performance on an English proficiency test to effectively deny the student the opportunity to learn in classrooms where the language of instruction is English (New Jersey Administrative Code, 2008).

SIOP, as defined by the Center for Applied Linguistics (2011), refers to an instructional model that has proven effective in addressing the academic needs of English language learners (ELLs).

Teacher beliefs refers to “attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, . . . repertoires and social understandings” (Pajares, 1992, p. 309), not to be confused with knowledge, which is neutral and bias free (Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

Teacher efficacy refers to a teacher’s belief in his or her capacity to organize and execute courses of action to accomplish specific instructional tasks to capacity and to affect student performances (Bandura, 1977, 1995).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Limited-English-Proficient Label

It should be noted that some researchers disagree with the LEP label because it defines students by what they lack rather than by their assets. They charge that the definition places the onus for change and the blame for failure on the students rather than on the institutions that define the parameters and circumstances in which their learning takes place (O. García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). The theory of subtractive schooling posits that any student who does not fit the paradigm of what an ideal student should be and should bring to the classroom is viewed by the school system as deficient and in need of remediation (Valenzuela, 1999). Valenzuela (1999) argued that school systems and educators must be mindful to ensure that their curriculum and behavior celebrate the positive influence of a diverse student population. This theory has had considerable influence on the way many educators think about and discuss students of any minority designation.

This philosophical shift led to the widespread use of the term ELL, which the National Council of Teachers of English defined as an active learner of the English language (2008). Although this term is most commonly used to define students in a kindergarten through Grade 12 setting, it could be used to describe almost anyone on the continuum of learning the language. Because of the potentially all-encompassing nature of the term ELL and because state and federal agencies use the LEP designation, this paper will refer to students using the term LEP and the definition provided by the state.

Social Cognitive Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in the theoretical framework of Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory. According to Social Cognitive Theory, an individual's perception of

self mediates between knowledge and action, and individuals evaluate and reflect upon their own thought processes. The self-system of the individual and that individual's perceived environment are constantly interacting with one another. The self-system is defined by Bandura (1977) as the confluence of the individual's attitudes, cognitive skills, and abilities. Individuals' perception of their abilities and the likely outcome of their actions greatly influence those actions and behaviors and play a key role in the development of agency in the individual. Agency in the social cognitive framework can be defined as the ability of individuals to contribute to their own motivations and actions (Bandura, 1986). Because of the differing self-efficacy perceptions of individuals, there is great variation among people with similar skills, situations, and backgrounds with respect to how much they are able to accomplish (Pajares, 1996).

As individuals evaluate their performance or prospective performance of a skill or attainment of a goal, that evaluation will influence the individual's self-belief and will therefore alter future performance (Bandura, 1986). Bandura referred to this process of interaction between personal and biological factors or behavior and environmental factors as reciprocal determinism, with each factor influencing the other in what he referred to as triadic reciprocity. In this view, individuals are both products and producers of their own environments (Pajares, 1996).

Bandura (1986) considered the ability to assess and reflect upon one's situation and to evaluate and alter behavior a defining characteristic of human beings. This ability to evaluate the self included the concept of self-efficacy, which Bandura defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (1997, p. 2). Individuals with a high degree of self-efficacy will show greater effort, persistence, and resilience when confronted with

challenges. Self-efficacy also affects the emotional state. People who have low self-efficacy often perceive challenges to be more difficult than they really are, which can in turn cause depression, feelings of stress, and less creativity in problem-solving (Pajares, 1996). For these reasons, Bandura (1997) refers to self-efficacy as the key factor in human agency.

Self-Efficacy in the Workplace

The effects of self-efficacy on success in the workplace are well-documented. Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) performed the first meta-analysis of studies of the effects of self-efficacy in the workplace. The following studies, all of which were referenced in the meta-analysis, are illustrative of the fact that self-efficacy is related positively to workplace success, such as adaptability to technological advances (T. Hill, Smith, & Mann, 1987) and coping with career-related events (Stumpf, Brief, & Hartman, 1987). Self-efficacy is also related to managerial idea generating (Gist, 1989), managerial performance (R. Wood, Bandura, & Bailey, 1990), acquisition of new skills (Mitchell, Hopper, Daniels, George-Faluy, & James, 1994), newcomer adjustment to an organizational setting (Saks, 1995), naval performance at sea (Eden & Zuk, 1995), and employee creativity (Ford, 1996; Tierney & Farmer, 2002). The meta-analysis performed by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) showed a significant weighted average correlation between self-efficacy and job performance, $G(r_+) = .38$. This correlation would equate to a 28% improvement in job performance as a direct result of increased self-efficacy. This result indicated that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of job performance.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

The importance of teacher self-efficacy and its relation to the academic achievement of LEP students cannot be underestimated. Teacher self-efficacy can be

summarized as “teachers’ belief that they can bring about desirable changes in student achievement” (Guo, McDonald Connor, Yang, Roehrig, & Morrison, 2012). A number of foundational studies have indicated that teacher self-efficacy has a direct impact on student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Pajares, 1992) and motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989). These studies represent seminal work in the field of teacher self-efficacy and continue to lay the foundation for modern research in this area. Siwatu, Frazier, Osaghue, and Starker (2011) added that the purposeful development of self-efficacy is essential to the development of effective educators.

Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy believe that they can influence student learning even in challenging situations (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). Teachers with a lower sense of self-efficacy report feeling that they have minimal influence over student achievement and give up more easily, blaming failure on extenuating circumstances such as lack of resources, lack of parental involvement, or the socioeconomic status of students (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1997, Khurshid, Qasmi, & Ashraf, 2012). In a survey of 2,565 teachers in 153 elementary schools, Bogler and Nir (2012) found that high teacher self-efficacy was the strongest predicting factor of feelings of empowerment and job satisfaction. They therefore recommended that school leaders focus on teacher empowerment as a means of building a more self-efficacious and satisfied staff.

Guo et al. (2012) found that after controlling for factors such as children’s previous literacy skills and family socioeconomics, teacher self-efficacy was critical to student achievement, asserting that it manifests itself indirectly through classroom environment and teacher practice. Stipek (2012) found that teaching populations of students historically considered to be at risk for academic failure, such as students of

color, students of low socioeconomic status, or students with low academic skills, did not affect teacher perceptions of self-efficacy. Stipek instead found that the critical variables in determining self-efficacy for the teachers in her study were feeling supported by parents and by the school administrators.

Additionally, some research has found that teachers with high feelings of self-efficacy reap the benefits of improved health over those who indicate lower self-efficacy (Schwerdtfeger, Konermann, & Schönhofen, 2008). Haberman (1995) cited several characteristics of what he referred to as star teachers, including persistence, a desire for lifelong learning, and the ability to work through problems reflectively. These characteristics are directly comparable to Bandura's (1977) description of the characteristics of the self-efficacious individual and Guskey and Passaro's (1994) description of the self-efficacious teacher.

The link between high teacher efficacy and positive student outcomes is well established in the literature. Teachers' efficacy beliefs affect how they interact with students. Those beliefs affect teacher attitudes, which in turn affect teacher interaction with students. That interaction then affects student beliefs and subsequent student performance (Jerald, 2007). Jerald (2007) also reported the finding that a strong sense of responsibility for student outcomes is as important as the teachers' level of education or years of experience in predicting student outcomes.

Because Hispanic students are the fastest growing demographic group in US public schools and because many Hispanic students are classified for at least part of their education as LEP, it is important to examine how teacher self-efficacy affects that group in particular. Sosa and Gomez (2012) examined how teachers with high self-efficacy were able to build resiliency and self-efficacy in Hispanic students. All of the teachers in

the study, who were chosen because they were labeled as highly effective by both fellow teachers and students, emphasized abilities in teaching that they felt were unique to them. They also mentioned that they believed that other staff members were unwilling or unable to develop those abilities.

The highly self-efficacious teachers in the study also focused on the importance of developing meaningful relationships with students while simultaneously setting high academic expectations as the key to their success. Among the strategies that the self-efficacious teachers used in promoting student success was the use of students' home language in the classroom, whether or not the teacher was a native speaker of the language. This is consistent with Paneque and Barbetta's (2006) finding that ability to communicate with LEP students in their home language contributed significantly to teacher perceptions of self-efficacy.

The Difference Between Self-Efficacy and Self-Confidence

It is important to note that self-efficacy involves "beliefs in one's ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). Self-efficacy beliefs differ from general personal competence beliefs that are central to other motivational and expectancy theories (Pajares, 1997). Self-efficacy is situation-specific and can vary greatly for a teacher depending on the subject and students being taught as well as the circumstances in which the teaching took place (Pajares, 1996; Siwatu et al., 2011).

Self-efficacy differs from overall self-confidence in that self-efficacy varies according to the task at hand. It is, therefore, essential to ensure that any measurement instrument used to determine self-efficacy be task- or situation-specific. Many measures of self-efficacy are not sufficiently specialized to correspond to the particular task being

assessed or domain of functioning being analyzed (Pajares, 1997). Bandura (1982, 1986) argued that reasonably precise questions that measure judgments about capabilities in achieving a specific outcome offer the best measure of self-efficacy because they represent the sorts of judgments that individuals rely on when faced with a challenging task. Pajares (1997) also noted that some measures of self-efficacy might seem more similar to generalized constructs of self-confidence because they transfer more easily than other aspects of self-efficacy. For example, measures of self-efficacy related to beliefs transfer across situations more readily than measures of self-efficacy related to skills.

It is important to phrase questions to reflect task or situation-based self-efficacy rather than domain-specific self-concept because inaccurate questions can lead to inaccurate statistical results. Skaalvik and Rankin (as cited in Pajares, 1997) found that self-concept items and domain-related self-efficacy items loaded on the same factor in a confirmatory factor analysis. This result led them to conclude that the two terms measure the same construct. Problem-specific self-efficacy items and domain-specific self-concept items, however, loaded on two distinct factors. A second-order common factor explained 81% of the variance.

Skaalvik and Rankin (as cited in Pajares, 1997), therefore, concluded that the division between self-efficacy and self-concept might not be as clear as previously believed. Pajares reconciled this finding by arguing that self-concept and self-efficacy are discrete concepts that both affect personal agency and mediate behavior. He concluded that self-efficacy has been a more consistent predictor of behavior than other similar constructs and is related to the learning of new skills and the performance of existing skills more closely than any other motivational theory with an expectancy construct

(Pajares, 1997).

According to Pajares (1997), a well-constructed instrument will provide items of varying difficulty that, when taken together, provide an overview of the desired domain. The questions that provide this overview should not be overly detailed. An overly detailed questionnaire risks loss of external validity and general relevance (Lent & Hackett, 1987). The questions on the instrument should also be phrased in terms of what the subject is capable of (e.g., use of the word *can*) rather than what the intentions of the subject are (e.g., use of the word *will*).

Researchers suggested that teachers who do not have an ESL or bilingual teaching certification are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of LEP students (Alexander, Heaviside, & Farris, 1999; August, 2006; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Menken & Antunez, 2001; Parsad et al., 2001; Reeves, 2006; Zehler et al., 2003). Considering that NCES (1999) data noted that this is an area in which a majority of US educators have indicated a perceived lack of knowledge, these findings are consistent with Bandura's (1986) assertion that high self-efficacy cannot be achieved when an individual possesses insufficient knowledge to complete a task successfully.

Because even the most dedicated teachers cannot provide high-quality education with inadequate skills and knowledge, it is essential to increase the ability of teachers to address the needs of LEP students through professional development (Ballantyne et al., 2008). Teacher self-efficacy is also the single most important variable in determining whether a teacher's practice will be positively affected by professional development initiatives. Professional development leads to better instruction and improved student learning when it focuses on how students learn specific subject matter and how students understand that subject matter. The focus must then be on instructional practices that are

specific to helping teachers better understand the subject matter and how to deliver instruction related to the subject matter (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007).

The professional development should also be directly connected to the curriculum materials and content standards in use (American Educational Research Association, 2005). Ingvarson, Meiers, and Bevis (2005) described a virtuous cycle in which job-embedded professional development that involved active learning and peer collaboration had a significant impact on knowledge. This, in turn, had a significant influence on teacher practice, impacting student learning outcomes and teacher efficacy. However, professional development with a view to developing teacher efficacy with LEP students must be viewed as a long-term initiative.

Creating change requires an investment of time and effort on the part of both the change agents and the teachers involved (August & Shanahan, 2006). Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) found that employees are often wary of change because they fear that they will not be able to develop the new skills and abilities that will be required of them. In effect, they resist change because of issues of self-efficacy. The authors added that people have a limited capacity for change, and for this reason, they may resist change even when they stand to benefit from it. Kotter and Schlesinger offered several methods for responding to those resistant to change; but several of those methods, such as negotiating an advantage for a resistant individual or group or coercing individuals out of the organization, are not likely to work well in the heavily unionized public school context. Other suggested methods, such as education and communication, participation and involvement, and facilitation and support, can bring about support for change within the educational context.

Wilson (2007) wrote that a theory is “a way of organizing ideas that seems to

make sense of the world” (p. 17). Fullan (2008) contrasted this definition of a theory with his own definition of a plan, which he describes as “a tool, a piece of technology only as good as the mind-set using it” (p. 1). Fullan asserted that theory and action by themselves are equally dangerous when trying to effect change and that the most effective change is produced through reflection in action. To synthesize, in order to effect change in the school setting with a view to impacting student outcomes and teacher efficacy, it is important to have a vision based in theory, a long-range plan for achieving the desired results and the ability to anticipate and respond to resistance to change.

Fortunately, self-efficacy is a trait that can be developed. Bandura (1977, 1995) identified four ways in which self-efficacy in a particular task or area can be cultivated. Self-efficacy can be developed by providing the learner with mastery experiences. These are challenging tasks that will give the learner the self-control, cognitive skills, and behaviors to experience success at a task that is above the learner’s current level of mastery, yet not so far above it as to be overwhelming or impossible. Mastery experiences are considered to be the most potent of the four ways of developing self-efficacy for teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007).

For teachers, mastery experiences are actual teaching accomplishments with students (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy increases if teachers perceive their performance as successful, and that belief contributes to the expectation that future experiences will be successful as well (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007). Siwatu et al. (2011) suggested that during each period of professional development, teachers should be given time to role-play how the objective of the training would look in their classroom. This exercise would allow them to build self-efficacy through simulated mastery experience. This, in turn, would increase the likelihood that the objective of the professional

development session will be implemented with fidelity in the classroom.

A second method of building self-efficacy is through vicarious experiences (Bandura 1977, 1995) in which the learner sees others with whom he or she identifies succeeding at a given task. The more the learner identifies with successful peers, the greater the chances that the learner will also succeed at the task or skill. Siwatu et al. (2011) provided the example of building teacher efficacy in the area of culturally responsive teaching. They hypothesized that if the knowledge remained theoretical, it could be too abstract for the teacher to implement. If the teacher were to see examples of culturally proficient teaching in the form of classroom visits or videos, it would be easier to develop the practice. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2007) noted that if the model differs from the observer in ways that the observer deems salient, such as level of experience or training, the observer might not experience greater self-efficacy.

The third method of building self-efficacy is positive reinforcement, in which the beliefs and encouragement of others motivate the learner to succeed. Finally, the learner's own affective state plays an important role in the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1995). If a learner is stressed or unhappy or if the learner harbors negative emotions about the subject of the training, it will be more difficult for that learner to experience success. At the early stages of skill development, both preservice and novice teachers benefit from feedback that highlights their professional capabilities (Bandura, 1977).

Few studies focused on the perceived self-efficacy of teachers of LEP students. Many of the published studies focused on the teachers of LEP students who are identified as special education students (Hoover, 2008; Paneque & Barbetta, 2006) or on the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and referrals of LEP students to special

education programs (Soodak & Podell, 1993). All of these studies have found that teachers with higher self-efficacy made fewer referrals of LEP students to special education programs than did teachers with lower self-efficacy.

Aligning Professional Development With Bandura's Social Cognitive Framework

Current teacher preparation programs divide future teachers into language specialists and content specialists. Inservice programs for practicing teachers reinforce this divide. Therefore, it is difficult to find teachers who are adequately trained to teach both language skills and subject matter to LEP students (Stoddart, Pinal, Latzke, & Canaday, 2002; Echevarria et al., 2013). This divided and divisive pedagogy for teachers limits the ability of both teachers and students to learn because learning about language is most effective when it happens in an appropriate and meaningful context (Gibbons, 2002). In order to improve the integration of language and content-area knowledge and increase teacher efficacy in working with LEP students, high-quality, integrated, context-embedded professional development is necessary (Shanahan & Shea, 2012). Professional development should have a focus on content knowledge, opportunities for active learning, and an extended duration (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

Shanahan and Shea (2012) developed a professional development framework grounded in the conditions for effective professional development set forth by Garet et al. (2001) and Hawley and Valli (1999). Their framework also follows Bandura's (1997) four conditions for the development of self-efficacy. Following Bandura's (1997) model, the Shanahan and Shea professional development sessions were led by a master teacher from another school district who taught the same grade level as the teachers in the workshop. Having a trained colleague teach the lesson rather than an outside expert who did not routinely teach that grade level and subject allowed teachers to identify with the

presenter, providing a vicarious experience according to Bandura's (1977) model for building self-efficacy. After engaging in a model lesson, the participants spent 15 minutes discussing the lesson, focusing on exemplary practices and how they could adapt the lesson to their own classrooms. This meeting time corresponded to Bandura's condition of vicarious experience and positive reinforcement.

This type of professional experience left teachers feeling that they could implement the changes, thus, having an effect on their affective state. When teachers returned to their schools, they discussed the enactment of the lessons, furthering social persuasion, vicarious experience, and positive reinforcement. Finally, the execution of the lessons in class gave the teachers mastery experiences. After 2 years, this continuous professional development model significantly improved teacher learning, practice, and self-efficacy beliefs in relation to LEP students (Shanahan & Shea, 2012).

Teacher Beliefs and Student Outcomes

Several researchers have shown that student achievement suffers when teachers discount the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students or perceive those backgrounds to be inferior to that of the dominant linguistic and cultural group (Gunderson & Siegel, 2001; Leistyna, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999; Wayman, 2002).

Valenzuela's (1999) seminal work coined the phrase *subtractive schooling*. According to Valenzuela, students who do not fit the paradigm of the model student, often because of their ethnicity, language, or background, are viewed as having deficits that require remediation rather than valued assets to be incorporated into the school culture. This framework for describing the challenges faced by language or cultural minority students has had considerable influence on educational research and practice.

Teacher beliefs have been found to be strong predictors of performance (Bai &

Ertmer, 2008), and this generalization has held true for teachers of LEP students. Several researchers have noted that in their studies, many mainstream teachers have characterized LEP students as less motivated, more difficult, or more troublesome to teach than non-LEP students (Clark-Goff, 2008; Yoon, 2008). Negative teacher attitudes toward LEP students have also been shown to affect student academic performance (den Brok, Levy, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2005; Reeves, 2006). Furthermore, negative teacher attitudes have been shown to negatively impact LEP student behavior (Clark-Goff, 2008). Teachers behave differently toward low-expectation students than they do toward students of whom they hold high expectations. Those behavior differences rooted in the teacher's beliefs and expectations often manifest themselves as less attention from and interaction with the teacher, which in turn has negative consequences for the student (Winfield, 1986). Smitherman and Villanueva (2000) found that attitudes formed during teachers' preservice years had a lasting impact on their practices with diverse student populations.

Fortunately, just as professional development positively affects teachers' self-efficacy, it also affects teachers' beliefs about their students and the families and communities to which those students belong (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Grause, 2005; Joshi, Eberly, & Konzal, 2005; Jung, 2007). Effective professional development that affects teacher beliefs about LEP students and increases teacher self-efficacy in turn has a positive impact on student achievement (Hart & Lee, 2003; Jung, 2007). However, before planning professional development, it is essential to have accurate information about the attitudes and beliefs of the participating teaching staff. It is this need that this research study sought to address.

Preservice Teacher Preparation

It was not until the late 1990s that teacher education programs in the United States began to address issues related to an increasingly diverse student population (Cummins, 1997). In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students made a strategic priority to develop policy and program recommendations to improve the ability of content area teachers to effectively teach LEP students (Ballantyne et al., 2008). Forty states currently require that their teacher education programs provide some form of preparation to teach LEP students. However, the requirements vary widely, with only four states requiring separate coursework or certification (Ballantyne et al., 2008).

Menken and Antunez (2001) found that less than one sixth of colleges and universities offering ESL or bilingual-education teacher education programs required any LEP-oriented content in the preparation of mainstream teachers. These findings are consistent with the survey of teacher education programs in New Jersey in which only one university offered minimal course work specific to LEP students. DeJong and Harper (2005) reported, "This finding suggests that teacher preparation programs assume that the preparation of teachers for diverse, native English-speaking students can naturally be extended to include LEP students" (p. 102). Although good teaching practices are generally beneficial to both LEP and non-LEP students, LEP students have additional linguistic and cultural needs for which teachers must have explicit training to be able to address. In order to teach LEP students effectively, preservice teachers must acquire these skills as part of their regular teacher preparation (DeJong & Harper, 2005). DeOliveira & Schoffner (2009) offered concrete suggestions about how to incorporate linguistically and

culturally sensitive teaching practices into a teacher preparation course, with an emphasis on not merely instructional strategies but also on ways in which they built empathy with LEP students by putting preservice teachers in the position of the students who must learn content through a second language.

Furthermore, several researchers found that coursework alone will not provide preservice teachers with the skills and training needed to effectively teach LEP students (Mencken & Atunéz, 2001; Téllez & Waxman, 2004). Instead, these researchers found that the knowledge and skills that led to successful teaching of LEP students were (a) the ability to communicate with the student and engage the student's family, (b) a thorough understanding of and ability to teach the language, and (c) a high degree of self-efficacy in teaching LEP students (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). It does not appear that current undergraduate programs in teacher preparation are preparing students to meet these criteria.

Despite the evidence that points to a lack of preparation to work successfully with a diverse student population, Burriss and Burriss (2004) found that preservice teachers indicated a high level of comfort and confidence in dealing with students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This was shown to be the case even when the preservice teacher's own background provided no indication of any exposure or life experience that would indicate an elevated sensitivity to issues of diversity. The researchers expressed concern that this apparently unwarranted confidence in preservice teachers could undermine their ability to learn new strategies and dispositions toward diverse student populations and could encourage them to treat all members of a particular group according to the same strategy.

Furthermore, Siwatu (2007) found that even when preservice teachers held

positive views of linguistically diverse students, they continued to hold beliefs about the language learning process that have been shown to be detrimental for LEP students.

Clark-Goff (2008) found that preservice teachers often held beliefs, such as that English is an easy language to learn, that a first language other than English interferes with English-language acquisition, and that correcting LEP students was time consuming, that do not correspond to the findings of current research and best practices in language learning and acquisition. Siwatu (2007) concluded that preservice teachers' knowledge of language acquisition and the needs of LEP students must be improved.

Changing beliefs is an important first step toward ensuring a positive instructional environment and increasing academic achievement for LEP students (Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008). Vélez-Salas, Flores, and Smith (2005) suggested that teacher preparation candidates must receive continual guidance and exposure to linguistic and cultural issues throughout the course of their preservice experience. They also expressed that teacher education programs should inform students how to recognize and integrate culturally relevant pedagogy in a fully integrated fashion. Commins and Miramontes (2006) called for shifting the place of language and cultural diversity within teacher education from a peripheral topic to a foundational base of teacher preparation. This type of preservice preparation could help to alleviate the problem of perceived cultural discontinuity between minority students' home experiences and school experiences, which has been blamed for persistent academic difficulties among these student groups (Tyler et al., 2008).

Inservice Teacher Preparation

Recent graduates often arrive at their first jobs with little knowledge of effective education practices for LEP students, and they appear to receive very little guidance once

they are hired. A 2001 NCES study of staff development revealed that training in the needs of LEP students was the least likely area of focus for inservice professional development. In the NCES survey (Parsad et al., 2001), 80% of teachers reported receiving professional development related to their state or district curriculum, whereas only 26% indicated that they had received any staff development related to the needs of LEP students.

Furthermore, of the teachers reporting that they had at least three LEP students in their classrooms, 62% reported having attended training related to the needs of LEP students within the past 5 years, but the median amount of training they had undergone during those 5 years was 4 hours (Zehler et al., 2003). Both the quantity and quality of inservice training provided to teachers and reported by Zehler et al. is contrary to the standards espoused by the National Staff Development Council, which call for long-term and continuous staff development (Learning Forward, 2011; see Appendix A).

Despite the compelling evidence for the effectiveness of integrated and relevant professional development as well as the need for strategies that directly address the needs of LEP students, it appears that at the national level as well as in the research district, teachers have had little sustained support for working effectively with LEP students. Growing evidence of significant achievement gaps for LEP students indicated that immersing students in an English-only environment does not produce desirable results (Echevarria et al., 2013; J. D. Hill & Flynn, 2006; Téllez & Waxman, 2004).

Given the lack of inservice training, it is little wonder that experienced teachers do not differ from inexperienced teachers in feelings of preparedness in working with LEP students (Bustos Flores & Smith, 2008; Lewis et al., 1999). The job satisfaction of teachers is heavily influenced by their interactions with peers and with students (Klassen,

Usher, & Bong, 2010), and years of frustration may explain the findings of García-Nevarés, Stafford, and Arias (2005) that the more years a teacher had been teaching, the more negative the attitude toward the native languages of LEP students.

Teachers of LEP students are generally aware of their lack of preparation in this area. Although 27% of teachers in the 2001 NCES survey replied that they felt very well prepared to meet the needs of LEP students, 12% reported feeling not at all prepared. These numbers contrast sharply with the 5% who reported that they were somewhat or not at all prepared to maintain order in the classroom or the 18% of respondents who felt somewhat or not at all prepared to implement cooperative learning.

In a research study involving over 1,200 teachers, 57% expressed a need for more information in order to work more effectively with LEP students (Alexander et al., 1999). This expressed need has been identified at both the elementary and the secondary levels (Gándara et al., 2005). Reeves (2006) found in a survey of nearly 300 teachers in a district with few LEP students that 81.7% felt that they did not know enough to teach LEP students effectively and 53% wanted more professional development in this area. Gándara et al. (2005) found that teachers were generally eager to help their LEP students and to acquire the tools with which to do so. An appreciable body of research suggested that many teachers recognize the gaps in their knowledge in the area of second-language acquisition and are eager to improve their practice in order to fill those gaps.

This lack of inservice training documented in the literature is critical because research has shown that teachers generally have lower expectations for LEP students than for non-LEP students across all subjects (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2001). Researchers have found that when faced with students whose English proficiency is emerging,

teachers tend to focus on simplified content and basic skills (DeJong & Derrick-Mescua, 2003; Kinsella, 2000; Echevarria et al., 2013). Additionally, teachers tend to hold potentially serious misconceptions about their students and about the process of learning another language.

For example, Karabenick and Clemens Noda (2004) found that in a district where one third of the population was LEP students, 52% of teachers believed that speaking a first language other than English at home hindered English-language development. Furthermore, 32% thought that if students could not produce fluent English, they were also unable to comprehend it. Many teachers were not aware of and did not differentiate the important distinctions between BICS and CALP.

Actions and beliefs that are not based on research and knowledge may be well intended, but they do nothing to reduce the persistent achievement gap that LEP students must struggle to overcome. Fortunately, several studies determined that continued training can shift the thinking of educators (Bartolomé, 2002; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; O. Lee, 2004; J. S. Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Reeves, 2006). This is a critical finding, because ongoing teacher training and support are essential to the implementation of strategies that have been found to help LEP students (Gersten et al., 2007; Hart & Lee, 2003). Teachers and staff who work with LEP students must have access to quality professional development in order to implement effective programs. Four steps to ensuring effective professional development are (a) needs assessment, (b) timely and valuable professional development, (c) evaluation, and (d) reflection (Thomasson, 2012). The researcher hopes this study will serve as a needs assessment that will lead to more effective professional development in the research

district.

Characteristics of Limited-English-Proficient Students

LEP students are the fastest growing population in United States public schools (Harper & DeJong, 2004). It is important to note that despite the one monolithic category indicated by accountability requirements, LEP students are a highly diverse group. Variables such as immigration status, socioeconomic status, level of education in the first language, and English language proficiency can create differing needs and require different strategies for instruction (Batalova et al., 2005; Echevarria et al., 2013). Many LEP students must mediate the new language and culture for themselves as well as for their parents or other family members. This interaction between the two languages and cultures also may profoundly impact their knowledge, skills, and identity, as well as their academic performance (Brisk & Harrington, 2000; Tse, 1995).

More than 70% of LEP students in United States schools were born in the United States, including 57% of LEP students ages 12-18 (Batalova et al., 2005). Some LEP students shoulder the additional challenge of learning English with little formal education in their native language or with interrupted schooling (Aragon, 2009). Because most LEP students spend most or all of their day in a classroom that is not adapted to their needs (Harper & DeJong, 2004; Menken & Holmes, 2000), mainstream teachers are a critical link in the successful education of LEP students (Evans, Arnett-Hopffer, & Jurich, 2005). However, the very professionals on whom LEP students must depend for their academic achievement appear to be only minimally prepared for the task.

For example, only 20% of the 56% of teachers who reported at least one LEP student in their classroom were certified to teach LEP students (Télliez, Waxman, & Walberg, 2004). Therefore, it appears that a majority of mainstream teachers lack the

training to teach subject-specific skills to LEP students (J. E. Brown & Doolittle, 2008).

This lack of expertise in working with LEP students, combined with a generalized lack of knowledge about how to differentiate language difference from learning disability (Klingner, Artiles, & Barletta, 2006), may lead to over or under representation of LEP students in special education programs, (J. E. Brown & Doolittle, 2008).

Academic Needs of Limited-English-Proficient Students

DeJong and Harper (2005) believed that the lack of coursework designed to address the needs of LEP students in preservice teacher training was the result of a philosophy that LEP students were just another group for which a teacher must recognize diversity. As such, all the teacher must do to meet their needs is to use the same good teaching practices that they use for all students, such as activating prior knowledge, cooperative learning, and hands-on activities. This theory is consistent with the lack of content-area coursework on the needs of LEP students in New Jersey. Both content standards and mainstream teachers assume an oral and literacy base in English, which LEP students by definition do not have (DeJong & Harper, 2005).

The developers of the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a, 2010b), to which the research state is an adherent, deliberately did not address LEP students' English language development needs. For example, there are foundations of literacy standards for Grades K-5, but not for the secondary grades, thus ignoring the language development needs of secondary learners. However, age-appropriate knowledge of English is necessary for the attainment of those content standards (Echevarria et al., 2013). To paraphrase Gibbons (1998), students must learn to talk before they can talk to learn.

Notwithstanding this limitation, the development of the Common Core State Standards represents positive change for LEP students. English language acquisition can no longer be considered a “boutique proposition” (Santos, Darling-Hammond, & Cheuk, 2012, p. 3), with the ESL teacher solely responsible for student success. Instead, all teachers will be held accountable for the academic language development of their students regardless of native language background.

There is no single definition of academic literacy or language, but most definitions include the four domains of language: Reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Most definitions, including the Common Core State Standards, require the use of a more formal, academic register of language (Bailey, 2007; Gibbons, 2002; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers; Schleppegrell, 2004; Short, 2002; Zwiers, 2004). The need to master academic language becomes more urgent as students advance through the grade levels, as content and class work become increasingly complex (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).

LEP students must learn the required content-area skills and concepts concurrently with the academic language and literacy skills needed to be successful in each content area (G. E. Garcia & Godina, 2004; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). At the same time, students must learn specific academic tasks, such as how to take notes or work effectively in cooperative learning groups. Without these English language skills, it is difficult for a student to learn and demonstrate proficiency in the content areas (Echevarria et al., 2013).

The challenges to LEP students in learning language and curricula are significant, but the rewards of achieving full bilingualism are well documented. Bialystok (2004, 2007) concluded that children with knowledge of two language systems develop greater

metalinguistic awareness, a more analytic orientation toward language that allows them to see patterns and differences between and among languages. Furthermore, the concept of linguistic interdependence (Cummins, 1979, 1981b) means that languages fortify each other in developing a student's language skills and knowledge. A similar concept is common underlying proficiency, in which knowledge and abilities acquired in one language are available for the development of another.

For example, if an individual wishes to learn how to add and subtract numbers in a second language, all he has to learn is the vocabulary for those numbers and for the mathematical operations desired. The concepts of addition and subtraction, although learned in the first language, will be available to the learner in the second language and quite naturally transferred. Furthermore, proficiency in the home language is related to improved academic achievement in the second language, particularly in the area of literacy (Riches & Genesee, 2006).

Cummins (1979, 1981a, 1981b, 2000) proposed a distinction between social language (BICS), which takes 1-3 years to develop, and academic language (CALP), which requires 5-7 years to develop. Thomas and Collier (1997) found that students require between 4-7 years to be able to read at grade level in English. Gándara (1999) found that the listening skills of LEP children may be at 80% of native proficiency by Grade 3, but reading and writing skills lag behind significantly.

High school students require a vocabulary of approximately 50,000 words in order to meet high school content standards, and the average student learns 3,000 new words each year (Graves, 2006). If LEP students learned the same number of words each year as non-LEP students, they would learn 12,000 to 15,000 words during high school. These numbers are far below the vocabulary necessary to engage with complex texts and

high school level coursework (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Hakuta et al. (2000) found that the districts that were most successful with LEP students devoted 3 to 5 years to develop BICS and 4 to 7 years to develop CALP. Most school districts do not support LEP students for the full amount of time they would require to develop CALP fully (O. Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). In addition to having to learn complex content through a new language, older students must also learn to navigate a school system that may function quite differently from their previous school experiences (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Common Teacher Misconceptions

As a result of their lack of training in the explicit needs of LEP students, well-intentioned teachers often focus on the similarities between first language (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition. Both L1 and L2 learners will acquire much oral language naturally, especially if they are young. They also follow a similar progression from preproduction to one-word utterances and eventually to complex structures (DeJong & Harper, 2005). DeJong and Harper (2005) also asserted that many teachers equate limited L2 language production with limited cognition or academic ability, as they would with an L1 speaker. However, all but the youngest of L2 speakers have prior learning experiences and a maturity level to be able to understand far more than they can express in the L2. It is therefore important for teachers to learn how to teach students with rigor even if they are still unable to produce language to verbally express their learning (Echevarria et al., 2013). Teachers may believe that LEP students will pick up the L2 quickly and easily “like thirsty little sponges” (King & Mackey, 2007, p. 55), as may be evidenced by rapid acquisition of BICS. Teachers who are unaware of the BICS/CALP distinction (Cummins, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997) can improve their instructional presentations and offer instructional encouragement to their LEP students by providing

additional scaffolding and support in performing academic tasks (DeJong & Harper, 2005).

Teachers who understand the process of second-language acquisition will realize that LEP students may use their L1 or code-switch between L1 and L2 in order to access knowledge, and doing so does not mean they are confused or lazy or require evaluation for special education services (DeJong & Harper, 2005; Meyers-Scotton & Jake, 2001; Zentella, 2007). Influence from the L1 may also take the form of differences in grammar or writing conventions that may affect a LEP student's ability to communicate in the L2, particularly in the case of older students who have had formal education in their L1 (DeJong & Harper, 2005). These cross-linguistic differences may cause a student to miss important cues in academic English (Birch, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

Mainstream teachers who do not understand the relationship between cognition and language proficiency rely on low-level questioning, such as recall or recitation of facts, when interacting with LEP students (DeJong & Derrick-Mescua, 2003; Kinsella, 2000). Teachers may unconsciously ignore LEP students in their classes or avoid interacting with them all together (Verplaetse, 2000). LEP students require cognitively challenging and academically rigorous teaching that is appropriate to their age and language level (DeJong & Harper, 2005), yet most teachers do not have the background to recognize and to provide for the academic needs of LEP students.

An understanding of what is developmentally appropriate for LEP students at various stages of language acquisition and an appreciation of the L1 as a resource for learning is essential for the academic success of LEP students (DeJong & Harper, 2005). New Jersey is attempting to assist teachers in this endeavor by publishing a model curriculum for each core content area that includes indicators of what a student can be

expected to do at each WIDA English Language Development level to demonstrate knowledge and what sorts of supports are appropriate for a student at that development level (New Jersey Department of Education, 2012).

Second-language literacy instruction. An awareness of the importance of L1 interaction in the L2 learning process is essential for the effective instruction of LEP students in both reading and writing. Even LEP students who appear fluent in oral language development do not have the same breadth and depth of vocabulary and intuition about the structure of their L2 as a native English speaker. Frequently, LEP students' L1 may differ from English in the way it communicates information through grammatical structures. The form, style, and organization of larger units of text such as a paragraph can differ substantially across languages (DeJong & Harper, 2005). Differences in writing systems or sound-spelling correspondence can affect the extent to which a student can transfer established literacy skills from the L1 (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). These cross-linguistic differences can affect not only LEP students' output but also their ability to decode the cues that native speakers of the language use when reading in English (Birch, 2002; Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

In writing, the tools and conventions a LEP student has learned in their L1 will permeate their L2 writing, and a teacher who does not understand the influence of the L1 may question the abilities of the LEP student rather than viewing errors as part of the acquisition process (DeJong & Harper, 2005). In order to effectively fill gaps in LEP students' learning, it is important that teachers have an understanding of their learners' needs based on their language background and prior literacy experiences and that they need to be given the tools with which to close these gaps (Schleppegrel & Colombi, 2002).

DeJong and Harper (2005) encapsulated all that a mainstream teacher must learn and understand about LEP students in order to be maximally effective into three basic categories. First, teachers must understand the processes of language acquisition and acculturation. Second, they must be aware of the role that language and culture play as the media of teaching and learning, which includes an awareness of the challenge that LEP students face in learning content and language simultaneously. Third, linguistic and cultural diversity must be important and explicit goals of content instruction, and lessons for LEP students must contain both language and content objectives. A generalized course in differentiation for diverse populations is unlikely to provide teachers with the needed skills and strategies.

A mainstream teacher who wishes to be fully proficient in working with LEP students must understand the needs of LEP students with varied L1 backgrounds and cultures. The teacher must also acquire the skills with which to address those needs. This task must seem daunting to the practicing teacher who is not receiving any sustained guidance for improvement or for the school or district administrator who must create a plan of action. Yet, the acquisition of those skills and understandings that are effective with LEP students can also be used improve the performance of non-LEP students (DeOliveira & Schoffner, 2009).

Mixed-methods research design. A mixed-method design was well suited for this type of study. The quantitative survey component of this study allowed the researcher to obtain information about a large sample of teachers across an entire district in a way that would be impossible or impractical to do qualitatively. Quantitative survey research is a systematic method of data collection that aims to predict the attitudes or behaviors of an entire population by presenting questions to a sample that is representative of the

entire population of interest (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Although the survey was sent to the population of 895 district teachers, the researcher did not anticipate that every teacher would respond. Therefore, the returned surveys represented a random sample of the population of district teachers.

A purely quantitative research study would not adequately explain the context and setting of the research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This information is critical to a full understanding of the feelings of self-efficacy of teachers in the research setting. Informing quantitative data with a qualitative component allows the voices of the participants to be heard, and this was clearly a case in which a quantitative design could be enhanced by qualitative data that enriches and explains the quantitative results. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Merriam, 2002).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to survey a sample of teachers from the district research site in order to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on how efficacious teachers judge themselves to be in teaching LEP students in comparison to non-LEP students. An existing survey, the EXCEL inventory (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006), was used as the basis for collecting this information (see Appendix B). The EXCEL survey was then modified in order to obtain separate data points for LEP and non-LEP students (see Appendix C). This study also sought to determine whether there were pockets of greater or lesser self-efficacy. This was accomplished by determining whether a relationship existed between reported teacher self-efficacy and independent variables such as demographic category or area of specialization. This study also sought to identify the initiatives or training teachers reported as contributing to greater self-efficacy in dealing successfully with LEP students.

The researcher conducted an integrative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data in which the quantitative results served as the basis for the selection of participants for qualitative interviews. The quantitative results also provided information about the context of the qualitative analysis. The quantitative and qualitative findings are synthesized in the discussion section.

Research Questions

This research study employed a mixed-methods research design, collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data sets to answer five research questions. The first 2 questions were analyzed using a quantitative method, and the last three questions were analyzed using a qualitative method. The research questions were as follows:

1. What is the difference between the level of teacher self-efficacy with LEP students and the level of teacher self-efficacy with non-LEP students in the research district as measured by a modified version of the EXCEL Teacher Inventory (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006)?
2. What is the relationship between the dependent variable of reported self-efficacy and the independent variables of grade level, years of experience, highest degree earned, proficiency in a second language, and content specialization?
3. How do teachers feel about their self-efficacy in working with LEP students?
4. What types of training do teachers credit with increasing their efficacy with LEP students?
5. What types of information or training do teachers feel would help them to increase their efficacy in teaching LEP students?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participants

All 895 teachers in the school district were asked to participate in the quantitative component of this research study. Although any data derived from the 72 ESL, Foreign Languages, and Bilingual Education teachers currently working in the research district was not used in the current analysis, it was collected along with that of all teachers in the school district. Doing so facilitated the dissemination of the survey, and the data may be used in future research.

According to school district data, 79% of teachers were female. The average age of teachers in this district was 31, and those teachers had an average of 11 years of teaching experience, 10 of which were in the employment of the research district. In this district, 76.1% of teachers listed a bachelor's degree as their highest level of educational attainment. A master's degree was the educational attainment of 23.2% of teachers in this district, and 0.2% of the teaching staff had a doctorate. All of the teachers in the district held a valid teaching certificate. In this district, 86.5% of teachers identified themselves as White, 5% self-identified as African American, 0.2% identified themselves as Hispanic, and 0.1% were Asian and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, respectively. Because participation in the research study was voluntary and not every teacher was expected to participate, this research study contains descriptive data about the sample of teachers who chose to participate.

The qualitative interview consisted of questions designed to engage the subjects to reflect on their feelings about working with LEP students, how they felt about their training, and how they would have liked to see the school district help them to improve

their efficacy and the educational experience of LEP students. Although the number of teachers interviewed was considerably smaller than the number of teachers surveyed, mixed-methods studies typically include multiple samples that vary in size from a small number of cases to large units of analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Therefore, this research design is typical of mixed-methods research.

The researcher used maximal-variation purposeful sampling to obtain subjects for qualitative interviews. In this type of sampling, diverse individuals are chosen who are expected to hold differing perspectives on a central phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this case, the researcher interviewed five subjects who taught at the preschool, elementary, middle, and high school levels and who taught a variety of content areas.

Subjects consented to being interviewed by responding to an e-mail sent by the researcher through the district communications director. The fact that the participants volunteered to participate in the interviews made the group from which this sample is chosen at least partially self-selected.

To gain access to the participants, the writer obtained the permission of the district superintendent by providing her with a summary of the dissertation proposal and research plan. The superintendent then provided a letter of cooperation. The research policy of the subject school district applied specifically to research with students. There was no extant policy in this district that addressed the use of adult teaching staff as research subjects.

To ensure the protection of the research participants, the researcher secured the training initiative certification provided through the university. Upon receipt of approval from the university, the researcher sent the quantitative survey to all teachers in the

school district.

Teachers were informed of the potential benefits and risks related to their participation in the study and assured of the confidential nature of the data collection, analysis, and reporting procedures. They were also reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation and the fact that their decision of whether or not to participate would not affect their employment in the district or their working relationship with their supervisors. They were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Instruments

The EXCEL survey (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006) contained 20 Likert-scale questions that asked teachers to determine how much they felt they could do to help LEP students in various ways. The survey was developed using Bandura's (2001) Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales and teacher competencies necessary for an endorsement for working with LEP students as specified by the state in which the original research was conducted.

Unlike previous studies, many of which have focused on the teachers of LEP students at the elementary level or in special education (Hoover, 2008; Paneque & Barbetta, 2006), this study focused on teachers of virtually every specialization across one suburban district. It was hoped that surveying the self-efficacy of teaching staff across a district would allow for a larger data set of teacher efficacy to emerge. Because the academic success of LEP and mainstreamed former LEP students depends on access to effective teachers across the curriculum, it is important to gauge perceptions of self-efficacy of all teachers, not just of those in specific grade levels or content areas, and to determine whether teachers report varied levels of self-efficacy as a function of students' English-language proficiency.

The EXCEL survey was designed to gather information about the perceptions of special education teachers who work with LEP students. However, this researcher believed that the original questions were well suited to the purpose of surveying all teachers across a district. Because of the growing movement to include special education students in mainstream classrooms (Mowschenson & Weintraub, 2009), the researcher surmised that the questions that were posed only to special education teachers in 2003, such as whether teachers can distinguish between a language difference and a language disability and whether they can adapt lessons appropriately, would be questions that all teachers grappled with in 2013.

However, the researcher was interested in assessing whether there was a difference in the treatment of LEP students versus non-LEP students by teachers across a district. As a result of this need for additional data, questions on the EXCEL survey that made explicit reference to LEP students were edited to make them applicable to both LEP and non-LEP students in regular and special education. Because the questions asked of the teachers were essentially the same, revalidation of the survey instrument was not deemed necessary. Because of these modifications to the original instrument, the Paneque and Barbetta (2006) instrument is referred to as the EXCEL survey, whereas the modified instrument is referred to as the EXCEL-2.

In the EXCEL-2, each question had two Likert scales below it. The first Likert scale asked the teacher to answer the question with non-LEP students in mind. These students were defined for the teacher as students whose home language is English.

The second Likert scale asked the teacher to answer the question with LEP students in mind. These students were defined for the teacher as students who are in an ESL program, as well as students who were in an ESL program but who still struggle

academically because of language.

The EXCEL-2 survey allowed the computation and analysis of differences in the way teachers report working with the two groups of students. These data provided the researcher with expanded information about how teacher perceptions of self-efficacy differed for LEP and non-LEP students. The information provided helped to determine which items indicated a general need that should be remedied by district training. It also determined which items represented a genuine reflection of teachers treating the two groups of students differently and, thus, exhibiting a need for more targeted training. For example, if a teacher were to check 1 (*not at all*) on both the ELL and English-speaking scales, it would suggest that this teacher was experiencing a general problem and not a problem related to training on how to work with LEP students. In the EXCEL-2 self-efficacy survey, the lowest possible score was 40 and the highest possible score was 360.

The Use of Online Surveys

Research subjects tend to complete online surveys at a greater rate than they complete pencil-and-paper surveys, particularly if there is information requested that the participants consider sensitive. Internet-based surveys require less time to administer and are less costly than pencil-and-paper surveys; and because the data collected can be imported directly into statistical analysis software, data-entry errors are reduced (E. Wood, Nosco, Desmarais, Ross, & Irvine, 2006). Web-based survey instruments have user-friendly interfaces that encourage participants to respond. Those user-friendly interfaces also help to maintain participants' interest long enough for them to complete the survey (Tourangeau, 2004). Studies indicated no differences or relatively few differences between the results of online and traditional surveys (Chuah, Drasgow, & Roberts, 2006; Cronk & West, 2002; Knapp & Kirk, 2003).

Archer (2008) found that the response rate to online surveys was dependent upon the survey type, with ballots generating a 62% response rate, followed by meeting and conference evaluations (57%), output or impact evaluations (52%), and needs assessments (40%). Archer also noted that given the low cost and high potential benefit of online surveys, a less-than-ideal (85%) response rate is acceptable because when surveying large numbers of people with an online instrument, the breadth and depth of responses that can be obtained provide sufficient information for program development to balance a lower response rate. In the research district, there was a high level of interest in addressing the needs of LEP students. Furthermore, the new teacher-evaluation system that became effective in the state the following academic year measured teacher effectiveness using a growth model that includes all students (New Jersey Department of Education, 2013). Therefore, a keen interest in the survey was expected, which the researcher anticipated would translate into a high response rate.

The original EXCEL survey was created by Paneque & Barbetta (2006) for the unique needs of their study, and therefore they analyzed its validity and reliability. They measured how individual items related to each other and to the instrument as a whole using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency or reliability. Reliability of more than .7 is considered acceptable (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The EXCEL survey had a reliability of .94. This level of reliability allowed the researchers to sum EXCEL item scores and use the total in their data analysis. Content validity, which indicates that the scores received from participants are meaningful indicators of the construct being measured (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), was established by conducting a literature review to identify areas of competency for the survey and creating a table of specifications for the development of inventory items. Face validity was determined by a

panel of three experts who reviewed the EXCEL survey and made recommendations for improvement. The survey was then reviewed for clarity and appropriateness of items by practicing teachers and special education teachers enrolled in a graduate class in special education (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006). As the items in the EXCEL-2 are essentially the same as those in the original EXCEL survey except that the teacher is now asked to describe teaching LEP and non-LEP groups separately, it is reasonable to assume that the validity and reliability would be similar.

All 895 teachers in the school district received the EXCEL-2 Teacher Inventory in electronic form so that they could complete it at any time during the quantitative data collection phase and in a location of their choosing. This survey instrument originated from the researcher, who is an administrator in the district, but was disseminated by the communications director, who had the ability to send e-mail to all district teachers. The teachers received an e-mail requesting their participation in the survey so that the researcher may plan future professional development opportunities for the teaching staff. A reminder e-mail with a link to the survey was sent to all teaching staff 1 week later, thanking those who had responded for their participation and requesting that those who had not responded do so.

The teaching staff had been characterized as eager to receive guidance in working with LEP students, and the superintendent and board of education had indicated that achievement for LEP students across the curriculum was a priority. The researcher therefore hoped for a robust response to this opportunity to provide informative data. The reminder e-mail that was sent at the midpoint of the quantitative data-collection phase asked subjects whether they would consent to be interviewed, and if so, to respond directly to the researcher's e-mail so that an appointment could be made.

Hoover (2008) added a biographical component, which this researcher modified to better fit the needs of the current survey. For example, Hoover surveyed only elementary teachers. Because teachers of all grade levels and specializations were surveyed for this research, the subject area taught had to be included in addition to the grade level, which was expanded to encompass prekindergarten through Grade 12. This background information questionnaire contained 18 questions that required short, straightforward biographical answers. These background questions were asked electronically at the same time as the EXCEL-2 survey.

The options were sufficiently detailed to provide the information necessary for data analysis, yet not so detailed as to compromise the anonymity of the respondents (e.g., a high school Latin teacher would identify as high school Foreign Languages). This was important because maintaining anonymity assists in attaining higher response rates, minimizing response bias, and reducing errors (Fink, 2003). In addition, Hoover (2008) created a qualitative interview template, which is also based on a questionnaire by Paneque and Barbetta (2006). This researcher used the Hoover interview template, along with the findings of the quantitative survey, as a basis for the creation of interview questions.

To ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of participant interviews and to minimize researcher bias, member checking was also performed with each interviewee (Creswell, 2007, Saldaña, 2008). Member checking is a form of qualitative validation that helps to determine whether the account provided by the researcher and the information obtained from the participants is credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As part of the member checking process, the researcher asked the participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account of their interview. Participants were asked whether the

description was complete and realistic, whether the themes derived from the interview were accurate, and whether the interpretations were accurate (Creswell, 2008). Reliability of qualitative data primarily relates to the ability of multiple coders on a team to agree on codes for passages of data and, therefore, plays a minor role in qualitative research in general (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Because the researcher coded the qualitative data alone, qualitative reliability did not play a role in this research study.

Procedures

This research study followed a 2-phase sequential, explanatory mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2003). In an explanatory mixed-methods design, the researcher places an emphasis on the quantitative data and then uses qualitative data to refine and enrich the results of the quantitative data (Creswell, 2008). In this study, a Likert-scale electronic survey was administered to the 895 teachers in the district via district e-mail following university approval of the proposal. Then maximal variation purposeful sampling was used to select interviewees for qualitative analysis. The qualitative interviews took place after teacher contract hours in a quiet place where the research subject felt comfortable.

A mixed-methods study was the best way to obtain the desired information. An electronic survey can be easily disseminated to all district personnel. According to Cook, Heath, and Thompson (2000), response representation is more important than response rate in survey research; however, in a convenience sample such as this one, response rate may determine representation to a greater degree. The researcher hoped that because of what was characterized as a high level of intrinsic motivation among staff for improvement in the delivery of instruction for LEP students, a high response rate would be obtained.

The online survey method allowed the researcher to collect a large amount of quantitative data from a large sample of the district teaching staff irrespective of their geographic location or academic level. In a mixed-methods research design, the items in the quantitative and qualitative analyses should complement each other (Yin, 2006). The writer used the information generated by the quantitative data analysis to formulate interview questions in an attempt to find deeper explanations and themes in teachers' thoughts about their work with LEP students. The district can then use this information to formulate effective professional development programs as well as to gauge the perceived effectiveness of current and past training in this area.

According to Yin (2006), the most desirable configuration of samples for mixed-methods research is to have one sample nested within the other. In the case of this research study, the qualitative sample was nested within the quantitative sample. The sequential mixed-methods design of this research study provides both quantitative representation of the population and qualitative saturation of information (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Because the entire population of teachers was asked to participate, the researcher expected to receive data from several hundred completed surveys, thus, providing a fairly representative profile of teacher self-efficacy across the district. Following that data-collection period, the researcher used maximum variation purposeful sampling to interview teachers whose views were expected to be representative of the majority of respondents. The use of this mixed-methods design was expected to produce converging evidence that would provide a picture of the phenomenon of teacher self-efficacy that was clearer than either quantitative or qualitative methodologies could provide alone (Yin, 2006).

The data collected for this study were stored in two places, online and in the

researcher's computer. Digital copies of interview notes and archival data were stored on Dropbox, a password-protected online storage service, as well as on the researcher's personal computer in password-protected files. Paper files related to the study were kept in a locked drawer in the researcher's office. The data will be stored for a period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.

In order to minimize researcher bias (Creswell, 2003), member checking and multiple forms of data were used. The analysis of multiple data sources helped to triangulate the research findings.

Furthermore, the responses of the ESL, bilingual education and foreign language teachers were not included in the analysis. This exclusion is important because, in most instances, their background knowledge of strategies for working with second-language learners is greater than that of other teachers in the district by reason of their certification requirements and the ongoing training they have received. Therefore, none of the teachers directly supervised by the researcher were included in the analysis, further minimizing the potential for researcher bias.

Quantitative data. The unit of analysis for this study included all 895 certificated teachers who taught in the school district at the time the research was conducted. The population and sample were the 895 teachers who taught in the school district at the time the research was conducted. One important aim of quantitative research is to choose a sample that is representative of the population (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Because 895 teachers received the survey and because samples of more than 100 participants are considered large enough to eliminate normality concerns (Statsoft, Inc., 2012), the sample of respondents was considered fairly representative of the population as long as response rate to the survey was higher than 8.95% (100 respondents.) The instrument

used to collect the quantitative data was the EXCEL-2 (see Appendix C). The respondents also provided some basic demographic and professional information based upon Hoover's (2008) work (see Appendix D).

The EXCEL survey (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006) and the EXCEL-2 used in this research study are Likert-scale surveys. Likert-scale items are not measured individually. Instead, they are created by calculating a composite score from four or more individual items (Boone & Boone, 2012). Thus, they are analyzed at the interval measurement scale according to the Steven's Scale of Measurement (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorenson, 2010). According to the Steven's scale, the interval measurement scale orders data and reflects meaningful distance between points on a scale, but does not have an absolute zero. A common example of an interval measurement scale is the IQ standardized test (Boone & Boone, 2012).

There are several advantages to using a Likert-scale survey. First of all, they are relatively simple to construct and are likely to produce a reliable scale. Second, Likert-scale design is easy to construct in an online survey format, and participants find them easy to read. However, Likert scales also have disadvantages that must be taken into consideration. For example, participants may avoid responding at the extremes of the scale, thus, producing a central tendency bias. Participants may also introduce an acquiescence bias in which they try to discern the researcher's desired response or a social acceptability bias, in which they choose an answer that they consider more socially acceptable than their true feelings. Furthermore, Likert-scale measures can be difficult to replicate. Finally, it may be difficult to demonstrate validity using a Likert scale (Bertram, 2006).

Qualitative data. The questions for the interviews that will provide qualitative

data were based upon the interview questions of Hoover (2008) and were modified according to the data that were revealed by the quantitative study. The questions that were asked as the basis for the interviews are shown in Appendix E.

The sampling procedure was maximal variation purposeful sampling. This method is commonly agreed upon as the best way to obtain representation across sites and large numbers of participants in the sample being interviewed. Maximal variation purposeful sampling can be used to select a sample that represents the majority of cases as well as to represent unique cases. This type of sampling can also be used to set up comparisons among groups of cases (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

A sufficiently in-depth interview should allow readers to connect the experiences of the interviewees to one another as well as to their own experience, which provides a measure of external validity in qualitative research (Seidman, 2006). The sample was selected from among those survey participants who consented to being interviewed by contacting the researcher for an appointment. The qualitative survey questions were based upon the survey questions of Hoover (2008) (see Appendix D).

Seidman (2006) suggested that the root of interviewing was an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. Vygotsky (1987) added that every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness. A hallmark of qualitative research is choosing the participants who can best provide an understanding of the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). In this case, that central phenomenon is teacher self-efficacy with LEP students within a school district. Therefore, interviewees were selected from among those teachers who consented to a follow-up interview and provided their contact information. The researcher intended to interview teachers from the early childhood, elementary, middle,

and high school levels and from an array of subject-area specializations, for a total of five interviews. These interviews allowed the researcher to explore teacher responses across all grade levels and in multiple subject areas. They also allowed for common themes to emerge and for outliers to be determined, thus satisfying the two key criteria for determining whether enough data has been collected: Sufficiency and saturation of information (Seidman, 2006).

The interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length, along with an additional 10 to 15 minutes at a later date for member checking. The researcher used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the interpretations of qualitative data (Creswell, 2007).

Although a focus-group design would also have been appropriate for the collection and analysis of qualitative data, the researcher decided that individual interviews would be a more appropriate format for data collection in this study. The depth of information desired is a primary consideration in the decision to use a focus group or individual interview, and individual interviews provide an opportunity for greater depth in covering the subject matter (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

Harrell and Bradley (2009) also advised that logistics should be taken into consideration when selecting an interview method. In this study, interview subjects could have been located at any of 19 buildings across a district that covers over 60 square miles. Because potential subjects worked at the prekindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school levels, they all had different working hours. These conditions would have made focus groups difficult to coordinate.

Individual interviews allowed the participants to respond to questions about a potentially sensitive subject without pressure to agree with others. The sensitivity of a

topic is another important consideration in choosing individual interviews over focus groups (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Teachers may not wish to admit in front of a group of their peers that they do not feel completely comfortable or capable teaching a group of students, or they may hold views that they would not express with their peers present. This format gives teachers who might not be candid during a group interview the opportunity to share their perspectives.

The researcher also reviewed the district's professional development plans for 2007-2012 in order to cross-validate teacher responses about how much professional development they received in the district, thus, adding to the internal validity of the study.

Quantitative data analysis. All research studies require a rationale, or theoretical framework, for conducting research. This framework provides “a schematic description of relationships between and among . . . variables so that a reader can easily comprehend the theorized relationships” (Radhakrishna, Yoder, & Ewing, 2007, p. 692). In quantitative research, the researcher asks specific, narrow questions, collects quantifiable data, and analyzes the data using statistics. The process is conducted as objectively as possible (Creswell, 2008).

This research study was grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), which postulated that individuals who feel more self-efficacious in doing a specific task are more likely to reap the benefits associated with doing that task well. The quantitative portion of this study was intended to discover how self-efficacious teachers felt when working with LEP and non-LEP students across a variety of competencies. The quantitative data were analyzed by importing the online survey data into SPSS, which was used to compute descriptive statistics and data analyses and to create the needed

tables and graphs.

To answer Research Question 1, a repeated measures *t* test was computed. The subjects were the teachers. The dependent variables were the Likert-item variable total of the ratings of the teachers' work with LEP and non-LEP students. The *t* test used and computed the means and standard deviations of these totals, thus, allowing the researcher to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the average of the responses about the two student groups.

To answer Research Question 2, the difference between each teacher's LEP total and their non-LEP total responses was calculated. That difference became the dependent variable in a multiple regression analysis in which the teacher characteristics of grade level, years of experience, highest degree earned, proficiency in a second language, and content specialization were the independent variables. These results provided information about which teacher characteristics affected the size and direction of any differences in responses about teaching LEP and non-LEP students. The *t* tests of the analysis showed which, if any, of the independent variables caused the teachers to report that they are treating students differently.

The writer determined the strength of any correlation between the dependent variable and each independent variable. The correlation coefficient (*r*) was determined, representing the linear relationship between the two variables. The coefficient of determination (r^2) determined the strength of the correlation between the two variables. The significance level of the correlation was also calculated to determine the reliability of the correlation between the variables. The significance of a correlation coefficient changes based on sample size. Sample sizes of $N > 50$ are unlikely to exhibit serious biases, and if the sample size is greater than 100, then normality concerns are eliminated

(Statsoft, Inc., 2012). Because 895 teachers were surveyed for this research study, the researcher anticipated a sample size much greater than $N = 100$.

ESL teachers, bilingual-education teachers, and foreign-language teachers were expected to have a much greater than average knowledge of strategies for working with L2 students, as evidenced by the certification requirements for those positions and the inservice training they have received. Furthermore, these teachers worked under the direct supervision of the researcher. For those reasons, the responses of the teachers in these three departments were removed from the analysis.

Qualitative data analysis. The researcher took notes as the interviewees spoke and then transcribed those notes at a later time. A transcript was sent to each interviewee via e-mail for member checking purposes. The interviewees verified that the transcription was a true representation of what was said in a response e-mail as a verification measure, adding any necessary corrections or clarifications.

The interview transcripts were analyzed according to the six-step process described by Creswell (2003, 2007). The comments feature in Microsoft Word was used for making notes as the researcher reviewed the transcripts and added comments and questions in the margins. Then the researcher highlighted quotes and began to create categories. First, descriptive coding was used to clarify the topics. In Vivo coding was then used to clarify the content (Saldaña, 2009.) Finally, after coding the data, Wordle word-frequency analysis software was used to analyze the data and create a visual representation of the themes that emerged. This process allowed the researcher to find common themes and ensure greater internal validity for the research study.

In qualitative research, data from interviews, transcripts, open-ended questionnaires, and other nonnumerical means of data collection are used to decipher

patterns, themes, and qualities, thus, exposing facets of the research problem not accessible through traditional quantitative research (Labuschagne, 2003). Based on the quantitative findings, a series of open-ended questions asking teachers about their feelings of self-efficacy with LEP students were developed. Teachers were encouraged to respond at length and in detail. The researcher sometimes asked follow-up questions for clarification, to obtain concrete details, or to request stories or examples (Seidman, 2006).

A review of district professional development plans over the past 5 years revealed that teachers in this district have received very little training in effective teaching of LEP students. The most ambitious professional development initiative in this area was a 3-day out-of-district training in SIOP techniques for a small group of staff in 2011. The ESL/bilingual supervisor at the time then left the district, and the initiative was not sustained. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research district has provided little guidance to teachers in this area.

The researcher did begin providing professional development in working with LEP students during the academic year in which the study was conducted. Initiatives included a 3-day in-district SIOP training for 23 middle school teachers, as well as three 2-hour after-school workshops, two of which were aimed at the general teacher population. The researcher sought to determine whether any of the teachers who participated in any of the trainings were using any techniques gained from that experience, whether teachers had sought out training through outside opportunities, and whether they had shared any knowledge that they had obtained regarding effective instruction of LEP students with one another.

The practical purpose of this applied dissertation research was to establish a baseline of preparation and perceptions of teacher self-efficacy in working with LEP

students in a large, suburban school district in New Jersey. The quantitative portion of the research informed the researcher about how teachers feel about their self-efficacy with students in general and with LEP students in particular across a variety of teacher competencies. Research Question 5 provided complimentary and critical information about what teachers felt they needed from the district in order to be successful in teaching LEP students. The themes garnered from teachers' answers to this research question could also be compared directly to the quantitative data collected.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Teacher self-efficacy has been found to play a critical role in student success. This research study examined the background, training, and attitudes of teachers of all subjects and at all levels in a culturally and linguistically diverse suburban school district of approximately 900 teachers and 11,000 students in New Jersey. The general perceptions of self-efficacy of teachers who are not LEP student specialists in working with LEP and non-LEP students were collected and analyzed to determine whether there was any significant difference in reported teacher self-efficacy with LEP and non-LEP students. The perceptions of teacher self-efficacy with respect to both groups of students were also analyzed according to grade level, subject, and teacher characteristics.

This mixed-methods research study consisted of an online survey administered to 895 teachers in the research district to collect quantitative data. In addition to the collection of quantitative data, five follow-up interviews were conducted in an attempt to deepen the quantitative analysis through the collection of qualitative data regarding the reasons behind teachers' feelings of self-efficacy with both LEP students and non-LEP students. The interview participants consisted of a sample distributed across a variety of teacher competencies. The interview participants were district teachers who had volunteered to participate in the interview process, making the sample self-selected.

Quantitative Demographic Data

Of the 895 teachers who received an invitation to participate in the survey, 240 teachers responded; 14 teachers read the participation agreement and decided not to participate in the survey, leaving 226 teachers who completed at least part of the survey. In the final analysis, 148 participants completed the entire survey. The demographic

information reported as part of this study refers to the 148 teachers who completed the survey in its entirety.

The teachers who responded to the survey represented a wide variety of roles and were employed at all levels of instruction. Seventy-eight percent of respondents ($n = 115$) were general education teachers, whereas 22% ($n = 33$) were special education teachers. Preschool teachers represented 10.1% of the respondents ($n = 15$), whereas 44.6% ($n = 66$) were elementary school teachers. Twenty-four percent ($n = 36$) were middle school teachers, and 20.9% ($n = 31$) were high school teachers. Although a slightly higher percentage of preschool and elementary teachers responded to the survey than did secondary teachers, the combined percentages of preschool and elementary respondents and secondary respondents were roughly equal (54.7% preschool and elementary and 45.2% secondary).

These numbers included those teachers who designated themselves as ESL, bilingual, foreign language, or other. These teachers were later filtered out of the analysis, because they are assumed to have a greater knowledge of the skills and dispositions that might lead to greater self-efficacy with LEP students and, therefore, might bias the results of the study. Furthermore, they were removed in an effort to reduce the possibility of researcher bias, as those teachers report directly to the researcher. The teachers in the *other* category were removed because they held disparate assignments that made it difficult to generalize.

Secondary school teachers were asked to specify the content area they taught. If they taught more than one content area, they were asked to select the content area for which they were scheduled to teach the largest number of classes. Respondents who taught in a special education or bilingual context were asked to select that designation

rather than a content area, allowing the researcher to remove those teachers who taught in a bilingual context from the analysis.

Respondents who were secondary education teachers worked in all of the content areas designated in the survey. The largest content area samples were Special Education (23.7%, $n = 18$) and Language Arts (22.4%, $n = 17$), followed by other subject areas (19.7%, $n = 15$), Mathematics (14.5%, $n = 11$), Science (14.5%, $n = 11$), Social Studies (9.2%, $n = 7$), and ESL, Bilingual, and World Languages (9.2%, $n = 7$).

Of the 240 teachers who opened the survey, 14 declined to participate and 78 did not complete the entire survey, leaving 148 teachers who completed the entire survey and were the subjects of the demographic analysis of the respondents. The sample was further reduced after the demographic analysis of the 148 respondents was completed. Twenty-two teachers completed the survey but indicated that they worked in the four categories (ESL, bilingual education, world languages, and other) that were intentionally excluded from the analysis. That left a total of 126 teachers who completed the entire survey and indicated that they taught a subject area that was included in the analysis.

In the sample of respondents that was used for the analysis ($N = 126$), 82.5% of the teachers ($n = 104$) were female and 17.5% were male ($n = 22$). The majority of respondents, 41.3% of that sample ($n = 52$), were in the 35-44 years of age range. Roughly equal numbers of respondents were in the 25-34 age range (23.8%, $n = 30$) and 45-54 age range (22.2%, $n = 28$). A smaller percentage, 10.3% of respondents ($n = 13$), were 55 or older, whereas only 3 respondents were under 25, representing only 2.4% of the sample.

Of the 126 participants whose data were included in the analysis, 90% characterized themselves as White ($n = 113$) and 4% as Black ($n = 5$). One teacher (.8%)

self-characterized as Native American, and no teachers characterized themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander. Only 7.1% of the sample ($n = 9$) characterized themselves as Hispanic of any racial composition.

Of the eligible teachers in this research sample who completed the entire survey ($N = 126$), 65.9% ($n = 83$) had a bachelor's degree as their highest completed degree, whereas 34.1% ($n = 43$) listed a graduate degree as their highest educational attainment. These percentages are slightly different from the 73% and 27% reported for the district as a whole. An ESL or bilingual endorsement was held by 8.7% of qualified respondents ($n = 11$). These teachers held the endorsement but because they did not teach ESL or Bilingual Education at the time the research was conducted, their responses are included in the analysis.

In this sample ($N = 126$), 29.4% of teachers ($n = 37$) reported being able to communicate in a language other than English. Of that group, the majority (53.5%, $n = 20$) reported that the other language was Spanish. Of the teachers who did speak another language, 35% ($n = 13$) had used it with students and had found using a language other than English with students to be an effective instructional strategy.

Results

Research Questions 1 and 2 used the collected survey responses to determine any difference between reported teacher self-efficacy with LEP students and with non-LEP students. They were also designed to determine whether self-efficacy with LEP students fluctuated according to grade level, content area, years of experience, highest degree earned, or proficiency in a second language. Questions 3, 4, and 5 were interview questions designed to gain insight on how self-efficacious non-LEP specialist teachers felt when working with LEP students. They were also designed to gain insight into the

types of training teachers believed was helpful in increasing their self-efficacy with LEP students and to determine what types of training teachers believed would help them to further increase their ability to work effectively with LEP students.

Quantitative Data Results

Response rates. The quantitative survey for this research study was sent to all 895 teachers in the research district. The e-mail request to complete the survey was created by the researcher, approved by the university, and sent by the communications director of the school district. A follow-up e-mail was also created by the researcher, approved by the university, and sent to the teaching staff by the communications director 7 days after the initial invitation. This follow-up e-mail was also sent to all district teachers. The period for data collection extended over the last 2 weeks in May and the first 2 weeks of June 2013.

Of the 895 teachers in the research district, 240 (27.8%) completed the survey. Of those 240 respondents, 14 teachers read the statement of participation and decided not to participate in the survey. The remaining 226 (27%) completed at least part of the survey. However, several participants decided to abandon the survey prior to its completion. Two-hundred nine (23.3%) completed the demographic data portion of the survey but abandoned the survey after that point. A total of 148 (16.5%) completed the survey in its entirety and are the subjects of the demographic-analysis portion of the study. A further 22 teachers were then removed from the statistical analysis because they taught ESL, bilingual education, foreign languages, or one of the subjects included in the *other* category. This left a total of 126 teachers (14% of the total population of 895 district teaching staff) whose data were analyzed for Research Questions 1 and 2.

Although a response rate of 16.5% is not as responsive as anticipated and the

number of responses used for statistical analysis was further reduced to 14%, 126 sample responses are sufficient to provide reliable data about the research population. Sample sizes of $N > 50$ are unlikely to exhibit serious biases, and if the sample size is greater than 100, normality concerns are eliminated (Statsoft, Inc., 2012). Furthermore, Archer (2008) noted that given the low cost and high potential benefit of online surveys, a lower response rate is acceptable because when surveying large numbers of people with an online instrument, the breadth and depth of responses that can be obtained provide sufficient information for program development to balance a lower response rate.

Any respondent who either did not consent to the survey or who did not complete the entire survey was filtered out of the quantitative analysis. Furthermore, all respondents ($n = 7$) in the foreign language/ESL/bilingual category were filtered out for two reasons. First, it was assumed that the certification requirements and continuing professional development of these teachers would give them a better-than-representative knowledge of the language-acquisition process, which had the potential to impact the overall results. Second, these teachers were under the direct supervision of the researcher, and eliminating their data from analysis reduced the potential for researcher bias.

Finally, teachers who were in the *other* category ($n = 15$) were filtered out because the category consisted of small numbers of teachers of varied disciplines, including many subjects that are not considered core academic areas, such as library, physical education, and music. Because of the heterogeneous nature of the category, this category was removed from the analysis, thereby leaving a final data set of $N = 126$.

Research Question 1. What is the difference between the level of teacher self-efficacy with LEP students and the level of teacher self-efficacy with non-LEP students in the research district as measured by the EXCEL-2 Teacher Inventory? In response to

Research Question 1, a repeated-measures *t* test was computed. The dependent variables were the Likert item variable total of the ratings of the teachers' work with LEP and non-LEP students. A *t* test used and computed the means and standard deviations of these totals, thus allowing the researcher to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the average of the participant responses about the two student groups. Table 2 illustrates the size of this difference.

Table 2

Maximum and Minimum Scores Reported by Participants for Nonlimited-English-Proficient Students and for Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Students (N = 126)

Students	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Non-LEP	162	360	306.06	34.977
LEP	86	180	156.41	15.743

The paired-samples *t* test was used to determine any correlation between teachers indicating high self-efficacy with LEP students and those indicating high self-efficacy with non-LEP students. The results indicated that teachers who reported having high self-efficacy with non-LEP students also reported high self-efficacy with LEP students. Similarly, teachers who reported low self-efficacy with one group also reported low self-efficacy with the other. This variable had a significance of $< .0005$.

The mean of the difference between reported self-efficacy with non-LEP students and with LEP students was 6.770, with a standard deviation of the differences of 13.98. That difference was highly significant ($t = 5.44$, $df = 125$, $p < .001$). In summary, there was a difference in teacher's perceptions of their own self-efficacy with non-LEP and LEP students, and that difference is highly significant. Table 3 illustrates those

differences in teacher self-efficacy with LEP and non-LEP students.

Table 3

Difference in Mean Scores Between Nonlimited-English-Proficient Students and Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Students (N = 126)

Sample	Mean	SD	Standard error mean
Non-LEP students	156.41	15.743	1.403
LEP students	149.64	21.485	1.914
Difference (non-LEP minus LEP)	6.77	5.742	0.511

Research Question 2. What is the relationship between the dependent variable of reported self-efficacy and the independent variables of grade level, years of experience, highest degree earned, proficiency in a second language, and content specialization? In order to answer Research Question 2, the difference between each teacher's LEP total response score and the non-LEP total response score was calculated. That difference became the dependent variable in a multiple regression analysis in which the teacher characteristics of grade level, years of experience, highest degree earned, proficiency in a second language, and content specialization were the independent variables. These results provided information about which teacher characteristics affected the size and direction of any differences in responses about teaching LEP and non-LEP students. The *t* tests of the analysis show which, if any, of the independent variables correlate with teachers reporting that they are treating students differently.

A regression analysis is often used to show the explanatory power of a model (Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Business, n.d.). It allows the researcher to explain "the extent to which two or more variables co-vary; that is, where changes in one

variable are reflected in changes in the other” (Creswell, 2008, p. 358). The analysis performed and illustrated in Table 4 indicated a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .156 with a standard error of the estimate of 13.331. The statistic R^2 is the percentage of variation that the model explains, where the statistic R is the multiple correlation. If there are many items correlating with a dependent variable, multiple correlation indicates how they correlate together. In this case, these factors account for about 16% of the variance. Therefore, about 84% of the variation is not explained by the model. The coefficient of determination thus illuminates trends in data. Despite the percentage of the variation that the model does not account for, the model as a whole exhibited statistical significance. In addition, three statistically significant relationships within the model will be explained.

Table 4

Significance of the Relationship Between Dependent Variable of Difference in Self-Efficacy (Nonlimited-English-Proficient Score Minus Limited-English-Proficient Score) and All Independent Variables (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Regression	3821.082	9	424.565	2.389	.016
Residual	20615.243	116	177.718		

Note. $N = 126$.

An ANOVA provides another way of estimating the effect size of an overall model (Creswell, 2008). In this case, the ANOVA indicated a highly significant difference ($F = 2.39$, $p < .02$) between the dependent variable of the difference in teacher self-efficacy between non-LEP and LEP students and the independent variables of all teacher

specializations and demographic categories. The F test showed that all of the predictive variables as a group were a significant predictor of the dependent variable, thus making the model believable.

According to this analysis, teachers felt significantly more self-efficacious with non-LEP students than with LEP students, and that difference in perceived self-efficacy was consistent across all teacher demographics and specializations. The multiple correlation R is .395, which shows that there are significant relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The statistic R^2 indicates that 15.6% of the difference is explained by this model (in other words, 84.4% may be due to something else). However, this is a highly significant model when taken as a whole.

Table 5 explains which of the independent variables were reliable contributors to that difference. In Table 5, a negative b value indicates a disposition toward greater self-efficacy with LEP students. A positive b value indicates teacher perceptions of lower self-efficacy with LEP students than with non-LEP students. Several of the independent variables proved to have no statistical significance in determining teacher self-efficacy. Preschool and elementary teachers gauged themselves to be more self-efficacious with LEP students than did secondary teachers; however, this variable was not found to be significant ($t = -.89, p = .38$). There was a very weak and insignificant positive correlation between years of experience and increased self-efficacy with LEP students

($t = -.28, p = .78$). For each year of teaching experience gained, there was a trend for that difference to become smaller, with the equation suggesting a self-efficacy gain of .04 for every year of teaching experience. However, this difference was not significant.

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Table 5

Significance of the Relationship Between Dependent Variable of Difference in Self-Efficacy (Nonlimited-English-Proficient Score Minus Limited-English-Proficient Score) and Individual Independent Variables (Regression Analysis)

Variable	<i>b</i>	Standard error	<i>t</i>	Sig.
(Constant)	4.504	5.108	.882	.380
Pre- and elementary vs. secondary school	-3.460	3.900	-.887	.377
Years of experience	-.049	.175	-.282	.778
Degree	5.786	2.473	2.340	.021
Other language	-5.439	2.672	-2.035	.044
Language arts	-2.511	3.560	-.705	.482
Mathematics	-2.432	4.339	-.560	.576

Social studies	-3.569	5.902	-.605	.546
Science	13.576	4.466	3.040	.003
Special education	-5.446	3.609	-1.509	.134

Teaching Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Special Education all correlated positively with greater self-efficacy with LEP students. However, no statistical significance can be attributed to any of these correlations.

Three independent variables did prove to be statistically significant factors in teacher self-efficacy. The first statistically significant independent variable was the level of education of the teacher. The analysis showed that having an advanced degree correlated strongly and negatively to reported self-efficacy with LEP students ($b = 5.79$, $t = 2.34$, $p < .03$). This means that teachers who held a graduate degree reported lower self-efficacy with LEP students than did teachers whose highest educational attainment was an undergraduate degree.

The second statistically significant independent variable was the linguistic background of the teacher. Paneque and Barbetta (2006) reported that the ability to speak a language other than English was the strongest indicator of teacher self-efficacy with LEP students. This study corroborated that finding. Bilingualism had the strongest significant positive correlation with increased self-efficacy with LEP students ($b = -5.439$, $t = -2.035$, $p < .05$).

The third statistically significant independent variable was being a teacher of secondary-level science. Science teachers demonstrated extremely low self-efficacy when working with LEP students. For all independent variables (including science), there was

an average unstandardized coefficient b of 4.504. In comparison, Science teachers alone had an unstandardized coefficient b of 13.576, $t = 3.040$, and a highly significant $p < .003$.

Qualitative Data Results

In this mixed-methods study, qualitative data were obtained through teacher interviews. This information provided valuable insights into the thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors of district teachers that would not have been obtained through quantitative survey analysis alone. Johnson and Onwegbuzie (2004) contended that modern research is more interdisciplinary, dynamic, and complex than ever before. Therefore, complementing one method with another facilitates communication and collaboration and improves the quality of research. The use of a mixed-methods design in this research study was intended to accomplish that objective. It has been argued that the use of qualitative data to illustrate quantitative data, as has been done in this study, subjugates the field of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Howe, 2004). However, Creswell, Shope, Plano Clark, and Green (2006) asserted that this type of mixed-methods inquiry democratizes research and can elevate the role of qualitative data in otherwise large-scale quantitative research studies.

Response rates. The reminder e-mail that was sent to all district teaching staff during Week 2 of the quantitative data-collection phase also contained a call for volunteers to participate in the interview process. A total of six teachers volunteered to be interviewed, and the researcher was able to secure interviews with five of those teachers. The participants' professional responsibilities ranged from teaching preschool to high school and covered the areas of general preschool, general elementary, middle school

science, middle school language arts, and middle and high school technology. The lone teacher who ultimately did not schedule the interview would have represented the Special Education department at the high school level. Follow-up requests for volunteers via e-mail and word of mouth met with no response.

The reminder e-mail that was delivered to all 895 district teachers contained an invitation to participate in an interview with the researcher about individual experiences with LEP students, their professional development experiences, and their desire for ongoing professional education in this area. The reminder e-mail was delivered at the end of the 1st week of June 2013.

The number of teachers interviewed was considerably smaller than the number of teachers surveyed. However, mixed-methods studies typically include multiple samples that vary in size from a small number of cases to large units of analysis (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Therefore, this research design is typical of mixed-methods research.

Qualitative results. The researcher used maximal variation, purposeful sampling to obtain subjects for qualitative interviews. In this type of sampling, diverse individuals are chosen who are expected to hold differing perspectives on a central phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this case, the researcher interviewed five participants who either taught or had extensive teaching experience at the preschool, elementary, middle, and high school level and who taught a variety of content areas.

Subjects consented to being interviewed by responding to an e-mail sent by the researcher through the district communications director. The fact that the participants volunteered to participate in the interviews made the group from which this sample was chosen at least partially self-selected. The five teachers who were interviewed were a middle school science teacher who had been in her assignment for 1 year and who had

previously taught elementary school (Teacher 1); a middle school English Language Arts teacher (Teacher 2); a middle school technology teacher who had been in her current assignment for 1 year and who had previously been a high school technology teacher (Teacher 3); a preschool master teacher with specialization in LEP students (Teacher 4); and a third-grade teacher (Teacher 5).

According to Saldaña (2009), a code in qualitative research is “a word or phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). Saldaña explained that it is natural that a few codes will be repeated throughout because humans follow repetitive patterns of action and value consistency in their actions.

In accordance with this definition, the data were coded and developed into five themes. The first theme was self-efficacy statements—whether those statements were positive or negative. Another theme was moments of increased insight (or, in common parlance, Aha! moments). Time constraints formed a third theme. A fourth theme consisted of external frustrations that may contribute to but are not directly related to teacher self-efficacy (such as frustration with the district, community, or society). The final theme was the desire to improve. Because the data set was small, the interviews were coded manually (Saldaña, 2009).

There were some general tendencies in the qualitative data. Of the five themes, the vast majority of coded utterances were self-efficacy statements. In the qualitative sample, one teacher displayed overall negative self-efficacy and negative self-efficacy specific to LEP students based on the coded utterances, whereas three teachers displayed overall positive self-efficacy both in general and with LEP students. One teacher displayed high general self-efficacy but low self-efficacy when working with LEP

students. Less experienced teachers and those who had changed assignments in the previous year or two cited time constraints as a major obstacle. However, veteran teachers who had not experienced a change of assignment did not mention time constraints as a factor. All of the teachers expressed a desire to improve, and all of them expressed frustration with current and past practices of the district with respect to LEP students.

In addition to the manual coding process, the text of the teacher responses from all five interviews was combined and submitted to Wordle for a frequency analysis (see Appendix F). Wordle is often used as a tool to uncover themes in text data. The software measures the frequency of usage of the words in a text and creates a word cloud in which the size of the words corresponds to their frequency of use. The software will remove high-frequency words, such as a and the, from the analysis at the request of the user, as was done for this study. The Wordle analysis, although it provided an accurate reflection of the contents of the data, did not reveal any additional themes or elements of interest that had not already been described in the coding process.

Research Question 3. How do teachers feel about their self-efficacy in working with LEP students? In qualitative research, data from interviews, transcripts, open-ended questionnaires, and other nonnumerical means of data collection are used to decipher patterns, themes, and qualities, thus, exposing facets of the research problem not accessible through traditional quantitative research (Labuschagne, 2003). Based on the quantitative findings, a series of open-ended questions asking teachers about their feelings of self-efficacy with LEP students were developed. Teachers were encouraged to respond at length and in detail. The researcher sometimes asked follow-up questions for clarification, to obtain concrete details, or to request stories or examples (Seidman, 2006).

The qualitative data illustrated some salient differences among teachers. The quantitative surveys were anonymous. Therefore, there is no way to correlate an individual teacher's quantitative survey answers with his or her qualitative interview answers. It is impossible to know whether a teacher who responded to an interview request even responded to the survey. However, based on the quality of their coded self-efficacy themes, there were differences of opinion among teachers who held high self-efficacy beliefs both in general and with LEP students, teachers who held low self-efficacy beliefs both in general and with LEP students, and a teacher who held high self-efficacy beliefs with the general student population but low self-efficacy with LEP students.

Teachers who exhibited both general and LEP-specific high self-efficacy framed the conversation in terms of what they could do with students. Teacher 2, the middle school English language arts teacher, was one of those teachers with an overall perception of high self-efficacy based on the themes revealed in the qualitative analysis. Teacher 2 made several "I can" statements, such as, "I can see whether a mistake is a language issue or whether there's something going on that's not right." She also discussed how she is able to use her high school Spanish to make students aware of roots, affixes, and cognates. Teacher 5, who also displays overall high self-efficacy, used several "I can" statements also to refer to her ability to reach LEP students using visuals and rephrasing, and using her Russian language skills to help students to identify with her and to acclimate to the culture of the classroom, school, and community.

In contrast, Teacher 1, who exhibited low self-efficacy both in general and with LEP students, made multiple negative statements about her ability to do even routine tasks. For example, she used the term "I dropped the ball" twice, and another time she

paraphrased, “I didn’t follow through.” Two of these phrases were used describing a time she “almost did a good job” with a LEP student. Teacher 1 also characterized herself as “not feeling strong in my content area,” “I have a long way to go in terms of monitoring [student progress],” “[I feel challenged] all the time,” “My classroom management skills are a work in progress,” and “I’m trying to catch up on content.”

Research Question 4. What types of training do teachers credit with increasing their efficacy with LEP students? A review of district professional development plans over the past 5 years revealed that teachers in this district have received very little training in effective teaching strategies for LEP students. The most ambitious professional development initiative in this area was a 3-day out-of-district training in SIOP techniques for a small group of staff in 2011. The ESL/bilingual supervisor at the time then left the district, and the initiative was not sustained. Therefore, it may be concluded that the research district has provided little guidance to teachers in this area since 2011.

The researcher did begin providing professional development in working with LEP students during the 2012-2013 school year. Initiatives included a 3-day in-district SIOP training for 23 middle school teachers, as well as three 2-hour after-school workshops pertaining to the needs of LEP students, two of which were directed toward the needs of the general teacher population. The researcher sought to determine whether any teachers who participated in any of the trainings were using any of the suggested techniques learned from that experience. Additionally, the researcher sought to determine whether or not teachers had sought training through outside opportunities and whether or not they had shared any knowledge and experiences that they had with one another.

All of the research participants expressed frustration with the lack of guidance

that the district had provided in the past on how to teach LEP students effectively.

Teacher 3, who is currently teaching middle school computer classes but had previously been a high school technology teacher, reflected on her frustrations as a teacher of a high school elective: “I don’t think a subject teacher knows what to do with [LEP students]. We want high expectations, but we also don’t want to fail a student because of the language barrier.”

Teacher 2 added, “I didn’t feel like I had any help” when she first began to receive large numbers of LEP students in her classes and was able to resolve the issue herself by establishing a relationship with the ESL teacher. Teacher 5 offered, “I don’t think I’ve received much [professional development]” She added that what professional development she has received in this area has largely been through her own initiative, such as attendance at voluntary trainings on her own time. Teacher 4, who is an experienced master teacher who provides guidance and professional development to other preschool teachers, added, “Most of [my professional development] is truly on-the-job training. I understood the application of my education after I was in the classroom.” On-the-job improvisation and independent professional development were overarching themes in the teachers’ discussions of their learning experiences with LEP students.

Of the 5 teachers who participated in the interview process, 4 of them had voluntarily attended professional development sessions with the researcher. Upon being asked whether they had been able to implement any of the techniques they had learned, it became clear that many of the teachers, particularly those with less experience or in new assignments, felt that time constraints were a major factor affecting their ability to implement change effectively. Teacher 3 complained, “Time constraints are so difficult. There is no time to plan for bilingual students.” Teacher 2 confided, “I think we all feel

like we have so much to do and not enough time to get it done. It's a challenge. You know what you need to do, but you also know you only have a week or a month to get it done. Do I slow down for 3 kids or just keep going?" Teacher 1 added, "I just wish I could spend some more time doing some more of those things [that were discussed in an after-school workshop she attended]. I didn't even scratch the surface of the things we talked about in that in-service, but I was more cognizant of things."

Research Question 5. What types of information or training do teachers feel would help them to increase their efficacy in teaching LEP students? The practical purpose of this applied dissertation research was to establish a baseline of the preparation and the perceptions of self-efficacy of teachers working with LEP students in a large suburban school district in New Jersey. The quantitative portion of the research informed the researcher about how teachers felt about their self-efficacy with students in general and with LEP students in particular across a variety of teacher competencies. Research Question 5 provided complementary and critical information about what teachers felt they needed from the district in order to be successful in teaching LEP students. The themes garnered from teacher answers to this research question could also be compared directly to the quantitative data collected.

One salient trend in the interviews with all of the teachers was a desire to learn how to work more effectively with LEP students. This was true regardless of specialization, grade level, and years of experience. Teacher 1, who struggles with self-efficacy in general, showed a great deal of excitement when describing an experience where she felt successful, sharing a story about the Chinese Zodiac with her class in order to help a student feel appreciated, accepted, and confident. Teacher 1 added, "Sharing this story with her class allowed the class to learn about her culture and highlight her as a

student with something special to offer that others could learn from.” Teacher 1 also had some prescient commentary about a difficult situation she faced with another student, one in which she felt that she had not done as good a job as she would have liked. In referring to the student, “He’s so quiet. If these kids were more of a behavior problem, I probably would have done more of these techniques. That’s the tragedy of it.”

Despite her struggles, Teacher 1 was able to pinpoint areas of which she was now more cognizant because of her exposure to professional development on the needs of LEP students. Among the examples she provided were the importance of vocabulary development and differentiating instruction while maintaining high expectations. She also mentioned doing the same things that would be done for any other student, such as fostering parental involvement. Teacher 1 added, “You don’t know whether they’re having trouble because of language or content, but it really shouldn’t matter why they’re having trouble.”

Other teachers were also able to pinpoint some of the most pressing issues faced by the district in training teachers to become more self-efficacious with LEP students even without formal training in this area. Teacher 3 told the researcher, “We need to be sensitive to reading levels and whether there is a cognitive issue or a language issue. I think that if we looked at the dropout rate for ELLs, they are passing the bilingual classes but not the classes that didn’t offer support.”

Some of the suggestions made by the research participants are currently being incorporated in the district. For example, Teacher 2 requested that SIOP modifications be written into the subject area curricula so that teachers would have a tailored reference guide for planning purposes. Teacher 4, the preschool master teacher, remarked on the fact that currently, all preschool students learn in English, but then those who score

sufficiently low on the W-APT to require bilingual services begin to receive instruction in Spanish in kindergarten. Teacher 5 suggested the use of bilingual teachers in languages other than Spanish to provide support in the absence of a full bilingual program.

Conclusion

This study sought to determine the levels of teacher self-efficacy with LEP students at all levels and in all subject areas across a large suburban school district in New Jersey. It was intended to provide baseline data for the district so that professional development could be implemented that would target the areas of greatest need.

Research Question 1 revealed that teachers in the research district felt significantly less self-efficacious with LEP students than with non-LEP students, and that this difference holds at all levels and across all subject areas. Research Question 2 sought to deepen the understanding of where those differences might be strongest. The data revealed that secondary science teachers felt an extreme lack of self-efficacy when working with LEP students. Other notable findings included that years of experience had no significant effect on teacher self-efficacy with students, and teachers with a graduate degree reported lower self-efficacy with LEP students than did teachers who did not hold a graduate degree. Finally, this study corroborated Paneque and Barbetta's (2006) finding that teacher bilingualism is the strongest indicator of increased self-efficacy with LEP students. The implications of these findings are discussed further in chapter 5.

This study also contained three research questions that were derived from interviews with district teachers. Research Question 4 asked subjects how they felt about their own self-efficacy with LEP students. The majority of the subjects displayed high self-efficacy with both groups. The most self-efficacious used multiple can-do statements to describe how they work with LEP students in their classrooms. However, one subject

exhibited high self-efficacy with non-LEP students and lower self-efficacy with LEP students. One teacher expressed very low self-efficacy with all students. Teachers who were new to their assignment also lamented the lack of time to prepare differentiated lessons and activities for LEP students.

Research Question 5 asked subjects what types of training the district has provided them in order to improve their performance with LEP students. Subjects expressed a great deal of frustration with the research district for not providing them with any meaningful guidance in this area. Research Question 6 asked subjects what kinds of program and professional development initiatives they would find most helpful for working effectively with LEP students. Teachers were able to articulate several concrete suggestions for improvement, many of which are already being implemented at the district level.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study was intended to determine the level of self-efficacy of teachers across this New Jersey school district when working with LEP students. This research study served as baseline data for the creation of future professional development initiatives in the research district, and allowed the district to target the areas in greatest need of professional development. It is also hoped that this research study will contribute to the body of knowledge on teacher self-efficacy in general and with LEP students in particular.

Summary of Findings and Corroborating Research Studies

This research study found that in general, teachers do feel less self-efficacious with LEP students than they feel with non-LEP students. This difference in teacher perception of self-efficacy was found across demographic categories and content areas and was statistically significant. However, teachers reported overall high self-efficacy with all students. This is consistent with the findings of Karabenick and Clemens Noda (2004), who found that 70% of teachers surveyed held positive attitudes toward LEP students but only 43% of teachers indicated that they would like to have LEP students in their classrooms.

This study found no statistically significant increase in self-efficacy with LEP students as teachers gained more years of experience teaching. This finding is corroborated in the literature. Experienced teachers do not appear to differ from inexperienced teachers in feelings of preparedness in working with LEP students (Bustos Flores & Smith, 2008; NCES, 1999; Paneque & Barbetta, 2006). Teachers' job satisfaction is heavily influenced by their interactions with peers and with students

(Klassen et al., 2010). If teachers have experienced frustration at being unable to effectively teach LEP students over the course of time, that frustration could weigh on their feelings about LEP students and about their own abilities. Teachers may share this frustration with one another as well. This cycle might explain the findings of Nevares et al. (2005) that the more years of experience a teacher had, the more negative the attitude of the teacher toward the first language of the LEP student.

Primary (preschool and elementary) teachers felt more self-efficacious with LEP students than did secondary (middle and high school) teachers, but the difference was not significant. Although teaching language arts, math, social studies, and special education all correlated positively to increased self-efficacy with LEP students, none of these correlations was statistically significant. Science teachers demonstrated extremely low self-efficacy with LEP students when compared to their perception of self-efficacy with non-LEP students, and that difference was highly significant.

These results are consistent with the findings of J. E. Brown and Doolittle (2008) and of Stoddart et al. (2002) and Echevarria et al. (2013), all of whom found that the majority of mainstream teachers lacked training to teach subject-specific skills to LEP students, including how to effectively integrate language and content area skills. Paneque and Barbetta (2006), the creators of the original EXCEL survey, found that the ability of the teacher to communicate in another language was the strongest indicator of self-efficacy with LEP students. This study corroborated their findings, as teacher L2 proficiency provided the strongest significant positive correlation with self-efficacy with LEP students in this research study also. The findings of this research study and those of Paneque and Barbetta (2006) are aligned with those of Gándara et al. (2005), who found that the ability to communicate with students and engage students' families was one of

the most important skills contributing to a teacher's ability to successfully teach LEP students.

Another notable finding in this study was the strong negative correlation between having a graduate degree and feeling self-efficacious in the instruction of LEP students. There is scant research on the effects of having a graduate degree on self-efficacy with LEP students or other minority student groups, but it might be assumed that the better educated teachers are more aware of the need to differentiate for subgroups such as LEP students and are, therefore, more acutely aware of their shortcomings in that area. The fact that a slightly disproportionate number of teachers with graduate degrees responded to the survey (although 27% of district teachers hold a graduate degree, 34.1% of survey respondents held a graduate degree) may suggest that those who were once graduate students either appreciated the need for applied research or empathized with the researcher. Conversely, their disproportionate response to the survey could be interpreted as a request for assistance.

The qualitative data collected in the five interviews was largely a reflection of the findings of the quantitative research study. Although five interviews may not be sufficient to reach the saturation point, the uniformity and representation of the responses indicated that the sufficiency criteria were satisfied (Seidman, 2006).

Most of the teachers interviewed felt self-efficacious overall. This finding is consistent with the finding of the quantitative survey. Although there was a notable difference in subjects' feelings of self-efficacy with LEP students and non-LEP students, they reported generally high self-efficacy with both groups. The teachers who exhibited the highest self-efficacy used multiple can-do statements regarding their ability to work with LEP students.

In general, the teachers expressed frustration with the lack of guidance and support that they had received from the district. Teachers identified several ways in which they had managed to work around such constraints, for example, by using colleagues as resources or just guessing about the best course of action. Teachers who were new to their assignment also lamented the lack of time to prepare differentiated materials and lessons for LEP students.

The comments of the teachers in the research district are consistent with the findings of the most recent survey performed on this topic by the NCES (1999), which found that the majority of U.S. teachers surveyed indicated a perceived lack of knowledge of how to work effectively with LEP students. Bandura (1986) wrote that high self-efficacy cannot be achieved if the subject possesses insufficient knowledge to complete the task successfully. It seems reasonable to conclude that targeted and sustained professional development in this area would increase the self-efficacy of the teachers in the research district.

Most of the teachers interviewed for this study were able to offer concrete suggestions for systemic improvement, and they all exhibited a strong desire to learn how to be more successful with this student population. Those who had attended one or more of the researcher's professional development sessions felt that even if they had not been able to implement the suggestions with fidelity, having had some professional development had made them more cognizant of the needs of their LEP students. These responses are consistent with the findings of Alexander et al. (1999) and Gándara et al. (2005), in which the majority of teachers expressed a desire for more information on how to work with LEP students.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, it is imperative that training be provided to assist teachers in gaining the skills and experiences that build self-efficacy with the LEP student population. This finding is corroborated by Echevarria et al. (2013), who found that these teacher skills are essential for the success of LEP students, as teachers must help LEP students to develop academic language as part of the lessons and units they plan and deliver (Echevarria & Graves, 2007; Short, 2002). Teachers must also be able to consciously modulate the level of English used, including the use of idiomatic expressions. They must also know how to use various visual and organizational techniques to present information. In addition, in order to be effective with LEP students, teachers must learn to teach procedural knowledge and learning strategies in conjunction with declarative knowledge (Echevarria et al., 2013). These practices can be developed and refined only through conscious training and practice, which many teachers at both the district level and nationwide have not had the opportunity to receive.

This applied research was intended to serve as baseline data for planning and monitoring the effects of professional development initiatives in the research district. It also served to assist the researcher in identifying and targeting groups with the greatest need for training. A focus on teacher self-efficacy during the delivery of professional development is extremely important. Teacher self-efficacy has been found to be the most important variable in determining the effect of professional development initiatives on teacher practice (Eun & Hening-Boynton, 2007).

One of the most pressing areas for professional development uncovered by the research study was a need for the provision of knowledge and strategies for working with LEP students to science teachers across the middle and high schools. Teachers across the

district are currently being trained in SIOP methodology (Echevarria et al., 2013), and the researcher plans to provide professional development in the coming year on strategies for working with LEP students in the science classroom. For example, one workshop will focus on helping LEP students meet the Next Generation Science Standards (2013). Many strategies are common to both SIOP and the inquiry-based science classroom, such as creating connections to students' prior knowledge and experiences, the use of meaningful and memorable materials, active student involvement with opportunity for application, and high levels of student-to-student interaction (Bergman, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations that might affect the ability to generalize the findings. The first limitation was the relative lack of ethnic diversity of the staff who responded to the survey. The research district teachers are relatively homogeneous in racial and ethnic composition, thus, making it difficult to generalize the findings to a more diverse faculty. The motivations of the teachers who responded to the survey versus those who did not respond to the survey could affect the validity of the results (Seidman, 2006).

Furthermore, this research was conducted from late May until mid-June of 2013. This time frame represents the final weeks of the school year, a time when many teachers are distracted with end-of-year tasks and activities. This schedule may have affected participation rates. It may also have been a factor in the high attrition rate of those who began taking the survey but did not finish, and which may have an impact on subsequent results.

Finally, although the quantitative surveys were anonymous, it is surmised that many of the respondents may have participated in the researcher's professional

development workshops throughout the year and, therefore, may have been more inclined to have a positive attitude toward LEP students. Three of the five interviewees had attended these trainings, and a fourth had worked closely with the researcher on other projects related to LEP students. Although the survey respondents whose results were used in the analysis were not direct reports of the curriculum supervisor conducting the research study, the possibility for effects due to the power differential existed and should be noted as a potential limitation.

There are further methodological limitations to the validity of this research study. Participants often avoid responding at the extremes of a Likert scale, producing a central tendency bias. Participants may also introduce an acquiescence bias in which they try to decipher the researcher's desired response or a social acceptability bias in which they choose an answer that they consider more socially acceptable than their true feelings. Furthermore, Likert scale measures can be difficult to replicate (Bertram, 2006).

In addition, although studies indicate that there are no differences or relatively few differences between the results of online and traditional surveys (Chuah et al., 2006; Cronk & West, 2002; Knapp & Kirk, 2003), the use of online data collection may affect the data collection process. Because an online survey instrument eliminates the need for supervision of the research subjects as they complete the survey, greater anonymity and lack of proctoring may affect the results obtained. For example, questions may be misunderstood.

Despite the fact that the design of this electronic survey prevented subjects from skipping questions, it is possible that some research subjects may have abandoned the survey because of lack of availability of the researcher to offer clarification or assuage concerns (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002). This may be a contributing factor to the

high attrition rate among survey participants. Furthermore, there was no guarantee that the intended research subject was the person who took the survey, and the survey may not have been taken as seriously without the researcher present (Tournangeau, 2004).

Although some studies have indicated that social desirability bias is reduced because of the greater anonymity afforded by online surveys (Richman, Kiesler, Weisband, & Drasgow, 1999), research results are mixed on this topic (Wood, Nosco, Desmarais, Ross, & Irvine, 2006).

Even though at first glance the much lower number of young teachers participating in the survey ($n = 3$, or 2.5% of respondents) may seem anomalous, it may in fact reflect the economic conditions of the past several years. An inquiry to the Executive Director of Human Resources (personal communication, July 25, 2013) revealed that only 4 teachers under the age of 25 had been hired in the past 2 years. Therefore, the response rate to this survey by teachers under the age of 25 in the research district was 75%, which is far higher than any of the other age groups. In other words, what had initially seemed to be an extremely low response rate among young teachers turned out to be by far the highest response rate relative to any other age group. Unfortunately, this dearth of information about the self-efficacy of younger teachers limits the ability to extrapolate about the professional development needs of young teachers in this area.

Suggestions for Further Study

This research study provides a basis for a number of diverse suggestions for future research. These suggestions fall into five broad categories. The first potential area of future research centers on teacher self-efficacy with and treatment of students who are speakers of nonstandard dialects of English. A second area of future research could

include the effect of culturally responsive teaching practices on the self-efficacy of teachers of language minority students. Further study into the correlation of increased teacher self-efficacy and increased LEP student achievement is an additional potentially rich vein of research. Determining whether professional development leads to long-term improvement in teacher self-efficacy is a fourth area of potential research. Finally, the development of a systematized approach to turning individual self-efficacy into collective efficacy within a learning institution, particularly in turnaround situations, will be discussed as a potential area of future study. The following sections provide additional clarification of each of these topics.

Teacher self-efficacy and nonstandard dialects of English. One of the more surprising findings of the study was the relative lack of understanding many teachers displayed when confronted with English-speaking students who speak nonstandard dialects of English. By selecting Options 1 through 5 on the 9-point Likert scale, 42.9% ($n = 54$) of teachers expressed that they were between somewhat and not at all comfortable with English-speaking students who speak a nonstandard dialect of English. Furthermore, 27.9% ($n = 35$) of teachers reported that they would be somewhat to very unlikely to adapt instruction for an English-speaking student who was a speaker of a nonstandard dialect of English. These findings are consistent with those of Tasan (2001), who examined the effects of various student language backgrounds on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy. Tasan found that teachers reported the highest efficacy with students who spoke Standard English, followed by LEP students, followed by students who spoke nonstandard English dialects.

The predominant nonstandard English dialect that would be spoken in this district is what Labov (1969) described as Black English Vernacular (BEV). Labov's seminal

research documented the grammatical features of BEV, as well as the high value placed on “linguistic virtuosity” in the Black community (Pinker, 1994, p. 29). Labov’s (1972) research was intended to refute research popular at the time that attributed the academic achievement gaps between White and Black students to the lack of linguistic competence of Black students (Labov, 1972). Future research on the lived experiences of speakers of such nonstandard English dialects as BEV or on teacher self-efficacy with students who are speakers of BEV would be useful in determining whether and to what degree a student who is a speaker of such a dialect suffers academically because of teacher judgments or lack of self-efficacy related to the nonstandard dialect.

Culturally responsive teaching practices. It also remains to be seen whether training in culturally responsive practices has a positive effect on teacher self-efficacy with LEP students. According to the NCES (1999), teachers were least likely to report feeling well prepared to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Fortunately, several research studies have found that continued training can shift the thinking of educators (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; O. Lee, 2004; Reeves, 2006; Bartolomé, 2002; J. S. Lee & Oxelson, 2006). This is a critical finding because ongoing teacher training and support are essential to the implementation of strategies that have been found to help LEP students (Gersten et al., 2007; Hart & Lee, 2003).

Gay (2000, 2002) defined culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of culturally diverse students in order to teach those students effectively. Gay (2002) further described five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching. Those elements included the development of knowledge about cultural diversity, the inclusion of cultural and ethnic diversity in the curriculum,

demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students, and responding to diversity in instruction.

Proponents of culturally responsive teaching assert that students who are taught academic material through their own frame of reference learn and apply that material more effectively (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). Graham and Lindsay (2009) asserted that lack of culturally responsive teaching practices are at the root of achievement gaps between White and minority students, adding that “correlation is not causation. . . . Low achievement and attainment rates for some groups persist because we continue to provide to some student groups less of everything that the research say makes a difference in their learning” (p. 6).

Future research may reveal whether training in culturally responsive practices correlates with increased feelings of teacher self-efficacy in general or with LEP students in particular. It would seem that a combination of training in culturally responsive teaching and SIOP methodology would result in increases in self-efficacy of teachers of LEP students or in increases in LEP student achievement. However, there are no studies to date that correlate any combination of those factors.

Teacher self-efficacy and LEP student performance. This study focused on teacher feelings about self-efficacy, not on whether feelings of self-efficacy translated into better performance by LEP students in the self-efficacious teachers’ classrooms. Pajares (1997) recognized that self-efficacy beliefs differ in predictive power depending on the task being predicted. Guo (2012) asserted that teacher self-efficacy is directly manifested in the classroom environment and in teacher practice. Tella (2008) found that teacher perceptions of self-efficacy were the most important factor in predicting student achievement, and Moore and Esselman (1992) found that teacher self-efficacy correlated

directly with student performance on state-standardized tests.

Because even the most dedicated teachers cannot provide high-quality education with inadequate skills and knowledge, it is essential to increase the ability of teachers to address the needs of LEP students through professional development (Ballantyne et al., 2008). Further research may provide additional insight into whether a correlation exists between teacher perceptions of high self-efficacy with LEP students and high achievement for LEP students in those classes and which particular self-efficacy beliefs correlate most strongly to student performance. Given the high-stakes testing environment that is reality in American public education, such research would be extremely timely and necessary for effective staff development in the modern educational era.

Long-term effects of professional development on self-efficacy. An additional area of future research may be a follow-up study of teacher feelings of self-efficacy after a period of training to see whether any shifts in self-efficacy beliefs have occurred. Bogler and Nir (2012) recommended that schools and districts focus on teacher empowerment as a means of building a more self-efficacious staff that experiences greater job satisfaction. Salanova, Llorens, and Schaufeli (2010) discussed how efficacy beliefs based on reciprocal determination (Bandura, 1977) can be viewed as a cycle. They, in turn, posit that this cycle, when viewed longitudinally, can be transformed into a spiral that positively relates to itself over time. Thus, beliefs interact with outcomes, which interact with affective factors, which interact with beliefs in a continuous spiral over a longer period. The purposeful development of teacher self-efficacy is essential to the development of effective educators (Siwatu et al., 2011).

Salanova et al. (2010) made the assumption of some level of positive efficacy at

the start of the study period. Therefore, future research may investigate how the spiraling construct would work in a turnaround situation in which teachers begin with low efficacy levels. Future research might also investigate the types of vicarious or mastery experiences that are most effective in bringing about positive effects on teacher self-efficacy beliefs with respect to LEP students. researchers may also investigate how to systematize such professional development experiences within a school district or other organization.

The development of an approach to transforming self-efficacy into collective efficacy in a learning organization. Fullan (2008) asserted that theory and action by themselves are equally dangerous when trying to effect change and that the most effective change is produced through reflection in action. To synthesize, in order to effect change in the school setting with a view to impacting student outcomes and teacher efficacy, it is important to have a vision based in theory, a long-range plan for achieving the desired results, and the ability to anticipate and respond to resistance to change.

Essential to the development of a systematic organizational approach to increased efficacy is creating a transition from individual to collective efficacy. According to Bandura (2000), Social Cognitive Theory contains three different types of agency. The first is self-efficacy, which has been the focus of this research study. A second efficacy construct is proxy efficacy. Proxy efficacy recognizes that humans are not entirely in control of the forces that affect them and are therefore not always able to control outcomes, no matter how self-efficacious they may be. Proxy agency involves the ability to get others who may have expertise or influence that the original agent does not have to act on the desires of that agent. A third form of agency is collective agency. Collective agency is the product of “people’s shared beliefs in their collective power to produce

desired results” (p. 75). Collective agency or efficacy allows groups to develop motivation and commitment to common goals and determines the types of goals they set. It allows them to withstand adverse situations, and determines the extent to which a group will persevere in the face of opposition or complications.

Collective efficacy is a separate construct from individual efficacy. Just as a team of star athletes may lose games, collective efficacy is not merely the sum of the efficacy of the individuals involved (Bandura, 2000). Three aspects of Social Cognitive Theory are especially important in organizational development (Bandura, 1988). The first aspect is the development of cognitive, social, and behavioral competencies through mastery modeling. The second is to cultivate employees’ beliefs in their abilities so that they will optimize the use of their talents. Last, goals need to be established that will enhance motivation.

The development of collective efficacy is often referred to in books on leadership as the development of employees’ confidence and competence as a means of building a strong team. Kouzes and Posner (2007) ascertained, “Long before empowerment was written into the popular vocabulary, exemplary leaders understood how important it was that their constituents felt strong, capable, and efficacious” (p. 251). For Kouzes and Posner, the transition from individual to collective efficacy rests on the trust of the individuals involved that each of them is taking responsibility for a portion of the job and has the competence to get it done well. They added that this ability to develop collective efficacy from individual efficacy is essential to the functioning of the modern workplace.

Clawson (2009) further elaborated on the development of collective efficacy by describing how to develop a detailed, descriptive, and passionately held vision for the future of the organization, as well as the necessary steps to achieve that vision. Clawson

described visioning as the ability to “imagine, see, and then describe in minute detail the view they have of what is possible—and not just once, but hundreds of times in hundreds of settings” (p. 122).

The combination of vision and empowerment that is described by Kouzes and Posner (2007) and Clawson (2009) is an elaboration, grounded in the context of business, of Bandura’s (1988) construct of efficacy building within an organization. Such efforts can also lead to positive changes in school or district culture. There are many studies that focus on team empowerment in schools or districts through learning and cooperation (Bogler & Nir, 2012; Bolman & Deal, 2002; G. Brown, Irby, & Fisher, 2001; Finnigan, Daly, & Stewart, 2012; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2004; Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013). Fullan (2005) differentiated between capacity building and accountability. He described capacity building as creating the circumstances within schools that increase collective efficacy by creating new knowledge and competencies, increasing staff motivation to improve, and providing the resources to support improvement. Fullan contrasted capacity building with accountability, which he described as monitoring and consequences. Fullan (2008) asserted that effective turnaround of a school involves a combination of capacity building and accountability.

One complaint made about efforts at school reform is that “nearly all the turnaround literature in education leaps from problems (e.g., failure) to solutions (e.g., adoption of whole-school reform) with remarkably little effort to understand the reasons schools and districts are failing” (Murphy & Meyers, 2007, p. 4). Finnigan et al. (2012) corroborated that in their study, subjects were focused on low test scores rather than on the causes of low test scores, “in other words, the low test scores were considered the problem that ‘caused’ continual underperformance” (p. 5). Murphy and Meyers also

criticized the school reform movement as myopic, failing to review examples of successful turnarounds in other industries. They discussed the importance of the development of human capacity within the organization as the source of a successful turnaround, asserting that key human factors such as teacher capacity, willingness to sustain improvement, and the ability to use data in educational decision making are fundamental to the success of any turnaround initiative. Murphy (2007) stressed the essential nature of strong leadership in the process of developing in employees the qualities needed for successful turnaround of the organization.

Finnigan et al. (2012) added that organizational learning can take place only in the school setting when individual staff members learn to “detect and correct problems to improve organizational effectiveness” (p. 2). However, they also noted that the failing schools they studied largely neglected to develop individual or collective efficacy among staff. They cited several common impediments to improvement shared by the schools: superficial use of restructuring plans, focus on symptoms rather than causes, limited collaborative inquiry, lack of innovation, and structures and climates that inhibited learning. Their data indicated a lack of teacher awareness of the improvement plans and their contents, indicating that administrators were using the plans to appease their superiors rather than as a springboard for staff involvement in the school improvement process.

Finnigan et al. (2012) also noted that the failing schools they studied provided little in terms of fostering a culture of collaboration and inquiry. They found that organizational learning occurs when individuals are able to make meaning together and exchange knowledge and ideas, and that this in turn leads to commonly held beliefs and practices. In the schools they studied, teachers rarely observed each other, worked in

teacher teams to solve student problems, analyzed student work, or coached or mentored other teachers. This dearth of team building would make it impossible for teachers to have the vicarious and mastery experiences required for the development of self and collective efficacy.

School or district turnaround is a complex process with uncertain outcomes (Murphy & Meyers, 2007). Although the researcher saw no direct references to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977) or the development of self or collective efficacy in the literature on school and business turnarounds, the attributes of a successful turnaround situation are clearly attributable to the development of individual and collective efficacy within the organization. Similarly, the analysis of turnaround failures attributes those failures to factors that relate directly to the inability of leadership within the organization to develop individual and collective efficacy among staff members. Making more explicit the relationship between Social Cognitive Theory and effective organizational leadership is a rich area for future research.

Conclusion

There is a dearth of research and, consequently, a dearth of practical guidance for school or district leaders on the development of teacher efficacy from the individual to the collective level as it relates to the fastest-growing population of students in the United States. This applied research study is a small contribution to the greater understanding of how to build the efficacy needed in order to make schools more effective at educating language minority students.

LEP students are the fastest growing population of students in the United States. Currently, 5.3 million children, or 10.7% of students in American public education, are classified as LEP students. That figure is expected to reach 25% by 2030 (Migration

Policy Institute, 2010). From 1998 to 2009, the LEP student population in the U.S. increased by 51%, whereas the total prekindergarten through Grade 12 population, which includes LEP students, grew by 7.2% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2011). LEP students are the least likely group to receive a high school diploma (Dianda, 2008). These statistics illustrate the urgency of developing the capacity of teachers, schools, and districts to meet the needs of LEP students.

The provision of skills and dispositions that help teachers work more effectively with LEP students is not occurring at a rate that would allow most schools and districts to adequately meet the needs of their LEP populations. This study corroborates the findings of other studies confirming that the skills and dispositions of teachers in the research district were fairly representative of teachers across the country. Teachers in the research district felt significantly more self-efficacious with non-LEP students than they did with LEP students.

This assessment of the research district is consistent with the conclusions of August (2006) and Echevarria et al. (2013), who argued that many teachers in the U.S. whose primary responsibility is not ESL have received little or no training in working with LEP students. Bandura (1986) claimed that self-efficacy cannot be meaningfully increased without a concomitant increase in knowledge. Teachers without a background in the skills and strategies needed to work effectively with LEP students are therefore at a distinct disadvantage when working with LEP students.

Teacher self-efficacy is defined as teachers' belief in their ability to affect the outcome of student performance through the successful execution of courses of action and specific instructional tasks (Bandura, 1977, 1995). Teacher self-efficacy beliefs can

affect the instructional choices a teacher makes, whether the teacher is willing to persevere under adverse conditions and how much effort the teacher is willing to expend. Teacher self-efficacy can be summarized as “teachers’ belief that they can bring about desirable changes in student achievement” (Guo et al., 2012). A number of foundational studies have indicated that teacher self-efficacy has a direct impact on student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992, Pajares, 1992; Guskey & Passaro, 1994) and motivation (Midgley et al., 1989). Siwatu et al. (2011) added that the purposeful development of self-efficacy is essential to the development of effective educators. Bogler and Nir (2012) found that high teacher self-efficacy was the strongest predicting factor of feelings of empowerment and job satisfaction. They therefore recommended that school leaders focus on teacher empowerment as a means of building a more self-efficacious and satisfied staff.

Effective teaching is the most important in-school variable in determining student success (The Education Trust, 2005). Furthermore, teachers’ perception of self-efficacy has an impact on teacher effectiveness. Tella (2008) found that teacher perception of self-efficacy was the most important factor in predicting student achievement. Therefore, it is important to measure teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy with LEP students.

Teachers are being held increasingly accountable for the performance of all students, including LEP students. They are being asked to reduce and erase gaps in learning and achievement between their LEP and non-LEP students. The research studies that have been completed examine teacher self-efficacy with LEP students in a given department or educational level (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006; Miner, 2006; Hoover, 2008). The goal of this research study was to provide additional information about how teachers across an entire school district feel when faced with the challenge of educating LEP

students, what types of experiences make them feel more prepared to meet those challenges, and what types of training they need in order to increase their effectiveness in working with LEP students.

Creating change requires an investment of time and effort on the part of both the change agents and the teachers involved (August & Shanahan, 2006). In order to effect change in the school setting with a view to impacting student outcomes and teacher efficacy, it is important to have a vision based in theory, a long-range plan for achieving the desired results, and the ability to anticipate and respond to resistance to change. Any long-range plan for improving student outcomes must have high-quality professional development at its core.

Teachers and staff who work with LEP students must have access to quality professional development in order to implement effective programs. There are four steps to ensuring effective professional development: (a) needs assessment, (b) timely and valuable professional development, (c) evaluation, and (d) reflection (Thomasson, 2012). The researcher hopes that this research study serves as a needs assessment that will lead to more effective professional development in the research district. This professional outreach in turn should increase the self-efficacy of individual teachers. It is hoped that this positive impact will lead to greater collective efficacy of district staff and improved outcomes for LEP students in the district.

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Appendix A

Learning Forward: Quick Guide to the Standards for Professional Learning

Standards for Professional learning			
<i>Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...</i>	learning communities: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.	leadership: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.	resources: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
data: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.	learning designs: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.	implementation: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.	outcomes: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Relationship between professional learning and student results

1. When professional learning is standards-based, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe.
2. When educators' knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective strategies to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs.
3. When educator practice improves, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results.
4. When student results improve, the cycle repeats for continuous improvement.

This cycle works two ways: If educators are not achieving the results they want, they determine what changes in practice are needed and then what knowledge, skills, and dispositions are needed to make the desired changes. They then consider how to apply the standards so that they can engage in the learning needed to strengthen their practice.

1. Standards- based professional learning
2. Changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions
3. Changes in educator practice

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Quick reference guide Standards for professional learning

T4

prerequisites for effective professional learning

The seven new standards focus attention on educator learning that relates to successful student learning. Implicit in the standards are several prerequisites for effective professional learning. They are so fundamental that the standards do not identify or describe them. These prerequisites reside where professional learning intersects with professional ethics.

Professional learning is not the answer to all the challenges educators face, but it can significantly increase their capacities to succeed. When school systems, schools, and education leaders organize professional learning aligned with the standards, and when educators engage in professional learning to increase their effectiveness, student learning will increase.

1educators'	2each	3Because	4like
<p>commitment to students, all students, is the foundation of effective professional learning. Committed educators understand that they must engage in continuous improvement to know enough and be skilled enough to meet the learning needs of all students. as professionals, they seek to deepen their knowledge and expand their portfolio of skills and practices, always striving to increase each student's performance. if adults responsible for student learning do not continuously seek new learning, it is not only their knowledge, skills, and practices that erode over time. they also become less able to adapt to change, less self-confident, and less able to make a positive difference in the lives of their colleagues and students.</p>	<p>educator involved in professional learning comes to the experience ready to learn. professional learning is a partnership among professionals who engage with one another to access or construct knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions. However, it cannot be effective if educators resist learning. educators want and deserve high-quality</p>	<p>there are disparate experience levels and use of practice among educators, professional learning can foster collaborative inquiry and learning that enhances individual and collective performance. this cannot happen unless educators listen to one another, respect one another's experiences and perspectives, hold students' best interests at the forefront, trust that their colleagues share a common vision and goals, and are honest about their abilities, practices, challenges, and results. professional accountability for individual and peer results strengthens the profession and</p>	<p>all learners, educators learn in different ways and at different rates. Because some educators have different learning needs than others, professional learning must engage each educator in timely, high-quality learning that meets his or her particular learning needs. Some may benefit from more time than others, different types of learning</p>

	professional learning that is relevant and useful. they are more likely to fully engage in learning with receptive hearts and minds when their school systems, schools, and colleagues align professional learning with the standards.	results for students.	experiences, or more support as they seek to translate new learning into more productive practices. for some educators, this requires courage to acknowledge their learning needs, and determination and patience to continue learning until the practices are effective and comfortable.
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Quick reference guide Standards for professional learning

Suggestions for use

Standards

Standards for Professional Learning are designed to set policies and shape practice in professional learning. Improvement is a continuous process without a beginning or end. Because professional learning is at the core of every effort to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students, its quality and effectiveness cannot be left to chance. The standards will guide the efforts of individuals, teams, school and school system staff, public agencies and officials, and nonprofit and for-profit associations or organizations engaged in setting policy, organizing, providing, facilitating, managing, participating in, monitoring, or measuring professional learning to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students.

These standards stimulate dialogue, discussion, and analysis that lead to increased effectiveness in professional learning regardless of the state of current practice. Here are several suggestions for how various types of educators may use the standards to deepen their understanding of effective professional learning and how to strengthen professional learning for all educators. The book *Standards for Professional Learning* (Learning Forward, 2011; see ordering information at right) offers a more comprehensive list.

individuals can:

- Study the standards to develop a foundational knowledge about effective professional learning.
- Use the standards to request improvements in professional learning in which they participate.
- apply the standards to the planning, design, facilitation, and evaluation of professional learning they lead.

school staff can:

- Share the standards with external assistance providers who facilitate professional learning with school staff.
- Share the standards with parents, guardians, and community members to foster their support for

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• professional learning as a means to increase student learning.• Bring the standards into all program implementation or improvement discussions.
school system staff can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• post the standards on or link to the standards from the school system's website.• Use the standards as criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of all professional learning.• prepare a resolution that the school trustees adopt the standards as expectations for all professional learning.

more to come

learning forward, with continuing support from Metlife foundation, will develop additional tools to support the implementation and evaluation of the standards.

“Using the standards to shape more effective professional learning will require study, thought, discussion, and planning.”

— *Standards for Professional Learning*

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Appendix B
The EXCEL Survey

The EXCEL (Exceptional Children who are English Learners) Teacher Inventory

This questionnaire is designed to gather information from general education and special education teachers working with special needs students, particularly those who speak English as a Second Language. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. Read each question and decide how much you can do in these areas using the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nothing		Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A great deal

1. How much can you do to motivate students no matter what their home environments are like? _____
2. How much can you do to communicate with parents and families who do not speak English? _____
3. How much can you do to redirect students who are misbehaving or disruptive? _____
4. How much can you do to teach students who speak English as a second language? _____
5. How much can you do to distinguish between a language difference and a language disability? _____
6. How much can you do to get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students? _____
7. How much can you do to incorporate appropriate content and materials for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse? _____
8. How much can you do to determine appropriate instruction according to the student's language ability and special need? _____
9. How much can you do to identify and utilize school/community resources for culturally and linguistically diverse students with special needs? _____
10. How much can you do to support the native language(s) of children who do not speak English fluently? _____
11. How much can you do to adapt and modify lessons for students who speak English as a second language? _____
12. How much can you do to use traditional and alternative assessment procedures with students who speak English as a second language? _____
13. How much can you do to communicate with students who speak English as a second language? _____
14. How much can you do to communicate with students who speak English as a second language? _____
15. How much can you do to improve the academic achievement of students who speak English as a second language? _____
16. How much can you do to determine the needs of students who speak English as a second language? _____
17. How much can you do to evaluate the academic performance of students who speak English as a second language? _____
18. How much can you do to be sensitive and aware of the needs of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse? _____
19. How much can you do to develop appropriate Individual Education Plans for students with special needs from non-English language backgrounds? _____

20. How much can you do to assess the academic progress of students who speak English as a second language? _____

Note. From “A Study of Teacher Efficacy of English Language Learners With Disabilities,” O. M. Paneque & P. M. Barbeta, (2006), *Bilingual Research Journal*, 30(1), 171-193. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix C
The EXCEL-2 Survey

13. I incorporate grade-level content and materials when teaching my English-speaking students.
14. I incorporate grade-level content and materials when teaching my ELL students.
15. I consider my English-speaking students' language abilities and special needs to determine appropriate instructional content for them.
16. I consider my ELL students' language abilities and special needs to determine appropriate instructional content for them.
17. I identify and use school/community resources to meet the needs of my English-speaking students.
18. I identify and use school/community resources to meet the needs of my ELL students.
19. I am comfortable when my English-speaking students do not use Standard English.
20. I am comfortable when my ELL students do not use Standard English.
21. I adapt or modify lessons when my English-speaking students do not use Standard English.
22. I adapt or modify lessons when my ELL students do not use Standard English.
23. When assessing English-speaking students' work, I use marking standards that allow for non-standard English.
24. When assessing ELL students' work, I use marking standards that allow for non-standard English.
25. I am effective in helping my English-speaking students develop social skills.
26. I am effective in helping my ELL students develop social skills.
27. I communicate well with my English-speaking students.
28. I communicate well with my ELL students.
29. I am able to improve the academic achievement of my English-speaking students.
30. I am able to improve the academic achievement of my ELL students.
31. I am able to determine the needs of my English-speaking students.
32. I am able to determine the needs of my ELL students.
33. I am able to evaluate the academic performance of my English-speaking students.
34. I am able to evaluate the academic performance of my ELL students.
35. I am sensitive to the needs of my English-speaking students.
36. I am sensitive to the needs of my ELL students.
37. I contribute to the development of appropriate Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for my English-speaking students with special needs.
38. I contribute to the development of appropriate Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for my ELL students with special needs.
39. I feel I am able to assess the academic progress of my English-speaking students.
40. I feel I am able to assess the academic progress of my ELL students.

Note. From "A Study of Teacher Efficacy of English Language Learners With Disabilities," O. M. Paneque & P. M. Barbetta, (2006), *Bilingual Research Journal*, 30(1), 171-193. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix D
Background Information Survey

Model Background Information Survey (based on Paneque & Barbetta, 2006)

1. How old are you?
Under 25 25-34 35-44 45-54 Over 55
2. How would you describe yourself? (click all that apply)
White Black Native American Asian/Pacific Islander
Hispanic (of any racial composition)
3. What gender are you?
Male Female
4. What is your current role?
General education
Special education

Preschool
Elementary
Middle
High
5. If you are NOT a preschool or elementary general education classroom teacher, what subject(s) do you teach? (If you teach more than one subject, please select the subject you teach the most)
Language Arts
Mathematics
Social Studies
Science
Other (*Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Athletics/Health and Exercise Science (PE)/Driver's Ed, Technology, Library/Media, etc.*)
Foreign Languages
Special Education
ESL/Bilingual
5. What is your highest completed degree?
Bachelor's Master's Doctorate
6. Do you hold an ESL or Bilingual Education endorsement?
Yes No
7. How many years have you been teaching?
Less than 5 5-9 10-14 15 or more
8. Can you speak and understand any language other than English? (if no, program skips to end of survey.)
Yes No
9. If yes, please indicate the language.

Spanish Other

10. Have you ever used a language other than English with students?

Yes No

11. If yes, did you find using a language other than English with non-English speaking students effective?

Yes No

Note. From "A Study of Teacher Efficacy of English Language Learners With Disabilities," O. M. Paneque & P. M. Barbeta, (2006), *Bilingual Research Journal*, 30(1), 171-193. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix E
Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Directions: Answer the questions as completely and explicitly as possible.

1. Tell me about your role as a teacher.
2. Tell me about your role in educating ELLs
3. Do you speak a language other than English?
4. If yes, which languages do you speak?
5. By speaking another language, tell me about some of the successes you have experienced in teaching ELLs.
6. If no, by not speaking another language, tell me about the challenges you have experienced in teaching ELLs.
7. Please tell me about any professional development training you have received related to working with ELLs.
8. Tell me how the professional development training you have received helps you meet the challenges of teaching ELLs.
9. Name some of the challenging aspects of teaching ELLs.
10. Tell me about any suggestions you have to improve education for ELLs in the future.
11. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

Note. From L. R. Hoover, (2008), *Teacher Efficacy of General Education Teachers of English Language Learners* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, UMI No. 3371575. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix F

Wordle Cloud of Qualitative Interview Text

