

6-2014

UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LATE-ENTRY ENGLISH LEARNERS IN THE VISTA CANYON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Joseph W. Boffa
jboffa@cvusd.us

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Boffa, Joseph W., "UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LATE-ENTRY ENGLISH LEARNERS IN THE VISTA CANYON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT" (2014). *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*. Paper 88.

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LATE-ENTRY ENGLISH
LEARNERS IN THE VISTA CANYON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Joseph William Boffa II

June 2014

UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LATE-ENTRY ENGLISH
LEARNERS IN THE VISTA CANYON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Joseph William Boffa II

June 2014

Approved by:

Dr. Louie F. Rodriguez, Committee Chair, Education

Dr. Bonnie Piller, Committee Member

Dr. Donna Schnorr, Committee Member

© 2014 Joseph William Boffa II

ABSTRACT

Many researchers have attempted to identify best practices, habits, and conditions of English Language Learners (ELs, ELLs) pertaining to school success. It is clear EL students pose unique and significant challenges, yet unclear what strategies and program models educators can implement to motivate learning, improve educational experiences, and appropriately acknowledge and reward these learners' accomplishments. Few studies have attempted to determine the difficulties and challenges associated with academic success and probability of graduation for Late-entry English Learners (LEELs), defined as those entering the school system as eighth-through-twelfth grade students. Their test scores weigh heavily on high-stakes standardized testing accountability measures. Late-entry ELs are often shortchanged when it comes to resources and teachers. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing reports nearly 7500 teachers currently teaching EL students without proper authorization as there simply are not enough teachers to meet the need. This study will give LEELs a voice to describe their educational experiences and perceptions of pertinent hurdles. They will share recommendations of best practices for Late-entry ELs and for the administrators and educators who serve them. The study draws attention to LEEL experiences, honoring them, while informing educational leaders regarding practices that may alleviate educational obstacles. Additionally, the study seeks to ascertain the best way to foster academic success for LEELs. This research is valuable as EL populations continue to grow in California and across the nation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to acknowledge all of the wonderful professors, administrators and support staff who have made the past few years at California State University, San Bernardino incredibly interesting, rewarding and enlightening. I would especially like to thank my prodigious, unparalleled dissertation committee, without whose tireless and talented efforts I would not be completing this heartfelt, poignant research.

Dr. Bonnie Piller has been a kind, positive, loving and guiding force from the moment I applied to the doctoral program, and continues to give me strength and stability. I definitely needed, benefited and am thankful for the direction, expertise and humor of Dr. Donna Schnorr. I am also forever grateful to a very special mentor, Dr. Louie F. Rodriguez, who modeled leadership at every turn, and instilled a sincere and benevolent passion continuously in our work.

I would also like to thank Dr. Doris Wilson, who has provided me with great courage, confidence and opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of heroic Americans, with or without documentation - Late-entry English Learners. I will never forget the doctoral program's first and most beautiful professor - Dr. Thelma Moore-Steward and her magnificent heartfelt laughter.

Dr. Moore-Steward and Dr. Wilson have taught me more than one could ever learn in a classroom or a book, and I wish them tremendous strength, health and happiness for many years to come...

Dedicated

I must first publicly thank and love my remarkable and wondrous parents, Joe and Rose Marie, whose endless love, zest for fun, and zeal for life endures and sustains me to this day and beyond. We had no idea Mom held the financial clout to get me started towards my dream of a doctoral degree. I am forever indebted to her, and likewise to my exceptionally strong and tremendous siblings and role models – Roxanne, Jill and Patrick; thank you for always allowing me to be the well-protected, spoiled brat, and gracefully blessing me with incomparable nieces, nephews and fun. God bless you.

I would like to thank and honor my great friend and colleague, Mr. Rogelio “Roy” Garza, for his unwavering support, ceaseless wisdom and unparalleled camaraderie in fighting the good fight towards equity, understanding and compassion for Latino students – we are not yet finished.

As with everything in this wonderful life, I must dedicate this labor of love to those who possess, accept and accord boundless, timeless agapé love throughout and beyond our beautiful, blessed and extended family; to Patty - our rock and moral compass; as beautiful as can be, inside and out; with a golden heart of kindness and respect. And to our heavenly treasures – three unique and special angels who inspire and amaze us on a daily basis; Shannon, Emily and Jay, our trifacta of love, life, laughter and happiness – turn on your love light, and *let it shine...*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Supreme Challenge	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study	5
Assumptions	7
Delimitations	7
Key Words	8
Definition of Terms	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
A Supreme Accomplishment – Success for Late-Entry English Learners in our High Schools	13
Research Needed and Should be Heeded	16
Lack of Equity for English Learners’ Education	18
Study Needed	21
Who are the English Learners?	23
English Learners: A Wide Variety of Abilities and Needs.....	28
Why Are We Testing Them?	30

Validity and Reliability in Testing English Learners.....	34
History of English Language Development Instruction and Teacher Preparation	37
Good Teaching Required.....	42
Program Models	58
Current Perceived Best Practices	61
Newcomer Programs	68
Conclusion	68

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction	70
Research Questions	73
Underpinnings.....	76
Restatement of the Research Purpose	76
Specific Methodology and Why.....	77
Design Specifics and Instrumentation.....	80
Data Collection Methods.....	83
Data Analysis.....	83
Validity	84
Role of the Researcher	85
The World and I.....	85
Culture and Approach	80
Self in Relation to Others	92

From Self to System.....	94
Overview	95
CHAPTER FOUR: VOICES TELL THE STORY	
Introduction	98
Part One: Participants.....	100
Mayra Barragan	100
Sahara Onder.....	102
Ariana Figueroa.....	106
Lionel Bustamonte	111
Rocio Navarro	114
Oscar Fuentes.....	118
Roberto Martinez.....	121
Nancy Solaris	123
Eva Cebedo	126
Rachel Ramos.....	135
Maria Lopez	138
Horacio Gutierrez	139
Part Two: Significant Themes – Addressing the Research Questions	141
Parents.....	142
Documentation	147
Finances	150

Spanish-speaking Teachers.....	154
Bullying	159
Friends.....	162
Television.....	164
Music.....	167
Confidence.....	168
Counselors.....	172
What Should Late-entry English Learners Know and Do?	181
What Should Administrators Know and Do?	184
What Should Teachers Know and Do?	193
Final Thoughts	202

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

About the Research	205
Lived Experience Concerns.....	211
Parents – Documentation – Finances	211
Confidence - Bullying - Friends	215
Counselors.....	217
Implications - Best Practices.....	219
What Should Administrators Know and Do?	219
What Should Teachers Know and Do?	224
What Should Late-entry English Learners Know and Do?	230
Advocacy	234

Closing Thoughts.....	236
APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT	240
APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC/INTERVIEW AND SURVEY	247
END NOTES:	258
REFERENCES	260

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Quotes on Counselors	179
--------------------------------------	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Diversity in ELL Students' Educational Backgrounds	30
---	----

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Supreme Challenge

Although many researchers have attempted to diagnose the best practices, habits, and conditions of English Language Learners (ELs, ELLs) pertaining to school success (Honigsfeld & Giouroukakis, 2011), few have tried to determine the difficulties associated with academic success and completion of graduation in a situation where ELs enter U.S. schools in the eighth-through-twelfth grade. These Late-entry English Learners (LEELs) have very little time, must learn English while simultaneously completing their content courses, and many reside in extremely low socioeconomic areas. There are 18,720 students who attend Vista Canyon Unified School District; 98.4 percent are Latino. The district serves 9,608 (51.3 percent) English Learners (CDE, 2013), and more than 99 percent of those speak Spanish as their primary language (District Demographic Summary, 2011). The graduation rate for the entire population is 70.7 percent, and the graduation rate for ELs is 58.2 percent (CDE, 2013). The graduation rate among Late-entry English Learners is unknown, as these statistics are not tracked.

In the study site chosen for this research, 94 percent of the students are socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) and 13 percent are migrant (District Demographic Summary, 2011). Much of the area's labor force centers on close

to 100,000 acres of diversified farmland, and research on the local farm worker families suggests economic struggle with little chance of educational attainment (Colletti, Smith, Herrera, S., Herrera, T. & Flores, 2006). Colletti et al. (2006) reports the following:

Critical to the success of the agricultural industry and thus the... county economy is a thriving and productive work force that tends the crops and livestock of the industry. Yet, many of the thousands of men and women that make up this work force struggle in their day-to-day subsistence due in no small part to low-wages and the seasonal nature of the agriculture industry (p. 9).

Statement of the Problem

The problem is that students come to Vista Canyon School District, in the southwestern United States, from another country, with little or no English skills. They are unique and widely varied; some beyond grade level in their primary language, some having never experienced a formal school setting, and others representing every stage in between. Students arriving in the eighth-through-twelfth grade are labeled Late-entry English Learners, or LEELs. It is the schools' responsibility to educate them all to the best of everyone's ability; they must be prepared to learn English very quickly and concisely, make steady gains on their

proficiency tests, pass their mainstream and elective classes, pass the high school exit exam, and do as well as possible on the state tests. According to Honigsfeld and Giouroukakis (2011):

The challenge of meeting the state standards is especially severe for English Language Learners (ELLs, ELs) for a number of compelling reasons, including the following: (a) special emphasis is placed on informational texts across all content areas, (b) college and workplace readiness are emphasized, and (c) no special accommodations are made for ELs (p. 7).

When English learners are included in state assessments, their academic performance is measured by tests that were designed for English-speaking students and, as such, may be culturally and linguistically inappropriate for ELs. Test items may contain concepts or ideas that may be unfamiliar to ELs who come from diverse cultures and who have not lived in the United States for very long (Coltrane, 2002).

If all of the student goals are accomplished, these Late-entry English Learners will be high school graduates, and perhaps ready for college. If they fail, students may continue to attempt passing the high school exit exam for up to two years after their scheduled graduation date in an attempt to earn their diploma. Some of these students are undocumented, meaning they do not have documentation or papers allowing them to remain in the United States legally.

There is no definite time frame for developing fluency in English. Guerrero (2004) points out, “The enormous amount of linguistic knowledge ELLs must acquire to achieve parity with their native English-speaking peers is a daunting cognitive task” (p. 194). Most researchers suggest the time period to gain proficiency ranges from 3 to 8 years (August & Hakuta, 1997; McLaughlin, Blanchard, & Osanai, 1995, as cited in Verdugo & Flores, 2007, p. 178). After studying academic proficiency rates for California ELs, Hakuta, Butler and Witt (2000), reported the following:

The overriding conclusion emerging from these data sets is that even in districts that are considered the most successful in teaching English to EL students, oral proficiency takes 3 to 5 years to develop, and academic English proficiency can take 4 to 7 years (p. 13).

However, Late-entry English Learners are asked to learn English, core subjects, and elective material simultaneously, at an amazing rate, and are tested on high stakes exams after just *one year*. These students have major decisions to make which will directly affect their immediate and long-term future. How should they go about studying? What should their focus of study be? How do they feel teachers and administrators can help them the most? How do they keep up their self-esteem? At what point do they give up their mission and focus on skills that will help them acquire employment and earn a living wage to help themselves and their families? What attitudes, skills, tasks, and behaviors will

assist them in achieving their academic goals?

Another concern is the growing rate of English Learners in our public schools. The rate of U.S. students with limited or no English skills whatsoever has gone from five percent in 1990 to nearly 10 percent currently, and could possibly reach 25 percent within the next 20 years (Goldenberg & Quach, 2010). ELs already account for nearly 25 percent of students in California and 16 percent of students in Texas; while approximately 13 percent of U.S. students are enrolled in California, they account for 42 percent of our nation's English Learners (CSBA, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study is to ascertain by “walking in the shoes” of these Late-entry English Learners, the types of skills, behaviors, and attitudes which help them to be academically successful as measured by achieving a high school diploma. By determining best practices, policies and program models of English proficiency attainment for these students, educators and administrators may be better informed and prepared to deal with similar students, and Long Term English Learners (LTELs) as well; these are English Learners who have been studying English more than five years, yet have not been re-designated as Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP).

Of the 1208 Vista Canyon students who have taken the high school exit exam, just 850 (70 percent) have passed the English Language Arts (ELA) portion, while 93 percent of the district's Redesignated Fluent English Proficient Students (R-FEPS) were successful (District Demographic Summary, 2011). There were 71 percent (861/1207) of Vista Canyon students receiving a passing math score on the exit exam (District Demographic Summary, 2011). Information derived from this study may help Vista Canyon Unified School District teachers and administrators develop proper pedagogical practices to assist all English Learners, and perhaps all students, as they strive for academic success on state tests and beyond. With the recent passing of the state's DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, some undocumented English Learners may be eligible for financial aid, scholarships, and perhaps eventual citizenship.

Education may serve as a cultural and financial springboard to lift these students and their families out of the cycle of poverty. According to the California School Boards Association (2011):

California has a relatively high number of students living in poverty, as measured by eligibility for a free or reduced-price lunch. In California, 52 percent of students are eligible, compared to a national average of 43 percent. Only the District of Columbia and four other states (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Mexico) have higher percentages than

California. The impact of poverty on a student's readiness and ability to learn is well documented. The high incidence of poverty in California means we must more aggressively address the out-of-school conditions of students that affect in-school performance (p. 26).

Another issue facing California's English Learners is that many of them are raised in families with little or no history of formal or higher education. The purpose of this study is to give voice to Late-entry English Learners, disseminate their recommendations for best practices regarding future LEELs and those teachers and administrators responsible for their education, provide unique and poignant material to fill the gap in literature for LEELs, and assist the learners' and their families' efforts to avoid poverty and a challenging existence.

Assumptions

One assumption of this study is that the state tests are valid measures of student achievement and English language acquisition. It is also assumed that the participants in this study reflect the socioeconomic and demographic realities facing the region. It is also assumed that the participants were honest in their interview and survey responses.

Delimitations

This study is not attempting to put subjects in particular intellectual categories or achievement levels, other than the grading and testing measures already being utilized. Also, the study will not attempt to analyze the state mandated assessments, nor break scoring down into finite sub-categories.

Key Words

English Language Learner (EL or ELL); Late-entry English Learner (LEEL); Long Term English Learner (LTEL); Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED); Re-designated Fluent English Proficient Students (R-FEPs).

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms apply for this dissertation:

English Learner (EL) Students (Formerly Known as Limited-English-Proficient or LEP):

English learner students are those students for whom there is a report of a primary language other than English on the state-approved Home Language Survey and who, on the basis of the state approved oral language (grades kindergarten through grade twelve) assessment procedures and literacy (grades

three through twelve only), have been determined to lack the clearly defined English language skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing necessary to succeed in the school's regular instructional programs. (R30-LC) (CDE, 2013).

ELD and Specially Designated Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) with Primary Language Support:

This term describes a setting in which EL students receive ELD and, at a minimum, two academic subjects required for grade promotion or graduation taught through SDAIE with Primary Language Support (L1 support) in at least two academic subject areas. Primary language support is instructional support through the student's primary language and does not replace academic instruction taught through the primary language but may be used to clarify meaning and to facilitate student comprehension of academic content area concepts taught mainly through English. The support may also include oral language development in the student's primary language. (R30-LC) (CDE, 2013).

English-Language Development (ELD):

English-Language development is a specialized program of English language instruction appropriate for the English learner (EL) student's (formerly LEP students) identified level of language proficiency. This program is implemented and designed to promote second language acquisition of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. (R30-LC) (CDE, 2013).

English Language Mainstream Classroom - Parental Request:

At the request of a parent or guardian, English learners who have not met local district criteria for having achieved a "good working knowledge" of English are enrolled in classes where they are provided with additional and appropriate services. Transferring an English learner from a structured English immersion classroom to an English language mainstream classroom is done with the permission of a parent or guardian of the English learner. (R30-LC) (CDE, 2013).

Fluent-English-Proficient (FEP):

Students who are fluent-English-proficient are the students whose primary language is other than English and who have met the district criteria for determining proficiency in English (i.e., those students who were identified as FEP on initial identification and students redesignated from limited-English-proficient [LEP] or English learner [EL] to FEP). (R30-LC) (CDE, 2013).

Grade point average (GPA):

Measure students' classroom grades. GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points received by the total number of grade points attempted for any particular school year (CDE, 2013).

Late-entry English Learner (LEEL):

Any English Learner student who arrives at the middle or high school level in grades 8-12 directly from another country, having little (six months or less) or no experience living or going to school in the United States.

Migrant:

Migratory youth are children who change schools during the year, often crossing school district and state lines, to follow work in agriculture, fishing, dairies, or the logging industry (CDE, 2014).

Redesignated FEP (R-FEP):

This category contains English learner (EL) students (formerly LEP students) who were redesignated as FEP (fluent-English-proficient) since the prior year census. These students are redesignated according to the multiple criteria, standards, and procedures adopted by the district and demonstrate that students being redesignated have an English language proficiency comparable to that of average native English speakers. (R30-LC) (CDE, 2013).

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED):

Students eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch program (CDE, 2013).

Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE):

Specially Designated Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) is an approach to teach academic courses to English learner (EL) students (formerly LEP students) in English. It is designed for nonnative speakers of English and focuses on increasing the comprehensibility of the academic courses typically provided to FEP and English-only students in the district. Students reported in this category receive a program of ELD and, at a minimum, two academic subjects required for grade promotion or graduation taught through (SDAIE). (R30-LC)

English Language Learner (EL, ELL):

Any student learning English as an additional language to the language(s) they already know; their primary language or the language spoken in their home is a language other than English (CDE, 2013).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Supreme Accomplishment – Success for Late-entry English Learners in Our High Schools

Immigrant students who enter American schools in the middle and high school years face a particularly difficult challenge. If they are to succeed in these schools, they must acquire English quickly while simultaneously obtaining content proficiency (Valdes, 2010). Little has been written about English Learners (ELs, ELLs) entering U.S. schools in 8th grade or later, known as Late-entry English Learners (LEELs), forced by time constraints to acquire the language rapidly and accurately. There is an inherent pressure, not just from the necessary high-stakes testing, but from school, familial, and self-esteem perspectives. Educating Late-entry English Learners is one of the many difficult challenges facing education today.

The purpose of this research is to ascertain through in-depth interviews, surveys and observation, the phenomenon of lived experience and proposed best practices of successful Late-entry English Learners in the south western United States. There is a distinct gap in the literature regarding the daunting challenge these LEELs face. These students are able to learn English quickly, navigate the educational system in a new culture, pass the high school exit exam and earn their high school diploma within a few short years. These prodigious

scholars deserve to be acknowledged, studied and celebrated; this research seeks to provide them with a voice so that their feats may be replicated by other Late-entry or Long term English Learners (LTELs), and their suggestions may be considered by and for their teachers and administrators.

The National Center for Education Statistics reports that approximately 13 percent of students in the U.S. are enrolled in California, yet they account for 42 percent of America's English Learners. Additional funding, resources and brainpower are needed to meet the challenge of California's immense and diverse EL population (CSBA, 2011, p. 25). There are 2,325,748 California public school students speaking a language other than English in their place of residence. The 1,441,387 English Learners attending California public schools constitute more than 23 percent of the total enrollment. While the majority of English Learners, approximately 71 percent, attend kindergarten through sixth grade, the remaining 29 percent are enrolled in grades seven through twelve (CDE, 2013). Stiefel, Schwartz & Conger (2010) state, "Previous studies find that foreign-born students outperform native-born students in their elementary and middle school years, but urban policymakers and practitioners continue to raise concerns about educational outcomes of immigrants arriving in their high school years" (p. 303). There is very little research dedicated to English Learners entering the public school system in middle or high school grades. Time is truly of the essence for these students.

Over the past decade, the number of students entering American schools with little or no English increased 40 percent, and 5.3 million students, or one in ten students from preschool to grade 12 is labeled an English Learner (Garcia, 2011). This influx is directly related to a large immigration wave in the past fifteen years. Many new immigrants gave birth to babies born in the U.S. as “new-Americans”, who inherited full citizenship rights, but not the English language (Garcia, 2011). It is exponentially difficult to attempt to navigate the school system successfully without the proper tools that the English language provides; therefore, these students must acquire knowledge, concepts, strategies and procedures, all while simultaneously working to know, understand and use the English language (Garcia, 2011). Because so many children are born into non-English-speaking families, the number of ELs is expected to increase by approximately 20 percent in the next ten years (Garcia, 2011).

Unfortunately, English Learners are underperforming 30 to 50 percent compared with white, English-speaking students at nearly every grade level on state and national assessments. This is the case in nearly every instance, even if one controls for median family income and other social class indicators (Garcia, 2011).

In 2007–08, 25 percent of students in California were not proficient in English. An additional 20 percent were proficient in English, but spoke another primary language. This equates to 45 percent of students in California speaking

another language besides English, with one of every four students still learning English (CSBA, 2011). One major concern is the lack of qualified educators working with English Learners currently, as well as in the future. According to data from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing released in April 2008, nearly 7,500 educators are teaching English learners without proper authorization. There are simply not enough teachers authorized to teach ELs to meet current needs. Also, districts lack flexibility in requiring teachers to become authorized to teach ELs (CSBA, 2011, pp. 19-20). No one can say for sure from where these much-needed educators will come.

Research Needed and Should be Heeded

The questions addressed in this research are important for the education of the ever increasing EL population in California and across the nation. English Learners will comprise a greater percentage of students of all ages in the future throughout the U.S. (Tórrrez, 2001). The demographics of these schools will steadily include increasing populations of ELs, making it even more imperative to understand their unique linguistic and cultural needs. Unfortunately, teachers dedicate disproportionate amounts of instructional time on preparation for standardized testing, while policy makers repeatedly neglect the available research (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Collier & Thomas, 2010; Gay, 2000, 2002;

Ladson-Billings, 1995, as cited by Verdugo & Flores, 2007), which provides evidence of best instructional practices and assessment regarding ELs.

Prior studies show students born outside the U.S. tend to outperform students born in the U.S. in elementary and middle school grades. However, lawmakers and stakeholders continue to elevate concerns regarding educational outcomes of LEEL, immigrants who arrive during the high school years (Stiefel et al., 2010). The White House has weighed in on this issue and tends to agree:

What is largely absent from the research literature on teacher education and particularly, the preparation and professional development of teachers to work effectively with English learners, is a knowledge base of principles and practices geared specifically for secondary subject-area classroom teachers working in middle and high schools... What is not so apparent, however, is a general consensus of what secondary teachers need to know and be able to do to ensure that English learners have full access to academic language and subject-area content in ways that enable them to succeed socially and academically (White House Fact Sheet: Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students, 2013).

This literature review is organized in such a manner as to make clear to the reader that research on late-entry English Learners is needed and desired. The opening portion of the review is dedicated to looking at who the English Learners are in American public schools. Secondly, issues with the testing of

English learners are reviewed. Thirdly, a brief history of teaching English to speakers of other languages will be explained, followed by a thorough discussion of instructional practices and believed necessary teacher preparation. This brief history includes a discussion of evolving instructional practices and teacher preparation reforms to address the needs of secondary school ELs. This will be followed by a brief look at various program models and suggestions. In looking at current trends and accepted best practices, the literature review reaches its conclusion by opening a window of comparison and contrast for what the research participants recommend and experience.

Lack of Equity for English Learners' Education

The transition to a new country, new culture and new educational world is difficult enough. When one adds the daunting challenge of pressure to learn English quickly, it is more than many students can handle. All the issues that can make high school difficult for every student have a compounding effect on Late-entry English Learners due to limited access to the language of instruction and lack of familiarity with the culture of U.S. high schools (Lara & Harford, 2010).

Rance-Roney (2009) elaborates on the plight of LEELs as follows:

The lack of enthusiasm for serving these students is unfortunate, but understandable. Public schools may feel they have little to gain and much to lose by enrolling older adolescents who have little or no English. No Child Left Behind demands that after one year of enrollment, ELLs must take statewide assessments, and the results must be integrated into the school's accountability measures. Enrolling large numbers of adolescent ELLs can put the school at risk of failing to make adequate yearly progress. In these times of increasingly meager resources in which schools are paring down to essential programs and making contingency plans to deal with statewide budget cuts and federal program funding reductions, adolescent ELLs are often viewed as an unwelcome presence in schools, a drain on the limited resources available (p. 33).

These students tend to be overlooked, misunderstood, or completely ignored, yet they are a consequential subgroup when it comes to high stakes standardized testing. Perhaps no category of learner has been more punished by the government's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) than ELs (Menken, 2010). Despite the promises this law held, ELs are continuously left behind in large numbers as they are repeatedly required to master linguistically complex exams in a language they are simultaneously attempting to acquire. The importance of these tests cannot be stressed enough, as they determine extremely high-stakes consequences, including high school graduation and school evaluation (Menken,

2010). According to the California School Boards Association (2011):

English learners are also an important student population whose needs must be met in order to close achievement gaps. English learners have, quite literally, twice as much to learn as their English speaking counterparts. They must not only master the core academic content, they must learn a new language with a depth of fluency that will enable them to be successful in rigorous academic content in all subject areas taught in the English language (p. 19).

Some feel education policy is used to support nativism at the expense of ignoring the needs of ELs, and though it has evolved, is once again reflecting xenophobia, the fear of anything foreign (Garcia, 2011). One may see this activated at the state level with aggressive anti-immigration measures, ethnic studies restrictions, the “birther” bill, administrative actions to dismiss educators with Spanish accents, and through laws such as California Proposition 227 requiring English-only instruction (Garcia, 2011). It is difficult enough for ELs to face the challenges of grade level course work in a new language without the expectation of mastering English quickly. Garcia (2011) reports, “We will not get the education of these students right until we jettison the ‘English-only’ ideology and implement policies and practices that respect their linguistic and cultural diversity and guarantee their civil rights and educational opportunities” (p. 47).

Study Needed

It is clear EL students pose unique and significant challenges, yet it is not clear what pedagogies and program models educators and administrators can implement to motivate learning, improve educational experiences, and appropriately acknowledge and reward accomplishments, particularly among Late-entry English Learners. Most of the ambiguity stems from the lack of information and research, questionable educational policies, and inability or lack of interest from educators to understand EL students, their culture and backgrounds (Verdugo & Flores, 2007).

More studies are required, particularly with larger teacher samples to determine incremental effects. Research is also needed to build stronger conclusions about effective instructional practices for ELs of varying levels of proficiency (Aguirre-Munoz & Boscardin, 2008). As a category, the English Learner population is highly transient. (Aguirre-Munoz & Boscardin, 2008), and continues to grow. Vista Canyon Unified School District has a 13 percent migrant population (DARC, 2011). This situation reflects the imperative demand to collect comprehensive data on best practices and resultant consequences on the impact of reform and achievement on ELs (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). While there are significant challenges facing ELs in general, Late-entry English Learners are particularly overlooked in educational research and practice. The research provided here will inherit a direct perspective from those most affected, providing

voice to the Late-entry English Learners themselves. Students in this study will be allowed and encouraged to relate their experiences and determined best practices for themselves, their educators and administrators through the process of open-ended interview questions.

University teacher preparation programs include pedagogical and assessment methods courses to assist English Learners. However, only Arizona, California and Florida have mandatory course work in ELD methods and second language acquisition for working with ELs in their credential programs (Short, 2013). These programs will improve engagement and achievement in K-12 schools for ELs, but should be implemented in all credential programs across the U.S. Further research is recommended in a variety of areas for contributions to best practices for educators concerning ELs, anticipating insight into diverse methodologies, program models and teacher efforts to improve EL instruction.

It is specifically recommended that future research incorporate more participants in rural and urban areas working with ELs (Rodriguez, Manner, & Darcy, 2010). In the rural location chosen for this study, research with the farmworker families suggests economic struggle with little chance of educational attainment (Coletti et al., 2006). In the study site, 97% of the students are socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) as determined through free and reduced lunch (CDE, 2013).

Who Are the English Learners?

The number of EL students in the United States has ballooned in recent years. Native speakers of languages other than English are the fastest growing student population within the United States, with nearly one-third of these residing in California (Cooper, 2007). School-aged children speaking a language other than English at home between 1979 and 2008 increased from nine to 21% of this age range population. The increase was from 3.8 million to 10.9 million students nationally over this time period (NCES, 2010). This changing demographic, coupled with the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) portion of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which mandates disaggregation in the scoring of EL subgroups, has brought a fresh awareness among professionals and major stakeholders in the educational community regarding diversity of instructional needs for ELs (Lara & Harford, 2010).

Across the United States demographics continue to change, creating classrooms that contain high numbers of linguistically diverse students. Some projections point to 40 percent of the U.S. school age population as ELs by 2030 (NWREL, 2004, as cited by DelliCarpini, 2008). Latinos are America's largest minority group, numbering over 11 million students in public elementary and secondary schools. They account for more than 22 percent of PK–12 students. Over 20 percent of students enrolled are Latino, but only about half of all Latino students receive a high school diploma on time (White House Fact Sheet:

Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students, 2013). Of the EL students who do manage to graduate, only about half are likely to be prepared for higher education. Nationwide, just 13 percent of Latinos have earned a bachelor's degree, and only four percent have attained graduate or professional degrees (White House Fact Sheet: Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students, 2013).

It is imperative to understand that 23.2 percent of students in California's K-12 public schools—1,441,387 students—are ELs (CDE, 2013); they are not concentrated in just a few locations, they are found throughout the state. Approximately 85 percent of these ELs are Spanish speakers, but the remaining 15 percent represent 55 different language backgrounds; this trend is predicted to continue for at least 20 years (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007). While there is plenty of literature dedicated to Long-term English Learners (LTELs), very little research has focused on Late-entry English Learners, or even best practices for ELs in the secondary setting. This research will attempt to partially fill this gap by providing a voice for successful LEELs, as measured by attainment of a high school diploma. By shining light on the experiences and recommendations of these successful students, there are also anticipated issues and expectations of identifiable barriers and difficulties encountered by those who fail to graduate.

Along with the growing EL population in America's schools, English

Learners hold an exceedingly high dropout rate. States vary in defining the term dropout, but the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported the percentage of non-native born Latino youth between the ages of 16-24 is 43.4 percent (Kaufman & Alt, NCES, 2004 as cited by DelliCarpini, 2008). This is critical because native Spanish speakers comprise 80 percent of ELs in the United States (Batalova, 2006, as cited by DelliCarpini, 2008). According to Peter Zamora, Co-Chair of the Hispanic Education Coalition (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007):

ELLs' academic performance levels are significantly below those of their peers in nearly every measure of academic performance. In the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress, for example, only 29% of ELLs scored at or above the basic level in reading, compared with 75% of non-ELLs (p. 30).

In California, nearly half of Latino students in K-12 are English Learners, and Latino ELs between the ages of 16-19 have a 59% dropout rate (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007). Considering that nationally EL students have the second highest dropout rate, this has detrimental social and economic repercussions for the individual students, their families and society as a whole (Lara & Harford, 2010).

Not only do Latinos hold the highest dropout rates, they also have the

lowest rates of college attendance (Garcia 2011). They are overrepresented in negative categories for most academic performance measurements, including suspensions, expulsions, special education enrollment and remedial programs. Conversely, in positive categories, such as gifted and talented programs, advanced placement and honors courses, Latinos are underrepresented (Meier, et. al. 1991 as cited in Noguera, 2005). English Learners have value outside the classroom as well. One must be aware of their impact on society as a whole (Lara & Harford, 2010).

Approximately five million ELs attend U.S. public schools, representing close to 10 percent of America's total student population, with 75 percent claiming Spanish as their primary language (White House Fact Sheet: Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students, 2013). Unfortunately, their linguistic and academic needs fail to be met by the nation's public school system. The stereotypical view of ELs as foreign-born immigrants is false. The majority are long-term English Learners (LTELs), with 76 percent of elementary and 56 percent of secondary ELs native-born. Over half of ELs in America's secondary schools are second or third generation U.S. citizens, and sadly, two-thirds belong to low-income families (White House Fact Sheet: Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students, 2013). English Learners account for nearly 25 percent of California's students, while Texas has the second highest rate of ELs, with 16 percent. Complicating the lack

of success and high number of ELs living in poverty is these families having little or no history of formal education (August & Hakuta, 1997). According to Laura Hill (2012) of the Public Policy Institute of California, “An important reason for policymakers to focus on ELs is that their poverty rates range from 74 to 85 percent, much higher than the 21 percent overall poverty rate for California school-aged children.”

According to a survey of over 500 farm laborers in the area researched for this study, 78 percent reported annual household incomes of less than \$15,000 (Colletti et al. 2006). Poverty leads to other detrimental issues. For instance, 87 percent of survey respondents reported not having private health/medical insurance, and 44 percent said they typically never receive health care services, save for emergencies (Colletti et al. 2006). Poverty is a central issue in the lives of many English Learners.

While the majority of California’s EL students’ first language is Spanish, there are over 100 languages spoken in the state’s schools, with concentrations of 15 percent or more at individual school sites for 55 of those languages (CSBA, 2011). The students enter at every grade level, coming with a wide variety of educational experience. Some have received no formal instruction in their home country (CSBA, 2011). These students are faced with the monumental task of learning a new language while attempting to keep up with the subject matter of the mainstream curriculum. Many are also struggling to adjust to a new culture,

family dynamics, living conditions and more (The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009, as cited in Lopez, 2011). Older students, such as Late-entry ELs, are particularly vulnerable, primarily those entering the school system with little or no experience in formal education (Tafoya, 2002).

English Learners: A Wide Variety of Abilities and Needs

Instructional needs for ELs attending secondary schools represent an extremely vast spectrum, which varies with their U.S. schooling experience, schooling in their native country, and a wide range of literacy skill levels in both languages. Successful Late-entry English Learners tend to have strong educational backgrounds and primary language skills, but there are very severe time constraints on their English acquisition.

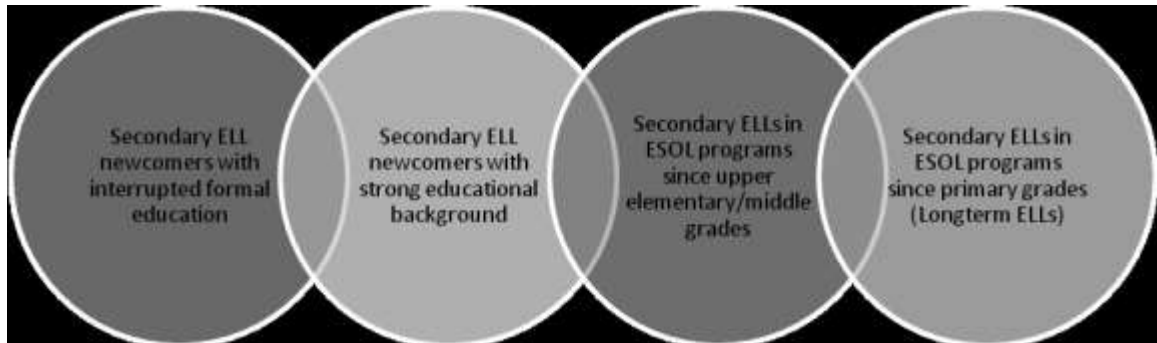
See Figure 2.1 (The National High School Center, 2009): On one end of the spectrum (far left) are new secondary students with interrupted formal education (SIFE), who require a framework of support services for cultural and linguistic assistance. New ELs with interrupted education, lacking basic skills in their primary language require intense specialized instruction in literacy, which is rarely available in a normal high school setting (Short and Fitzsimmons, 2007).

A little further along the spectrum are new students with a solid educational background in their native language, successful at applying the literacy skills and background knowledge of their primary language. Their learning approach to English may be quite different than that of their SIFE classmates. Ability to transfer knowledge and literary skills to English may result in more reliance on written instruction and seeking out grammatical rules to assist them in making sense of their new language (Lara and Harford, 2010). As these students acquire intermediate proficiency in oral English, they tend to make impressive and rapid gains in reading and writing English, with ability to apply background knowledge to their academic work; they appear to do much better when transitioned into mainstream or core classes than their peers (Lara & Harford, 2010).

Again, successful Late-entry English Learners will come predominantly from the group of students with a high literacy rate in their native language, and most probably a continuous and successful academic record prior to their arrival (second circle from left). There are many challenges in accurately determining a student's level of knowledge and English proficiency.

The two circles on the right of Figure 2.1 represent Long Term English Learners (LTELs); those who have been in the system for at least five years, yet have failed to be reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP). While findings from this research may help these students, they are not the focus of the study.

Figure 2.1



Diversity in ELL Students' Educational Backgrounds

ELLs in secondary schools represent an extremely wide spectrum of instructional need. The needs of secondary ELLs often vary in relation to their schooling in the United States as well as wide-ranging levels of literacy skills in both languages, and previous schooling in their native country (National High School Center, 2009).

Why Are We Testing Them?

There is one enormous positive resulting from NCLB's insistence on high-stakes standardized testing for all students, and that is the bright light placed on the struggles and failures our nation endures in educating English Learners. Attempting to raise academic achievement levels for every student is indeed a noble endeavor, yet stakeholders are now forced to understand the undeniably low and frustrating levels of our ELs. Challenging these learners to rise to their potential is an excellent proposition; however, how can this be done in a fair and

equitable manner?

English Learners, by definition, have not yet fully grasped the English language, yet NCLB insists they are tested in it after just one year. To make matters worse, students, schools, and districts are held highly accountable for this assessment (Menken, 2010). This creates an enormous and ongoing challenge for the English Learners and also those responsible for their education. Valli and Buese, 2007, as cited in Honigsfeld & Giouroukakis, 2011, suggest that "high-stakes policy directives promote an environment in which teachers are asked to relate to their students differently, enact pedagogies that are often at odds with their vision of best practice, and experience high levels of stress (p. 520)."

Nearly all high-stakes tests are written and administered solely in English, leaving questions regarding accurate interpretation of the results of these tests (Coltrane & Bronwyn, 2002). Most involved agree it is impossible to divorce content knowledge from language proficiency in test results, making it unlikely for a true portrait of student ability and knowledge to be rendered (Menken, 2000; 2008; Solórzano, 2008). If a student's response to a test item is incorrect, one cannot be certain if the student was not capable of discerning the correct answer or simply did not understand the question due to a language barrier (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007).

Consequently, researchers argue about the validity of academic content testing for ELs in English. This is undeniably important as these testing results determine high-stakes decisions, including grade level promotion, program placement, school evaluation and funding, and high school graduation (Gándara & Baca, 2008; Menken, 2010; Solórzano, 2008; Coltrane & Bronwyn, 2002). Menken (2010) states, “Because the NCLB accountability requirements rely heavily on standardized test scores, testing policy has created a disincentive for schools to serve ELLs at all, because these students are seen to pull down schoolwide test scores” (p. 126). Schools serving high populations of ELs are certainly likely to fall under the “failing school” label as defined by NCLB. This was the case in California, as nine separate school districts serving large populations of ELs were labeled as failing due to low passing rates by ELs on the state test; therefore, at risk of being taken over by the state (Gándara & Baca, 2008). This research will be conducted with students from one of those districts, where the EL rate now stands at 76% (CDE, 2011).

While the federal government cannot demand states follow their prescribed educational program changes, it is apparent that they do control much of the funding, and it may be withheld. The federal legislation of NCLB mandates English proficiency assessments annually of every student attending schools in the United States, with the exception of Puerto Rico (Garcia, 2011). Also, the federal government requires that states hold their schools accountable for

achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) regarding “measurable achievement objectives.” States who fail to attain their AYP goal are in danger of losing federal funding (Garcia, 2011).

California requires annual increases for the number of ELs making progress on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). This is a standardized assessment for English language development. In order to comply with NCLB’s required gains in English proficiency, a certain percentage of ELs in a school must improve by one proficiency level or more on the CELDT (Cooper, 2007).

Individual ELs vary in how accurately and quickly they acquire English language skills. When students and their educators are pressured to progress rapidly, there is an increase in the chances of pushing students through and out of appropriate literacy instruction prematurely (Gandara, 1999; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997; U.S. General Accounting Office, 2001, as cited in Verdugo & Flores, 2007). This may result in many ELs’ failure to achieve English proficiency at all (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). This leads to serious consequences for secondary students, many of whom choose to leave school and find work to support their family. Solorzano (2008) comments, “This in turn, will result in promoting a generation of youth who are undereducated, tracked into lower paying jobs, and susceptible to all the negative consequences of being marginalized in today’s society” (p. 261).

For students who are undocumented, this may be the death knell for their path to citizenship, as they will no longer be eligible for the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors), unless they can attain their General Educational Development (GED).

Validity and Reliability in Testing English Learners

These are very serious consequences for the students, their families and their future. The good intentions and hard work of ELs often do not provide enough ammunition when students come up against standardized testing. It is considered unclear by many just exactly what is being tested. Verdugo & Flores (2007) describe the difficult debate surrounding assessment of proficiency in language in “Issues Related to Language-proficiency Testing.”

Language proficiency is a controversial topic. What exactly is English-language proficiency? Does it mean commonplace communication skills? Or does language proficiency mean proficiency in academic English language? The research in this area is mixed, controversial, and lacks consensus. To begin with, there is a lack of consensus about the nature of language fluency (Canales, 1992).

For example, Dulay, Burt, and Hernandez-Chavez, 1978, use models with 64 components of language proficiency (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). Oller (1980) suggests that language proficiency is a single construct; most language proficiency tests tend to assess discrete points of language skills, but theory suggests that it is a unitary construct, best measured or assessed through integrative procedures (Verdugo & Flores, 2007).

It may appear beneficial to challenge ELs with administration of high-stakes tests, but reliability and validity complications arise for this specific group of students. Test makers must determine what is truly being assessed and proceed carefully (Menken, 2010). Does the test measure skills or academic knowledge of ELs; or is it language skills that are primarily being tested? Results for ELs on standardized tests tend to determine English-language proficiency and may fall short in accurately assessing their skills or content knowledge, thus weakening the validity of their test (Abelle, Urrutia & Schneyderman, 2005; Menken, 2010). When ELs cannot demonstrate what they know and can do because of linguistic problems on a test, the results will not show a valid reflection of their expertise (Coltrane & Bronwyn, 2002).

Solórzano (2008) posits the following perspective:

Because of the widespread use of tests without consideration of their technical quality, purpose, and use, students are tested at the whim of

those who stand to gain from political posturing rather than from those who want to use tests to improve instruction. The high-stakes nature of the tests makes the latter point untenable and potentially compromises the tests validity for ELLs (p. 262).

Another potential issue in high-stakes testing for ELs may be their lack of cultural familiarity on certain test items. Test questions might refer to concepts or events to which they have not yet been exposed. For example, a writing prompt concerning the novelty of an African-American President may be misunderstood by a student new to the United States, coming from a country with a different type of government and possibly no concept of what an “African-American” is. An EL student who may be a proficient writer may struggle to comprehend the task, as cultural bias invades the prompt (Coltrane & Bronwyn, 2002).

As with all students, it is important to realize that no single test can accurately reflect all that the student knows or is able to accomplish. This is certainly true when the reliability and validity of a test are questionable when proctored for ELs without proper accommodations for testing. Experts believe important conclusions and decisions regarding ELs should never be based on scores from one single test (Solorzano, 2008). Consequently high-stakes decisions regarding an individual program, student placement, promotion, or evaluation of school, administration or school district with high populations of ELs should also never be based on the results of one high-stakes exam (Solorzano,

2008). Data may simply indicate the program, school or school district comprises a high percentage of ELs, and may not reflect the quality of instruction or effectiveness of program (Coltrane & Bronwyn, 2002).

History of English Language Development, Instruction and Teacher Preparation

Many Americans today have a xenophobic outlook on any languages beside English. They would be surprised to learn that America has historically produced many bilingual environments, and that these scenarios are common all around the globe. In fact, learning more than one language is normal throughout the world (Lessow-Hurley, 2005). The United States was not always so monolingual. Dual language or non-English instruction classes were offered in more than a dozen states in many languages in the 1800's, including French, German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish, Dutch, Italian, Czech, and Spanish (Ovando & Collier, 1985; Tyack, 1974, as cited by Lessow-Hurley, 2005).

Linguistics has historically been devoted to the analyzing of languages. The history of English Language Development (ELD) may be as old as the language itself, but documentation of the methods used is a relatively new study.

Until the beginning of the 1960's, it was believed language was acquired merely by the imitation of others. It was considered a phenomenon of behavior with little emphasis on thought. Grammar and vocabulary were taught and learners benefited from stimulus and response (Zwiers, 2008). Language form was the main goal and grammatical structure was considered a very important facet (Loide, 1991).

Noam Chomsky helped language to be seen as a code in the 1950's. Thus, acquiring a second language became a challenge of solving the "code". It was believed that each learner was equipped biologically with a learning device which naturally assisted language acquisition. Educators in the 1960's incorporated the influence of developmental psycholinguistics, determining that learning a second language required both biological and environmental phenomena (Loide 1991). Less than 40 years ago, in the late 1970's, linguists believed that each language was developed and utilized in separate compartments of the brain. This was known as Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP). Finally in the early 1980's, Jim Cummins, a Canadian linguist, proposed only one brain compartment for languages. This property was labeled Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), characterized by an iceberg with two protruding peaks above the water line representing separate languages. This led to the concept of transfer. Transfer is simply using a known language to understand the vocabulary or concepts of a second, or target language, by applying the proper

label or descriptive word (Cummins, 1982).

Cummins is also credited with identifying two components of language proficiency. The first describes the language used in everyday conversation known as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), or social language. This is considered to be less abstract and less complex, aided by extra linguistic clues, such as gestures, facial expressions and real objects. The second component is Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), or what is commonly referred to today as academic language. CALP tends to be more abstract and complex, and is lacking in extra linguistic support (Cummins, 1979; Loide, 1991; as cited by Zwiers, 2008). This is the language of school and academia at which ELs must excel to succeed in school.

Also in the 1980's, Stephen Krashen built on Chomsky's ideas, believing that second language acquisition is similar to the first. This is done by listening to or reading understandable pieces of audio or text in authentic context, which he named comprehensible input (Zwiers, 2008). Krashen's second language acquisition theory contained five hypotheses, including the affective filter hypotheses, which directs that anxiety or stress in the learning process will produce a filter or barrier which may serve to block one's ability to learn. Therefore, learners should be comfortable and relaxed, yet alert. Krashen posited the optimal avenue for language teaching is to focus on content or a subject area, believing that the target language will consequently be

automatically and naturally acquired (Loide, 1991). Modeling language is insufficient; students must be strategically supported when attempting to learn a second language effectively. Zwiers (2008) describes it thusly:

Psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) pointed out that children internalize the thinking and language patterns of more proficient speakers. This happens when new language and concepts are just above the students' current levels of proficiency. Vygotsky called this concept the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky's insights provided a theoretical foundation for Jerome Bruner's studies of child language development (1986). In his research on mothers and their children, Bruner describe their shared learning experiences using the term scaffolding, which has since become a popular metaphor for an apprenticeship-style support of learning.

EL students today are not exactly welcomed with open arms. Research into undocumented students in K-12 nationally projects a serious lack of resources, assistance, and opportunities, which lead to a high dropout or "pushout" rate (Fry, 2005). We must consider what happens to these students. They do not simply disappear; in fact, they most likely lack the resources to travel far. These are students who gain critical consciousness, and are able to utilize their experiences to continue to learn and even teach (Freire, 1970), yet many remain in the community lacking employment or serving as the working poor. It is hoped that this research will embolden and inspire the students involved to go on

and do great and wondrous things while adding to the insufficient research on second language acquisition, particularly for Late-entry English Learners. Their insight and experiences may be extrapolated across the state, nation and beyond, making a profound difference wherever improvement may be administered to the classrooms and programs of second language learners.

Bilingual and dual immersion programs in the U.S. have made dedicated strides in educating our newly arrived students and all language learners. But states like California (Proposition 227) and Arizona (Proposition 203) have mandated English-only instruction in their schools, negating and demeaning the value of students' native language in acquiring English. Late-entry English Learners should acquire proficiency in interpersonal communication in English, yet they also must acquire academic proficiency, and out of necessity, they need to do it quickly. They must develop the ability to take notes while listening to lengthy discourse. The abilities to read extensively and critically are important, and they must understand subject matter in their reading. LEELs must show the ability to display learned skills in all language domains – reading, listening, speaking and writing for all academic hurdles faced. Time is of the essence as class enrollment, particularly college preparatory and interesting elective classes are often only open to English Only (EO) students or the students who have successfully completed the EL program (Valdes, 2010).

Good Teaching Required

In order to succeed at the difficult task ELs are faced with, they may rely heavily on excellent teachers trained to work with them. This is especially true of LEELs, bound by time constraints and faced with adaptation to a new culture, school system and language. In some circles, there exists a consensus that anyone who speaks English well should be able to teach English learners; or that anyone who is bilingual will make a good ELD teacher. These fallacies are troublesome from an educator's standpoint and double indemnity for the affected English Learners. Many studies have been done to determine the key to quality education, and nearly all boil down to one paramount factor, described as follows: "When researchers ran the numbers in dozens of different studies, every factor under a school's control produced just a tiny impact, except for one: which teacher the student had been assigned to" (Green, 2010). Indeed, the most important piece of any educational puzzle is the teacher.

Lack of qualified teachers for English Learners is certainly not a new obstacle. The nationally recognized panel of experts from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, who published *A Nation at Risk* (1983), noted at the time that there were not enough qualified teachers available to educate English Learners (Bunch, 2011). Olsen (2010) makes the following observation about secondary teachers of LTEs, which also applies to LEELs:

Whether Long Term English Learners are placed in mainstream classes or in designated English Learner SDAIE content classes, they often are taught by teachers without the preparation, support, or strategies to address their needs. Secondary school teachers are generally not prepared to teach reading and writing skills. They do not have training in language development. Their focus has been on the academic content to be taught in the class. They are challenged by how to teach grade-level, advanced secondary school academic content to students without the English foundation or literacy skills, needed to access that content. Few teachers feel they have the tools, skills or preparation to meet the needs of their English Learner students — and, few have received professional development to do so. This is made even more problematic because these classes are disproportionately assigned to the least prepared teachers in the school. In too many settings, as teachers become more veteran, they earn the rights to “move up” to the honors classes. In California, there have been ongoing efforts for years to strengthen the preparation of teachers to be better able to meet the needs of the diverse students and communities served by the schools (pp. 28-29).

The California State University system is the largest and most diverse system of 4-year universities in the nation, comprised of 23 campuses and approximately 417,000 students, according to Beverly Young, who serves as

Assistant Vice Chancellor for Teacher Education and Public School Programs, California State University System. The universities award approximately 13,000 teacher credentials each year, representing nearly 60 percent of California's educators, translating to 10 percent of the nation's teachers (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007).

NCLB requires that every student, including ELs, be educated by a highly qualified teacher. However, it is twice as likely English learners will be instructed by teachers who are not fully credentialed (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007). Francisca Sanchez, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for San Bernardino County, CA Superintendent of Schools Office, stated the following (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007):

According to 'Teaching and California's Future' (2006) published by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, CSU Office of the Chancellor, UC Office of the President, Policy Analysis of California Education, and WestEd, one of the greatest teacher preparation shortages in the state is in the area of teachers for English Learners. In fact, in 2005-06 only 56% of fully credentialed, experienced (more than five years of teaching experience) teachers had English Learner authorizations. While this is a dramatic increase from over five years ago (34%), given the nature of instruction and the fact that English Learners are incorporated

throughout virtually all classrooms in schools where they are present, the percentage must be much higher to ensure effective academic instruction for English Learners (p.50).

Virtually every teacher in California will educate an English learner at some point in their career. Teachers across the nation should be prepared for this, and should have the knowledge and skills available to inculcate students of all ethnicities, languages and cultures (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007). Instructors must be capable of expanding English Language Development (ELD) and of instilling content knowledge. The focus of English language development is advancing the students' language learning in all domains toward fluency within the core curriculum's context (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007). Content development concentrates on understanding essential concepts with preparation based on Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE). These instructional strategies work extremely well for most ELs, and are also beneficial for every student. Teachers must differentiate their lessons based on the English levels of the students and the amount and levels of support necessary for effective instruction (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007).

SDAIE strategies include scaffolding of curriculum and differentiation of

content presentation and assessments, which should be accrued in multiple measures, or various ways. Scaffolding involves dividing the core curriculum into manageable pieces for the learner. According to Burns and de Silva (2006), “Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) developed the term scaffolding, as a metaphor to describe the role played by the interactional talk between learners and skilled others” (p. 4). They also added that Bruner (1978) describes scaffolding thusly, “... the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom taken in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill she is in the process of acquiring” (p. 9).

Differentiation includes the implementation of various instructional strategies geared toward the learners’ level of language and concept understanding (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007). These may include front loading of vocabulary, pre-reading and pre-writing activities, graphic organizers, and even primary language support for the English Learner. ELs particularly benefit from this, but it is imperative the instructor delivers all phases of instruction with comprehensible input (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007).

Comprehensible input strategically taps into the students’ prior knowledge, building on what they already know and using the knowledge and skills of the learners to make curriculum content meaningful (Subcommittee On Early

Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007). Savvy teachers will collaborate across the curriculum so students may build on lessons from other classes as well as drawing upon their own learning strengths to advance understanding. There is a true emphasis on a variety of assessments for ELD and SDAIE. There should be multiple measures in place to assess where learners are in regards to content and language in order to ensure students are learning both content and English instruction (Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education, 2007).

Educators do not instinctively know how to best deal with speakers of another language in their class, particularly when the core curriculum is not language. Many teachers feel unprepared to deal with assisting ELs with their language needs while instilling in them the key concepts and knowledge of the course. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2002), as cited by Echevaria, Powers & Short (2006), “Fewer than 13% of teachers in the nation have received professional development to prepare them for teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students” (p. 196).

Time is of the essence for Late-entry ELs if they are to succeed by graduating from a U.S. high school on time. The challenge of passing the required core classes in a new and foreign setting is daunting, but the remonstrance heightens when one realizes they must learn the language of instruction simultaneously. These LEELs should not have their time wasted by

instructors whom are not prepared to teach them. They also need not be exposed to “watered down” material, but should be challenged; a difficult principle to implement effectively (Gersten & Baker, 2000).

Mainstream and subject area educators, in particular, are often unprepared to assist students with language needs as they focus on course content. Frequently, these teachers have had little or no training in assisting ELs (DelliCarpini, 2008). Sadly, it is all too common for ELs to be taught by poorly qualified or the least experienced teachers. It is also quite common to find ELs being taught by emergency credentialed teachers (Gandara & Baca, 2003). These students desperately need and deserve highly qualified, motivated educators, yet this does not seem to fit the game plan. It is imperative for educators to undergo focused professional development, raising consciousness regarding the significance of the language and culture that each student brings to the class. They should be taught to support the culture and native languages of their students and assist in the maintenance of those languages in their students’ lives (Cooper, 2007).

Much of the focus and research on English learners is dedicated to the elementary grades, with an ongoing debate about whether it is best for an EL to learn reading skills in their native language or in English. Elementary ELs will not be the focus of this research, nor will long-term English learners (LTELs). Very little research has been dedicated to language acquisition for Late-entry English

Learners at the high school level, and none has been found which provides a voice to those attempting the monumental task of learning academic English while accomplishing the necessary hurdles of high school graduation. Assisting in this lofty goal will require educators with proper training, knowledge and motivation. A White House fact sheet (2013) titled *Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students* sums up the lack of research necessary to assist stakeholders with secondary ELs as follows:

Much of what has been researched and written about this knowledge base and the practical knowledge has been embedded in the literature on what all teachers need to know about teaching English learners. Attention placed on what secondary teachers need to know and be able to do for teaching English learners is relatively recent, and to the best of our knowledge, there has been no attempt to distinguish the two sets of teacher competencies, or to verify that the competencies recommended for secondary teachers are in fact, what secondary teachers view as important and useful for teaching English learners (White House, 2010).

One key purpose of this research is to ascertain directly from the LEELs what they feel helped them the most. Students will reflect on their own situation, efforts and best practices, but they will also comment on what teachers and administrators should be able to know and do to guide them successfully, thus contributing to the gap in teacher and administration preparation, focus and

beyond.

Secondary EL teachers must have a firm grasp of content and pedagogical knowledge, but must also be aware of the demands social and academic language place on ELs, making certain language is used in multiple ways for a variety of purposes. Teachers must know to value and implement students' native languages and have an understanding of how oral and written English is acquired (Faltis et al., 2010). They must assess student learning with a variety of methods, while being cognizant of language proficiency in each student, and be able to make connections and learning strides while incorporating background knowledge of the cultural and community lives of their students. Teachers must be aware that they are providing and nurturing a plethora of language skills and applications (Faltis et al., 2010).

In California, all basic credential programs require coursework on teaching ELs. However, teaching these students in specialized settings requires particular authorization. According to the California School Boards Association (2011), California Commission on Teacher Credentialing released data in April 2008 stating that “nearly 7,500 teachers are currently teaching EL students without the proper authorization because there simply are not enough teachers to meet the need” (p. 21). A significant number of ELs attend school in the rural, agricultural areas of the state, yet 23 percent of teachers there worked in classrooms with emergency permits or waivers (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). This is very

disconcerting from a fair and equitable EL standpoint, and does not appear to be what NCLB had in mind.

Lack of qualified teachers appears inexcusable and highly unfair to EL students, but this issue will not be resolved overnight. Therefore, we must focus on highly effective ways to improve the situation moving forward. It is not enough that educators develop and implement best practices for EL students; they must also share and model such strategies with others. One primary goal of this research is to compile best practices and ideal acquisition scenarios as understood by those affected most – the LEEL students themselves. Their observations, experiences and recommendations should be shared, studied and successes replicated at all levels. English Language Development (ELD) instructors should serve as advocates, working with all other stakeholders, including administrative staffs, after school programs, mainstream, single-subject and special education teachers.

Educators must understand and be willing to implement and share best practices within their classrooms, schools, districts, and beyond (Newman et al., 2010). This spirit of confidence and collaboration is part of the overarching aim of this research; to disseminate best practices and valid concerns and remedies among other ELs, their teachers, administrators and stakeholders. The beauty here lies in the nature of the research, which comes directly from those most affected and impacted, giving them a voice along with a sense of achievement,

cooperation and self-worth.

Feelings of inadequacy surround many teachers who feel they lack sufficient knowledge and resources to assist ELs. Those willing to aid and encourage educators may develop resources, training programs or professional development programs, but they must understand the willingness, or lack thereof, on the part of these teachers to engage in professional development (Newman, Samimy, & Romstedt, 2010). Leadership is needed to convince educators that their time and effort in relation to professional development may make measurable differences in the testing results and reputations of their schools, especially where ELs are concerned. This, in turn, may make profound differences in the lives of the EL students and their families.

Teacher collaboration across disciplines may be beneficial to all concerned. They should be encouraged to create lesson plans together so they are aware of what their students are facing in other aspects of the curriculum. It is beneficial for the teachers to be aware of the current level of each student and their performance and interaction in other classroom settings, and this may be especially beneficial to each student. ELD instructors may serve as an excellent resource for content area classrooms and students may develop an advanced sense of worth knowing that their teachers converse and evaluate them across the curriculum. This may lead to the belief on their part that their questions, contributions and observations are valued and appreciated (DelliCarpini, 2008).

In California, it is a requirement that teacher education programs provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to learn about instructing ELs. They are taught second language acquisition theory, English language development instructional strategies, and the legality and rationale for policy on teaching English Learners. Literature analysis outlines what those who teach English Learners need to comprehend and be able to do. This has been broken down into nine teacher competency categories of what teachers should know (Faltis et al., 2010), as follows:

- Understand BICS/CALP distinction
- Understand second language acquisition, especially the role of comprehensible input and promoting low affective filter.
- Understand role of students' L1 to promote learning in English.
- Coordinate English-language proficiency standards with content/language arts standards.
- Use small-group work and heterogeneous grouping of English learners and English speakers.
- Direct students' attention to language forms.
- Conduct group study/teacher study of ways to advocate for and

promote high-quality learning for English learners.

- Engage with the community and students' families.
- Use Multiple Assessments (p. 313).

It appears most research and recommendations for teachers of English learners are geared to the elementary grades. Very little has been done to assist middle and high school educators of LEELs or LTELs. This study is an important piece which will attempt to lessen the gap in the knowledge base of best practices for secondary ELs, their teachers and administrators.

Using Theme-Based Lessons and incorporating literature with a common thread are highly recommended strategies for teachers of secondary ELs. These educators should be capable of creating curriculum utilizing themes which incorporate genres, concepts, and specialized vocabulary in a number of ways, implemented in spiral fashion (Faltis et al., 2010). This gives ELs multiple opportunities to apply listening and language skills, with repeated content within the context of the theme, enabling secondary educators opportunities to provide language acquisition support. This may help to develop student identities within disciplines (Faltis et al., 2010).

A key component to the ethical and equitable education of English Learners is leadership. John F. Kennedy, in his 1960 Democratic national

convention address, said it best, “For courage, not complacency, is our need today; leadership, not salesmanship.” Gimmicks and short-term programs will never suffice; English Learners need and deserve passionate, accountable leaders who comprehend the plight of ELs, understand instruction, and who know how to lead teachers, as well as students, in a positive direction. We must have accountable leadership with integrity, persistence and knowledge that will inspire justice and positive results for English Learners.

Abraham Lincoln is considered by many to be the most poorly educated of all Presidents in the history of America. When questioned about his education, Lincoln reportedly had a one-word reply: *deficit*. This aptly describes Late-entry English Learners with a history of intermittent schooling, yet we must not give up on them. Educators must also remain aware that children learn in and out of school. Mark Twain is famous for saying, “I never let schooling interfere with my education” (Kamien, 2011). One must keep in mind that every exchange in which our students participate provides learning in context. This includes everything from automobile repair, to lawn care, to music, and provides ample opportunities for students to learn from people they love and trust (Moll & Greenberg, 1990).

Much of this learning is motivated and determined by specific interests of the student. Knowledge is gained and communication skills sharpened at the bequest of the child unencumbered by classroom protocol or imposing adults (Moll & Greenberg, 1990). Though these lessons will certainly not be included on

any standardized test, they may be considered valuable and worthy beyond compare. Many of these lessons are passed down from generation to generation and contribute to what Luis Moll (1990) has labeled “funds of knowledge”.

Technology is another area of opportunity for English Learners, with or without teachers. Chamberlin-Quinlisk (2012) observed the following: “The people, artifacts, and popular culture of a target language are often highly accessible to language learners and teachers, despite geographical barriers. This accessibility, of course, is possible through mass media and electronic forms of communication” (p. 152). She goes on to posit that educators have an embedded responsibility, stating, “But with this unprecedented accessibility comes serious questions about the media we have at our disposal and about the role of media education in the TESOL profession” (p. 152). Indeed, LEEL teachers have serious decisions to make regarding technology and media in the classroom.

According to Faltis et al. (2010), “There is much work to be done in the area of teacher preparation, particularly at the secondary level, where teacher knowledge about how to best address the needs of English learners is inchoate” (p. 321). In a report prepared specifically for the White House, these findings were revealed:

What is largely absent from the research literature on teacher education

and particularly, the preparation and professional development of teachers to work effectively with English learners, is a knowledge base of principles and practices geared specifically for secondary subject-area classroom teachers working in middle and high schools. Increasingly, secondary teachers have English learners in their classrooms, where access to learning and ultimately school achievement, depends to a large extent on how well students understand, use, and affiliate with language in academic settings. It is clear that adolescent English learners placed in academic subject area classes taught in English need extra support to participate in and benefit from classroom learning experiences in ways that promote membership into academic communities (Márquez-López, 2005). What is not so apparent, however, is a general consensus of what secondary teachers need to know and be able to do to ensure that English learners have full access to academic language and subject-area content in ways that enable them to succeed socially and academically (White House, 2010).

As stated in the beginning of this paper, there is a dire need for research regarding all aspects of English Learners at the secondary level.

Program Models

Students in the realm of K-12 have very little choice in the classes they will take or the manner in which they are set up. This can be a very serious matter for Late-entry English Learners facing time constraints in their attempt to complete their goal of high school graduation. Dual language instruction and bilingual programs may be excellent ways to acquire English quickly, accurately and proficiently. However, some states, including California, are regulated by law to implement English-only programs. This monolingual approach to language learning can add to the challenge of English acquisition and be very stressful to the learner.

According to Judith Lessow-Hurley (2009), program model pertains to “the span of language use and distribution toward a goal for a specific population, across the grades” (p. 13). School districts must come up with a program model they believe will work for their EL students. It appears that these programs vary from school to school, even grade level to grade level in some instances (Lessow-Hurley, 2009). One must keep in mind that EL students, particularly at the high school level, are unique individuals with specific, definitive and varied needs.

The most common program model implemented today is the transitional program, the lone goal of which is to develop students’ English proficiency. U.S.

government policy appears to favor these programs, with the expectation that students should be ready to transition to an English-only classroom after approximately three years (Lessow-Hurley, 2009). There are several problems with this method, the least of which is that it is unrealistic for all students to master academic English within three years. The transitional program makes little or no effort to provide or improve literacy in the students' primary language, resulting in subtractive, as opposed to additive, bilingualism (Lessow-Hurley, 2009). Students in a transitional program tend to be grouped with other similar language learners, leaving little or no interaction with students capable of modeling English literacy for them. Assessments are also a cause for concern as the common face-to-face measuring of English skills may not translate into the academic language requirements necessary to succeed in mainstream classrooms (Lessow-Hurley, 2009).

One main goal of any program model is to transition students to fluent English proficiency. In California, this ideal is designated as R-FEP (Re-designated, Fluent English Proficient). A major concern for these and other ELs is what level of success is achieved when they encounter mainstream classrooms. It is imperative that programs follow up with these students to be certain they are continually improving and succeeding, progressing towards their goal of high school graduation. For Late-entry English Learners, program models may need to be hybrid, or extremely flexible to accommodate specific learners or

classes, as time is of the essence (Lara & Harford, 2010).

Content courses often implement a “sheltered” instructional model, utilizing grade level standards for the content and integrating language support. Student grouping is flexible and may depend on the teacher or the levels, personalities and motivation of the students themselves. Language instruction and vocabulary are specific to the content being taught. Ideally, the teacher will be well-trained in sheltered instruction (Lara & Harford, 2010).

ELD instruction models are basically English courses in which teachers implement ELD standards. Traditionally, only ELs are enrolled in these classes. General literacy and vocabulary skills are the focus, with some content material integration. The instructor should be a certified English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher (Lara & Harford, 2010).

One popular and highly successful method which is not allowed in Massachusetts, California or Arizona is the bilingual program. However, a promising possibility for ELs in California is the two-way immersion program, sometimes known as developmental, or bilingual immersion program. This is where monolingual English-speaking students and native speakers of a different language are immersed together to gradually learn each other’s language. The goals of this pluralistic program include biliteracy and bilingualism for all students involved (Lessow-Hurley, 2009).

Much thought and preparation must be given to the program model at any given school site. Flexibility and choices will be ideal for students as they navigate their way through the hurdles of content classes while simultaneously learning English. One detrimental consequence for Late-entry English Learners is to be rushed through programs or courses; they should be allowed and encouraged to work and achieve at their own pace. Counselors may play an important role in keeping LEELs on track to complete all their course work while developing all the skills and confidence necessary to pass the high school exit exam. Ideally these students would be given extra time to accomplish their goals, and concerned district or school site personnel should follow up with these students on a regular basis.

Current Perceived Best Practices

The central purpose of this research is to determine best practices for Late-entry English Learners, their teachers and administrators as seen through the eyes and minds of these students. Other recommended best practices are included as points of reference and for comparison and contrast. Keeping in mind there is very little literature available pertaining directly to Late-entry English Learners, some recommended practices may be generalized. Analyzing this

research also requires realization that English Learners are unique individually and also as a particular class grouping. Therefore, teaching and learning for ELs should be specifically designed to the learner and their particular class whenever possible (Tharp, 1982; Wong, Ammon, McLaughlin, & Ammon, 1985, as cited by Verdugo & Flores, 2007). There must also be a determined and relentless effort throughout the nation to provide equity in education for English Learners at each individual school site.

According to Dutro, Levy, & Moore (2012), “Implementing a shared vision of high quality language instruction for all adolescent English learners is seen as the most important step educators can take to best serve these youth” (p. 342). Coursework needs to be challenging, yet LEELs also must understand what it is to be successful. With curriculum balance, a combination of challenge and success will enhance the achievements of these students. While some students prefer to work alone, it is generally felt that a group or community approach will be more conducive to learning. Students learn at different paces and some respond better to different strategies, so customizing learning is very important (Verdugo & Flores, 2007, Short & Boyson, 2011).

Students vary in how quickly they acquire English skills. There is no calendar or time frame educators can follow to assure English acquisition and fluency. According to Short & Boyson (2012), “Research has shown us that English language learners need 4–7 years to reach the average academic

performance of native English speakers (Collier, 1987; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2002), so time is critical” (p. 2). NCLB chooses to ignore that it is academic English ELs need to succeed in school, and insist on high-stakes standardized testing after just one year of English instruction (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). There are many factors which affect the rate of English acquisition, including primary language literacy level, age, personality, experience and most importantly – motivation. Pressuring students and their teachers to progress quickly increases the chances of ELs being moved out of the proper level of language instruction before they are truly ready (Gandara, 1999; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997; U.S. General Accounting Office, 2001, as cited in Verdugo & Flores, 2007). This may result in students failing to become proficient at all (Verdugo & Flores, 2007) and possibly increase their chances of dropping out.

Students must find and maintain a purpose to achieve their educational goals. For Late-entry English Learners, acquiring English quickly and efficiently is the primary piece of the puzzle. They should be immersed in environments rich with literacy in both the native and target languages. Highly capable and dedicated staff with access to high quality professional development is instrumental in assisting the students. Ideally, LEELs will have had meaningful and rewarding experiences since childhood developing pre-literacy skills (Garcia, 2011). For those lacking in these skills, the battle will be much tougher. It is

generally believed that ELs must have feedback on their academic English as they progress, yet teachers tend to lack consistent and coherent means of providing it (Gersten & Baker, 2000). We must avoid the English-only pedagogy, rather implementing practices and policies which respect and build upon the students linguistic and cultural diversity, guaranteeing proper and deserved educational opportunities and their civil rights (Garcia, 2011).

ELD and content area teachers must work collaboratively, ideally in professional learning communities (PLCs). Educators should implement cooperative learning with inquiry based activities, and should be able to do the following (DelliCarpini, 2008):

- providing effective EL instruction design in ELD and mainstream classrooms
- tapping into and building upon students background knowledge and creating contexts for significant and authentic interaction
- identifying and implementing comprehensible input on an accessible and continuous basis
- providing curriculum access to all learners by selecting appropriate materials, targeting a variety of interests and ability levels
- planning and implementing differentiated instruction with integration

of various instructional strategies

- designing and integrating multiple methods of assessment

According to Newman, Samimy & Romstedt, “Both content and ESL teachers need to learn how to look for best practices and guide fellow teachers toward them. This awareness of best practices can serve as the foundation of collaboration with their colleagues” (p. 159). That is part of the overarching aim of this research, to collaborate best practices with other teachers and disseminate accordingly; however, the observations and suggestions from this research come directly from the voices of Late-entry English Learners.

There must be a determined effort in working with LEELs to ensure curriculum is relevant to the students’ lives. They should be motivated to apply the skills learned in the classroom in a number of ways and to novel learning situations (McKeough, 1995, as cited in DelliCarpini, 2008). This should provide more dedication on the part of the students, and this motivation may be used not only to assist acquisition, but also in assessing the learners (Perkins, 1991, as cited in DelliCarpini, 2008). Teacher cooperation can influence and encourage this enhanced curriculum allowing LEELs to create meaning actively so that self-esteem, motivation and sense of purpose are evident in continuous, meaningful ways (DelliCarpini, 2008).

Teachers should make a devoted effort to explore and learn about the

communities in which their EL students live, and attempt to understand what everyday life is like for these students (Faltis et al., 2010). This depth of teacher observation and developing practices will add to the discussion of best strategies and common interests applied to various locales and provide intellect towards the development of teacher education and shared knowledge and understanding (Faltis et al., 2010). Educators can also motivate ELs by supporting their success in the classroom and by instilling in them the importance of English acquisition and academic language in the everyday patterns of life; securing gainful employment, social networking, college acceptance, access and understanding of various media and recognizing and developing appropriate life skills. A key strategy is to focus lessons involving how to access knowledge, and consequently to become critical thinkers; not believing everything that one is exposed to. Faltis et al. (2010) encourages EL teachers to aid and abet English learners by any means possible, explained in the following:

Many of the teachers we know and work with teach against the grain, working under the radar of accountability to engage students in problem posing and problem solving beyond what is covered in the status quo. These teachers' stances and practices must also form part of what secondary teachers need to know and be able to do to help English learners stretch their own knowledge to understand as well as challenge what is being taught in school (p. 322).

Another practice which will benefit LEELs is raising their awareness of the typical formats and discourse used on standardized tests. Modeling strategies for answering multiple-choice questions or giving directions for finding main ideas in reading passages could be time well spent, as teaching test-taking skills may make enough of a difference for Late-entry English Learners to mean the difference between graduating from high school or not. Students should be encouraged and implicitly taught not to be intimidated by unfamiliar formats and terms. Educators must also decide on and implement appropriate and equitable test taking accommodations and modifications for LEELs (Coltrane and Bronwyn, 2002).

The most common allowable accommodations for ELs on high-stakes tests, according to Coltrane and Bronwyn (2002), include the following:

- * Timing/scheduling: ELLs are given additional time to take the test or are given additional time for breaks during the test.
- * Setting: The test is administered to ELLs in a small group or in an alternate location, such as an ESL teacher's classroom, to ensure that ELLs are in a familiar, comfortable environment when they take the test.
- * Presentation: The test administrator is allowed to repeat or explain test items and directions for ELLs, or the test may be translated into the students' native language and administered by an ESL/bilingual educator.

* Response: ELLs may respond to test items in their native language, or they may dictate their responses to a test administrator.

Newcomer Programs

A relatively recent phenomenon taking root in the United States is the use of newcomer programs for English Learners (Short and Boyson, 2003). The design of these centers specifically attempt to assist new ELs with varied levels of educational experience. These programs help learners with transitions to their new area, school site and classroom (Lara and Harford, 2010). Unfortunately, Late-entry English Learners may not benefit from extended, or even necessary periods of time in a newcomer program due to time constraints; however, it may serve the purpose perfectly for certain students needing the accommodating guidance and encouragement that might be provided.

Conclusion

Although the challenges posed by LEEL students are significant, it is less clear what strategies and programs educators can use to improve the educational experiences of this population. Most of this ambiguity is due to the lack of research and information, inappropriate educational policies, and inability of educators to understand EL students and their backgrounds (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). The goal of this study is to shed light on what successful Late-entry English Learners do to accomplish their goals, and what they recommend teachers and administrators know and do to assist them in this intimidating challenge. By “walking in the shoes” of these amazingly successful young men and women, this research attempts to fill part of the huge research void regarding Late-entry English Learners, their programs, teachers and administrators.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Many researchers have attempted to diagnose the best practices, pedagogy and conditions of English Language Learners (ELs) pertaining to school success (Honigsfeld & Giouroukakis, 2011), yet few have attempted to determine the difficulties associated with academic success and best practices for learning English quickly for completion of graduation for Late-entry English Learners (LEELs). The graduation rate for the entire population is 70.7 percent, and the graduation rate for EL's is 58.2 percent (CDE, 2013). There is no statistic kept for graduation rates among LEELs.

In Eastern Vista Canyon, much of the labor force centers on close to 100,000 acres of diversified farmland, and research on the local farm worker families points to economic struggle with little chance of educational attainment (Colletti et al., 2006). According to Colletti et al. (2006), "It is apparent that there are issues concerning health care, housing, education, employment, income, and transportation" (p. 51). In the school district serving this population and chosen for this research, 97 percent of the students are socioeconomically

disadvantaged (SED) as determined through free or reduced school lunches (CDE, 2013).

The problem is that students come to Vista Canyon Unified School District (VCUSD) from another country with little or no English skills; some having never experienced a formal school setting. It is the schools' responsibility to educate these students to the best of everyone's ability; and to prepare them to make steady gains on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), pass their mainstream and elective classes, pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), and do as well as possible on the California Standards Test (CST). The challenge of meeting the state standards is especially severe for English Learners, and their high stakes testing scores are included in their school's report card after just one year of English instruction.

When English learners are included in state assessments, their academic performance is measured by tests that were designed for English-speaking students and, as such, may be culturally and linguistically inappropriate for ELs. Test items may contain concepts or ideas that may be unfamiliar to ELs, who come from diverse cultures and who have not lived in the United States for very long (Coltrane, 2002).

If all of the student goals are accomplished, these students will be high school graduates, and perhaps ready for college. If they fail to graduate,

students may continue to try passing the CAHSEE for up to two years after their scheduled graduation date in an attempt to earn their diploma. Some educators feel Late-entry English Learners should be allowed an extra year of schooling, where they become what is known as “*super seniors*”. Some of these students are undocumented, meaning they do not have legal documentation or papers allowing them to legally remain in America.

It takes approximately 5-7 years to learn a second language properly, (Cummins, 2000) but these VCUSD Late-entry ELs are asked to learn English, core subjects, and elective material at an amazing rate. These students have major decisions to make which will directly affect their immediate future. How should they go about studying and learning English quickly? How do they feel teachers and administrators can help them the most? How do they keep their self-esteem at a high, healthy and positive level? At what point do they consider aborting their educational mission to focus on employment skills that will help them earn a living wage, to help themselves and their families? What key attitudes, skills, and behaviors will assist them in achieving their goals? There are many pertinent and difficult questions for this subgroup, who, due to education’s primary focus of high-stakes standardized testing, find themselves unwanted and unwelcome in many school settings.

The goal of this study is to delve into the lived experience of successful Late-entry ELs to determine what skills, behaviors, and attitudes helped them to

be academically successful as measured by achieving a high school diploma. By determining best practices and models of English proficiency attainment for these students, educators may be better informed and prepared to deal with future similar students. Information derived from this study may help VCUSD teachers and administrators develop proper pedagogy and practices to assist other ELs, and perhaps all students, as they strive for academic success on California state tests and beyond. With the recent passing of the California DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, these students may be eligible for financial aid, scholarships, and perhaps eventual citizenship.

The overarching goal is not only to provide a voice for LEELs, but also to tap into the knowledge, perspectives and expertise of these often overlooked and underappreciated students; and to determine from them the best practices for new LEELs and those responsible for their education, primarily teachers and administrators.

Research Questions

The problem lies in the fact that many Late-entry English Learners fail to navigate the American high school system while attempting to learn English

quickly and simultaneously. Furthermore, many of these hard-working, well-intentioned and dedicated students do not get the direction, materials and support they deserve. Many schools look at these students as undesirable and deleterious to their high stakes standardized testing scores; some are personally neglected and their task at hand is difficult enough to determine dropping out, or what Fry (2005) terms “pushout”, as a viable option.

When these students fail to succeed, it hurts them in many ways and is detrimental to their future, to their finances and to their families. They may also become a burden to extended family, the community and the local region. August and Shanahan (2006) state, “Language-minority students who cannot read and write proficiently in English cannot participate fully in American schools, workplaces or society. They face limited job opportunities and earning power” (p. 1).

Failure to educate these students in the best possible manner with adequate resources, *cariño* and pedagogy is an inexcusable travesty, and will continue to be so for many years to come, as immigrants continue to arrive. So little is thought of this aggregation, that there are no statistics available regarding LEELs. Little or no research has been dedicated to this issue, and nobody has thought to ask the one group with the most insight and the greatest at stake – the Late-entry ELs themselves. Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following research questions through the voices of those most impacted:

1. What can we understand about the lived experiences of Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District and what are the challenges and best practices for learners needing to learn English quickly and be academically successful?

2. What do Late-entry English Learners feel are the best practices for teachers in and out of the classroom to assist these students in acquiring the language quickly and in learning the content necessary to achieve passing grades in their courses?

3. What do Late-entry English Learners feel are the best practices of administrators and what policies and procedures can they put in place to positively affect Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District and beyond?

Answers to these questions and feedback on peripheral topics may have a profound effect on current and future Late-entry English Learners, their peers, families and communities. Dialogue and determined best practices may benefit future Late-entry English Learners, their teachers and administrators, and perhaps all students and stakeholders in general locally, regionally and across the nation.

Underpinnings

This study was post-positivist and inductive, primarily open ended, with no final truth. This is a flexible exploration, and I learned within naturalist settings from detailed interviews and a survey. Participants were all over the age of 18, and had the option of opting out at any time. Audio recordings were used, and vocals were transcribed within a 48-hour period. Participants understood the purpose and depth of the study, and agreed they were contributing to a greater good, hopefully assisting future students in similar situations, their instructors and administrators.

Restatement of the Research Purpose

The goal of this study is to ascertain by “walking in the shoes” of these Late-entry English Learners, what it is like to experience a new culture, schooling and language, and what skills, behaviors and attitudes help them to be academically successful. By encouraging the participants to determine best practices and preferred models of English proficiency attainment for English Learners, and best practices for educators and administrators, all stakeholders will be better informed and prepared to deal with future similar students and situations. Ethnographic, interpretivist and qualitative are somewhat interchangeable when referring to practices which seek to interpret the

participants' constructions of reality and in identifying patterns and uniqueness in perspectives and behaviors of the individuals (Glesne, 2000).

As an ethnographer, I feel an obligation to not just interpret the stories of these students, but also to serve as an advocate for them and similar students, and to denounce the biases and injustices that continue to exist in our society, particularly prevalent in our public schools (Lopez, 2011).

Specific Methodology and Why

Although there is a bastion of academic literature on English Learners, very little of the research focuses on students coming to this enormous task as middle or high school students. There are no instances found of cases where students are given a voice regarding this phenomenon. This study is unique in the sense that it focuses on students attempting to learn English quickly as high school immigrant students; participants were encouraged to voice their opinions, concerns, experiences and suggestions. There appear to be a limited number of students attempting this remarkable feat, starting as Late-entry EL students in the eighth-through-twelfth grade. Thus, it was determined adequate that 12 subjects participate in the interview process.

The study was exploratory in nature, and the experience of one participant may appear vastly different from others with the same goal. The individual

experiences of the subjects may be at least partly the product of individual interpretation. I have chosen a phenomenological approach because it provides opportunity for a critical lens and a voice by which the subjects may share their lived experiences. Polkinghorne (1989), as cited in Creswell (1998), states, “A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon. Phenomenologists explore the structures of consciousness in human experiences” (p.51).

A phenomenological study attempts to understand perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular phenomenon or situation, dependent almost exclusively on lengthy interviews of a relatively small and carefully selected sample of participants (Leedy, & Ormrod, 2010). This is appropriate as a relatively small sample was studied; Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District. I am attempting to discern the intricacies of the lived experiences of this highly-challenged group of students, residing in one of the lowest socioeconomic regions in the nation. Within this sample, I looked currently and ex post facto at challenges and strategies students implemented, and whether this was enough to help them pass the high school exit exam and graduate, earning a high school diploma.

Phenomenology encompasses multiple perspectives, and the basic premise is the perceiver determines meaning, which therefore relies on human perception, and not external factors; in other words, human consciousness

determines reality (Madison, 2012). The study attempted to understand the students' perceptions, perspectives and motivational factors, and also attempted to identify common themes and generalize the experience of Late-entry English Learners. Delpit (1998) states, "We must keep the perspective that people are experts on their own lives...we must become ethnographers in the true sense. Teachers are in an ideal position to play this role" (p. 297).

The overarching goal was that participants be allowed and encouraged to voice their reality, perspectives, opinions, recommendations and more. It is believed that best practices were identified for both the Late-entry English Learner at any high school stage, and those educators and administrators developing assignments, curriculum, program models, protocol and policy for them. This information will be shared with anyone striving to learn and understand more about English Learners, particularly from the aspect of Late-entry immigrant students. Ideally, participant perceptions and suggestions will be disseminated through related literature, the study itself, word of mouth, future audio clips or text of those who wish to share their similar stories, replicated studies, and presentations across the area, state, nation and beyond by the author, and perhaps interested, involved students.

Qualitative research is ideal as this study seeks to understand the relationships, obstacles, and processes involved in learning English at a rapid pace with a specific goal in mind. The phenomenological approach included

interviews, notes, open coding, and qualitative textual analysis. Also applied was what Maxwell (2005) credits Becker (1970) with calling, “quasi-statistics”, referring to the use of simple numerical results that were readily derived from existing data (p.113). This included students’ self-reporting of standardized test scores and GPA’s.

Design Specifics and Instrumentation

The goal of this study was to provide a voice for former LEELs, and to determine the essence of the Late-entry English Learners’ experience. I intended to capture participants’ emotions, thoughts, reasoning, observations - their whole educational experience and what it has meant to them. This proved to be an emotional encounter, yet definitely worth exploring, providing an opportunity for participants to create their own unique pathway of agency. The survey and the demographic/interview questions were adapted (Lopez, 2011), developed and refined through the literature review and 20 years experience as a teacher of English Learners.

Participants in the study consisted of adults (18 years of age or older) who were Late-entry English Learners, having arrived in the 8th grade or later in the Vista Canyon Unified School District (pseudonym) of California. These students came into the system for the first time in the eighth-through-twelfth grade from

another country with little or no English skills. Particular attention was given to LEELs who completed all the requirements for graduation, but I also interviewed one Late-entry student who must still pass the English exit exam to graduate. This school district was chosen for its close proximity to the Mexican border, its continuous influx of migrant (13 percent) and immigrant students, the low socioeconomic nature of the area (94 percent free and reduced lunch) and the unique 99% Latino student population (District Demographic Summary, 2011).

I have access to the population because I have taught in the school district for over 20 years, and this is my eleventh year at one of the high schools, Desert Palms High School, having been present since its inception. The purposeful sample size was 12 participants, as attempting to graduate from high school within three to four years of entering a new country is a daunting and difficult task which not many attempt. I intended to incorporate recent graduates from Vista Sands High School, yet was unable to locate willing participants graduating from that site within the past ten years. Participants who attended Vista Sands did so prior to the opening of Desert Palms High School in 2003. The schools are about five miles apart, and serve very similar student bodies. It is acceptable for the participants to be located at a single site (in this case, two), as long as they have experienced the phenomenon, and are capable of articulating their conscious experiences (Cresswell, 1998, p. 111).

Initial participants for this study were recruited by word-of-mouth. Following initial recruitment, the snowball sampling technique was used with online social network Facebook. The snowballing technique was particularly useful given that many of the prospective participants know and associate with one another. The participants were eighteen years of age or older, and therefore did not require special permission. However, each signed an informed consent (see *appendix A*) form and completed the demographic/interview survey (see *appendix B*). All of the participants were Spanish speakers, primarily Mexican, with one male from El Salvador and one female from Chile.

Statistics show that more than 99 percent of English Learners in the district speak Spanish as their primary language (District Demographic Summary, 2011). They all had five or less years to learn academic English to graduate from high school. There were four male and eight female participants, and the primary source of data collection was face-to-face interviews. Some participants chose to write out their responses due to comfort or convenience.

Established questions (see *appendices B and C*) were used as a guide in a semi-structured interview approach (Glesne, 2011). Interviews took place at agreed upon locations where participants felt they would be the most comfortable.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected through a demographic/interview and survey process with audio recorded interviews with students confidentially; most interviews lasted from forty to fifty-five minutes. Some participants were not comfortable with being interviewed or due to logistics, chose to write out their responses, and e-mail them. Questions were open-ended, and students were encouraged to elaborate on certain points beneficial to future Late-entry English Learners and the educators and administrators responsible for their education. Questions were focused on determining what strategies, mind sets, materials and motivation the students used to learn English rapidly, and what sorts of support, guidance, or policies did or would help them succeed. Each audio recorded interview was soon thereafter transcribed verbatim to assure accuracy. Field notes were taken during recording and participants were well aware of the purpose of the research.

Data Analysis

Transcribed audio of the interviews were coded through ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software, looking for commonalities and patterns in the responses. Notes were also taken during the taping, with immediate response to body language, noticeable reactions of the participants, and key observations in general. Audio was listened to within a 48-hour window, and again at a later date,

where key observations, concepts, and ideas were noted. Constant comparison and contrast of responses were also noted, looking for obvious and subtle differences and similarities. This provided an analytical step in identifying patterns within themes (Glesne, 2011).

Validity

Transcription of interview data, word-for-word, was one of the best assurances for maintaining validity in this study. The ultimate validity of the study should be sound, as participants understood they are assisting other EL students, and appreciated the opportunity to tell teachers and administrators how *they* can improve. There was nothing for them to gain by being dishonest. Researcher positionality may have been a slight factor, as I served as an ELD teacher for one semester for the two “super senior” participants. One participant incorporated or emphasized my contribution towards her English acquisition in her remarks. This was not included in the data interpretation, and is believed to be a non-factor in the overall goal or findings of the research.

Internal generalizability should be extremely efficient, which is, according to Maxwell, “a key issue for qualitative case studies” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 115). The setting and the types of students who attend the site are extremely stable and consistent. This may, according to Maxwell, have what Judith Singer calls “face

generalizability” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 115), where there is no obvious reason not to believe the results will apply more generally. Therefore, the best practices arrived at by the students may very well be applied to schools and students in a vast array of settings across the country; however, the findings will be most useful and readily applicable at the local level.

Role of the Researcher

The World and I

I am extremely excited to share this research from a particular group of my heroes – these were Late-entry high school English Learners, and I am amazed by their work ethic, determination, intelligence, and *ganas*. I am anxious to present them to the world, not just academia; I feel privileged to have this opportunity to give these students a voice. They now have a chance to share their concerns, revelations, trials, tribulations, and successes. They were also encouraged to share their best practices with others, and voice their opinions and suggestions to and about school teachers and administrators.

Their school experience is vastly different from mine. I grew up in the 1970’s in Babbitt, nestled in a lily-white area of northern Minnesota, known as the Iron Range. At that time, all the iron mines were in full swing, unemployment was a non-issue, and the biggest battles fought were on the high school hockey rinks.

As a varsity high school hockey player my freshmen year, I was accepted and catered to by nearly everyone. We received an exceptional education, as Minnesota has nearly always been at the forefront of public education in America. I was a member of the National Honor Society, student council president, and a member of our (one and only) state high school championship baseball team. I was accepted to West Point and the Air Force Academy, and though I chose the latter, I did not last long, heading to the University of Wisconsin, Superior, after basic training. At UWS, I played baseball and hockey, and learned to enjoy college life (perhaps a bit too much...).

It was in Superior that I was first introduced to people of color. Our dorm mates were Nigerian, and I was so intrigued with their accents. In particular, I remember a young man named Oudi, who would pass in the hall with a big, friendly grin, saying, "Hi, fine please." The thought of that still makes me smile today.

I also spent quite a bit of time with several black students from Brooklyn. They were basketball players, but they loved watching hockey; so much so, that they would walk a mile in the freezing cold just to see us *practice*. I brought them home with me to Babbitt one weekend, about a two hour drive straight north, nearly to the Canadian border. Little did I realize they would scare my 80-year-old grandmother Hildegard half to death. I still remember T (Tony), the first male

I ever knew with an ear ring, after appreciating the visit, telling me, “I’d love to take you to *my* home, Boffs, ...but...well..., they’d kill ya, man.”

I never understood what that really meant until much, much later. I truly appreciated those friends as brothers, and cherished the times we would just hang out or play. I still get a rush every time I hear certain *Earth, Wind, and Fire* tunes, which bring me straight back to those dorms.

Again in Superior, many doors were opened for me as a hockey player, and I secured a summer job as a temporary insurance adjustor, which paid very well. In fact, it paid so well and I enjoyed traveling around following storms so much, that I decided not to go back to school in the fall of ‘78. I was laid off shortly afterwards, so traveled out West to see the sights – I have never been the same since! My dad and I always enjoyed watching old western movies together, and this excursion brought all that beautiful scenery and mystery to life.

I fell in love with the West - Flagstaff, Arizona, in particular; I put my hockey skills to use at Northern Arizona University, and fit right in. In fact, I fit in a bit too well, and... suffice it to say, the party was always at my house or *wherever* I was. I continued to work as an adjustor in the summers, traveling all around the country, and getting the exceptional education you can only get with those types of experiences. I was very good at my job, and people of all shapes, sizes and color across the West, Southwest and Midwest trusted me unconditionally. I would work very hard climbing on roofs and looking at wind and hail losses all

day, then sit down in the temporary offices at night to go over the dollar amounts, make my phone calls, and settle the claims. My supervisor happened along one evening in Texas, and paused behind my desk, asking, “What the hell is *that?*”

I answered, “It’s a hail claim from one of our insureds’ residence.”

He countered, “I *know* that, but it’s already signed, and you don’t have a total!”

“I know,” I said, “I get them to sign while I’m out there (at their home), and I call them at night with the final figures – then they don’t have to bother meeting again for a signature,” as I flipped through my large stack of losses, all complete with signature, but no final dollar amount.

He was flabbergasted. He simply could not believe people trusted me enough to sign a monetary agreement without knowing the amount. I just shrugged, “They trust me.” I was a top producer in every office in which I worked. It never even occurred to me that people *wouldn’t* trust me. In my very first communications class at UWS, the professor challenged the group to choose one person in the class, walk up and put your hand over their head, and describe them in one word. A pretty young girl named Cindy, from Wisconsin, who later became a local radio DJ, immediately accepted the challenge, walked straight over to me, placed her hand on my head, and said, “Natural.”

I still believe this to be one of the nicest, sweetest compliments I have ever received. I feel I still exude qualities of fairness, honesty, and nature, and I

feel they assist me in my research. My own students tend to be very open and honest with me, and I still keep in touch with many who are “out in the real world”. I’ve always appreciated and enjoyed other cultures, and have kept an open mind. I think my experiences have led me to this point, and after 20 years of working with English learners, I feel very confident and excited about my research.

Culture and Approach

I have thought quite a bit about cultural heritage, and how one can be certain about what has transpired in a family’s cultural sense. The majority of my family roots are fairly well documented, with my paternal grandmother arriving from Scotland and paternal grandfather from Italy in 1912. My maternal grandfather is from Ireland, but the mystery lies in my maternal grandmother, Hildegard Crooks Howard McManus. Records show her family came at the turn of the 20th century from a small town in Finland, yet Hilde swore that we are Swedish. She lived to be 94, but we were never able to get an accurate description or explanation of this assessment – I’m still unclear about that quarter of my bloodlines.

My background has definitely influenced how I view the world, and how others view me. I was the spoiled baby of a loving family with four children, and although we were not well off by any stretch of the imagination, I was very happy.

We managed to get by on my father's teaching salary, though he did have to work in the mines several summers to make ends meet. I knew we were not rich, but I never really felt I was lacking anything. I played sports year round, and never had to struggle to pay for equipment or dues, mainly because the community took care of nearly all the fees back then.

My mom deeply affected how I view and interact with the world. I was never told any bad news for any reason – I honestly went through life believing that everyone should be happy, should love each other, and should do their best to get along and help others. I even started an impromptu "*Happy Club*" in Flagstaff, which still resonates today. I encourage, model, and discuss happiness with my students, and I will take this positive approach to my research. Oddly enough, I believe the students feel somewhat the same in an altruistic sense. The students at Desert Palms do not dwell on poverty or hardship – they celebrate life. They appear happy, healthy, and full of zeal for life, and I can totally relate to, and appreciate that.

Twenty years of teaching in Eastern Vista Canyon has changed my outlook on race, poverty, education, politics, the world, and, well, just about everything. I am the minority there, but it suits me. I appreciate the culture, and feel I am a part of it.

One thing my students and I have in common is the challenge of language. They all know I struggle to improve my Spanish, and they truly enjoy

correcting or assisting me. I admire and praise them for learning English so quickly and efficiently. One reason I insist on approaching research from this angle is precisely because I have such difficulty learning another language. I had the same arduousness attempting to speak German in high school. I think there is much to be said for language demand in relation to achievement. Most bilingual speakers in the Southwest are Spanish speakers, faced with needing to learn English to succeed in social, academic, and therefore monetary sense. The need and opportunity to tap into, access, and master the second language promises great benefit. That is not true for the majority of Americans, yet they are chastised for being monolingual.

In reality, there was very little need, incentive, or reward for me to learn German – and even if I had become fluent, there were amazingly few German speakers to converse with. The majority of bilingual speakers I meet in the Southwest do not know or study any other languages, yet some claim superiority over monolinguals, even insinuating laziness or stupidity; when in reality, there was never any need or immediacy to learn another language. It's understandable why Europeans learn each other's languages – cultural and linguistic proximity encourages this; again, not true in America. Canada is a bilingual country, but most western Canadians I know despise French, and have no interest in learning it whatsoever.

The sad thing to me is when parents are so insistent that their children learn English, they neglect to teach them their first language. This hit home with many of my university students, saddened by the fact that they don't speak Spanish, yet one or both of their parents did and still do. This has been going on since before Meyer v. Nebraska, 1914. My father spoke absolutely no Italian, yet it was his father's first language – this is the true travesty of monolingual Americans.

Part of my research will include assuring students they can succeed in English, but insisting they never lose their first language, or in the case of my P'urepecha students, first and second languages. The same appreciation for all languages and encouragement of language plurality will be instilled in all my students.

Self in Relation to Others

The participants of the study are all Latino, and the student population in Vista Canyon Unified School District is 97 percent Latino (CDE, 2013). Over 94 percent of the students are socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED), as determined by free or reduced-cost lunches (District Demographic Summary, 2011). The majority of the participants are from Mexico, with one male from El Salvador, and one female from Chile.

No doubt many of the participants hail from families with incomes well below the poverty line, though this was not a direct question. Historically, the surrounding population in the area of this research is exploited and subjugated. One group of students in particular has been taken advantage of on both sides of the Mexican border. They are an indigenous group from Michoacan known as the P'urepecha. They are fighting battles in their native area to protect their lands from loggers and their people from abuses. The P'urepecha speak their own language, yet nearly all label themselves as Spanish-speakers on the Home Language Surveys of our district.

Those who have immigrated to the United States, primarily in Florida and California, have been oppressed and disadvantaged members of the minimum wage labor force, and some have trouble even attaining that. They appear humble, hard-working, intelligent, and kind. I feel obligated to amplify their voice, and do whatever is in my power to respect and advance their goals and culture. Unfortunately, none of the participants in this study are of P'urepecha descent, but there are current Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District who are, and I hope they will benefit from this research.

I believe I have earned the trust and camaraderie of the students and their families in this area, and feel they know I will treat them fairly and keep their best interests at heart. My research should serve to, not only give them a voice, but hopefully improve their educational and financial lot in life. I aim to make a

profound difference in how English Learners, particularly those who enter our system as adolescents, are treated, encouraged, and assisted, not just locally, but on a much larger scale. There has been much talk recently about Hispanics or Latinos being the fastest growing voting block in the nation. This is how the Irish became a legitimate force in America, and I trust political power is in reach for the Latino segment of our population, not only through voting, but also by individual representation. I returned from the polls last November having voted for Raul Ruiz, the eventual winner over Mary Bono-Mack for a congressional seat. This is not an anomaly; this is a matter of legitimately choosing the proper candidate for the job, with race or ethnicity a nonfactor. Our education system is capable of producing leaders of color at a very high rate, and I envision many more social, historical, and political leaders of color in the near future, and rightfully so.

From Self to System

I don't believe the contextual nature of race, class, or gender will have a negative effect on my proposed study. These will be overcome with kindness, humanity, and honesty. I legitimately want to give voice to a group who genuinely deserves to be heard, and I believe once people listen to what these participants have to say, they will be amazed, inspired, and impressed – just as I continue to be, and have been for the past twenty years. My literature review reveals very

little about the communities and students under inquiry. They have been an invisible, under represented, and under appreciated portion of our population. Systemic and organizational barriers and structures in the vicinity of my research have shaped the communities' and peoples' experiences locally and globally in a negative way. These populations have been exploited, ignored, and abused – from lack of transportation and infrastructure to arsenic in their drinking water, and according to an LA Times article “noxious odors that sickened children at a nearby school... children complained of piercing headaches, upset stomachs and raw throats” (Willon, 2011). The article goes on to describe, “Within sight of three schools in the immigrant haven... on reservation land... is a plateau of human excrement that was 40 feet high at its peak” (Willon, 2011). This research is long overdue, and the knowledge we stand to gain from an epistemological standpoint may be invaluable. The beauty of this is the erudition and conscientiousness will be provided directly from the participants in their own way and in their own words.

Overview

This is a unique and powerful study which is long overdue. Little research has been reported regarding anything to do with Late-entry English Learners. This study is purposeful and exclusive, not only for giving voice to the students

under pressure to learn English quickly to earn a diploma, but also for others to understand their lived experience. This study attempts to fill a gap in the research of English Learners. There is much to read about and study concerning elementary English Learners, Long Term English Learners (LTELs), and even Newcomer Programs, but there appears to be nothing dedicated to Late-entry English Learners, particularly eliciting their own voices.

This is important to me because I feel these students have every right to a complete and satisfying educational experience, whether they are able to learn quickly enough to pass the high school exit exam and graduate or not. I believe in humanistic critical pedagogy, which may prepare these students for further education or employment, whether or not they have citizenship documentation.

Theory and/or reality work against these students in that it reportedly takes 5-7 years to adequately acquire an additional language (Cummins, 2000). Students without language skills are often marginalized and set up for either failure or perpetual low wage labor if we do not assist them. Addressing this problem will make a huge difference for the families involved, and the families that are to follow. It may also touch the lives and open the eyes of other stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and community members.

This research shows what challenges must be overcome, and what strategies may be implemented by all stakeholders to assist Late-entry English Learners to find their own mode of success and achievement. They may go on to

further their education, or perhaps find a satisfying role in the workforce to meet their skills and needs.

Results of this study may have far-reaching implications for Late-entry English Learners and the educators and administrators of facilities that serve them. Understanding, compassion and guidance in this area may allow and encourage LEELs to not only have a better chance to graduate from high school, but also to achieve in college and create a better living situation for themselves and their families. These intelligent, hard-working students will be productive citizens and adept communicators, unafraid of hard work, understanding of the value of language, communication, and collaboration. These young people will make excellent citizens, contributing to the greater good of society and the continued improvement of education and communication in our country, and wherever they choose to travel or reside.

I sincerely hope this research will impact policy, understanding, and attitudes about these LEELs on a local, state-wide, and national level – perhaps beyond. I believe these students are underserved and unappreciated – they are often skipped over as a viable learning and working entity, often given the lowest levels of teachers, materials, and expectations. Better treatment and higher expectations may lead to higher graduation rates and more academic success, directly affecting the lives of these students and their families, and improving our communities and society as a whole.

CHAPTER FOUR

VOICES TELL THE STORY

Introduction

The overarching goal of this research is to provide a voice for Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District. Chapter Four is divided into two main parts; the first section will focus on describing the participants of the study, attempting to use their own words in relating their experiences, observations and opinions, giving them voice whenever possible. Part two of this chapter will reflect on the themes and patterns resultant of the surveys and interviews with the participants, relating key issues of the lived experiences, and attempting to provide answers to the research questions, which once again, are as follows:

1. What can we understand about the lived experience of Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District and what are the challenges and best practices for learners needing to learn English quickly and to be academically successful?
2. What do Late-entry English Learners feel are the best practices for teachers in and out of the classroom to assist these students in acquiring the language quickly and in learning the content necessary to achieve passing grades in their courses?

3. What do Late-entry English Learners feel are the best practices of administrators and what policies and procedures can they put in place to positively affect Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District and beyond?

All participants and places were provided with pseudonyms, and again, attempts were made to use the exact voices of participants whenever possible.

Participants will be introduced on a chronological basis, starting with the oldest. There were eight women and four men interviewed for this study, with all but two coming from Mexico. One female hails from Chile and one male participant comes from El Salvador. All participants attended high school in the Vista Canyon Unified School District for some time, and five of them work in the district now; two of the women are teaching at Desert Palms High School, and a male and a female are teaching at nearby Torrez Canyon Middle School. A male participant also works at Torrez Canyon with the AmeriCorps program, and attends college. The remainder are also college students, except for two “super seniors” (second year seniors) currently attempting to earn their diploma at Desert Palms High School. All seven participants under the age of twenty-five attended Desert Palms High School, while those over the age of twenty-five attended Vista Sands High School. Please allow me to introduce them...

Part One: Participants

Mayra Barragan

“I am the youngest in my family. But when my parents and I got to United States, I got the responsibility of manager of the finances because my parents did not understand English” (M. Barragan, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Mayra Barragan is from Coquimbo, Chile. She originally moved to Riverside, California, in 1983, and set about fulfilling her parents' desire of graduating from high school and earning her bachelor's degree. Mayra's mother was a homemaker who dabbled in business and her father was a pastor; together they instilled in their five children the importance of education. Mayra attended private school in Chile and always knew that she would go to college, not only at her parent's insistence, but also for her own desire. Although she is the youngest in her family, Mayra was deemed responsible for the family finances when they arrived in America because her parents didn't understand any English. She continued with private school upon her arrival in the U.S. at a Seventh-day Adventist high school, where she felt completely at home and ready to learn. Teachers were very important to Mayra, because she said, “They always treated me like I was going to go to college” (M. Barragan, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Following her graduation from Loma Linda University in 1996, Mayra arrived in the Coachella Valley to begin her teaching career at Vista Sands High School. She will complete her master's degree in December, 2014, and currently serves as a math teacher at Desert Palms High School. Mayra has dreamed of being a math teacher since she was six years old, yet she is also interested in social studies, and continues to enjoy learning.

Mayra wishes her teachers would have taught her more pronunciation skills in English, and laments that she was given very little cultural information upon her arrival to the states. She feels that teachers must be patient and quality one-on-one time with them is very important for English Learners. Mayra would have liked her counselors to have explained how credits work in both high school and college, and wanted more information on how to be ready for college right from the beginning. If she were to face the cultural and language transition all over again, Mayra believes she would take more ELD classes and speak more English right from the start, preferably with non-Spanish speakers.

While recommending television as a strategy for acquiring English quickly, Mayra related her experience as improving gradually through the medium at first. However, she felt that her English really improved and she was able to claim a better handle on American English *and* popular culture a few years later, while watching children's shows with her young daughter. Mayra laughed as she remembered sharing experiences with television cartoons and shows like

Barney, The Wiggles and *Teletubbies*. She also recommends children's books as being helpful for English Learners, particularly those from Dr. Seuss.

As a pastor's daughter, Mayra was naturally drawn to the Christian music of Amy Grant. She would print out the lyrics of the songs and sing along repeatedly, which she felt not only helped with pronunciation, but also to build vocabulary. When asked about any humorous misunderstandings while learning English, Mayra laughed and said, "Yes, I don't know why, but I still have trouble confusing 'soup' and 'soap' – I know the difference, and I understand completely, but for some reason I still mispronounce them occasionally to this day" (M. Barragan, personal communication, March 6, 2014).

Sahara Onder

"I remember being a very active student, very responsible; my friends were always involved in education – but I didn't give up because of the language... I was a very hard worker – what worked for me, I had a dictionary - every single homework I was translating word by word until I finished. I translated everything – oh yes, but (I was) very determined, though, since I remember" (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

Sahara is a strict and dedicated middle school teacher from Sinaloa, Mexico, in her mid-30's. Sahara hails from a very hard-working family, and her parents insisted she complete her education and begin a career. She is about to complete her master's degree, an amazing accomplishment considering her

counselor in high school gave her little or no chance of succeeding in high school. Sahara remembers it this way:

My counselor – she didn't believe in me. Before graduating, one of my friends was getting a scholarship – and I was wondering what a scholarship was, because I had no idea... I went to her office and I asked her about scholarships. I told her I needed help, what do I need to do to get a scholarship, because I want to go to college. She looked at me, and she goes, 'you're not going to go to college'... I just looked at her, and I'm like, thank you for your help, and I walked out (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

For this self-proclaimed fighter, that was by no means the end of the story. Arriving her sophomore year at Vista Sands High School with no English skills whatsoever, the challenge for Sahara was immense. She was extremely frightened and shaking the first week of school because of the language, and had no idea what the teacher was talking about, or what was going on in class. When asked about the first day at school, Sahara responded with a giggle, "Oh, goodness – I was looking everywhere, even for the emergency exits – in case I can make it out, just run away" (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

She relied on her friends for many translations and positive motivation. Sahara also recalls three particular teachers who were instrumental in helping

her through her educational challenges. One gave her positive encouragement on a continual basis. An English teacher continually pushed her to do her work better, always challenging her and never giving her a chance to slack off.

Sahara's third memorable teacher was very protective of her, insisting that she speak English, even though he was fluent in Spanish.

Yet it was her hard work that saw her through, translating homework, word by word with the help of a dictionary, and never being afraid to ask questions. She describes it by saying, "I was in a new country, and I came here; well, we came here to succeed, and I'm like, we're going to do it! I'm not giving up, no matter what. Language was not a barrier" (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

Sahara always remembers being a very determined and dedicated student, taking the time to do the job right the first time, something her father instilled in her from an early age. She remembers washing his car when she was young, and if he felt it was not clean enough, he would tell her to do it again – *repeatedly*, until she did the job right. This explains the high expectations Sahara admittedly has for her own middle school students.

Sahara felt out of place in high school, remembering the following:

You know, sometimes I felt like the outsider, because of the language – I could feel it because of my accent; so in the class, when I was reading, everyone looked at me, even... I was the only one who didn't read in

English. Well, they were all English students and I was the only English *learner* (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

Learning English was not the only struggle, Sahara also faced many hard times financially. At one point, Sahara had a dream to be a high school cheerleader and was hopeful, but her dream was short-lived when her mother found out how much it cost, responding with a simple 'no'. There were many things which Sahara worked hard for and earned by baking and selling tasty little *empanadas*, allowing her to pay for her graduation photos, community college courses and more. When questioned about her biggest concern in high school, she did not hesitate, "Not having enough money to pay for college – yes, that was my biggest concern in high school. Yes, not the language, the language didn't stop me" (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

Thank goodness Sahara did not allow her counselor to determine her fate, "Definitely, the counselor is no one to make a decision for me, I'm the one who makes the decision, not her" (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014). Uncertain of what she should do after high school, Sahara saved up her money and started taking a variety of classes, as she describes, "I took seven of them altogether, such as cosmetology, banking, business, among others" (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014), seeking a specific interest or two that might guide her. She was always drawn to a career as a business person or a lawyer, and considered combining the two interests. She has no

doubt that had she stayed in Mexico, these subjects would be the focus of her studies there. Her father ran businesses in Sinaloa, including a furniture shop and a shoe store. Sahara remembers always helping out as a secretary and with the accounting; this background and her quest as a life-long learner has contributed to what I consider to be a successful, well-rounded, dedicated and talented educator.

Ariana Figueroa

“I was a student who cared for her education. I always prioritized school as first. I was disciplined when it came to school work. I tried my best to complete all assignments and to obtain good grades. I studied for tests and I spent double the amount of time reviewing or studying, because not only did I have to learn the content, but I had to translate all the content first” (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Arianna Figueroa, approximately 30 years old, is a high school Spanish teacher serving in the district in which she attended high school. Her mother is from Sinaloa; her father is from Jalisco, and Arianna was born in Mexicali, Mexico. Like many families in the area, her mother is a housewife and her father works in the fields as a farm laborer, with sixth and third grade educations, respectively. Three of her five siblings graduated from high school in Mexico, and Arianna arrived here as an eighth grader.

Unlike the majority of participants, Arianna gives much credit to her high school counselors at Vista Sands for not just helping to make her aware of college as an option, but also encouraging her to set and achieve this goal. When asked what Late-entry English Learners need to be successful, Arianna stressed the need for a mentor in each student's life; someone who will acknowledge them, check up on them and constantly remind them that they can be successful in an educational setting. She believes it was important that her counselor assured her that she didn't have to work in the fields like her parents, and that she was capable of so much more. She truly felt empowered and inspired by her counselors in high school and credits them for making a wonderful difference in her life.

However, there was still very much work to do. When asked about high school, Arianna had this to say:

For me, survival was the stage I was in. While other students worried about what to wear, where to go after school, who to hang out with during lunch, or which teacher to make miserable, I worried about knowing how I would survive class-by-class without understanding or learning the content. I worried about making sure my work was satisfactory so I could get points for it. I worried about not bringing any attention to myself, because then teachers could call on me, and then my classmates would laugh at me if I didn't know how to respond. I worried that the test would

ask a question I had not reviewed or was worded differently, because then I wouldn't be able to know the answer (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

One must admit, that is an awful lot of worry and stress. As with most participants, the struggle was not confined to the classroom; finances were always an issue, as Arianna remembers:

My dad was the only one that worked; he worked in the fields, we only had what we needed - no luxuries at all; no new clothes except once at the beginning of the year, so those clothes better last a whole year! We also lived in a trailer our first year in the U.S. Our trailer didn't even have a shower/toilet facility. We had to use the showers and toilets in the community restrooms. My parents provided the best they could with what they had. We had lots of love, and that truly helped (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

One experience went a long ways towards preparing Arianna for college. She joined the *Harvey Mudd Upward Bound Program*, which helped her to be able to meet all the A-G requirements for college, otherwise she feels she wouldn't have been able to experience college life. The summer before her junior year in high school, Arianna attended UCLA, stayed in the dorms, took college classes, completed homework and experienced "the real thing" (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014). Living this experience and

completing this program not only helped her to prepare for college, it also helped her parents to be informed and learn about her options as a student. Arianna is grateful and proud of the support and guidance her parents provided.

Arianna believes that memorizing grammar rules was instrumental in her English language development and the fact that she loved her dictionary helped quite a bit. She would have liked to have had more reading comprehension exercises and wishes her teachers had provided more visuals, as well as more listening and speaking exercises to perfect her pronunciation; though her English appears flawless.

If she were to do it all over again, Arianna insists that she would be more involved in clubs or organizations. She laments the fact that she did not build relationships as well as she needed to because of language limitations. Arianna highly recommends a newcomer program for today's LEELs, and remarks that an orientation would be beneficial to the students *and* their parents. She knows that you must be strong-willed and confident to acquire English quickly. Although this wasn't always the case with her; she learned to ignore the students who were cruel to her, speaking only in English to her when they knew she did not understand, and calling her "*Chaka*", a derogatory term for someone with dark skin who cannot speak or understand English. Arianna states that any teacher or counselor showing patience and caring will be beneficial to LEELs.

Indeed, Arianna has come a long way from those stressful days when she first arrived, to her current pursuit of becoming a university professor. When queried, if you were still in your native country, what do you think you would be doing? Arianna became thoughtful, responding, “This is actually a tough question; looking back at the people I knew in my childhood and knowing that most of the kids in my hometown are married, poor, thieves, drug addicts, and unemployed, it is hard to think of what I would be doing” (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Just as America has been good for Arianna, I believe Arianna has also been good for America. A dedicated teacher, taxpayer, and continually assisting young people in the area, she has made a positive difference in the lives of students, family, friends and the community. When asked if there was any humor involved in her language learning, Arianna laughed as she reflected back, and shared:

One time, instead of saying I was *congested*, I said *constipated*, and I said it with a confident smile; the woman at the store found it quite odd that I would be so casual about such a personal issue. Other times, I made a fool out of myself because I would nod when I had to respond to a question I didn't understand.

Fortunately, Arianna can laugh about that now (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Lionel Bustamonte

“I was very responsible, very persistent and dedicated, and very serious about my education. I made quite a few friends and I always tended to gravitate towards other kids who were just like me, like the straight ‘A’ students, you know, the responsible students, the ones that don’t get in trouble” (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Lionel is a 31-year-old middle school teacher who claims dedication to his profession and from my observation, appears to take every facet of it very seriously, and is very good at it. His first year in school in the U.S., 1994-95 as an eighth grader, was memorable for all the wrong reasons. He diplomatically states, “Our teacher wasn’t equipped to teach us” (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014), which is still an issue in the education of Late-entry English Learners today. The only learning of English for Lionel that year took place outside of school with his friends. As a result, he arrived at Vista Sands High School his freshman year very far behind. Teachers there focused primarily on cognates and vocabulary, but built quickly towards reading. It was there that he met a teacher who would change his life. Lionel describes Ms. Estrella Stahl, saying simply, “She was the best teacher ever” (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Ms. Stahl chose to teach ELD to the whole class through novels. Lionel remembers, “We had novel studies with books that were about immigrants. So we were culturally and personally connected to the characters in the stories” (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Unfortunately, Lionel did not have the same luck with counselors, and he wishes they would have taught him more about college, scholarships and financial aid. For no apparent reason, they were changed nearly every year. His first counselor was okay; the second counselor was very helpful, but the third counselor was not conducive to Lionel’s goals. He described the experience:

There was one (counselor) that I lost a lot of respect for, because my first year, when I went to see him for my schedule, just because I was an ELD student and didn’t speak English, he had placed me in a lot of the remedial classes - like Math A, instead of Algebra; instead of Biology – Life Science; and when I told (asked) him, why am I being placed in these classes when I want to go to college, he pretty much told me, you don’t speak English - you’re not going to college (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Lionel expressed his displeasure and credits his teacher with giving him the courage to fight back, “I wish I could be making this up, but no, that’s actually what happened. But I always had the initiative, you know – teachers like Ms.

Stahl, you know, she always taught us to fight for what we deserved; she was great with that” (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Lionel was a determined and dedicated student, and fortunately, guidance from his parents and a teacher were in place. However, he had to be patient, as citizenship issues prevented him from heading straight to a four-year university.

He describes it thusly:

My plan was to graduate from high school and go to UC Riverside. I couldn't quite do that because also at that time I didn't have my papers, my residency in place. But I knew about college, and Ms. Stahl - having Ms. Stahl, *of course* we knew about college. She always shared with us her experience of going to UC Riverside, having studied abroad in Spain, and she would always be motivating us. She was very inspiring and I wanted to do the things she did, and I wanted to have the experiences she had – because I thought it was the best thing ever, and it was (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Another aspect of assistance for Lionel's education came from a tutoring program known as the *Bilingual Training Recruitment Program* (BTRP); “I became a tutor when I was a junior. It was a bilingual future training program – and obviously, by doing that, I also learned a lot about college - so I was going to go to college no matter what” (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

When questioned about his advice for Late-entry English Learners, Lionel again referenced Ms. Stahl:

I think Ms. Stahl saw all of her students as smart students, or at least students that had potential – students that were smart and intelligent, with only a language barrier - not a learning disability. And she made her class challenging – you know, exposing us to all those novels, even though we probably didn't speak English back then, and we didn't know certain words, but we got it. We were reading and we got into it and we *got it*. (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

When asked what he felt teachers of LEELs should be doing, he added, “I think just challenging your students, you know? Don't make it easy for them – don't lower your expectations. Don't try to plan for easy stuff. Challenge them! (L. Bustamonte, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Rocio Navarro

“I have always thought that education is the only private property that we can really own. Certainly, I was not rich when I was in high school, but education has always been more important to me than any other kind of property” (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

Jiquilpan, Michoacan de Ocampo, Mexico, was home to the Navarro family before arriving in Vista Canyon eleven years ago. Rocio, in her mid-twenties, has one brother and their parents' highest level of education was elementary school. Her mother is a seamstress, her father works in the fields, and Rocio is fulfilling their dream by attending a university. A thirst for knowledge drives her as she pursues a master's degree in education, stating, "I am hoping to find a stable job position in which I can develop myself as a professional by serving the community and to keep on learning." She added, "My teachers and counselors have been crucial for my academic success and personal development as an English Learner and newcomer in this country" (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

The metaphor of a jungle was used by Rocio when describing high school, "It was a complex environment with different and many species, with just a goal in common, try to survive!" (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014). She describes her first year of high school as challenging and confusing, because she did not understand the language or the system (grading, credits, requirements, etc.), and the culture was very different. She wishes she had had (and recommends) an advisory teacher to explain what exactly is needed to be done in order to graduate from high school.

Rocio wishes her counselor would have shown her how to calculate her GPA. She also would have appreciated being able to discuss what classes were

available, and suggested the idea of the counselors providing a guide of the classes needed to take in order to graduate. Rocio was very appreciative of her counselors' effort to provide the opportunity to stay in school after her eighteenth birthday. She obviously took full advantage of her "*super senior*" year. Rocio feels the best advice she received was this: "Every day is a new day" (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

When asked if she were to attend high school over again, what she would do differently, Rocio's response was tinged with sadness: "I would stop worrying about the CAHSEE, and try to enjoy high school. In other words, I would try to be more involved in high school - clubs and games. I was so stressed trying to learn to read and write English that I forgot to enjoy the experience" (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

Feeling lost, confused and alone when she first arrived at school, Rocio made a commitment to herself that she would survive. She felt the need to give her best effort to compensate her parents for their hard work in the fields, and for the risk they took leaving Mexico to "start from zero" (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014). She was very nervous at first, and did not consider herself a confident student. In her first class, the teacher gave her an algebra test in English, and Rocio was frustrated by not being able to understand the questions. At that point, she thought that school would be a failure for her. The teacher told her that if she was a good student in Mexico, she would be an

effective student anywhere; she realized that teacher was right. Rocio is grateful that her parents were involved in her schooling as much as they could be, attending open houses and parent conferences whenever they could.

Rocio wishes her teachers would have taught more decoding and reading skills, and provided writing templates for such things as essays, formal letters, resumes, and college and scholarship applications. According to her, the best thing her teachers did was to believe in her; she also applauds the use of visual aids, recommends a considerable amount of homework, and is grateful that teachers went out of their way to inspire and prove to her that she was able to learn English.

Rocio provides excellent advice for teachers of Late-entry English Learners, suggesting they teach language through different subjects, such as civics, geography, art and history. In this way, they may help students continue learning in different ways, not just focused on language lessons per se, preventing them from feeling underestimated. She recalls the damage to her self-esteem, transitioning from an organic chemistry class in Mexico to reading children's books in the U.S. It wasn't until she took AP Spanish that she started to feel that she belonged to the class in the school, and her confidence was restored. I believe there has been no stopping this wonderful learner since.

Oscar Fuentes

“I think I was a good high school student. I always did all my homework. I was never sent to the principal’s office. My social life revolved around high school clubs, not in parties and alcohol. Three out of my four senior classes in high school were AP” (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

I have known Oscar Fuentes since he began at Desert Palms High School in August of 2003, and it broke my heart to hear some of his responses. Oscar, 23, hails from Sinaloa, Mexico, and he is one of the most polite, kind, intelligent, well-liked and generous young men that one could ever meet. His parents are farm laborers, and he has three younger brothers, so finances tend to be an ongoing struggle. He is currently finishing up his teaching credentials in Spanish, mathematics and a BCLAD at California State University, Los Angeles.

It is a shame that Oscar felt he was not able to trust a lot of the students in the school. He sums up the transition to the U.S. with the following:

My biggest worry was getting my homework done. I never tried to fit into any group just because I was scared by all of them. I remember all they talked about were parties and alcohol, and I felt like I was not old enough to go and have fun like them. I feel I was more like a child, not a teenager (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Elaborating on the transition, Oscar offered the following:

When I was in school in Mexico, I had to walk for about four miles to get to school. My middle school had no windows, doors, AC, electricity and the restrooms were in horrible condition. When I came here, I saw that the school had nice classrooms with white boards, computers, carpet, AC, and internet, so it was the greatest feeling in the world. I was extremely thankful for being in that school. At the same time I felt lonely, lost, hopeless, and dependent. I was not able to complete all my homework because I could not understand it. Some of the students used to make fun of me because I would wear a uniform to school; I was not listening to the same music they were listening to, they would talk back to the teacher, and they would get in physical fights. It was a whole new setting, culture, language, and environment (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

He continued, adding the following:

I always thought that they were not appreciating what they had. I would think that I was not as grown up as the rest of the students. I was thinking that I had no friends and was very overwhelmed by everything that was happening. I was extremely scared because I remember that the first day of school, I could not even find my bus and did not know who to talk to (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

There were no set plans to continue education for Oscar, and he recalled:

I had no plans whatsoever. I just wanted to pass my classes. I did not care about higher education because nobody would talk to me about that. I never went to a fieldtrip to a university. I always thought that universities were only for rich white people, because that was what I used to see on movies (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

He did not connect with his counselor, and in both middle and high school found a different counselor for guidance than the one assigned. Fortunately, Oscar had some friends in the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program who influenced him to go to college. He described his plan:

When I first graduated, I wanted to be rich. I wanted to study business. After taking a few classes and working for California Mini Corps (migrant education program), I realized that I love helping others. I am happy by helping others have a better life. So I decided to change my major and become a teacher (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

I have a notion that all stakeholders will be grateful for Oscar's decision, and truly hope he will return to teach in the Vista Canyon Unified School District soon.

Roberto Martinez

“I was a very calm student – I never had any issues when it comes to discipline – I wasn’t very outstanding either. I was just there, I was getting good grades. I was passing all my classes, I was making friends; never, ever got into any issues – but never stood up (out), either” (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

The son of fieldworkers with elementary education from Michoacan, México, Roberto is a 23-year-old AmeriCorps worker with one brother and one sister. The family is very stable and supportive and arrived from Michoacan eight years ago. Roberto plans to graduate with a business degree in June, and then pursue a master’s degree in Public Administration.

When asked about his counselor in high school, Roberto calmly smiled, then proceeded to tell a sad, but familiar story:

I did know who she was – but never had a chance to meet with her that often as I would have loved to. I just remember one time that I actually met with her, because I had my English IV class, and I was removed from that class, because my English wasn’t that good; also, because I still was not passing the English part of the CAHSEE - so she moved me to one of the special classes, as in English 10, *CAHSEE Preparation*. Nevertheless, I thought that class was a total waste of time, because I wasn’t learning anything. I was just wasting my time right there, so I went in and talked to

her about it; she didn't do anything. She said there was no point for me to go back to my English IV class, because I wasn't going to graduate, because of my limitations in the English language. And that's something that actually marked me; it marked me in a good way, because it motivated me to continue growing, to show her that I actually would be able to graduate (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

He continued on with a wry smile, "Just for fun, when I graduated, I showed her my diploma – because that was something nice, you know? I graduated, and I'm going to school - to college. I would say other than that, I never had a chance to meet with her a lot" (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

When asked about his hardest class, Martinez said it was science, and went on to elaborate with the following:

I was having a hard time in the class. Because there are new concepts brought up to me – things that... big words that I wouldn't remember – fancy, they were; so that I wasn't able to understand them. And there were times when I wouldn't say anything to any of my teachers because I was embarrassed. Especially, not because my teacher would say something to me, but my friends, the other students – they would laugh at me, or in a

way they would bully me for not knowing English correctly. (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Roberto is describing an issue for nearly all English Learners, the adaptation from social conversation (BICS) to cognitive or academic language (CALP) (Cummins, 2000). Of the participants who divulged their most difficult class, nearly all chose a science-related course, where vocabulary and concepts become more difficult. Only one chose English, and there is a very good reason for that; she is a very intelligent young lady who took *Honors English* her junior year, after arriving as an eighth grader. Her name is Nancy Solaris, and you will meet her next...

Nancy Solaris

“There were several occasions where I wanted to be born speaking English instead of Spanish, so that I did not want it to be so difficult or me to despair. I wished there were some kind of pill that one could eat and already knew how to speak and understand English well” (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Nancy Solaris arrived in the United States in April 2006, from Guadalajara, Jalisco, México. Her plans are to graduate from UCLA, possibly getting a master’s degree, and become a high school Spanish teacher. When asked about

the importance of her high school teachers and counselors, Nancy had this to say:

My teachers were very important to me because with each I learned different things and all that is useful for either everyday life or my education, among other things. My advisors were not so important to me, since we were hardly going to see them, and it was nothing compared to how I could talk to my teachers (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Nancy was fortunate to have good teachers, and perhaps part of that had to do with being in the AVID program, a powerful force on the campus of Desert Palms High School and beyond. She recalled:

Teachers were also friendly and tried to help in some way for me to understand what was happening in class. A lot of my teachers cared about my education and future. I learned a lot in their classes and they helped if occupied or I had a problem, I knew I could trust them and ask for help or advice (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Her feelings were juxtaposed when it came to counselors; she explained: It could be said that the counselors were friendly, but most were not interested in helping. With AVID, it was much easier for me to get the classes I wanted or needed, and that felt like the counselor and advisor

pushed me to take classes that were a challenge for me (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

A running theme throughout the interviews with these successful students is the desire to be challenged. Nancy felt she was a confident learner, but English sometimes worried her. She described it this way:

In the school, I was worried about my grades, exams or any work I had to do for my class, and in special presentations in English, because I was nervous and I had trouble speaking in front of everyone and expressing myself in a language with which I was not very familiar (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

When asked if there were any words or phrases which she picked up immediately because of the effect they had on her, Nancy offered an interesting experience:

The word I remember is "War", because in eighth grade reading, it appeared in a task and I did not know what it meant. So I went to the dictionary to look it up; I remember I saw that the translation said "war" and the truth much surprised me, because I said something as big as a war can't be said with only three letters in English, and it is something I will not forget (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Lastly, Nancy was asked what she would change if she were to attend high school all over again. Her response sums up the Late-entry English Learner experience, looking back:

I would have made sure of taking the correct classes from my freshmen year in high school, so that I would have had space to take fun classes or have space for more AP classes. I would have tried to take my P.E. classes at the beginning of high school instead of at the end. Also, I would definitely try to join sports that interested me without feeling scare(d) of not being able to be part of it because my English wasn't the best. I wouldn't have permitted myself to be shy and doubt about myself of being able to be in a leadership position because I care too much of what people would say and be scare(d) to not be able to express myself fully in English. On the other hand, I would do everything the same because without doing everything I did or the way it happened, I don't know if would be where I am right now (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Eva Cebedo

"I think it's my dad, you know – the person that was always there for me. I went through a hard time when he passed away. It was just hard, losing my house, losing my father and moving to this country when I didn't know anything – it was

really, really hard for me. And it was hard for my mom, because she never worked in the fields. She never, so it was hard for her. I remember seeing her walking, all sweaty and tired with a sad face, I wanted to cry. It's sad, I don't want to see my mom working in the fields. It's a hard life" (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

The most poignant, powerful interview was held with Eva Cebedo, who moved to the area in March 2008, with her mother and six siblings, following the death of her father. They came from Michoacan, Mexico, and her mother went right to work in the fields. Eva was uncertain about the move, but dedication to family helped to overcome her doubts. She remembered:

At the beginning I was pretty scared. I didn't want to attend school. I wanted to stay home and go to work with my mom, and then I knew that wasn't gonna be good for me. So I did accept my mom telling me to go to school – that's when I got some motivation to come to school (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

She described her original goal upon her arrival at school by stating, "Well, the first thing I wanted to do was learn the language; that way, I would be able to get a good education, go to school, get a good job and be able to help my mom" (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Her first days in school were difficult, as she describes, “I was pretty scared for me, as I didn’t have any friends. I didn’t know anyone and I just wanted to stay home instead of me going to school – because I was scared people would make fun of me because I didn’t speak English, or people would look at me wrong and they wouldn’t like me.” Eva continued her description of starting school in her new home with the following:

The second day, I started talking to some girls, but they weren’t really willing to hang out with me, so I would go, I got my lunch and went to meet with the janitors – they would always be eating together, and I would just go with them and I would talk to them. And then, little by little, in my classes, I would interact with other students. That’s how I started making some new friends (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Eva described one of her coping strategies early on with this:

You know what I would do – like every time I was supposed to do, like a journal or everything, I would put (write) – okay, I really don’t understand this – just for the teacher to have kind of an idea, she’s a second (language) learner, like (so) I just have to put more attention to her. But I wouldn’t get that (extra help) most of the time. I would just talk to the person next to me. And I’d be like oh, could you please help me? Like, what is he saying? Some of the people were nice, some would help me,

and others of them were like, okay, I'm not going to help you, I'm not here to help you. I think it was lucky, because most of the time the classmates would help me (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

As with other Desert Palms students, Eva found the counselors lacking, and the teachers kind and caring, as she explained:

I didn't know who was my counselor my freshman year – then we get this paper that told me this person was going to make a plan for me, like the classes I needed to take in order for me to graduate, and to get my diploma. But most of the time, I didn't feel that much attention. Thank God I had some teachers who knew my situation and they would help me - and they would always ask me how I was feeling in my other classes – and if I would have any struggles, I would talk to them. They would know, okay, so she is an ESL student, she may have some struggles, so then I was able to pass most of my classes with good grades and graduate with honors and pass the CAHSEE, the AP exams; those, too, help(ed) me, now that I'm in college – they look really good on my transcript (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

After getting more involved in school, including having a redemptive opportunity to help the student who had bullied her on the first day of school, Eva began to build more confidence, stating:

I felt more comfortable and I just had this feeling inside me that was like, okay, I can talk without being shy, I can just talk and not care about the students. Since that day, I was thinking okay, I can do this, I can start getting involved in school. I was part of the basketball team, so I knew more people, thanks to the sport and (basketball) open(ed) new doors, like to have new friendships. I started getting involved in different clubs; Spanish Club, MEChA, Girls' Varsity Club (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

At this point, Eva was reminded that she had been chosen Homecoming Queen, yet she played that down, and continued in her own kind, humble way, "Yes, I was the homecoming queen – I think what helped me the most was basketball" (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Playing basketball was not a given; when Eva arrived home to ask her mother if she could play, explaining the cost of new basketball shoes and insurance, her mother's response was a quick and finite, no. As is her nature, Eva refused to quit, running and slipping all over the court, and so impressed the coach, that he *gave her his own shoes* so she could play. She remembers, "I was really, really happy because those were the first pair of shoes for basketball that I had. And I still have them – they are like *my trophy*. Yes, that turned out really good for me (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Taking or receiving does not come naturally for Eva. However, passing along good fortune and karma suits her very well. She relates this remarkable story:

When I was coaching volleyball, I had this little girl, she was from El Salvador, and she comes up to me and was like, 'Ms., I don't have the knee braces (pads)' – you know, the ones they have to use for volleyball – and I'm like, you need them for the game, you need them. She said, 'My mom told me she's not going to get them for me, because they're expensive. My mom told me either she buys that or turkey for us to eat.' And I was like, oh my God, that was me! – totally, my mom, and I identified myself with that, and she was like, 'Miss, I don't think I'm going to play.' She was my best player; I said no, you have to play, and I was like, don't worry, I'm going to get them for you. And it took me back to that day when my coach gave me the shoes. He told me, you play with your heart, have fun and enjoy the game. So I remembered, and I had to get that knee brace for the girl - so I went and I got them for her, and the next day, I went to work and she was like, 'Miss, I'm not staying today, because you know I don't want to stay and I don't want to practice.' I said no, you're going to stay, look, I got them for you. She just smiled. She gave me a hug, like, 'Really? Ms., I'm going to have to pay (for) these for you, I want to save money and I'm gonna pay them for you.' I said no, you don't have

to. I just want you to have fun – play with your heart, enjoy this game. She just looked at me and said, ‘Miss, why would you buy these for me?’ I told her why, and she was like, ‘Miss, one day I’m going to do the same.’ And I said, yes, that’s what you have to do, and you know this little girl coming from El Salvador, some student that I could, you know, connect myself with her - that was me, like, years before. You know if I can help them, I will help them (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

This is a vast understatement; for all the misfortune and misery in Eva’s life – her father’s death, being stranded at the border, working in the fields to support her family – her main concern is the comfort and well being of others. When reminded that some students lack the confidence or are too shy to seek their own help in school, Eva responded:

That’s why I feel students like me, we need to help them, and guide them to try - for them to get a connection with teachers that are actually going to help them. I feel like, okay, if I got help from someone, that’s when I have to go back and help someone that was in the same situation as me. That’s why (I) feel like I am returning the favor, you know? (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

When asked about talking to high school students, Eva responded, “I definitely would love to do that, because by me sharing my experience with them, it will give them hope. And then for them to believe in themselves, that they can

do it as well” (E. Cebedo, personal communication, January 15, 2014). She is eternally grateful for the slightest bit of help, and described her attitude like this:

Yes, and you know, thanks to all of them, they expect too much from me, and I don’t want to let them down. That’s why I always try my hardest, not just for myself or for my family, but it’s just they expect a lot from me, expect a lot because they know I’m capable of doing it, then added, “Okay, if they believe in me, then I have to believe in myself, and I have to do it (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Eva has gone on to become a community college basketball star, awaiting a scholarship to play at a four-year university; but she will never forget her roots or where she came from. Fiercly proud, she describes her attitude with a beautiful, confident smile:

You know they always say, Eva, yes, she is so Mexican, – oh yeah, even my teammates, they are like, you are so Mexican, and I’m proud of it. I’m very proud of it. If my teammates are talking about anything, I’ll connect myself to it. They’ll be like this and all this, I start connecting my roots, you know, and I bring them to their life; whoooa, here goes the Mexican, and they’re like making fun of me, but, they love me. I know they do! They do - everybody (says) Eva and this and that; it’s great! (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

She continues on to describe her plans with the following:

I think most of the people that are around me know my plans for the future, which is to transfer to UCR, or that all depends with basketball, but I know that I want to focus in school and go for my career, and want to become a Spanish teacher... And I actually want to come back to the school, I really do. I really do – so those are my plans for the future, and to help my mom get a house. Because an apartment is not always going to be there for us; you know, you always pay the rent, but that not always can be yours. It's different than getting the house. I want to help my mom with that. So those are my plans for my future (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

That is pretty sound real estate advice from a young immigrant who cried at first and didn't want to go to school. She is humble, but proud, and very happy where her life has taken her, saying, "This little girl from the rancho that just moved to this country, you know, and to have that much (many) people, you know that..." (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Her boyfriend, Jorge, interjected, "You inspire them..." (J. Chavez, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

And she continued, "Yes, I like to see that, mucho... Sometimes I feel that it's too beautiful to be real. I'm like, it seems like a dream. I wonder when I'm

going to wake up. I don't want to wake up. I like this dream. I don't want to wake up. It's just great!" (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Rachel Ramos

"My teachers were pillars in my education. However, my counselors were not helpful" (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Rachel is a 20-year-old college student from Sonora, Mexico. She arrived in the area with her housewife mother, physician father and five siblings in 2010. Her goal is to become a doctor and she had this to say about her high school counselors, "I would have liked to hear more advice from them, and at the same time they should listen to me when I had concerns, but they did not" (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

A self-proclaimed good student and confident person, Rachel said, "I made some friends who helped to develop my language with conversations" (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014). Although she had no trouble making friends, Rachel added, "When I arrived here I was afraid, ashamed, and sad because I missed home" (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

She had this to say about her first class: "When I came in, I saw a blonde teacher with blue eyes and I thought she was not going to understand me; I was about to cry, but then she said, '*Buenos días*'" (R. Ramos, personal

communication, March 20, 2014). Ironically, this teacher turned out to be Ms. Sahara Onder. Rachel was extremely happy to have Sahara for a teacher, and felt perfectly challenged and supported by her. However, she did not start out confidently, recalling, “I was really nervous because I felt that I was not going to be able to express my ideas. I was thinking that English was the harder (hardest) language that someone can learn” (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Rachel may have found English difficult, but she has a very astute vision of what communication entails, stating, “Language involves not only words, it involves body communication and gestures. Every culture develops language based on their customs, traditions and economic situation” (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014). When asked what she would be doing if still in Mexico, Rachel said, “I would be doing the same thing that I’m doing here, studying medicine” (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014). She is very serious about following in her father’s footsteps; therefore must acquire academic English at the highest levels.

Remaining grateful for all of her English teachers, Rachel spoke of one community college educator in particular who was extremely helpful:

Professor Pearson, my English 51 teacher, I will never forget him. When I came to college, my language was not completely developed and I started to have problems with prepositions and the structures of my ideas. So

then, one day he asked me to stay after class; he read all the essays, sentence after sentence, he was correcting with me my essays, until I could realize what was my problem. I remember that he told me I was going to fail the class. I cried because I was under stress, and then he told me, 'Just fix your problem, it has solution.' I did, he read and re-read my essays until my problems disappeared (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

Sometimes for LEELs, that is what it takes – dedicated one-on-one time with a teacher who cares. There is no course which covers this teaching strategy in any credential program – this must come from one's heart. Students who find these teachers are fortunate, indeed. When queried about what else helped Rachel learn English quickly, she had this to say, "The methods that I used to learn faster were; music, television, books, internet and friends, because those involved my favorites activities" (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

That is something that is often overlooked – *learning should be fun*. Who doesn't enjoy becoming smarter and more adept at communication in any language? Although it is difficult to find language acquisition methods that are truly enjoyable, it is worth pursuing, implementing, and sharing for teachers and students alike.

Maria Lopez

“High school means to me a stage where you can find many friends, do different activities with teachers and students – it is a beautiful experience. Also, it is a stage where yourself (you) will know that you will feel proud to have achieved several objectives” (M. Lopez, personal communication, February 10, 2014).

Maria is an 18-year-old “super senior” who has been in the country for just two years. Her mother is a housewife from La Blanca, Zacatecas, Mexico, and her farm laborer father is from Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico. Born in Indio, California, Maria was raised and went to school in Mexicali until arriving in Vista Valley to live with an aunt, her junior year. As with most participants, the transition to a new school, language and culture shook Maria’s confidence, “At first, some students mocked me because I didn’t know much English,” and she added, “I wondered if I better come back to my old school” (M. Lopez, personal communication, February 10, 2014). Undecided about her future, Maria has plans to be a secretary, or to possibly continue her education and become an accountant.

There is tremendous pressure on Maria as she has yet to pass the English high school exit exam, a mandatory piece of the graduation puzzle for which she is striving. This creates an enormous and ongoing challenge for ELs like Maria, and also those responsible for her education. Ideally, students will pass the test

on their first attempt in their sophomore year, but this is not likely for LEELs. This is a shame as results on standardized tests such as the CAHSEE tend to determine English-language proficiency and may fall short in accurately assessing an EL's skill or content knowledge (Menken, 2000). When ELs cannot demonstrate on a test what they know and can do due to linguistic problems, results will not show a valid reflection of their abilities (Coltrane & Bronwyn, 2002). Students have up to two years after leaving high school to attempt passing the CAHSEE, or they have an option of getting their GED (General Educational Development Test). Maria's goal is to become independent and earn her own money, adding, "I will need it" (M. Lopez, personal communication, February 10, 2014).

Horacio Gutierrez

"I listen to music in English every day, and it helps" (H. Gutierrez, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Horacio is a reserved, yet intelligent, eighteen-year-old "super senior" at Desert Palms High School, who has passed both the math and English CAHSEE, and is preparing for the graduation ceremony. His family came from San Miguel, El Salvador, less than two years ago with seven children. Horacio's mother is a housewife and his father is a field worker, both with an elementary

education. Their goal for Horacio is to get a good education and a job, and he intends to keep on studying.

A member of the high school's tennis team, Horacio appears to have an active social life and be a very friendly, well-liked person. Algebra II has proven to be his toughest class; again, perhaps due to the language demands involved. He has learned English remarkably well in a very short period of time. For that, he credits listening to music in English every day, enjoying tunes from *Bruno Mars*, *Maroon Five*, and any pop radio station. When Horacio was asked to provide advice for anyone trying to learn English as quickly as he did, he did not hesitate, replying, "Don't be shy to talk" (H. Gutierrez, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Many times Late-entry English Learners find themselves sequestered or isolated, whether by choice or circumstance; and they either hang out alone or with other Spanish-speakers in similar situations. One thing that has appeared to truly help Horacio is his involvement with the tennis team. The majority of his teammates are bilingual, but most of the conversations are in English. The tennis coach is a monolingual English speaker, so Horacio is forced to communicate with him in English. Not only do these meaningful interactions help LEELs with their English skills, but they also help to create a network of new friends and acquaintances, many of whom prefer to communicate in English. It also provides one with a sense of self-esteem, acceptance and accomplishment.

Part Two: Significant Themes – Addressing the Research Questions

After a review of the interviews and surveys, there were ten key themes that emerged. Keep in mind the overall purpose of this research, aside from providing voice to LEELs, is to not only delve into the lived experiences of the participants, but to ascertain their suggestions of best practices for Late-entry English Learners, their teachers and administrators. The following ten categories go a long way towards painting the picture of LEELs' lived experience, and touch on best practices for them, as particularly portrayed in research question one:

1. What can we understand about the lived experiences of Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District and what are the challenges and best practices for learners needing to learn English quickly and to be academically successful?

The ten pertinent themes which arose include the following:

- Parents
- Documentation
- Finances
- Spanish-speaking teachers
- Bullying
- Friends
- Television
- Music

- Confidence
- Counselors

Once again, I will attempt to allow the participants to address these issues in their own voice wherever possible.

Parents

One important aspect of education often overlooked is the parents' role in raising and educating their children. Sahara described how her parents had total faith in the education system in America, requesting that she listen to her counselor and showing unwavering faith in the ability and intentions of the teachers. This was a point of true frustration for Sahara, as she knew her counselor was not doing a good job, and did not have her goals and best interests in mind. Perhaps part of this stems from the fact that parents with little or no English skills are of little help to students needing assistance with their English language and their homework. It is easier to show blind faith in the system, rather than face the shortcomings and uncertainty of something they are not capable of or don't understand.

Most of us will never understand the difficulties and challenges incurred in moving one's family to a new country. There is a myriad of concerns and a never-ending gauntlet of obstacles to citizenship and financial security, not to mention the concerns of employment, living conditions, family members' stations

and education. Sometimes students will understand what needs to be done before it occurs to the parent(s). Eva describes a situation in which her mother didn't understand at first:

Well, in my house, we all speak Spanish, so when I got home, we would just speak Spanish all the time. Mom would get mad when we talked in English. She wouldn't understand. But then, little by little, we start telling her, you know mom, we have to practice when we are watching TV; we would put the channel on English. I started listening to the music in English. I would be singing without even knowing what the lyrics were, but I was singing the song that would help me with my English. Sometime I would talk to my sister and we would try to help each other using books, but we always had the dictionary, so we would translate the words and have an idea what we're talking about when we were reading (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

One can only imagine how difficult this was for a loving widow to let go of the flow of communication in her own household, for the sake of her children learning English. There is a natural gap between teenagers and their parents at some point in adolescence for nearly all families. However, while parents of LEELs not only struggle to understand this natural growing apart, a new and different language for the teenagers only complicates matters. This is extremely

hard in a foreign country and culture, but double indemnity for Eva's mother, still recovering from the recent loss of her husband.

One constant commonality for the successful Late-entry English Learners in this study was the appreciation for the support and encouragement of their parents or guardians; Lionel explains:

Yes, my parents were involved - I remember coming home and they were always asking for our homework – even though they couldn't help us because they didn't have the knowledge or didn't speak the language or whatever, but they were always making sure we did our homework and for every time we had a parent meeting, they were always there – any time any of us were recognized, they would always be there. They would ask for the day off or ask for a few hours off, and then they would go and support us – they were always supportive, that I can tell (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

For the majority of the participants, parental employment meant low-paying, hard labor in the agricultural fields in East Vista Canyon. Most jobs are seasonal and temporary, so requesting time off was not just frowned upon, it was dicey – one could easily be replaced. Many parents lack the confidence to attend school meetings or functions, unwilling to risk their jobs or feeling the language barrier is too much to overcome. There are also issues of transportation and child

care involved, and many parents/guardians work more than one job, and cannot find the time to attend.

Some parents are not trusting of their neighbors or their children's friends. Eva, whose desire to help others is legendary, tried to explain what happened to a friend she attempted to assist:

One example that I use is my friend, how she would have to go home to clean her house and just to be there – just waiting for her parents, you know? I think if she would've stayed for the after-school program, or just to hang out more with students that have been here all their lives, you know, that would've helped her again a lot, like for her to be more comfortable with speaking English, even with me. We had a lot of things in common, so I would always tell her, you can always go to my house. I remember on the weekends, inviting her to my house, because back then, we were like good friends, and I tried to help her, but it didn't. She didn't want to... (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

When boyfriend Jorge interjected, "So it was like a personal choice" (J. Chavez, personal communication, February 15, 2014), Eva continued, "Ya, and I think, like other kids, their parents, they probably didn't trust for her to go to other houses" (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Oscar recalled divulging his plan once he finished high school, "My mom did not want me to move out of the house. She wanted me to stay with the

family just because I was the first one in my family to go to a four-year university. She was scared because I did not know how to live or travel by myself” (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

The most touching example of parental support came from Roberto, whose migrant farm working folks came from the Delano-Bakersfield area, where they were working, all the way to Vista Canyon on a Saturday, just to give him a ride to and from school so that he could attend a field trip to the Tolerance Museum in Los Angeles. Roberto shared:

I think that was something very memorable for me, because I will never forget that. That was one of the things I’ll remember all the time because they supported me all the way through high school, all the way through college and they still do support me right now to get my education. I would say I have the best parents – I would never change them for anything (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

The majority of participants shared this sentiment, showing immense love and pride for their parents, and true appreciation for the many sacrifices endured. Schools should do whatever is in their power to communicate with parents, and make them feel comfortable, appreciated and heard, as they are an extremely valuable asset.

Documentation

Many students arrive in Vista Canyon without proper visa or citizenship documentation. Some families are forced to arrive piecemeal, saving their money, working hard, waiting and hoping for a chance to put the family back together. Arianna remembers:

I actually did worry about my family a little bit. One of my brothers and one of my sisters didn't get documentation to come to the U.S. so they were left behind with (other) family until they were able to come. Fortunately, they were in their 20's when we came over, but I remember it was still hard to be separated from the rest of the family (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Often times it becomes a barrier for LEELs trying to further their education. Lionel explains, "My plan was to graduate from high school and go to UC Riverside. I couldn't quite do that because also at that time I didn't have my papers, my residency in place" (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014). He discussed how that concerned his parents greatly, and put a damper on his educational experience in the following excerpt:

Because of our situation in the country, I remember that as an 8th grader, I was accepted or was included into the (Gifted and Talented Education) GATE program – and obviously I didn't know much about GATE, and then I was told it was for the gifted and talented, you know, I was very excited

about it. And then, when I went to a meeting and they told us they were going to take us on a lot of field trips, you know, I knew that was going to be a problem. So I needed to get my mom's permission to see if she would let me, to be in the program, and she actually said no, because you know better; she said, 'You're going to be out of town, you're going to be traveling, and what if they take you? No.' Unfortunately, now I think about it - no, that's not the way it works, but back then, you know – so I just had to say no, I can't, my mom didn't let me – I was also afraid of that, because you never tell anyone that you are undocumented (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

That is an understatement. Those who do make that mistake are often soon gone. Twice in the past several years, an empty chair was left among the graduates at the Desert Palms High School commencement ceremony to honor an undocumented student who made one simple mistake. Eva describes the stress of having her visa lapse, yet wanting to participate in high school sports with this description:

They (family members) had their papers (visa documents) and everything - my sister and myself and my two little brothers, we moved here, you know, with a parent – but it got expired; it was scared (scary). My mom would be like (say), don't go on the streets, because if a police sees you or something, you're going to go back to Mexico. You are not allowed... I

remember, myself, when we would go play basketball at Caliano...
(getting emotional) aw, I'm going to start crying..., because I'm risking myself right here, like, I shouldn't be here, I shouldn't be here, but I wanted to go and play (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Wiping away a tear, Eva continued:

Good thing, you know, they don't check, because the van and in the school, they don't ask you for your papers, so I was like... I remember all those times, like, oh, that was really, really scary – I didn't want to do anything. Same thing when we went on field trips to go to any school (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

This is the reality for many students, some of them Late-entry English Learners, forced to live a life in the shadows; taught to not bring attention to one's self, missing out on opportunities and living a very nervous and frightened lifestyle. One does not even dare call the police when something dangerous happens. Of course, there are deviants and scoundrels in the community that take advantage of their situation, extorting, threatening to report them. Sometimes it is a neighbor or an acquaintance, other times it may be one's boss – no matter how hard one worked or what they accomplished, one would dare not ask for a raise or better conditions. This explains one essential reason I feel

the need to provide voice through this research for these students and their families.

Finances

The majority of Late-entry English Learners appear to arrive and remain in poverty. Most live with parents who work in the fields for very low pay and minimal benefits. This lack of financial resources can be damaging to the students' self-esteem and hard on their day-to-day lives. It may seem obvious that simple things become difficult in poverty. However, educators and stakeholders tend to overlook these issues when dealing with students, particularly LEELs. In high school, Sahara's dream was to be a cheerleader and Eva simply wanted to play basketball; yet they were both met with the same response from their mothers - if it costs money, you *can't* do it. These were not flippant responses meant to be mean or to teach a lesson, this was basic, commonsense reality from mothers with little resources and tough survival choices.

Lionel's response to poverty was very powerful:

Growing up in poverty makes you appreciate little things in life, and it made me appreciate education. And I knew from a very young age that the only way for me to get out of poverty was to get an education, and that's something also, my parents taught me. And they always told me,

just because we don't go to college just because we didn't get an education, just because we're poor, it doesn't mean you have to be the same (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

The rule of thumb for most parents is that they always want their children to have a better life or opportunities than they; this rule applies to these low-income, immigrant families as well, and many of the parents understand that education provides an opportunity that opens doors for a brighter future, so they support their children the best they know how.

Oscar casually describes his high school experience, "We did not have a house; we lived in a trailer in Sunland. I slept on the floor for four years. I did not have a quiet place to do homework" (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014). This did not deter him or dampen his desire to help out the family; when asked if he worried about them, he responded, "Yes, I am the oldest in my family and I feel that I should set a good example. My main goal is to help them out so they do not have to work in the fields" (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Arianna described her college experience, lamenting not being able to afford the involvement she felt others at her school took for granted; visiting different restaurants, going out for a coffee, shopping at the mall and more. She relates it this way:

All the things I could not afford – I felt like I was the only one in the whole school who was ignorant and sheltered from all of these experiences. I started seeing how poverty had limited my experiences and my confidence. However, these challenges made me stronger and gave me endurance to continue working for, what I felt would liberate me, my education (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

I experienced this firsthand as a new teacher in the Vista Canyon district many years ago. One of my top students arrived without her homework, which was totally unlike her. I good-naturedly chided her a bit, and she felt the need to explain, sharing with me that her mom worked three jobs, and had come home to rest, requesting that she turn *the* light out. When I realized they only *had* one light, I tried to pull my foot out of my mouth, opting not to relate the wonderful story of Abraham Lincoln reading by candle light, as I realized I was the learner here, and the lesson was poverty.

Profound wisdom is found in Rocio's quote, "I have always thought that education is the only private property that we can really own. Certainly, I was not rich when I was in high school, but education has always been more important to me than any other kind of property" (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

Nancy delivered a proud, powerful statement regarding finances and about working hard and contributing; speaking for her family, she said, "We also

think it was not good receiving government assistance” (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Most students understand what their parents are up against, and know better than to spend money foolishly. Eva described her understanding with the following:

Yes, and I remember in high school how everyone would be wearing new clothes, you know, with *marcas* (brand names) and I would still have my clothes from Mexico, that I'm still the same; but then I got some weight and I was kind of a little bit chunky, so (I said) mom, I need some pants, so she had to buy some. And that was clothes, for me... But other than that, I wouldn't ask my mom for anything; when she did buy me this because I knew since I was small I didn't feel good asking her – Because I knew how hard it was for her. It's the same thing with my brothers, we're not like, give me money for this, we understand – we don't really need this stuff (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Not only is Eva responsible about not spending her family's money, she also has ideas of how to contribute financially to future Late-entry English Learners - Ariana had the same inclination – start a club for English Learners. Eva elaborated excitedly:

It would be a good idea to get a lot of ideas like *Day of the Dead* (Mexican cultural ceremony), to participate in those events – and for those students

who, you know, like me, who just moved to this country without papers, but then by the process, they fix their papers, and they have to go to school, and they want to continue with school – and keep that money for those students who want to continue in school - like a scholarship. That way they could help them, because you know when you don't have your papers, you don't get financial aid. You get *some* help, but it's not the same. You know, you get your check like every semester – no, and they're not going to buy you books. To be a club with those students that you are going to refund money - that money is going to be for them when they go to school... (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Yes, love trumps money, and family alleviates lack of finances, but one must not underestimate the challenges of these remarkable students. There are other systemic issues that go along with being poor. Students in the district have survived high levels of arsenic in their drinking water, and noxious fumes from waste disposal facilities which sickened students and teachers at one elementary school to the point of passing out. As many who have faced this dilemma can attest, it's dangerous to be poor.

Spanish-speaking Teachers

There was an interesting array of responses regarding the topic of teachers using Spanish to deliver their lessons. Obviously, there is a certain

comfort factor for Late-entry English Learners in the beginning, when nearly everything relies on translation. However, there were mixed emotions when it came to teachers delivering lessons in Spanish further along in the acquisition process. Sahara described it this way:

Yes, I would rather *not* have teachers who spoke Spanish, but yes, for me it would worked perfect. My social studies teacher, Mr. Ramirez, knew Spanish, but he said, ‘Don’t ask me in Spanish, because I won’t respond to you in Spanish,’ and you know what, I was like, perfect! I was pushing myself – So, yes, to force me to speak English (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

Arianna added, “I think a class with a Spanish-speaking teacher would have definitely helped for clarification, but I think the fact that I was forced to communicate in English may have been more helpful” (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

There is not complete consensus on this issue, and each student appeared to have their own comfort zone of when they preferred an English-only class. Some participants found solace in knowing that their teacher could and would translate, yet there is no doubt about what Roberto preferred:

I feel that it was kind of bad when they tend to do bilingual, it’s only more confusing for the students. I like the English classes, the English only –

because you were exposed to the language 24/7. Because at home, the only thing I would hear was Spanish, so it was nice to be in school and only be hearing people talking in English, and that helped me to process information faster and learn more. It was more efficient for me (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Lionel had this to say:

I don't remember my other teachers speaking to me in Spanish. It was mostly English... Yes, and I really appreciated it – I think when learning a language, you need to be exposed to it, and you need to allow yourself practice time. Some people might be scared of being exposed to that situation and having to speak another language, but I think when you're serious about it, you need to be speaking it - absolutely need to (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

However, Rocio felt conversely, expressing her viewpoint as follows:

Indeed, Spanish-speaking teachers who were willing to communicate with me in order to give clarifications for the assignments in my first language were helpful. In addition, bilingual classes helped me not only to continue learning in my first language, but also to increase my participation and self-esteem (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

This is the sad reality of California voters approving Proposition 227 in 1998, making English-only the rule in public schools. Bilingual education can be

a powerful option for LEELs, and dual immersion classes can help learners in two languages become bilingual simultaneously. It is believed voters did not have access to the complete truth prior to voting on this issue (Guerrero, 2004).

A diplomatic and thoughtful answer regarding lessons delivered in Spanish came from Nancy, who responded with the following:

I think that being in a class with a teacher who can speak Spanish can be both – it helps because if you have any questions or problems, you can ask him or her for help with English or speaking. But it can also be a hindrance since students tend to rely that the teacher will understand you if you speak Spanish, and then speak Spanish rather than English; and in the process of learning English, that can be more complicated (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

Evidently there is no perfect response for this question in regards to best practices. Just as each individual learner is unique, so is the scenario in each school site and class. What works with one group of learners does not necessarily work for the next. Spanish-speaking teachers are paramount when English learners first arrive and need to know what is going on, if for no other reason than to keep the learners' stress level down, and to translate. But as their English levels progressed, the majority of these successful LEELs appreciated that their teachers insisted they understand and speak English in the class.

Roberto related an experience that provided an interesting perspective:

I will go back to my English teacher, Mrs. Moreno – she wouldn't speak to me in Spanish, period. She would always encourage us to try to speak English. I remember this day when I went to her class to use the computer at lunch, so I asked her in Spanish, may I use the computer? And she was like, only if you ask me in English, because if you don't, you may not use it. So I was forced to practice my English and I think that was one of the key points – practice! Practicing helped me a lot (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

I questioned Roberto, "At the time, did you understand that, or did you get mad at her?" His response was, "No, at the time, I was just like, why? She *knows* Spanish. Why wouldn't she just say, yes. But I mean, as time passed, I was glad that she actually made me do that. Because I probably wouldn't even be able to speak English now if she wouldn't have done that at the time (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Teachers must balance a fine and delicate line between doing what is best for the learner and promoting low Affective Filter (Krashen, 1998), or relaxed alertness, in the classroom. All learners react naturally according to situations, but then realize later on through reflection what actually transpired. Teachers must realize that they may make students uncomfortable or even a bit angry just by doing the right thing; and must have faith that eventually the student(s) will

understand the help that was given. This is a perfect example of why choosing older, more experienced English Learners was a better fit for this research.

Bullying

Bullying has come to the forefront of issues in education today, and rightfully so. There is no place in our schools for such behavior, yet it is often difficult for teachers to identify or prevent. It appears that Late-entry English Learners are an easy target for bullying behaviors, even at a school site which is 99 percent Latino; Arianna had this to say:

I was bullied by other students who used to call me “*Chaka*”, which I had no idea what it meant. To this day I still do not know with certainty what it means, but I know students used this in a derogatory way. They referred to students who didn’t speak English, who looked poor and who were dark-skinned (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Many participants found the first days of school excruciatingly difficult, particularly where bullies were concerned. Eva related this story:

I remember my first time (day of school), there was this guy – He made fun of me because I couldn’t speak English. He did, and I remember that day, I just went home, straight out and just started crying and I didn’t want to go to school anymore, because he was making fun of me because I

couldn't speak English. Yeah, so I remember telling my mom, I don't want to go anymore, because people were making fun of me... but, I didn't give up (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Lionel also elaborated on the difficulty:

There was like this stigma towards students who didn't speak English. For students who only spoke Spanish, it wasn't cool back then. Was I bullied? - Yes, because I didn't speak English, you know, because it was not cool to just speak Spanish. The bilingual class was always - that's what they called us, and we were always being made fun of because we didn't speak English. Classmates that had been here longer and spoke the language better - they were moved into a mainstream class, and I remember that they came to me once. Some of them cried in class because they needed to make an oral presentation in front of everyone. The students were making fun of them because they had an accent or they couldn't pronounce certain words, or whatnot (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

There are times when a teacher does not realize bullying has occurred or is unable to prevent it. Nancy described this scenario:

In another class there was an activity to introduce a partner in front of the class, and I told someone to help me introduce him, that I did not know

English. And the teacher asked the boy if he wanted to do the activity with me in Spanish, and he said no, he did not know Spanish. To me, it made me feel bad, sad and a little upset, because I knew I had heard him before speaking Spanish (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

When questioned about what would have helped her in school, Nancy had this to say:

It would have helped me not be so shy or feel intimidated by my own classmates. Also, to not worry about my way of speaking English, if I mispronounced, or if I said it wrong. On another occasion in a class, I had to read, and pronounced something wrong, and everyone laughed and that affected my development in my classes in other years (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

As is the case with Nancy, bullying may have a deep and lasting effect on one's education and life. It is not new for bullies to pick on the new student, but when that student does not have control of the English language, they become easy, vulnerable targets. Oscar felt this in a major way, to the point of being afraid, and even suffering from panic attacks. He said:

I was thinking that I had no friends and very overwhelmed by everything that was happening. Only some of them (other students) were helpful. I remember they used to call me 'paisa' just because I was not assimilated

to the US culture (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Stakeholders must do whatever is in their realm of possibility to prevent all bullying, but particularly for LEELs. It isn't always the random student, either; Roberto was teased in his science class for mispronouncing words, relating, "Sometimes I felt like I was being bullied by some of my friends" (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Friends

It appears friends are highly instrumental from a motivational standpoint, and often very supportive when it comes to pronunciation, or help with homework. However, many participants felt their friends were *not* helpful in acquiring English, because they simply carried on conversations in Spanish on a continual basis. Oscar puts it this way, "My friends were not that helpful, especially because we would only speak Spanish. I never practiced my English (with my friends)" (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Sahara had a similar experience, where she only spoke Spanish with her friends. Roberto, on the other hand, relied on a good friend to help, "I would just be writing in Spanish, and he (his friend) would translate in English, and he would

tell me how to translate it. He would go step-by-step, telling me how to do it” (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Occasionally students are forced to grow apart from friends who are not helping them with English; for instance, from high school to college. Nancy had this observation:

During high school they did perhaps make it more difficult, because among my friends and I spoke only Spanish and no English. Until the college and I met many more people who do not speak Spanish, I was forced to speak much English, I have my friends that speak Spanish and I speak in both languages, but being surrounded where much English is spoken and is most often heard helped me develop my English and my speech. I started to stop feeling so nervous to talk to people and I feel that I can speak English much more fluently, the words and expressions I learned here in college with my friends and roommates (N. Solaris, personal communication, March 7, 2014).

There is another issue which exacerbates the lack of opportunities for practicing English in the surrounding communities. This is primarily a Spanish speaking area. When asked if running errands or interacting in the community improved his English skills, Roberto explained:

Not in this community, because people here in this community, they are all Latinos and Hispanics, and they all speak Spanish. It’s so hard because

they don't want to speak in English to you. They would rather speak Spanish. Sometimes I think it's because they don't know English, and sometimes they'd just rather speak Spanish than English. Because I would go to other communities like Desert Willow or Santa Maria – that would be more of a chance for people to practice their English because people there speak more English than Spanish – but in the Eastern part, no (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Friends can definitely be an asset if they focus on helping each other with English. The key is to find activities one can do with a friend that will encourage or implement the English language. Participants described two areas in which friends were able to enjoy and assist in the English language – television and music.

Television

Nearly every participant mentioned the importance of television in acquiring English quickly. When asked which show helped her the most, Sahara did not hesitate, “*Lucy*, yes, I remember (I Love) *Lucy* - and they had those Spanish words once in a while, you know, because of the husband – I *love Lucy*, my goodness, yes” (S. Onder, personal communication, January 20, 2014).

Having a crush or a love interest on a TV show can also be helpful; Sahara reminisced, struggling for the name of the show at first, “What was the

name of that show?... Oh, *Wonder Years* – oh God, yes, I loved Kevin – I remember him. I loved that show” (S. Onder, personal communication, January 20, 2014).

It makes complete sense that television would help in learning English quickly. The video provides visual cues in perfect context, and the audio is usually quite simple. Several participants recollected watching cartoons to improve their English, and Mayra felt that watching children’s shows with her daughter certainly improved her English skills and her cultural capital.

This strategy also worked for Eva, “I would always watch cartoons – yeah, most of the time it was cartoons. I also had this – I would watch this show, what was the name, what was the name? ... I would watch the History Channel...” (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014). ”

Jorge offered, “National Geographic?” (J. Lopez, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Eva responded:

Yeah, and they would talk about, you know, *los Mayas* (the Mayans) and stuff like that. I think it was perfect, because I’m really into that stuff, like the Aztecs, I would just have this program that would talk about it, but in English – I would be like, yeah, that’s true. That’s true – I would be all excited to see this old guy telling us about the history of the Aztecs and all that, and I would be like, that’s true. So it would be translated, you know,

the words in my head, and I would be like, it's correct; sometimes with the dates, I would be, maybe I learned a *poquito diferente* (little differently), but it was still the same, so that's pretty good (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

One strategy for learning English is watching, listening or reading about topics that one knows well. Then context and vocabulary are understood in the first language as one attempts to watch, listen or read in the target language (English). Roberto felt seeing the news on television was very helpful, explaining the following:

Yes, (it helped) big time – because of the way they talk, the fancy words they use, the sophistication of everything they are saying, the way it's presented and how they project, that helps a lot. You get an idea of how you project yourself in the future and how to act when you see people of that level (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Indeed, television can be an excellent teacher of language; however, like music, each student is drawn to their own particular genre or style of entertainment. Although it may be difficult for a teacher to find a program that all students connect with and enjoy, it may be worth their effort. One must be certain that all students have access to television; watching a 30-minute program may be an excellent homework assignment. Teachers may also choose to record valuable excerpts of shows for students to watch and discuss together in class.

Music

Most participants agreed that music supplies a sound impact on learning English quickly. Mayra was a big fan of Christian singer Amy Grant and even printed out the lyrics to practice singing along. She also joined a church singing group, and feels that learning those songs helped her with pronunciation, and also building vocabulary. Sahara felt strongly that music was important for her acquisition skills, stating, “I was just listening to music – whatever my cousins played, so I asked them, who is this? – Oh, Lauryn Hill, okay, perfect, and they had the CDs or whatever, or the radio – R&B music, I like R&B” (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

Arianna added the following:

It’s funny, but when I was learning English, I remember one of my ELD teachers would make us sing different songs. Although it was fun and funny, it really did help. I actually still remember some of the songs we used to sing. Music would definitely help (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Agreeing that music is a valuable tool for learning English, Oscar stated, “Yes, especially slow songs. It helped with my pronunciation. I never liked rap because I was not able to understand a word” (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

“But for the purpose of learning English, I would just only focus on the English music,” added Roberto, “I was trying to pay attention to lyrics – I even downloaded them, printed them out to see them as well” (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Eva decided to switch genres when she realized she was learning some questionable language:

I was listening to more like... I got kind of into hip-hop, then, that was bad because of the bad words, and I heard so many bad words; so then I started getting into different types of music. I got more involved with rock ‘n roll; one class that I took in Community College - the rock ‘n roll class - that opened it up more, now I’m more into rock ‘n roll. It’s pretty cool, yeah (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Many participants described printing out the lyrics to songs, allowing them to read and comprehend the words as they sang along or enjoyed listening to the songs. This appears to be a very powerful way to expedite English acquisition.

Confidence

When asked, “Do you consider yourself a confident person?” many participants had similar responses to Arianna’s:

Now I do. All through high school and college, I didn’t feel confident at all. Not speaking the language affected me in that sense. It took a while for

me to gain my confidence back. I became a very shy and quiet person due to my inability to speak the language (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

This personality shift has got to be taxing for young adults. To go from a confident, outgoing person to someone hiding in the shadows, afraid that they will be called upon or engaged in conversation, has got to weigh on the psyche of any young person. In fact, it can be very detrimental to one's health; Arianna continues, "I was *Extremely* nervous, very scared, and the first days I was actually depressed. I didn't eat the first week of school because I actually wanted to go back to Mexico" (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Lionel had a similar observation:

I was very nervous – I was *very* nervous. It's hard – that transition going from one country to another country, and having to learn another language is always very challenging – brings a lot of baggage with that, you know? I think the first few months, It took me quite some time to adjust, and I wasn't feeling so comfortable. I was still doing my work, and I was still learning, and I was still being responsible, but I wasn't as confident, because I felt like there were times in which you feel like you're never going to get your goal because the barrier looked like it was too big for you

to overcome (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

The most alarming response came from Oscar: “No, I was not confident at all because I did not know the language, and I also suffered from severe panic attacks” (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014). This is a student whose parents work in the fields, so health insurance was probably not an option; It is estimated that 92 percent of farm workers do not have medical/health insurance (Colletti et al, 2006). It is a travesty that students such as Oscar must simply bear down and get over any medical issues that confront them, on their own. He then continued:

I was thinking that I had no friends and was very overwhelmed by everything that was happening. I was extremely scared because I remember that the first day of school I got could not even find my bus and did not know who to talk to (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

This is the kind of stress teachers, counselors and administrators must try to be in tune with. There is very little learning going on if LEELs are simply operating in survival mode. Stakeholders should actively attempt to keep stress levels down for all students, but especially LEELs, who may develop serious health issues as a result.

There is added stress and pressure for many English learners as they are relied upon by their families to be their voice, translators, liaisons and more. Mayra was called upon to take care of the family finances at a very young age because her parents did not speak English.

One reason students' self-esteem may be diminished is that teachers tend to underestimate their intelligence, mistaking English language ability for IQ. It is true that many teachers are not prepared to deal with English Learners (Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000), but it would seem to fall under the guise of common sense that these students do not have the intellect of a five or ten-year-old child. Rocio described the frustration of going from studying organic chemistry in Spanish in Mexico to reading children's books in English in California. It was insulting and demoralizing, and it wasn't until the following year, when she took AP Spanish that her confidence was restored.

Lionel concurs, expressing, "... I think Ms. Stahl saw all of her students as smart students, or at least students that had potential – students that were smart and intelligent, with only a language barrier - not learning disability. And she made her class challenging" (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

This is good advice and extremely important for teachers of LEELs to keep in mind. Nearly every participant expressed the need and desire to be

challenged, and were disappointed and frustrated by teachers who underestimated them, or assigned very little work.

All of this depicts a glaring need for what Arianna, Rocio and Eva suggested – a newcomer or mentor program, where students do not have to feel alone, uneasy or frightened. These feelings of angst and inadequacy are not only conducive to doing poorly in school, they are also very unhealthy. LEELs should be given a chance to attend challenging classes and learn to the best of their ability without being concerned with peripheral issues such as bullying, neglect, poverty, isolation, being the family spokesperson or feeling lost. The unanswered questions remain; whose responsibility is it to organize such a group, program or club? Also, how can we procure a relaxed, yet academic atmosphere in which these new students can be challenged, and yet learn to the best of their ability?

Counselors

The primary and most alarming issue resultant of the research is the powerful and dynamic role played and misplayed by counselors. Eight out of twelve participants felt that counselors either didn't do their jobs effectively, or were completely disrespectful to the skills and desires of the students. There were many cases in which counselors dictated in a straightforward manner that students were not capable of graduating or going to college, therefore refusing to

listen to the LEELs, or making little or no effort to assist them in their preferred educational goal.

It is alarming that this small sample size revealed so many instances of a counselor (perhaps the same counselor in more than one instance) who was either unwilling to help or incapable of doing their job. The recent lack of assistance or expertise described in the research was attributed to Desert Palms High School. Examples of counselors making judgments about students' skills and drive were prevalent. In such cases, counselors pigeonholed students into simple classes with very little challenge or hope of college preparation. The thought of counselor judgment pre-determining the fate of these students provides a giant red flag in the everyday operation of our schools.

This particular participant LEEL sample is unique in the sense that each individual (except one "super senior" who still needs to pass the English CAHSEE) found a way to learn English quickly, succeeding in their goal of becoming a high school graduate. Nearly every member felt the need to, not just overcome the lackadaisical or judgmental approach of their counselor, but in many cases, to strive to prove them wrong. Several participants described the feeling of satisfaction in proving to their counselors that they were not only prepared to graduate from high school, but they were also determined to succeed in college. Roberto made a point of visiting his counselor to show her his diploma, and inform her that he was going to college.

When Sahara described approaching her counselor (after she had transferred to a neighboring school district) to ask how she could obtain a scholarship as her friend had done, the cutting response of her counselor, “No, you won’t be going to college” (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014), may have varied and wide repercussions. Lionel had a similar experience: “When I told (asked) him, why am I being placed in these classes when I want to go to college, he pretty much told me, you don’t speak English - you’re not going to college” (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Admittedly, one could see where a counselor might jump to the conclusion that LEELs have too daunting of a challenge to succeed. However, it appears that counselors must be very cautious in attempting to determine what is best for each individual student. At the very least, they must take into consideration the student’s past education, current scores and grades and their overall ambition and goals.

It is disconcerting to consider how many students took the counselors’ word as truth, giving up on their educational dream. Perhaps some counselors feel their negativity may provide positive action, but at what cost? Is this the proper way to go about challenging a student? The majority of the participants in this study found someone, somehow, to make a difference in their own lives. Many participants identified one or two particular individuals who encouraged them, making all the difference in their educational future. As

described by Arianna, these individuals serving as catalysts did not have to produce motivational speeches, financial assistance or even be shining examples; they simply needed to show signs of concern or human kindness. The simple act of any adult in a student's life asking how they are doing, or if they might need some help, goes a long way toward the confidence, self-esteem and consequent academic focus of a high school student, especially LEELs.

Oscar seemed to know all along that that special person was needed:

I was more confident once I passed the CAHSEE. I noticed that some students that had been living here for their whole life did not pass it, and I passed it the first time. That's when I started to build more confidence. All I needed was someone that believed in me and talked about a brighter future (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Profound instinct on his part, but one must admit, that is not a lot for a student to ask in a school setting.

The lone participant who lauded their assigned counselor for being an important part of their educational progress (two participants at Desert Palms High School credited an *unassigned* counselor they sought out for themselves) was Arianna at Vista Sands High School. She was inspired and encouraged just by the way her counselor would check in with her to see how she was doing, or just to say hello.

Participants described counselors setting up their classes for them, and discussing what was needed for graduation, but most wanted much, much more. Eva described a wonderful relationship she had with her teacher, and lamented the following:

I didn't have that with my counselor – they would always just help me to have my student plan. You are going to do this, you (are) going to discuss this in order for you to graduate, in order for you to get your diploma – that's all you need. You know, sometimes,... I'm not saying that they didn't help me, but sometimes I wanted to talk to someone and tell them, this is what I'm feeling right now, I would like to get some help; like when I wanted to play basketball and didn't have any insurance – okay, there, we need to have insurance. So I wanted to have someone who could tell me, okay, there's these programs that you can apply, and maybe they can help you – that way, you can have other options. But I think they could've done a better job than that, but they really didn't (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Eva offered her advice to someone unhappy with their counselor:

I would ask to look for another counselor; like the counselor that I was supposed to go and look for, Mr. Cortez, the one that would tell me okay, you need this, seniorita, you are not doing right on this, you need to take this class

instead – he always would tell me, you know, straight out. You need to do this this and this... (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

If there is no one on campus to advocate for these students, making certain they are comfortable, motivated and productive, what is to prevent them from simply walking away and dropping out? This is especially true for those who were told they had no chance of graduating. This would appear to be a normal reaction from someone who feels lost and invisible, or what Roberto referred to as “in the gray area” (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014). It is sad that several participants described avoiding their counselor and seeking out a different counselor or someone who was willing to be of some assistance, just as Eva had done. One particular (former) counselor, Mr. Cortez, was mentioned several times as a dedicated leader in providing students with the information, guidance, care and support they not only deserve, but which they crave. Oscar described it thusly:

I remember that I stopped visiting my counselor because he would only give me electives, because according to him, I was not university material, just because I was placed in ELD classes. All I needed was someone that believed in me and encouraged me to go to college. Because of that counselor, I decided to change counselors and ‘adopted’ Sal Cortez as my new counselor. He was very helpful (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Who and where are the Sal Cortezes of the counseling world and how can we convince them to work in our schools or train more counselors to be like them? Administrators and Human Resource personnel must be very careful when choosing counselors, as they obviously may have a very negative effect on students. It is interesting to note that all the counselors employed at Desert Palms High School were Latina/o, which should be beneficial to a student body that is 99 percent Latino. Apparently that is not the case.

It doesn't always have to be a counselor to provide that spark for LEELs. Coaches can also make a unique difference, as witnessed by Eva:

The best advice that I received in high school is that I have to push myself to accomplish my goals and become someone important. The person that will impact many people, Coach Miguel, told me once, if you set your mind to accomplish your goals, you could do anything to reach and accomplish it (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Some participants agreed with Roberto as he stated the following:

I wish my counselors would have provided me with more resources to get me prepared to go to school. Because I didn't know anything about the financial aid, anything about the colleges. I was... I just did my Desert Community College application because one of my friends helped me –

otherwise I wouldn't even have gone to DCC (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Roberto also felt underestimated by his counselor. When asked what he wished his counselor would have taught or told him, he responded:

I wish my counselors would have taught or told me that I was going to be able to make it, because imagine - she said to move back to my English IV class because I wasn't going to graduate – the encouragement, passion, more trusting the students would be better, would be very good (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Table 4.1

Quotes on Counselors

Initials	Quote
S.O.	My counselor – she didn't believe in me. I went to her office and I asked her about scholarships. I told her, "I need help, what do I need to do to get a scholarship, because I want to go to college." She looked at me, and she goes, "You're not going to go to college."
A.F.	I did however appreciate a counselor who made me aware of the possibilities of going to college.

R.N.	My counselors were always very friendly and serviceable, but sometimes they were very busy, too.
L.B.	I had different ones - I think every year, I had a different one. I don't know why they kept on changing them. There was one that I lost a lot of respect for... he pretty much told me, you don't speak English - you're not going to college.
O.F.	I remember that I stopped visiting my counselor because he would only give me electives; because according to him, I was not university material, just because I was placed in ELD classes. All I needed was someone that believed in me and encouraged me to go to college...
R.R.	I would have liked to hear more advice from them, and at the same time they should listen to me when I had concerns, but they did not.
N.S.	It could be said that the counselors were friendly but most were not interested in helping.
R.M.	She said there was no point for me to go back to my English IV class, because I wasn't going to graduate, because of my limitations in the English language.
R.R.	"Mija, study more, maybe you can graduate." This is the most beautiful advice I could hear (sarcastic tone).
A.F.	The best thing my counselors did was check in with us, acknowledge us. ELs need someone to go to, even just for simple things like how to get books from the library, what we need to do to graduate, etc.

What Should Late-entry English Learners Know and Do?

Without a doubt, the main message from the participants of this study is that LEELs must be motivated and willing to challenge themselves. They must seek out those who will help them, find inspiration from those around them, and must know that dictionaries are their best friend if they truly want to learn English quickly and fulfill their educational goals. They must also be tenacious, and never, *ever* quit!

Both Eva and Arianna suggested the need for a club on campus that would provide some type of motivation, comfort and belonging for ELs. One cannot underestimate the sense of belonging, as witnessed in a class assignment Arianna shared from her master's program:

When I went to college I went through a major culture, language, and class shock. I lived at the dorms my first year and even though I did see many students who looked like me, I felt that I was really on my own, I felt as if I was 'the only one' who struggled. Even though several students looked like me physically, culturally we were very different. They came from a newer generation of Latinos; Latinos who had assimilated into the culture and life of the U.S. I felt like we had not much in common, except of course, our family names and some of the language and music. Other than that, I felt very different. I missed my family, my friends, my own. I

didn't belong there (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

This research implies that students must find a way to feel they belong; they must find a way for their voice to be heard. Once their educational goals have been set, nothing or no one should be allowed to stop them. This means Late-entry English Learners must find a way to be motivated and dedicate themselves to their mission.

We cannot assume that just because students are Latino, they will automatically get along and assist other Latinos. Each situation is unique and students come from a wide variety of Spanish-speaking countries and/or areas. As in any other group, there will be personality clashes, disrespect and even bullying among students who appear to have the same or similar backgrounds. English Learners have a very serious disadvantage in overcoming the language barrier. Arianna continued, "I was the only one who had to read the material three times only to be able to translate the content into my own language, let alone grasp the main ideas" (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

She goes on to say that she felt "limited", and that she had no voice. However, Arianna's hard work and dedication paid off, and her story appears to continue happily, a successful high school math teacher with a beautiful family

and a true sense of belonging. Yet this was a hard fought battle; she remembers, “As I grew up, struggled, worked hard and looked around, I started seeing that I actually was *not* the only one. There were many others like me, fighting the same battle. Of course, at the end, we were victorious” (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

New Late-entry English Learners must remember that they, too, can be victorious; education is said to be the great equalizer in America, and in many cases, this has proven to be true. LEELs must feel the intrinsic motivation and the power to write their own story, if they truly want to make a difference for themselves, their families and their community.

As beautiful and true as the victorious sentiment is, I cannot help but feel empathy for the many students who did not have a counselor who cared, did not have a teacher who connected, did not have a mentor to guide. Are we truly doing the best we can to educate, nourish and encourage *all* of our students today? This research looks at one particular group of overlooked, under represented, yet worthy students – Late-entry English Learners; unfortunately for them, the answer is *NO!*

Students must do their best to remain confident and find what works best for them in acquiring English quickly. Participants agree that television and music are two key ways to improve one’s English skills, and recommend printing out

song lyrics to read as they listen. LEELs should choose their friends and acquaintances carefully, attempting to provide opportunities to practice English often and build confidence. They must attempt to forego the comfort of hearing their native language when English-speaking teachers will challenge them linguistically and academically. Awareness of bullies and bullying is the first step towards avoidance, and LEELs should seek out teachers, counselors, peers and administrators who are willing to help out. It is also recommended that LEELs get involved in various clubs, sports and activities, on and off campus.

What Should Administrators Know and Do?

Administration was not given high marks by the participants. In fact, they received the lowest average score, 1.8, on the 0-5 Likert scale. However, critiquing how the school is run and the way things are done on campus is difficult for a student to ascertain or put into words, so I did not anticipate many specifics being given. It did not escape the students under the age of twenty-five that Desert Palms High School has had a quick and varied succession of leadership configurations, never having the same administrative group in place for more than one year since the retirement of the school's founding principal, Mr. Ceballos.

Eva referenced that situation in this quote:

I think what I see that kind of affects the students right now is that we get a new principal every year – I don't see that as good. You normally have this principal that will stay with us four years, you know. That actually helps build the program so that the principal will be interested in helping and having meetings with the parents, and maybe the principal could get involved with the students. Because I remember sometimes the principal of the school would come watch us play (basketball), you know, come watch our games, and it feels good to have a principal like that. I remember all the schools we used to go to, the principals would be there and sometimes our principal wasn't there, and it's like, okay, where's our principal? So sometimes it is better if the principal is more involved, not just to help the vice-principal – I understand that they have stuff to do, but if they put more time being involved about the way things are going... because you know, it's like the principal is here, and everyone likes the principal – everyone wants to be good with the principal. If the principal says 'hi' to you, and you would say, what? The principal said hi to me! If the principal goes up to you and says, 'How are you doing?' It's like a highlight for your day. If these people would get involved in the programs, that would be good. That's the way I see it (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Oscar proved to be exceptionally insightful when he stated the following:

I feel that administration was little or no help. I also feel they never really focused on ELD classes. I know that teaching an ELD class is really hard, especially when you do not have the support from administrators. I think that my ELD teachers did not have access to useful resources that could have enhanced our learning. I do not remember that my ELD teachers had trained teacher aids, Rosetta-Stone, technology, or books other than High-Point (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Oscar's observation is not only insightful, it is unfortunately very true.

After suggesting that teachers know the English level of each of their students, Roberto was asked about administration's role in helping English Learners, and had this to say:

I would say the same for them (they should know the level of each student) because sometimes administration is very, very concerned about other things such as suspensions, they don't pay any attention to the English Learners. They just leave them on the side, hoping they will learn English one day, but they really don't take action to do what they need to do. They are just looking at test scores – they should be looking into teachers' reports, referrals, things like that, so they can develop a plan for those students that are falling behind (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

One recommendation that surfaced through the interviews was that of a newcomer program for English learners, and possibly their parents. Due to the built-in time constraints on LEELs, this is a difficult challenge, but perhaps some type of abbreviated class or orientation would be beneficial. One perplexing problem for several years at Desert Palms High School was the implementation of two teachers for three ELD classes. One teacher was forced to teach two levels of ELD simultaneously. Thankfully, due to new administration, this issue has been addressed, but Eva described her experience:

When I started taking ELD classes, there were students that were more advanced than me, so I remember my teacher putting some questions (on the board) and just asking, and a student saying, yes, I know this, I know this; but for me, it was just my first time being in that type of class. I was like, I don't know, why are you going so fast? You need to slow down. He (the other student) knows that – he should go to another class - you know. He shouldn't be here (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

She is absolutely right, and that frustration and mistreatment continued, particularly when classes were full. The ELD instructor (who had never worked at the high school level before), already overburdened teaching two levels at once, was required to choose a certain number of students to be “bumped up” to the next level. This was not based on any testing or grading; simply placed at the

new, inexperienced teacher's discretion, due to the class being overcrowded.

Eva described it this way:

Sometimes the teacher would be like, he knows and you don't know so... he knows, so we're doing our job good, we're doing good. So, sometimes it would be good to have this exam to know what level we are. That way, to know it will help students to end up with a professor (teacher) to say okay, I can just focus on these... Because I remember sometimes I didn't know how to put a subject in a sentence – I was like, okay, I know how to do it in Spanish, but it's not the same in English. No. It all comes to having the level, and that level with the professor (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Eva's kind, helpful character came out during this exchange when asked, "What about culturally, were you comfortable with the new culture?" She replied:

I'm glad in the school that they started doing the things like the *Posada* and events like that, because when those events were happening in school, it was like, okay, yes, I feel like I'm in my country. I feel like I'm celebrating culture in my country (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

When reminded that not all students are from Mexico, through the question, “What about the students we had from China?” Eva’s kind, thoughtful nature jumped to the foreground:

Oh, well that’s... *We should do something for them, too!* It’s not fair just to have *Day of the Dead* and all this stuff, we should do activities for them, too, or we should have a club or something like that, that has some different cultures just for us to hang out and just to share – you know, like one day we could just, I don’t know, just bring your favorite food and just share with each other – talk about the cultural things we used to do when we were small, that would be something really cool, because that would be interesting to know about people from China or from (El) Salvador, because El Salvadorans are different from Mexico, but still. I don’t know what their culture is – I don’t know as much as a few of my country, you know? So I think if we do something for, like *Day of the Dead*, you know, for the Mexicans, we should do something just as well for them (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

I believe Eva would truly make a thoughtful, diplomatic administrator. Her point is well taken - administration must reach out to all cultures and languages represented in their district, including family members, businesses, community members and all stakeholders. There is a fairly large contingent of indigenous EL students from Michoacan, Mexico, in the district, complete with their own

language – the P’urepecha. For some reason, they all pencil in ‘Spanish’ as their home language on the Home Language Survey, negating the fact that, by law, there should be a P’urepecha speaking teacher or aid available on campus to assist these students and their families. It’s amazing that the powers that be simply pretend it isn’t happening; another example of lack of service.

One important aspect which surfaced during this study is the list of programs that participants felt truly did help them get where they are today. Programs such as AVID, the PASS Program, Bilingual Training Recruitment Program (BTRP), Upward Bound and Migrant Education have all made profound differences in the lives of these LEELs.

Eva had this to say about the PASS program:

What helped me a lot is that I was a good student, and I spoke English most of the time – I tried to hang out more with students who spoke English, to hear more English than Spanish. So, I would stay in the after-school program – the PASS program, which was one of the best programs that helped me to be able to graduate from high school (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

She continued, describing how the PASS program helped her sister, another successful LEEL, who was not interviewed as part of this research:

That program (PASS) helped my sister a lot, because she got here when she was a sophomore... junior, my bad, junior – she came to the program, she was able to do five classes online, so you'd see her always with a bunch of books and dictionaries, like for math, for history, for health and for English, she took all those classes with the PASS program, so she was able to get her diploma, thanks to that program and she did it like, all her junior year – during the summer, she was doing it again because they offered the program again in the summer, which was really good because they even provided us buses (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Administrators have a tough job, and difficult decisions to consider. Three major expenditures were met in order for the situation Eva described to happen; the PASS program, summer school and providing bussing for the students. Vista Canyon Unified School District is a very rural area, so bussing becomes an expensive consideration for nearly every program offered.

Eva also felt she benefited greatly from the migrant program:

They (Migrant Program) offer a lot of programs for students –students like me, to go to different schools, like UCR or San Bernardino, and I remember that they let us stay over there for a week, so we were able to experience that college life, and we actually had some students from the

school and they were helping us. We would go to class with them, we would have the schedule they would have, we would go with that person to their class, we would do what they would do, and it was so cool because I was like, oh my God, I want to do this – I was so excited to do that, you know? And that's something really, really good that the migrant program did for us, and was very helpful. And another thing was, they would always give us books – like every month I think we would get books, and I remember it was like the best. I started looking for the most interesting book – I want this one, or no, I want this one – that's something really good, because if you think about it, they're trying to help you a lot by just giving you those books for free, just for you to read it, just for you to learn something from that book...even the dictionaries – I remember my sister, she wouldn't get books, she would get dictionaries. I was like, why don't you get a book? But no, she'd always go for the dictionary (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was supposed to assure that all teachers were qualified to teach the subject they were assigned. Unfortunately, this has not always been true for LEELs. Lionel provided outstanding advice for administration:

Make sure that the teachers that are teaching or helping the kids are trained for that. It just doesn't take anyone that's got a Credential in

literature, you know? Literature – let’s face it, we teach *literacy* (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Arianna also has some advice for administrators, “It’s important for leaders to share their experience and to give students faith - there has to be some type of student connection, perhaps a club with student mentors. English Learners need some type of motivation, and perhaps that can be provided by mentors or guest speakers” (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

It is apparent from this research that better care needs to be taken of LEELs, and that should come from administration and/or policy makers. Some type of orientation or newcomer program needs to be put in place. A club or program where LEELs can meet regularly, feel as though they belong, have their questions answered, and generally feel wanted, should be part of district and school policy. LEELs should be encouraged to join clubs, sports and activities, and be made to feel welcome along with their parents and families. Participants agreed that ideally some type of connection to the school must be extended cordially to LEELs on a regular basis.

What Should Teachers Know and Do?

Arianna states, “Any teacher showing patience and caring will be beneficial to English Learners” (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014). However, teachers must learn to work together to maximize the

Learning potential for their English Learners (Newman et al., 2010). English teachers were awarded the highest Likert score by participants, 4.33 out of 5. There is a fallacy that anyone who speaks English well will be a good ELD teacher. Not only is this false, but many single subject teachers have never been taught how to work with English Learners (DelliCarpini, 2008).

This research promulgates the belief that all English Learners are unique, therefore, it is extremely difficult to say exactly which strategies or materials teachers should use to be successful with LEELs. I will attempt to relay some of the more poignant observations about teachers from the participants, all of whom are considered successful Late-entry English Learners.

Lionel truly admired the way his teacher directed his ELD class at Vista Sands High School, providing this description:

Ms. Stahl was the person who helped me the most. She exposed us to wonderful literature written by Latino writers. Although some students were probably not fully ready for those novels, she still challenged us and we overcame all language barriers. She had us practice our speaking, listening, reading and writing skills on a daily basis. She knew that her students didn't have any learning disabilities; she understood it was just a language barrier. She was always very encouraging and truly saw the potential in all of her students (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Therein lies some clues for educators who work with LEELs; challenge your students; practice your speaking, listening, reading and writing skills on a daily basis; stay encouraging, and look for the potential in *all* of your students.

More excellent advice came from Roberto, as he said:

They (ELD teachers) should know the situation and the levels that their students are – if they are basic, advanced, or any level they are. And they should be able to help them with the right materials, because what works for one student may not work for the other one. Just knowing the difference in each of the students' personalities, skills and knowledge - that would be better efficiency for the students and the teacher (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

Single subject teachers should definitely know who their English learners are, as expressed by Eva:

There were some teachers that didn't know that I was an ESL student, and some of those classes were really hard for me, so I tried a lot, and I felt like those professors (teachers), they didn't take into consideration all my struggles. And that did kind of affect me. I ended up getting, you know, like bad grades – I'm not saying that I failed that class, you know. But my goal was to get straight A's in all my classes. And sometimes because of that, I would get like a B or a C, and I would still be mad, you know, because I wanted to get an A. But sometimes, it seems a little bit that they

don't really care, or they don't even teach them that. I remember going to this class and I would be like, what? What are we doing? Just watching this film? Or just read these pages and answer these questions? That was all – And I didn't feel like I was learning anything (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

If one truly wants to be a successful and dedicated ELD teacher, one must advocate for the students to the best of their ability at all times. When Lionel was told by his counselor that he wouldn't be going to college due to his lack of English skills, one person gave him the courage to fight back; "I always had the initiative, you know – teachers like Miss Stahl, you know, she always taught us to fight for what we deserved. She was great with that" (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Who and where are the Ms. Stahls of this world, and how can we convince them to teach, model and share their expertise? Is there truly a way to teach educators, counselors and administrators how to care? Can we advise a new teacher, counselor or administrator how to bridge relationships and show concern for students and their families? These questions and the ideal scenario are beyond the scope of this research, but worth contemplating.

Not only did Lionel take his lessons from Ms. Stahl to heart. As a learner, he also became an effective ELD teacher; in fact, he was Nancy's teacher when

she first arrived in the U.S. It is nice to see those who have been reached and helped put forth their own effort to assist the following generation. Being a protégé of Ms. Stahl, it is no wonder that Lionel gave the most complete and thoughtful response to the question regarding best practices for Late-entry English Learners; here is what he had to say (with key ideas in bold print):

I actually had to teach the newcomers for the longest time when I first started working here (Torrez Canyon Middle School). You use a lot of **visuals**. I remember using a lots of **SDAIE strategies**, I remember that I would **repeat things slowly**, too; I remember that I would have them do a lot of **think-pair-share** activities so they could work on their speaking skills. I **taught grammar explicitly**, too - I don't think you have to put up a circus or anything like that to teach grammar, maybe that's a very traditional way of saying it, but I think you open the book, the teacher explains it, and then, you know – that's the way you learned... / think.

Reading books, reading books in class - I remember I actually used some of those books with Ms. Stahl that were used in high school, I remember that we read with my students, *Esperanza Rising*, and I wanted to expose my students to other types of literature, not just Hispanic literature, per se, so I would use books like *Bridge to Terrabitha*, which is like a 4th grade book - but it wasn't about the level, it was about the fact that they were **reading a book in English**, and I think that is very

important. I think when students realize that they can read English and understand it, I think that's all you need, try to motivate them to continue reading even more.

Group projects - a lot of group projects, and I remember at that time in particular, it was challenging because I was teaching 3 different groups at the same time in the middle of the year. I had to regroup everyone: I would let them work in groups and then I would rotate - so yes, **a lot of group work**. What else... **Video, visuals, power points** – I've always been in favor of **technology**, I think, still to this point, my **students need to see it**. Also, always making **personal connections – activating prior knowledge, always making those personal connections**, and I think that students, if they can't relate to what they're reading, they're not going to be interested. We lose them – **they have to find something that they can relate to**. I think just **challenging your students**, you know? Don't make it easy for them – don't lower your expectations. Don't try to plan for easy stuff. Challenge them (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Oscar, who plans to finish his teaching credential this spring, also added some poignant observations:

I liked teachers that were able to make a connection with students. I liked teachers that would smile and make you feel welcome in their classrooms

- teachers that were able understand our social-economic status, culture, and background; teachers that used art and made us think critically. I liked to reflect and connect the curriculum with real life experience (O. Fuentes, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

Rocio adeptly described her version of what good teachers do, with this statement:

Without doubt, my high school teachers had helped me the most to learn English and succeed academically in and out of school by giving me their support, assigning me a considerable amount of homework, and find(ing) new and different ways to inspire me to continue in school (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

Roberto also discussed the importance of note taking:

Taking notes is very good because you can review them at home or anyplace else. But while you are taking them, I would say it doesn't really help a lot because you are only copying down what it is. If students are to review them afterwards, it does help, better than just taking the notes and leaving them in your folder – that won't help a lot (R. Martinez, personal communication, March 14, 2014).

It appears a running theme throughout the interviews was the desire to be challenged. Sahara stated the following:

I didn't even have any hard classes. I think the dictionaries saved my life – and one of my cousins, he helped me translating the words as well, but no, no hard classes for me. But this is why, again, because I wasn't placed in challenge classes. I just was placed in any class that was available for them - Not for me, for them – the counselor (S. Onder, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

Most teachers are accustomed to wearing more than one hat, and for teaching LEELs this proves to be a necessity. Sometimes the job of the teacher becomes counselor, as described by Eva:

I remember talking more with Ms. Benitez (than her counselor), just talking or telling my personal life with her – I think she was my counselor - telling her, you know, this is how I feel – and she would share with me some of her personal experiences, you know, like I did this, you can do it, too. I went to this university - you can do it, too. But you have to do this, this and that – you have to be a leader, you have to accomplish this goal – you have to work hard for it (E. Cebedo, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Teachers, also, must work hard to accommodate and encourage English Learners. Many students, especially those challenged by the English language, arrive in our classrooms every year, afraid and nervous, feeling inadequate. Sadly, many are bullied or teased because of their lack of command of English.

Teachers must be very aware of the dynamics of their classroom, the interactions of their students and what is going on at all times in their room. There are no statistics kept regarding the dropout rates of LEELs, so we have no clear indication of how many students simply give up and refuse to come to school, or make the financial decision to seek employment to support their family. If these students are truly being discouraged, bullied and mistreated, why wouldn't they leave school? This 'pushout' (Fry, 2005) effect may even be purposefully implemented in some areas to protect a school's high-stakes standardized test scores.

One reason LEELs have to fight so hard is the misunderstanding of teachers who are ill prepared to educate them. Lionel put it best with this quote:

I feel that sometimes ELD students are looked down (upon) and they're seen as a problem, you know, or at least we're viewed as we have a problem – but we don't, we don't have a learning disability – it's a language barrier. The knowledge is there. We have knowledge. It's in a different language, but it's there. All we have to do is just learn the second language and then transfer all of that into a new language, and that's it (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

He continued, solemnly, "Yeah, and I remember sometimes teachers would talk to us like we were... I don't know, like we were dumb, I guess. You

know, I'm smart – I'm just learning another language, that's it" (L. Bustamante, personal communication, February 27, 2014).

Participants identified trust and patience as two endearing qualities of excellent teachers, especially in areas of explanation and pronunciation. One area of contention that was appreciated much later was that of teachers insisting LEELs speak English. Some participants didn't completely understand or appreciate this while it was happening, but now consider it instrumental in acquiring English skills quickly.

Several participants were extremely grateful that their teachers truly cared for and about them, as Ariana related, "My teachers also showed me patience and caring, and I could feel it. It helped me to feel empowered" (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014). It takes a very special, caring person with a humanistic outlook to be a good teacher, and this is especially true with Late-entry English Learners.

Final Thoughts

From a research perspective, I feel the participant pool was more than adequate, and provided a very complete picture of the lived experience of Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon School District. The age range

among participants is approximately 20 years, providing a consistent snapshot of what LEELs have faced in the district in the recent past, and continue to face today.

Ironically, two of the younger participants had been students of two of the more senior contributors in the sample. All of the younger participants were students at Desert Palms High School, and because the school has been open just over ten years, the more experienced participants were products of Vista Sands High School, approximately five miles away.

I was surprised by the prevalence of bullying as it pertained to LEELs. I was also shocked and appalled by the counselors' treatment of many of the participants. The majority complained about the lack of caring and professionalism of their counselors, but the fact that a student advisor would come straight out and tell talented, dedicated students that they simply were not going to graduate baffles me. When asked about the best thing a counselor did for her, Rachel, studying to become a doctor, replied sarcastically, "Mija, study more, *maybe* you can graduate,' - This is the most beautiful advice I could hear" (R. Ramos, personal communication, March 20, 2014).

I will not even pretend to understand or explain the lack of communication or compassion between the counselors and the participants. I'm certain all of the counselors are not at fault, but the ones that are should possibly reconsider their

approach or their choice of profession. It is certainly something that deserves closer scrutiny and more research.

One set of issues that I will not elaborate on is immigration and undocumented students. These issues hit very close to home in the area, and are central to the dynamics of education and everyday life, but will not remain a primary focus of this study. My intent was to share with the world a picture of these amazing American heroes, to describe some essence of their immense struggle and to provide for them a chance to use their voice – voices that up until now have been silenced or ignored.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

“Love is the key, everyone needs to receive it – love automatically makes you want to grow and learn” (A. Figueroa, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

About the Research

An interesting element of this research is the high number of participants devoted to education. The participant pool is comprised of two high school teachers, two middle school teachers, four college students intending to be teachers and three college students who remain undecided. I believe this makes their observations and suggestions that much more powerful, as these key stakeholders have an inside knowledge regarding the intricacies of policies and procedures within their state, district and individual school sites. Of the undecided participants, one is a sophomore at UCLA and two are considered “super seniors”. These are high school students in their second year as seniors, accumulating enough credits to earn a high school diploma. One has passed the CAHSEE and is scheduled to graduate in June, while the other is still struggling to pass the CAHSEE in English. Rocio was also a super senior several years ago at Vista Sands High School. It would seem both fair and equitable for LEELs to

have an extra year to complete their high school requirements while developing their English skills.

The age range of participants in this study is approximately 20 years. While each participant was offered \$20 worth of gift certificates for participating, nearly all felt that having a chance to let their experiences be known, giving a voice to English Learners in general and the opportunity to help future English Learners were the most important aspects of involvement.

Two of the younger participants had been taught by two of the more senior participants. It is encouraging to see past LEELs returning as educators to assist those in a similar situation. Not only are four of the college participants preparing to be teachers, at least two of them have their hearts set on returning to the Vista Canyon School District to teach. These trends say a lot about the love and encouragement, not to mention the educational skills instilled in these wonderful young people, who were once nervous and frightened LEELs.

Oscar provided this observation of the interview and survey:

I think this was a good reflection of my own experience as a student. I feel that my old school (Desert Palms High School) did have some very good teachers and some that were not that great. I liked to be challenged and helped by my teachers. Now that I am on the other side (completing his teaching credential), I try to help all my students and I understand it is a very hard profession, but I feel that my teachers had a huge impact on the

way I think right now. I feel that students at risk are the ones that are in need of motivation. They are the ones that need more support. I am also glad I got to meet extraordinary teachers that did care about me. I picked up a lot of things from them that I am now using with my own students.

It is both inspiring and encouraging to witness the torch being passed down to light the lamp of educational leadership in the Vista Canyon School District, where there is a plethora of true, dedicated professionals who make a profound difference on a daily basis, and it is an honor to witness their work. Teachers must realize we have the power, and our work continues to grow and regenerate. We are not just teaching a classroom of students, we are teaching future generations. As made clear in the literature review and throughout this paper, very little research has been dedicated to the education of Late-entry English Learners in American schools. The strength of this study is twofold; first, it brings awareness and focus to an unexamined topic, that of Late-entry English Learners; secondly, this study provides a voice for these amazing academics, something no one else appears to have done. Keep in mind these individuals have had to learn English very quickly while simultaneously passing core curriculum courses and electives in their new and second language.

This research allowed me to take a very close look at some true American heroes. These are strong, creative and unique scholars who refused to quit. These participants refused, for whatever reason(s), to give up on their

educational dream. It appears most of them want to be loving, contributing members of their own family, neighborhood and community, striving to contribute to a successful transition to a new culture and country.

The labor of love that I have undertaken in this research pales in comparison to the tears and fears and unmitigated workload these individuals have wrought. Their descriptions of best practices in learning the English language quickly lead me to believe that language learning is a very personal endeavor, characterized by individual choices, solo preferences and highly fueled by the *ganas*, or desire to succeed, no matter the obstacles. Ariana put it succinctly, "... these challenges made me stronger and gave me endurance to continue working, what I felt would liberate me; my education."

Yes; Education – the great equalizer. Yet, how can we convince *all* students that this is true? How many of our students are truly provided with the knowledge and navigational skills to achieve their potential in education today? Each participant in this study had exceptional teachers or leaders to learn from, but they also endured terrible teachers, administrators and counselors, yet learned despite them. There is no surefire formula for success that Late-entry English Learners can implement. However, this research has identified key points of interest in providing opportunity and encouragement for those individuals who are strong and resourceful enough to claim success.

I have yet to find any research that comes close to accomplishing what this study has, and I believe strongly in the validity of information gathered here, presented in the voices of those who have not only lived this strenuous, daunting challenge, but have succeeded with flying colors. All but two participants have had the chance to reflect for at least a year, and employ their metacognition skills in determining their recommendations for best practices for future Late-entry English Learners and their teachers, counselors and administrators.

The findings of this study point towards what is necessary for fair and equitable treatment of a vastly overlooked, yet powerful group of students. There is very little research and almost no statistics focused on Late-entry English Learners coming to California or U.S. schools. I believe the information presented here will surprise very many people, and hopefully open educational stakeholders' eyes as to the untapped resource and amazing abilities of these remarkable students. Just as many of them had been written off by their counselors, so too has society largely underestimated them, if it has acknowledged them at all.

Chapter 5 will discuss the extent to which the research questions have been addressed, recommended policy and practice resultant of the research and implications of the findings and proposed future research considerations. Observations will be linked accordingly with the literature, keeping in mind this is unique and original research, with little or nothing to directly compare.

After an overview of the research questions, I will begin this chapter by reviewing key factors of the lived experience expressed in Chapter 4, followed by shared observations of best practices by the participants for their teachers, administrators and themselves. The following section will identify vital areas of challenge and opportunity from which future Late-Entry English Learners might learn. It also provides a blueprint of assistance for teachers, counselors, administrators and stakeholders of Late-entry English Learners.

Research Questions:

1. What can we understand about the lived experiences of Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District and what are the challenges and best practices for learners needing to learn English quickly and to be academically successful?
2. What do Late-entry English Learners feel are the best practices for teachers in and out of the classroom to assist these students in acquiring the language quickly and in learning the content necessary to achieve passing grades in their courses?
3. What do Late-entry English Learners feel are the best practices of administrators and what policies and procedures can they put in place to positively affect Late-entry English Learners in the Vista Canyon Unified School District and beyond?

Lived Experience Concerns

Parents – Documentation – Finances

Some key findings regarding the lived experience of these young Americans has been established in this research. Most are children of farm laborers in the surrounding agricultural fields, and are financially challenged to say the least. Nearly 80 percent of farm workers report their annual household income as less than \$15,000 (Colletti et al., 2006). Poverty carries with it a plethora of social ills. Lack of medical services were determined to be the top concern with 92 percent of farm workers without medical/health insurance, and over half (52 percent) reporting they “never receive health care services during a typical year” or receive health care services only “for emergencies” (Colletti et al., 2006, p. 6).

When health services, community issues or important transactions are negotiated, many adolescent English Learners become spokespersons for their parents and their families, adding some serious stress to their lives. To exacerbate this, numerous students and their families are relegated to the shadows, afraid because they do not have legal documentation to participate in the society of this country; living with daily fear and apprehension, knowing that one mistake could mean the difference between sweet, hard-earned success and

possible deportation. One reason many LEELs do not have a voice is they do not dare speak out for fear of government retribution.

A key focal point of this study is the role of parents and parenting in the education of Late-entry English Learners. Nearly every participant described some aspect of parenting that facilitated their success. In most instances, the parents are hard-working farm laborers, with very little pay or benefits. There was no mention by any participants of their parents speaking English. However, many did mention that they were counted upon for translation and communication in English for their parents. This can be a source of much pressure on a young student. Mayra was designated as the family accountant strictly because of her grasp of the English language.

One must realize that these parents are also coming into a totally new and different culture. They should not be judged or chastised for applying parenting or social skills which have been instilled in them through generational lines in their home countries. When Eva described to her mother that she needed a dress as a homecoming candidate, and that her mother needed to attend the ceremony as her escort, her mother's first reaction was, no, we don't have money for a new dress and I will be too tired from working all day to attend a football game. One must realize this is not a heartless, selfish knee-jerk reaction or a parent trying to teach her child a valuable life lesson; this is simply a realistic viewpoint from a

wonderful, loving, single parent trying to do the best she can, for a daughter she loves and appreciates.

Although parents are often too busy working for other endeavors, it is recommended that schools or districts provide English classes for them. Just as this study pointed to after school and summer school programs making a positive difference for students, parents also may benefit from these opportunities. This researcher recommends Pedro Noguera's model of parental and student participation making the school a centerpiece of each community. Employ students as teachers, as Mr. Garcia has done in a wonderful program at Desert Palms High School, teaching adults how to use computers while simultaneously teaching them English. A 2006 survey of farm workers revealed 80 percent of them could not communicate in English, and 63 percent were interested in learning English (Colletti et al., 2006, p. 7).

Schools, districts, and educators must reach out to parents; they must be made to feel welcomed on school campuses and at educational meetings. Translation should be available, and everything possible should be done to help the parents understand the processes and protocol of education and the path to future opportunities for their children and themselves. It has long been believed that students whose parents are involved in their education do better in school, and this should be no different for LEELs. Parents undoubtedly immigrate with

their families for opportunities to have better quality of life. Some seize these opportunities prior to arranging for legal documentation.

Not every LEEL will have legal visas to be in the country; they are classified as AB-540 students¹. This is legally a non-issue, as students deserve the right to an education regardless, as a result of Plyler v. Doe, 1982 (Olivas, 2010). However, one must realize the sense of danger, fear and apprehension these students and families live with on a daily basis. Participants described being afraid to join a campus club, go on a field trip or even travel to an away game with their sporting team. It is a life style that most could only imagine, living in fear for yourself, your situation and your family on a continual basis. Students and families must have a safe place to discuss and ask questions regarding legal documentation, civil rights and environmental issues; the schools should provide that place. It should also be made clear to undocumented students that there are paths of higher education, scholarships and possible citizenship for AB540 students. The school should provide information on the DREAM Act² (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act), which may provide legal status to unauthorized young adults after completing two years of military service or college (Olivas, 2010). They should not be treated as, nor felt to be criminals; they have the legal right to learn to the best of their ability, like every other student.

Confidence - Bullying - Friends

According to the participants in this research, personal confidence and self-esteem becomes a roller coaster ride when put in the situation of a Late-entry English Learner. Most participants were satisfied with their initial self-esteem, coming into the situation, yet confidence waned as they first entered the various classrooms where learning transpired. Nearly all felt nervous and apprehensive in the beginning, but several described their state as going past that, to the point of physical ailments, even panic attacks, as they attempted to start their educational journey as LEELs. Stakeholders should be cognizant of possible problems for these students.

Another primary issue that arose from the research is that of bullying. This was not a major consideration going into the study, and certainly was not expected at such a high rate of reported occurrence. It appears that bullying is something new LEELs should be warned and counseled about. Teachers of LEELs must do a better job of identifying, preventing and eliminating bullying in their classrooms.

As new students in school, LEELs are often bullied and harassed; if for no other reason than their lack of proper English skills. No matter how confident and self-assured they are prior, finding themselves in a new culture, school setting and language turns every one of them into nervous, doubting, fearful participants in a scenario in which they must learn twice as much as all their peers. Some find

the stress unbearable, or temporarily petrifying as they must learn a new language extremely fast while simultaneously attempting to pass classes in core subjects in that language (Valdes, 2010).

Stakeholders must do a better job of identifying and eliminating bullying, particularly where Late-entry English Learners are concerned. It is difficult enough to learn a new language while adjusting to a new culture, language and school system, but trying to learn while others are blatantly harassing you is an extreme and unfair challenge. Educators must strive to set up learning environments in which all students feel safe to interact, learn and take risks (Zwiers, 2004).

Friendships may alleviate some of the stress and strain of attempting to learn and acquire English quickly. Some felt friends were very helpful, while others realized they only spoke Spanish with her friends, which did little to improve their English acquisition. However, this is not completely detrimental, especially when you consider the social support and self-esteem building friendships can bolster. However, most participants felt they learned more quickly and completely when forced to negotiate and communicate in English with friends, acquaintances and even strangers.

Counselors

By far, the most powerful finding of this research has to do with the complete unhappiness and lack of appreciation participants had for counselors, particularly at Desert Palms High School. The findings of this research lead me to suggest that we take a very close look at what the job of a high school counselor entails, and the training accrued. Just as previous research has determined that we need to improve the education and preparation of teachers dealing with English Learners (DelliCarpini, 2008), I believe it is imperative to go directly to the source of the education of counselors. They must be taught to understand the power they wield, and that their job includes not only the many things they need to do, but also many important practices they must avoid.

For instance, participants related several examples of counselors coming straight out and telling them that they had no chance of graduating from high school. Participants felt they deserved much more time, attention and respect from their counselors, and they would have preferred that counselors listen to them, provide viable options for their educational plan and encourage them by acknowledging their goals and assuring that they may be reached. Another issue that surfaced is the availability of counselors. Students must be able to have opportunities to meet and discuss their present situation and future plans with their counselor. This cannot happen if the counselor is not available for whatever reason.

Counselors must realize that not every student wants the easy way out, or the bare minimum regarding classes. Participants in this study preferred to be challenged, and felt their counselors not only stood in the way of their progress, but proved to be disrespectful and demeaning.

This study reveals how important it is that someone acknowledges the student, seeming to care about their well-being, their progress and their questions. Rodriguez (2012) states, “It is believed that educators (and researchers) must be given opportunities to apply, practice and reflect on their praxis of recognition to appreciate its relevance to Latinas/os and other historically marginalized youth in U.S. schools” (p. 27). Every student needs someone they feel they can go to for whatever reason. Indeed, this generative approach would be ideal for all concerned – who would not want to work, learn and exist in an atmosphere of love and encouragement? Wherever these qualities can be instilled in individuals at an educational setting, I believe you will find great things happening. However, it is out of the scope of this research to determine how this should best be implemented, encouraged or shared.

Counselors have the power to make a profound difference in the lives and educational journeys of their students. Conversely, they also retain the power to dissuade lofty educational and personal goals and kill individual dreams. I recommend more research be done on the scope and sequence of counseling

education, and more stress be placed on the personal skills and generative habits of counselors, as well as teachers and administrators.

Implications - Best Practices

What Should Administrators Know and Do?

It was not anticipated that participants, particularly the younger ones, would be critical of administration. Generally, students in a high school do not have the perspective or wherewithal to be critical of how the campus is run. However, participants proved to be insightful in matters of administration, beginning with criticism over the fact that Desert Palms High School has implemented near-yearly changes in principals and assistant principals resulting in four separate administrative teams since 2010.

Involved participants voiced appreciation for a long-term principal with vested interest, who interacts on a regular basis with the students. Principals and assistant principals should do everything in their power to be involved in the day-to-day activities and special interests of the students on and off campus. The policies and practices of a school's administration set the tone for the everyday perceptions and atmosphere of the campus. For instance, a no-tolerance bullying policy or student and staff in-services may go a long way towards curbing or

eliminating the mistreatment of LEELs by their peers. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for the teachers could improve relationships, instructional planning, overall teacher performance and consequently, student learning. Uniting technology strategically with instruction can provide a modern, positive and enjoyable learning environment across the campus and beyond.

Other excellent leadership recommendations for English Learners at the secondary level were summed up by the National High School Center (2009) as follows:

- Staff capacity to address the needs of ELLs;
- Schoolwide focus on English language development (ELD) and standards-based instruction;
- Shared priorities and expectations in regard to educating ELLs;
- Systematic, ongoing assessment and data-driven decision making.

In nearly every case of successful LEELs, the dictionary was identified as playing a vital role, and became the LEEL's constant companion. Administrators should be certain that each classroom has an adequate number of dictionaries, thesauruses, Spanish-English dictionaries, dictionaries for any other languages represented in the classroom and other reference materials. A bountiful and well-run library is a powerful learning center on many campuses, and it is no different for low socioeconomic areas such as Vista Canyon. The majority of learners in Vista Canyon U.S.D. speak Spanish as their first language; therefore, there

should be a plethora of contemporary books and resource materials in Spanish. The research identified class novels as an excellent teaching tool for Late-entry English Learners, particularly those written by Latino authors. Administrators and library personnel should be encouraged to ask students what reading materials, including popular magazines and computer programs, they prefer.

Technology provides another vital resource for English Learners. Vista Canyon Unified School District is in the process of providing iPads for every student in the district. However, administrators should be certain that proper programs and applications are installed on these devices to help English Learners. Also, these computers will do no good if the students and teachers cannot access the Internet properly and consistently. Therefore, issues such as bandwidth and connectivity are instrumental to student learning, and teachers being able to follow through on technology-based lesson plans. Leading administrators will create opportunities for educators to develop, encourage and share best practices for ELs on campus, and with neighboring schools, districts, counties and beyond. They will also actively seek out other successful EL programs for collaboration, ideas and advice.

As suggested by Roberto, English Learners should be identified, followed and studied. Once English learners are redesignated as Fluent English Proficient, known as R-FEP, they are supposed to be tracked for at least two years to be certain they are continuing to succeed. Redesignation is a serious

issue at Desert Palms High School, falling from 10.1% in 2008–2009 to just 2.8% in 2011–2012 (CDE, 2013). It is imperative that more English Learners are redesignated, and that they are easily identified, tracked and monitored for further success. This appears to be extremely important as the top scorers consistently on the CAHSEE in Vista Canyon U.S.D. and beyond are bilingual (R-FEP) students.

It should be automatic for teachers to know who the English Learners are in their class, and at what level they are operating, especially LEELs. Teachers should have a plan in place for students who are new to the school. Many single-subject teachers are not prepared to work with English Learners (DelliCarpini, 2008). Administrators must stress to their staff the importance of strategic teaching to English Learners, and should provide staff development as needed in such areas as scaffolding, SDAIE strategies, direct instruction, multiple measures and more. Scheduling for LEELs must be done with care, and administration must work with counselors and competent teachers to be certain LEELs are placed in proper classes with adequate support and continual follow-up.

Administrators must be aware of what is happening to each subgroup on their campus. Reaching out to parents of these students, particularly those of English Learners, is imperative, and providing the best possible resources for learning should be mandatory. It took Desert Palms High School four years and three principals, just to implement the Rosetta Stone language program on

accessible school computers for ELs. This should have been an option for all English Learners from the beginning.

The research brought out various programs which participants felt helped improve their English skills. Those in leadership should know what programs are available, and which ones will give the “most bang for their buck” with the schools’ students. They must know when to pay for busing, which can be a huge expense for schools in rural areas, such as Vista Canyon Unified School District. Top administrators should know what the programs provide, their stipulations, and the possible positive outcomes for their students. Programs like the (Portable Assisted Study Script) PASS program, the After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSET) Program and the migrant program were all mentioned by participants as having a positive effect on English acquisition and overall learning.

Nearly all participants felt they would have benefited from a newcomer or peer assistance program. I believe this should be implemented immediately in all schools. LEELs do not have the luxury of being involved in a newcomer program for any length of time, but it would still be beneficial to help them acclimate to a new culture, education system and language. There are many productive seeds that could be planted during a newcomer program. I would also recommend a peer-mentoring program for LEELs; someone to guide, encourage and model for them. This would be an ideal scenario for encouraging participation in clubs and

sports, explaining and following through on long-term planning with educational goals and an opportunity for students to get help with homework or classes that are giving them particular trouble. Stakeholders must acknowledge LEEL students and encourage them to be involved in activities in school and in the community. They must be made to feel welcomed and valued right from the start.

Good administrators know their personnel. They must find pockets of brilliance in their staff, and utilize those skills and ambitions to benefit the students and community. They should also be willing and able to compensate those who go the extra distance to aid students and community members in their learning and growing. I believe it is important for administrators to trust their teachers to develop, find, use and share supplemental materials and pedagogy (Newman et al., 2010).

What Should Teachers Know and Do?

There is plenty of literature and research on best practices for teaching elementary English Learners and younger Long Term English Learners (LTEs). Unfortunately, almost no research is dedicated to Late-entry English Learners, forced by time constraints to learn quickly and efficiently. This research pointed to consensus regarding several practices, but no two learners chose the exact same best practices in aiding their amazing, successful journey. For instance, every participant felt television was very helpful in learning English quickly, but

the variety of recommended programs - the news, cartoons, National Geographic, *I Love Lucy* - speaks to the premise that language learning is a matter of personal choice and experience. Teachers must realize this, and provide opportunities for choice whenever and wherever possible for LEELs, including television homework.

As English acquisition is a personal journey and key to academic success, it is instrumental that we make our LEEL students comfortable right from the start. Perhaps they could be assigned a buddy or peer partner to help them get to know their way around campus and community, and feel good about their surroundings. At the very least, we should do everything possible to make certain these students are not bullied or taken advantage of. Ideally, there will be a low effective filter in a relaxed but stimulating class climate (Krashen, 1982) throughout their school day.

Attempts should be made to provide a variety of speaking opportunities for all students, whether it be pair-share, small group, oral reports, class discussion, Socratic seminar or scripted dialogue. Students should talk as often as possible, to each other, the teacher, random visitors to the class and even by themselves (working on sounds and pronunciations with PVC "phones", especially in a mirror); speaking the language is a prominent way to improve one's skills. Participants felt they would have benefited if teachers provided more instruction on vocabulary and pronunciation. Students should also have access to a vast

array of reading materials in different genres, resource materials, dictionaries and thesauruses at their immediate disposal. Magazines are an excellent way to satisfy a wide variety of reading interests, from sports to current events to poetry and beyond.

A key point driven home by participant voices is that they are not dumb, do not possess a learning disability, and therefore should not be treated as such – they simply need to acquire English so that they may apply their knowledge in the dominant language. Providing them with first-grade reading materials when they may have been studying difficult scientific concepts in their own language is insulting and demeaning. They need, want and deserve to be challenged.

Many LEELs are incredibly smart and have great proclivity for language. I recommend an adequate entrance exam be given to all LEELs in their native language to get some idea of their linguistic ability and knowledge base. Perhaps this could become a piece of Common Core protocol, since 85% of California ELs are Spanish-speakers (Young, 2007); there should be an entrance assessment instrument which would provide teachers with an idea of how intelligent each student is in their native language. Goldenberg and Quach (2010) suggest, “Teachers should be aware of what students know and can do in their primary language so they can help them apply those skills to tasks in English” (p. 5).

Effort should be made to tap into students' prior knowledge and use their primary language strategically. However, most participants felt it was important to be challenged with lessons in English. All teachers should be familiar with ELD strategies such as scaffolding, SDAIE strategies, direct instruction, multiple measures and more. However, it can seem overwhelming to implement all of these strategies at once. Teachers should not be overwhelmed or try to do too much, as the resulting stress will negate positive class climate. Educators need to remember that each class is unique, just as each individual learner is unique; each with their own strengths, weaknesses and needs.

This research points to the importance of music and television as catalysts of English acquisition. Teachers must be creative in implementing the use of these tools, as it is noted that each individual learner has specific preferences for music and television. These can provide pivotal homework assignments or be imbedded into the basic curriculum; it is quite easy to implement lyrics into various lessons. Another useful tool for language acquisition is authentic text, particularly flyers or documents with English on one side and the students' primary language on the other. This provides an opportunity to read and understand English with the translation simply printed alongside or on the back of the page (provided the translation is done correctly), and often pertains to students' lives at school or in the community.

It is obvious students value encouragement and assistance from their teachers and other adults on campus. All teachers, not just ELD or English instructors, need to be aware of who the EL students are in their classes, and their CELDT (California English Language Development Test) levels. All teachers should be trained in using SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) strategies for English Learners and all their students. Keep in mind these students are expected to contribute and pass core and elective courses *while* they learn English. Ideally they would be able to take some of these courses in their native language, or at least in a program model that avoids total immersion right from the start. Students value being able to stay after school or on Saturdays, and appreciate being able to take materials home. Administrators and teachers should consider an after school and/or Saturday situation where LEELs can focus on and practice their literacy skills, perhaps with teachers willing to share their expertise and passion for subjects outside the everyday curriculum. As mentioned earlier, teachers should never underestimate the intelligence of LEELs, and they must realize the importance of choice for many classroom activities and Saturday or after-school opportunities.

Learning can and should be fun, and teachers should share their knowledge, dedication, devotion and passion, encouraging enjoyment, creativity and laughter from their students, especially LEELs. This is much easier to do when surrounded by genuine happiness. Learning a language does not have to

be excruciatingly painful. While the actual internalization of the language is a personal journey that one must take at their own pace, educators may set contexts in which opportunities for challenge and advancement may be completed in a low stress environment. This is what Krashen deemed “affective filter” of the Natural Approach (1982).

Many times, our Late-entry English Learners feel scared and alone, though they may be surrounded by hundreds or thousands of students. Often they feel neglected, or worse yet, bullied; this is unacceptable in our public schools today. Eva was right when she identified the need for students to help each other, and that a club on campus could be dedicated to appreciation and understanding of other cultures and backgrounds with a built-in support system for all. However, this important piece of campus climate should not be left to a group or club; adults need to be present and proactive in the education, support and well-being of each and every one of the students, no matter how it is formatted

Teachers should not put undue pressure on their LEELs. A prime example of this came from Rocio, who, when asked what she would do differently if she were to do it all over again, said:

I would stop worrying about the CAHSEE, and try to enjoy high school. In other words, I would try to be more involved in high school clubs and games. I was so stressed trying to learn to read and write English that I

forgot to enjoy the experience (R. Navarro, personal communication, March 11, 2014).

Remember, students may not remember whether they learned specific grammar, punctuation or high-level vocabulary in one's classroom, but they *will* remember how they felt when a specific teacher was in charge of their learning. Educators must strive to make that experience productive, enjoyable and memorable in a positive, generative light.

What Should Late-entry English Learners Know and Do?

If they are to succeed in high school, LEELs must acquire English quickly while simultaneously obtaining content proficiency (Valdes, 2010). This is a difficult and challenging proposition, as most feel it takes 4-7 years to truly acquire the academic language necessary to succeed in the classroom (Thomas & Collier, 2002). One must be in the proper frame of mind in order to learn effectively and quickly. LEELs may feel nervous or uncomfortable at first, but should not be afraid to seek guidance and assistance. Asking questions is mandatory, working hard is necessary and the dictionary may need to be a LEEL's best friend. Participants in this study provided outstanding insight into the lived experience and educational strategies necessary to succeed in this difficult challenge. It is recommended that one set their goals high, strive to improve each day and never, ever quit!

Friends, particularly girlfriends and boyfriends, can be very beneficial to English acquisition or may provide a waste of valuable time by continually conversing in their native language. One should choose friends and acquaintances wisely when attempting to acquire a new language. Each opportunity to speak is a chance to learn from experience, and one must attempt to use the target language as often as possible. LEELs should be certain to read, write, listen and speak each day, seldom or never taking the easy way out. They should seek out authentic text – words found in everyday life or the media – and use that as an opportunity to grow. Reading, watching or listening to the news in one’s primary language is recommended just prior to attempting it in English; it helps if one knows the concepts, characters, outcomes and fundamental vocabulary in one’s first language ahead of time. Research topics of one’s own interest should be pursued, whether for homework, or for natural interest; try to choose topics of interest that one cares for or is passionate about.

Participants’ feelings on the issue of Spanish-speaking teachers were divided; however, most proposed that one must determine their own timeline for when Spanish-speaking lessons are no longer needed and are simply used as an unnecessary crutch. LEELs must learn to challenge themselves on a regular basis, and should not be afraid to give their teachers cues as to how much help is truly needed. Communication with teachers is essential and may go a long way toward the success of language acquisition and course grades. Participants

acknowledged that participating in an English-only class is a challenge, but must also be seen and used as an opportunity for LEELs to grow and learn quickly.

This research identified two powerful means of language acquisition, music and television. Many participants described seeking out the lyrics for different songs and simply singing along to gain pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge. It was suggested that rap music is too fast and has some questionable language, but learning English through music is highly effective, though a matter of personal choice. This is also true for television; one must find programs that encourage English acquisition, yet are enjoyable to watch. Shows may run the gamut from cartoons to soccer games to National Geographic specials; again, it is a matter of one's own tastes, as is the use of subtitles. It is anticipated that reading the words as they are heard may expedite English acquisition.

Another activity participants felt assisted their language acquisition was keeping a journal. It was also recommended by Eva that one go back and read prior entries, not just for memorable content, but also to check for improvement in one's writing (participant, personal communication, February 15, 2014). One should write every day, not just for school assignments, but also for pleasure or purpose. Many students serve as translators or primary communicators for parents or entire families. Writing down such things as errands to run, grocery lists, family chores or vacation plans are not only good and authentic means of

practicing English, they also provide opportunities for teaching other family members the language. It is recommended that LEELs serve as teachers and counselors for younger brothers and sisters or cousins attempting to learn the English language.

One should take Eva's advice to heart:

I would ask for more help, I would try to interact with my professors in a manner that they would understand what I was going through. I would try to be involved in many activities and help some of the students that, just like me, got here to this country to get involved in sports or clubs. I know how it feels to be in a new country where most of the time you don't feel comfortable and where you don't want to do anything that could make them interact, share beliefs and cultures with others (participant, personal communication, February 15, 2014).

Most participants agreed with Eva, wishing they would have been more involved in sports or clubs during their high school years. Do not be so stressed out from this daunting challenge that one becomes seriously unhappy or sick. If necessary, request an extra year of high school or continue at an adult school. Even if LEELs do not pass the CAHSEE as a senior, students have up to two years after leaving high school to attempt passing the CAHSEE, or they have an option of getting their General Educational Development (GED).

Perhaps the most important piece of advice from participants is to find one's own voice. Make it a point to be heard and understood; whether it be one's goals, dreams and desires, or one's opinion, do not be afraid to speak out. If one is unhappy with one's counselor or teacher, or a peer is bullying, one must not be afraid to stand up for one's self and be heard. Participants in this study, described the early days of language learning as difficult and scary, not wanting to be judged or put down, yet they all had the same advice – get over it. This is one's future, and it must be handled maturely, effectively and immediately. Education is seen as the great equalizer in America, and the fastest, most effective way to help one's self and one's family, financially and socially. One cannot let an incompetent counselor, an uncaring teacher or an immature bully stand in the way of one's destiny.

Advocacy

Allowing these participants an opportunity to share oral histories, feelings, opinions and suggestions, cannot help but improve understanding and relationships among stakeholders. Calderon (2009) states, "The ability to communicate one's perspective affects one's ability to participate in society, and with it, one's access to power" (p. 1). I sincerely hope the research participants were empowered by this process and remain proud of their contributions. I feel

this also provides an opportunity for me to continue advocating on behalf of them and all Late-entry English Learners. Theoharis & O'Toole (2011) state, "...social justice leadership has a necessary connection to creating more equitable and better services for ELL students and their families (p. 679)."

This research will be shared with area English Language Advisory Committees (ELAC), District English Learner Advisory Committees (DELAC) and School Site Councils. Attempts will be made to share findings with district educators, principals, superintendents, school boards and remaining stakeholders. Offers will be made to perform professional development presentations, perhaps inviting interested interview participants to also speak; results and best practices will also be shared with future EL students.

Findings will be embedded into future conference presentations, and through adjunct courses which I hope to command. I will offer resultant information to Dr. Timothy Boals of (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) WIDA, specializing in assessments, particularly for implementation with English Learners.

In a perfect world, all stakeholders would realize the capabilities and desires of this amazing group of students, and even those who come up a bit short, perhaps needing an extra year or two to complete graduation requirements. New students should have a newcomer program, orientation or peer support to aid them in their quest. Successful students should be

encouraged to return to the area as teachers, counselors and advocates of the educational community. I implore all stakeholders to value the goals and desires of *all* our students, and to implement teaching and research methods that encourage and support students in creating their own vision of change (Freire, 1970). Perhaps a positive pipeline could be created with universities who understand these students may need a bit of extra patience and understanding with their English skills as they progress along their educational journey through the college ranks. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI's) come immediately to mind. Ideally, these amazing successes will be shared with students of other cultures and speakers of other languages throughout the nation and North America, spreading hope and confidence.

Closing Thoughts

Good educators dialogue about student interaction and most outstanding teachers, like Freire (1970), believe that students should have a say in their curriculum and learning. The main ideas built into the interviews of this research are that LEELs could describe and elaborate on what they feel made them successful English Learners, and what teachers and administrators could do (or not do) to facilitate and expedite this process. These were exceptional students of, not just language, but life. They were faced with a situation which required

them to figure out best practices quickly and efficiently if they were going to achieve their primary goal of earning a high school diploma. I could find no literature regarding this aspect of Late-entry English Learner proficiency with time constraints. Therefore, I believe this study is unique and insightful, with a chance to benefit language learners of all kinds in a plethora of situations, and those who are fortunate enough to be able to implement these proven strategies.

This research serves to fill a void in the academic canon of English Learners in American schools. Participants in this research came to the country as adolescents with little or no English skills. They were considered by many to be a burden; a drain on resources, a scheduling problem, a waste of valuable time and a detriment to the all-important high-stakes testing scores of their school. They were given very little chance to succeed; in fact, some were directly told by their counselors that they would certainly fail. This research is a testament to the indomitable will and superb strength of these participants, and many just like them; intelligent, hard-working pillars of American society, making a positive difference in the world around them.

What can one make of this journey from unwanted immigrant to productive taxpaying American? What does one think about someone who is told they will never make it, yet dreaming, persevering and proving that they can? What can we say about a nervous, frightened Late-entry English Learner who a few short years later is willing to make a profound difference in the lives of the young

people they encounter, wishing to represent the time-honored profession of teaching? We should be impressed and amazed, but we should also be angry. How many students just like the participants in this study were *not* given the extra encouragement, *not* provided with added care and concern, *not* given the classes or materials needed to succeed, or worse yet, *believed it* when they were told by a counselor or a teacher that they would never make it? How many lives have been altered negatively? How many students have been bullied – not by their peers, but by adults on a high school campus? How many dreams have been crushed? There is no excuse.

Imagine if we gave each child coming to our schools the attention, compassion, materials, guidance and encouragement they deserve. The goal of education is to create intelligent and prosperous citizenry. If we could tap into the marvelous skills and work ethic of these amazing LEEL students, this would be a stronger nation. If average men and women could see what is accomplished and how, by these students, perhaps the xenophobic nature of our country could be lessened; and we could strive for tolerance through camaraderie, cooperation, and communication, realizing that we all truly are more alike than we are different. This research serves as a wake-up call to anyone who will listen. Late-entry immigrant students are not here for a government handout or to steal one's hard-earned job. They simply want and deserve a fair chance to prove themselves, and to earn a better living and life for themselves and their families.

Results of this study may have far-reaching implications for Late-entry English Learners and the educators and administrators of facilities that service them. Understanding in this area may allow and encourage ELs to not only have a better chance to graduate from high school, but also to achieve in college and create a better living situation for themselves and their families. Dialoguing regularly and in-depth with students is an invaluable way to facilitate a public school. This Freirean approach provides students agency and voice.

These intelligent, hard-working students will be productive citizens and adept communicators, unafraid of hard work, understanding the value of language, communication, and collaboration. These young people may make excellent citizens, contributing to the greater good of society and the continued improvement of education and communication in our country, and wherever they choose to travel or reside.

Lastly, some advice for teachers instructing EL students - Laugh with these students, make your own mistakes, give them choices, don't just allow them to follow their passion – go with them! These are vibrant, beautiful, and intelligent young men and women, and when given a true opportunity, they will earn your respect, admiration, and awe.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT



College of Education
Office of Doctoral Studies

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am asking you to be part of a research study. The goal is to understand the experience of English Learners who came to the Coachella Valley Unified School District in 8th grade or later. This study is being done by doctoral student Joe Boffa with help from Dr. Louie Rodriguez, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been okayed by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino on _____
Date

PURPOSE: The reason for this study is to understand the best ways for students, teachers and principals to help English Learners learn English fast and graduate.

DESCRIPTION: Information will be taken with a survey and a face-to-face interview with the researcher. There may be second and third interviews if you have many ideas to share. There will be some questions about your family, including parents' birthplace, job(s), education, number of kids and where they go to school, and parents' goal(s) for you. This information will stay private; you do not have to answer any question(s) that you do not like.

Information you share about your family will be private – no one will be named. The interview(s) will be voice recorded. You will be asked about your school and life experiences. I may also write notes in a journal during the interview(s). You will be asked to share your ideas of the best ways to learn English. You will also be asked what teachers and principals should do to help English Learners.

DURATION - LOCATION: The survey will take less than twenty minutes. Each interview will be thirty to sixty (30-60) minutes long. Interviews will be at Desert Mirage High School, Coachella Valley High School or a comfortable place.

PARTICIPATION: You are a volunteer. You should not be uncomfortable with the survey or the interview. You will be asked to complete a thirteen-question survey and a face-to-face interview with the researcher. You may be asked to do one or two more interviews. This will depend on how much you share and how many ideas you have for learners, teachers and principals. You can choose to be audiotaped or not, and to stop the interview at any time without penalty.

909.537.5651 • fax: 909.537.7056 • <http://edd.csusb.edu>
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE

APPROVED 01.07.14 VOID AFTER 01.04.15
IRB# 13028 CHAIR *Sharon Ward, Ph.D.*



College of Education
Office of Doctoral Studies

CONFIDENTIALITY: You have the right to privacy and all that you share will stay private. Fake names will be used to protect you.

Your information from the survey and interview(s) will be put in a locked place or on a computer with a password. The computer will stay at the researcher's house for less than three (3) years. All information will be destroyed less than three years from the end of the study.

AUDIO: I understand that I have a choice in the voice recording of the face-to-face interviews and can stop at any time without penalty. **Initials** _____

AGE: I am over the age of 18. **Initials** _____

BENEFITS: The positive of this study is you will help to better the knowledge about English Learners.

INCENTIVES: You will get a \$10 Starbucks gift card or a \$10 Target gift card after the interview(s).

RISKS: The possible risks of being in this study may be:
(1) You may not be comfortable remembering what happened at school.
(2) Some questions may cause negative feelings.

CONTACT: If you have questions about the research and your rights, you may contact Joe Boffa, jboffa@cvusd.us or call (760) 831-2119. You may also contact Dr. Louie Rodriguez, louiefrodriguez@gmail.com or call (909) 537-5651. You can call or write the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino; they are at 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407-2393, (909) 537-5052.

RESULTS: The results of this study will be ready by June 2014. The results will be shared at a public meeting. A copy of the study will be put in the California State University San Bernardino Phau Library at 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino CA 92407.

CONSENT: I understand that I am part of a research study. The research has been explained to me.

909.537.5651 • fax: 909.537.7056 • http://edd.csusb.edu
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE
APPROVED 01/07/14 VOID AFTER 01/06/15
TURL 13028 CHAIR Shaaron Wood, Ph.D.



College of Education
Office of Doctoral Studies

I understand my role in the study. I understand that I may stop at any time without penalty.

Thank you for your help.

Signature _____ Date _____

909.537.5651 • fax: 909.537.7056 • <http://edd.csusb.edu>
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE

APPROVED 01/09/14 VOID AFTER 01/09/15
IRB# 13028 CHAIR Sharon A. Ward, Ph.D.



College of Education
Office of Doctoral Studies

FORMULARIO (INFORMADO) DE CONSENTIMIENTO

Te estoy pidiendo que seas parte de un estudio de investigación. El objetivo es entender la experiencia de los estudiantes de inglés que llegaron al Distrito Escolar Unificado del Valle de Coachella en el 8vo grado o posterior.

Este estudio está siendo realizado por el estudiante de doctorado Joe Boffa con la ayuda del Dr. Louie Rodriguez, de la Universidad Estatal de California en San Bernardino. Este estudio se ha dado el visto bueno de la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad Estatal de California en San Bernardino en _____.

PROPÓSITO: La razón de este estudio es para conocer las mejores maneras para que los estudiantes, los maestros y directores ayuden a los estudiantes aprender Inglés rápido y graduarse.

DESCRIPCIÓN: La información se toma con una encuesta y una entrevista cara a cara con el investigador. Es posible que haya entrevistas segunda y tercera si tiene muchas ideas para compartir. Habrá algunas preguntas acerca de su familia, incluyendo el lugar de nacimiento, trabajo (s), la educación, el número de niños y donde ellos van a la escuela, y objetivo (s) de los padres para usted. Esta información se mantendrá privada, usted no tiene que contestar ninguna pregunta (s) que no te gusta.

La información que usted comparte acerca de su familia será privada- nadie va a ser nombrado. La entrevista (s) será la voz grabada. Se le preguntará sobre su escuela y experiencias de vida. También puedo escribir notas en un diario durante la entrevista (s). Se le pedirá compartir sus ideas sobre las mejores maneras de aprender Inglés. También se le preguntará lo que los maestros y directores deben hacer para ayudar a los estudiantes de inglés.

DURACIÓN - UBICACIÓN: La encuesta le tomará menos de veinte minutos. Cada entrevista será treinta a sesenta (30-60) minutos de duración. Las entrevistas serán en la preparatoria Desert Mirage High School, Coachella Valley High School o un lugar cómodo.

PARTICIPACIÓN: Usted es un voluntario. Usted no debe ser incómodo con el cuestionario o la entrevista. Se le pedirá que complete una encuesta de trece preguntas y una entrevista cara a cara con el investigador. Se le puede pedir que haga una o dos entrevistas. Esto dependerá de la cantidad de información que usted comparte y cuántas ideas que tiene para los estudiantes, los maestros y directores. Usted puede elegir para ser grabada en audio o no, y para detener la entrevista en

909.537.5651 • fax: 909.537.7056 • <http://edd.csusb.edu>
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE
APPROVED 01/07/14 VOID AFTER 01/06/15
IRB# 13028 CHAIR *Sharon Ward, Ph.D.*

cualquier momento.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD: Usted tiene el derecho a la privacidad y todo lo que usted comparta permanecerá privado. Nombres falsos serán utilizados para protegerte.

Su información de la encuesta y la entrevista (s) será puesto en un lugar cerrado con llave o en un equipo con una contraseña. El equipo permanecerá en la casa de la investigadora durante menos de tres (3) años. Toda la información será destruida menos de tres años desde el final del estudio.

AUDIO: Yo entiendo que tengo una opción en la grabación de la voz de las entrevistas cara a cara y puedo parar en cualquier momento. Iniciales _____

EDAD: Soy mayor de 18 años. Iniciales _____

BENEFICIOS: Los beneficios positivos de este estudio es que ayudará a mejorar el conocimiento de inglés de los estudiantes.

INCENTIVOS: Usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de Starbucks de \$ 10 o una tarjeta de regalo de \$ 10 Target después de la entrevista (s).

RIESGOS: Los posibles riesgos de participar en este estudio pueden ser:

- (1) Es posible que no se sienten cómodos al recordar lo que pasó en la escuela.
- (2) Algunas preguntas pueden provocar sentimientos negativos.

CONTACTO: Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de la investigación y de sus derechos, puede comunicarse con Joe Boffa, jboffa@cvusd.us o llame al (760) 831-2119. También puede comunicarse con el Dr. Louie Rodríguez, louiefrodriguez@gmail.com o llame al (909) 537 a 5651. Usted puede llamar o escribir a la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad Estatal de California en San Bernardino, sino que son en 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407 hasta 2,393 mil, (909) 537-5052.

RESULTADOS: Los resultados de este estudio estarán listos en junio de 2014. Los resultados serán compartidos en una reunión pública. Una copia del estudio será puesto en la Universidad del Estado de California San Bernardino Phau Biblioteca en 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino CA 92407.

909.537.5651 • fax: 909.537.7056 • <http://edd.csusb.edu>

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE

APPROVED 01/07/14 VOID AFTER 01/06/15
IRB# 13028 CHAIR *Amorita Alvarado, Ph.D.*



College of Education
Office of Doctoral Studies

CONSENTIMIENTO: Yo entiendo que soy parte de un estudio de investigación. La investigación se ha explicado a mí. Entiendo mi posición en el estudio. Yo entiendo que puedo parar en cualquier momento sin penalización.

Gracias por su ayuda.

Firma _____ Fecha _____

909.537.5651 • fax: 909.537.7056 • <http://edd.csusb.edu>

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEE

APPROVED 01/07/14 VOID AFTER 01/06/15
IRB# 13028 CHAIR Shaundra Ward, Ph.D.

APPENDIX B
DEMOGRAPHIC/INTERVIEW AND SURVEY

Late-Entry English Learner Interviews

I have read and understand the purpose of this research.

Yo he leído y entiendo el propósito de esta investigación.

Interview 1:

Demographic data and educational background/Información demográfica y antecedentes educativos.

Demographics/Demográfica:

Name/Nombre

1. Age/Edad
 2. Birthplace/Lugar de nacimiento
 3. Education: Name of schools, location, public or private?/ ¿Educación: nombre de escuela, lugar, publica o privada?
Elementary/Elemental
Secondary/Preparatoria
- Parents want me to accomplish.../ Los padres quieren que logre ...

Family/La Familia

1. Mother's birthplace/lugar de nacimiento de mamá
2. Father's birthplace/lugar de nacimiento de papá
3. Mother's occupation/Trabajo de mamá
4. Father's occupation/Trabajo de papá
5. Mother's highest level of education/Educación de mamá
6. Father's highest level of education/Educación de papá
7. Siblings/Hermanos/as:
How many brothers? ¿Cuántos hermanos?
How many sisters? ¿Cuántas hermanas?
8. Siblings school of attendance/Escuela de asistencia de los hermanos.

Question 1: How long have you lived here in the Valley? When did you arrive?
Cuanto tienes viviendo en el valle? ¿Cuándo llegaste?

Question 2: What are your plans for the future? ¿cuáles son tus planes para el futuro?

Question 3: When you are not in school, what are three things or activities you do? ¿cuando usted no está en la escuela, que son tres actividades que haces?

Question 4: How much time do you spend reading or doing any kind of school-type work? ¿Cuánto tiempo pasas leyendo o haciendo cualquier tipo de trabajo de tipo escolar?

Question 5: How important are/were your teachers and your counselors? ¿Que tan importante fueron/eran tus maestros y tus consejeros?

Interview 2:

School matters and Plans after graduation/Asuntos de la escuela y planes después de graduacion.

1. Describe yourself as a high school student./Describete como estudiante.
 - a. What does/did high school mean to you? ¿ Qué hace / hizo la escuela secundaria significa para usted?
 - b. Did you make many friends since you first arrived? ¿Hiciste muchos amigos desde que llegó por primera vez?
 - c. Do/did you know who your counselor is/was and have you met her/him? ¿Es / ¿sabía usted que el consejero está / estaba y has conocido a él / ella?
 - d. Do you consider yourself a confident person? ¿Te consideras una person confiada?
 - e. Do you live with both your parents? ¿Vives con los dos de tus papas?

2. Can you describe your feelings when you first arrived at school? ¿Puedes describir tus sentimientos cuando llegaste por primera vez a la escuela?
 - a. What were you thinking? ¿Que estabas pensando?
 - b. How were you treated? ¿Como te trataron?
 - i. By students/Los estudiantes
 - ii. By staff (secretaries, etc.)/El personal docente (secretarias, etc.)
 - iii. By Teachers/Los maestros
 - iv. By Counselors/Los consejeros

3. Can you describe your experience when you entered your first class? ¿Puedes describir tu experience cuando entraste a tu primera clase?
 - a. What was it like? ¿Como fue esa experiencia?
 - b. Were you nervous? ¿Estabas nervioso/a?
 - c. What were you thinking? ¿Que estabas pensando?
 - d. How were you treated by your peers? ¿Como fuiste tratado por tus companeros/as?
 - e. Were you able to communicate with your teacher? ¿Pudiste comunicarte con tu maestro/a?

- f. Were you self-confident? ¿Te sentiste seguro/a?
4. What are/were your plans? ¿Cuales son tus planes?
 - a. Do/did you know what your options are now that you have completed school? ¿Sabes cuáles son sus opciones, ahora que se han terminado la escuela secundaria?
 - b. Do/did you plan to go to a community college? ¿Piensas ir al colegio comunitario?
 - c. Do/did you plan to go to a four-year university? ¿Piensas ir a la Universidad?
 - d. Do/did you plan to go straight to work? ¿Piensas ponerte a trabajar?
 - e. Do/did you know what a Vocational Technical school is? ¿Sabes lo que es una escuela vocacional?
 - f. Are/were you aware of the military branches? ¿Estas enterado de las ramas del servicio militar?
 - g. If so, have/did you considered joining the military?/ Si es así, ¿ha considerado alistarse en el ejército?

 5. If you were still in your native country what do you think you would be doing? ¿Si estuvieras en tu pais natal, que estarias haciendo?
 - a. Do/did you think you would be in school? ¿Piensas que estarias en la escuela?
 - b. If in school, what would you major in? ¿Si estuvieras en la escuela cual seria tu especialidad?
 - c. Do you think you would be working? ¿Piensas que estarias trabajando?
 - d. If working, what kind of work would that be? ¿Si estuvieras trabajando, en que seria?

Interview 3:

Interview three is primarily a review and a chance for participants to add any last minute thoughts, observation or suggestions or expound on earlier answers.

Entrevista tres es principalmente una revisión y una oportunidad para que los participantes agreguen alguna idea de última hora, observaciones o sugerencias o exponen en las respuestas anteriores.

Interview three will not be as structured, and participants may simply free form their thoughts, observations, opinions and suggestions based around general topics or suggestions, including the following:

Entrevista tres no será tan estructurado, y los participantes pueden simplemente forma libre sus ideas, observaciones, opiniones y sugerencias basadas en torno a temas o sugerencias de carácter general, incluyendo las siguientes:

Previous Education - Educación Anterior

Good student? - Buen estudiante?

Study English before coming to the US? - Estudia Inglés antes de venir a los EE.UU.?

Community - Comunidad

Were your parents involved in school or community activities? - Fueron sus padres participan en la escuela o actividades de la comunidad?

What places have you lived? - ¿Qué lugares has vivido?

What places have you visited? - ¿Qué lugares has visitado?

Any language observations about those places?... - Cualquier observación del lenguaje acerca de esos lugares? ...

Concerns: Preocupaciones:

What did you worry about? ¿Qué le preocupa?

In school? En la escuela?

School work/Testing - El trabajo escolar / Pruebas

After school activities? - Después de las actividades escolares?

Socially - socialmente

Financially? - Financieramente?

What (if any) financial problems did you have? - Lo que (si los hay) problemas financieros tuvo?

Family - Familia

Did you worry about your brothers & sisters? ¿Te preocupas por tus hermanos y hermanas?

Did you worry about your parents or other family? - ¿Te preocupas por tus padres o de otros familiares?

Hardest classes? Clases más difícil?

Why? - ¿Por qué?

What would have helped you? - ¿Qué hubiera ayudado a usted?

Classes with Spanish-speaking teachers? - Clases con españoles - hablando maestros?

Help or hindrance to learning English? - Ayuda o un obstáculo para el aprendizaje de Inglés?

How have **friends** helped or hindered your English acquisition?

¿Cómo tienen amigos ayudaron o dificultaron su adquisición Inglés?

What kind of music do you listen to? (English or Spanish?) ¿Qué tipo de música te gusta escuchar? (Inglés o español?)

Has it helped you learn English? ¿Ha ayudado a aprender Inglés?

Teachers that were most helpful - Los maestros que fueron más útiles

What did they do to help? - ¿Qué han hecho para ayudar?

How and **why** was this helpful? - ¿Cómo y por qué fue útil esta información?

Were any of these methods very helpful learning English:

¿Alguno de estos métodos muy útil el aprendizaje de Inglés:

Reading books - La lectura de libros

Reading stories - La lectura de historias

Reading news - noticias de la lectura

Answering reading questions - Responder a las preguntas de lectura

Worksheets - Hojas de trabajo

Oral reports - informes orales

Listening - escucha

Taking notes (video) - Tomar notas (video)

Group work - trabajo en grupo

Projects - Proyectos

Memorizing - Memorización

Writing - Escritura

Flash Cards - Tarjetas Flash

Rosetta Stone - Rosetta Stone

Out of School :

Television - televisión

Radio - radio

Community—errands - Comunidad-mandados

Special events/concerts/movies - Eventos especiales / Conciertos / películas

Music - música

Video Games - video Juegos

Were there any words or phrases that jumped out at you—or you have a story for how they were learned? Hubo palabras o frases que saltaron a la vista o que tienen una historia de cómo se conocieron?

Any **humorous** situations from misunderstandings or mixed communication?

Cualquier situaciones humorísticas de malentendidos o de comunicación mixta?

Thank You!

¡Gracias!

The best thing(s) my teachers did was/were

COUNSELORS

I wish my counselors would have taught/told me

I wish my counselors would have provided me with

The best thing(s) my counselors did was/were

The best advice I received was

If I were to do it all over again, here is what I would do differently (or the same):

English Learner Success

The purpose of this section is to determine who helped you to succeed in school, how, and to what degree:

Rate on a Scale of 0-5; 0 being *NO HELP at ALL*, 5 being *TREMENDOUS Help*

My MATH teachers HELPED ME...

0 1 2 3 4
5

No Help Very Little Help Some Help Help was Fine Helped A Lot
Tremendous Help

My ENGLISH teachers HELPED ME...

0 1 2 3 4
5

No Help Very Little Help Some Help Help was Fine Helped A Lot
Tremendous Help

My COUNSELOR(s) HELPED ME...

0 1 2 3 4
5

No Help Very Little Help Some Help Help was Fine Helped A Lot
Tremendous Help

My **ADMINISTRATION** (Principals, support staff, etc.) HELPED ME...

0 **1** **2** **3** **4**
5

No Help Very Little Help Some Help Help was Fine Helped A Lot
Tremendous Help

My **Friends & Peers** HELPED ME...

0 **1** **2** **3** **4**
5

No Help Very Little Help Some Help Help was Fine Helped A Lot
Tremendous Help

Who helped you the most to learn English and/or succeed academically in or out of school (i.e.: friend, family, teacher, coach, church member, boss, etc.)? Please identify **who**, and explain **how** they helped you:

END NOTES

1 AB 540 Firebaugh - Chapter 814, Higher Education: Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. Existing law authorizes the establishment of community college districts under the administration of community college governing boards, and authorizes these districts to provide instruction at community college campuses throughout the state. Existing law authorizes community college districts to admit, and charge a tuition fee for, nonresident students in accordance with specified criteria. This bill would require that a person, other than a nonimmigrant alien as defined, who has attended high school in California for 3 or more years, who has graduated from a California high school or attained the equivalent thereof, who has registered at or attends an accredited institution of higher education in California not earlier than the fall semester or quarter of the 2001-02 academic year, and who, if he or she is an alien without lawful immigration status, has filed an affidavit as specified, be exempted from paying nonresident tuition at the California Community Colleges and the California State University. This bill contains other related provisions and other existing laws (CDE, 2013)

2 The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, or “DREAM Act,” would provide a pathway to legal status for the thousands of undocumented students who graduate from high school each year. On May 11, 2011, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) introduced the DREAM Act as S. 952 and H.R. 1842, respectively. To date, the DREAM Act has 32 co-sponsors in the Senate and 2 in the House

Immigration Policy Center – American Immigration Council
<http://immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/dream-act#do>

REFERENCES

- Abedi, J., & Dietel, R. (2004). Challenges in the No Child Left Behind Act for English-language learners. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *85*, 782-785.
- Abelle, R., Urrutia, J., & Schneyderman, A. (2005). An examination of the validity of English-language achievement test scores in an English language learner population. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *29*(1) 127- 144.
- Aguirre-Munoz, Z., & Boscardin, C. K. (2008). Opportunity to Learn and English Learner Achievement: Is Increased Content Exposure Beneficial? *Journal of Latinos & Education*, *7*(3), 186-205.
- August, D. & Hakuta, K. (1997). *Improving schooling for language minority children: A research agenda*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- August, D. & Shanahan, T. (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: a report of the national literacy panel on language-minority children and youth*. 0-8058-6077-0, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Bunch, M. (2011). Testing English language learners under No Child Left Behind. *Language Testing*, *28*(3) 323-341. doi:10.1177/0265532211404186
- Burns, A. & de Silva Joyce, H. (2006). Challenging requirements: How teachers

navigate to make changes within required curricula. In A. Burns & H. de Silva Joyce (Eds.), *Planning and teaching creatively within a required curriculum*. Alexandria: TESOL.

Canales, J. (1992). Innovative practices in the identification of LEP students. In proceedings of *the Second National Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues: Focus on Evaluation and Measurement* (pp. 89-122). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs.

Calderon, J. (2009, October). Perspective-Taking as a tool for building democratic societies. Retrieved April 12, 2014, from Community Works Journal:

http://www.communityworksinstitute.org/cwjonline/essays/a_essaytext/josecalderon1.html#sthash.jcD85kbX.dpuf

California Department of Education (2013). Facts about English learners in California – CalEdFacts. Retrieved July 9, 2013, from California Department of Education website:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/cefelfacts.asp>

California School Boards Association Education Issues Brief (2010-2011).

Retrieved July 29, 2012, from

<http://www.csba.org/~media/AC5BF2C5672340BB9482C3221C645FC9.a>

shx

Chamberlin-Quinlisk, C. (2012). TESOL and media education: Navigating our screen-saturated worlds. *TESOL Quarterly* 46(1), 152-164.

Colletti, J, Smith, D., Herrera, S., Herrera, T. & Flores, L. (2006) 2006 Coachella Valley farmworker survey: Final report (report). December, Coachella, CA: *Institute for Urban Research and Development & County of Riverside*.

http://www.urban-initiatives.org/media/documents/Farm_Worker_Survey_CoachellaValley06.pdf

Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2010). Helping your English learners in spite of No Child Left Behind. *Teachers College Record*. Retrieved July 7, 2013, from <http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=15937>

Coltrane, B. (2002). English language learners and high-stakes tests: An overview of the issues. *Center for Applied Linguistics*, Retrieved July 11, 2013, from <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/digest_pdfs/0207coltrane.pdf>

Cooper, A. (2007). English language learners in public schools: A challenging environment and a path to improvement. *Occidental College, Urban and Environmental Policy Senior Comprehensive*, 1-61.

Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy*. San Diego, CA: College-Hill Press.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Creswell, John W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

DARC = 2010-11 District Accountability Report Card

http://p2cdn3static.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_5158457/File/school%20pro/sarc/Desert%20Mirage%20High%20School%20-%202011-12%20SARC%20-%20English.pdf

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2010). Reaching ELLs at risk: instruction for students with limited or interrupted formal education. *Preventing School Failure, 55*(1) 35-41.

DelliCarpini, M. (2008). Teacher collaboration for ESL/EFL academic success. *The Internet TESL Journal, 8*, August 2008. Retrieved July 12, 2013, from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/DelliCarpiniTeacherCollaboration.html>

Delpit, L. (1998). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*(3), 280-298.

Dulay, H., Burt, H., & Hernandez-Chavez, E. (1978). The process of becoming

bilingual. I. S. Singh & J. Lynch (Eds.), *Diagnostic procedures in hearing, language, and speech* (pp. 251-304). Baltimore: University Park Press.

Dutro, S., Levy, E., Moore, D. (2012). Equipping adolescent English learners for academic achievement: an interview with Susana Dutro and Ellen Levy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(4), 339-342.

Echevaria, J., Powers, K., & Short, D. (2006). School reform and standards-based education: A model for English-language learners. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 99(4), 195-210.

Faltis, C., Arias, B., Ramirez-Marin, F. (2010). Identifying relevant competencies for secondary teachers of English learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 33, 307–328, doi:10.1080/15235882.2010.529350

Freire, Paulo (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (Bergman Ramos, M., Trans.). New York: Seabury

Fry, Richard (2005). *The higher drop-out rate of foreign-born teens: The role of schooling abroad* [report 55]. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center
<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=55>

Gandara, P. (1999). *Review of research on the instruction of limited English proficient students: A report to the California legislature*. April 14, 2004, from the University of California Language Minority Institute,
www.lmri.ucsb.edu/resdiss/pdf_files/Gandara.pdf

- Gándara, P. & Baca, G. (2008, September). NCLB and California's English language learners: The perfect storm. *Language Policy*, 7, 201–216.
- Garcia, E. (2011). *¡Ya Basta!*: Challenging restrictions on English language learners. *Dissent*, 58(4), 47-50.
- Gersten, R. & Baker, S. (2000). What we know about effective instructional practices for English-language learners. *Exceptional Children*, 66(4), 454-470.
- Glesne, Corrine. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Goldenberg, C. & Quach, S.R. (2010). Instructing English language learners: Assessing the state of our knowledge. *ERS Spectrum*, 28(1), 1-15.
- Green, E. (2010, March 2). Building a better teacher. *New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved July 13, 2013, from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/07/magazine/07Teachers-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1). Article 4. Retrieved March 21, 2014, from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/3_1/pdf/groenewald.pdf

- Guerrero, M. (2004). Acquiring academic English in one year an unlikely proposition for English language learners. *Urban Education, 29*(2), 172-199.
- Hakuta, K., Butler, Y. G., & Witt, D. (2000). *How long does it take English-Language learners to attain proficiency?* Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, CA.
- Hill, L. (2012, September). California's English learner students. *Public Policy Institute of California*, Retrieved August 1, 2013, from http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1031
- Honigsfeld, A. & Giouroukakis, V. (2011). High-stakes assessments and English language learners. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 77*(4), 6-10.
- Kamien, M. (2011). *Great one liners*. The United States of America: Platinum Press.
- Kennedy, J. (1960, July 15). Democratic national convention nomination acceptance address, "The New Frontier". Retrieved September 2, 2013, from *American Rhetoric* website: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfk1960dnc.htm#undefined>
- Krashen, S., (2011). Academic proficiency (language and content) and the role of strategies. *TESOL Journal, 2*(4), 381-393.

- Krashen, S., Long, M., & Scarcella, R. (1979). Age, rate, and eventual attainment in second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 13, 573-582.
- Lara, J., & Harford, S. (2010). Middle-to-high school transition for English language learners: Promising school-based practices. U.S. Department of Education (ED), Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Smaller Learning Communities Program. Contract Number ED-07-CO-0106. EDJ Associates, Inc. Herndon, VA.
- Leedy, Paul D. & Ormrod, Jeanne Ellis (2010). *Practical research planning and design*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Lessow-Hurley, J. (2005). *The foundations of dual language instruction*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Lopez, M. (2011). *Fostering a consciousness of academic success with Latino English language learners in high school: The role self-efficacy and social capital play*. Educational Leadership Program, California State University, San Bernardino.
- Madison, D. S. (2012). *Critical ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McLaughlin, B., Blanchard, A., & Osanai, Y. (1995). *Assessing language*

development in bilingual preschool children. (National Clearinghouse of Bilingual Education Program Information Guide Series, No. 22). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse of Bilingual Education.

Menken, K. (2010). NCLB and English language learners: Challenges and consequences. *Theory Into Practice*, 49, 121–128, doi: 10.1080/00405841003626619

Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D. & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

Moll, L.C. & Greenberg, J. (1990). Creating zones of possibilities: Providing social contexts for instruction. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education* (pp.319-348). Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press.

National High School Center (2009, April). Educating English language learners at the high school level: a coherent approach to district-and-school-level support. Retrieved August 1, 2012, from http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/EducatingELLsattheHSLevel_042209.pdf.

Newman, K. L., Samimy, K., & Romstedt, K. (2010). Developing a training program for secondary teachers of English language learners in Ohio.

Theory Into Practice, 49(2), 152-161. doi:10.1080/00405841003641535

Noguera, P. (2005, April 3). And what will become of children like Miguel Fernandez? "Y que pasara con jovenes como Miguel Fernandez?". *In Motion*, Retrieved July 7, 2013, from http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/er/pn_become.html

Oller, J. (1980). *Research in language testing*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Olivas, M. (2010, September 9). Plyler v. Doe: Still guaranteeing unauthorized immigrant children's right to attend U.S. public schools. *Migration Policy Institute*, Retrieved July 14, 2013 from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/plyler-v-doe-still-guaranteeing-unauthorized-immigrant-childrens-right-attend-us-public>

Olsen, L. (2010). Reparable harm: Fulfilling the unkept promise of educational opportunity for California's long term English learners. *Californians Together*, 1-68. Retrieved July 11, 2013, from www.californianstogether.org.

Ovando, C. J. & Collier, V. P. (1985). *Bilingual and ESL classrooms*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rance-Roney, J. (2009). Best practices for adolescent ELLs. *Supporting English Language Learners*, 66(7) 32-37.

Rodriguez, D., Manner, J., & Darcy, S. (2010). Evolution of teacher perceptions regarding effective instruction for English language learners. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 9*(2), 142-143.

doi:10.1177/1538192709359423

Rodriguez, L. (2012). "Everybody grieves, but still nobody sees": Toward a praxis of recognition for Latina/o students in U.S. schools. *Teachers College Record, 114*, 1-31.

Scovel, T. (1989). *A time to speak: A psycholinguistic inquiry into the critical period for human speech*. New York: Newbury House.

Short, D. J., & Boyson, B. A. (2012). Helping newcomer students succeed in secondary schools and beyond. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Solórzano, R. (2008, June). High stakes testing: Issues, implications, and remedies for English language learners. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(2), 260-329. doi:10.3102/0034654308317845

Stiefel, L., Schwartz, A., & Conger, D. (2010). Age of entry and the high school performance of immigrant youth. *Journal of Urban Economics, 67*(3), 303-314.

Subcommittee On Early Childhood, Elementary And Secondary Education,

Committee On Education And Labor. (2007). *Impact of no child left behind on English language learners* (Report Serial No. 110–14), Retrieved July 7, 2013, from <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/house/education/index.html>

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Glass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Tafoya, S. M. (2002). The linguistic landscape of California schools. *California Counts, Population Trends and Profiles*, 3(4), 1–16.

Theoharis, G. & O'Toole, J. (2011). Leading inclusive ELL: Social justice leadership for English language learners. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(4) 664-668. doi:10.1177/0013161111401616

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (1997). School effectiveness for language minority students. Washington, DC: *National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education*, Retrieved August 3, 2012, from http://www.thomasandcollier.com/1997_Thomas-Collier97-1.pdf

Tórrez, N. (2001), Incoherent English immersion and California proposition 227. *Urban Review*, 33(3), 207-220.

- Tyack, D. B. (1974). *The one best system: A history of American urban education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Valdes, G. (2010). *Learning and not learning English: Latino students in American schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press
- Valli, L. & Buese, D. (2007). The changing roles of teachers in an era of high-stakes accountability. *American Educational Research Journal*, 44, 519-558.
- Verdugo, R. & Flores, B. (2007) English-language learners key issues. *Education and Urban Society*, 39(2), 167-193. doi:10.1177/0013124506294852
- White House Fact Sheet: Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students, (2013). Retrieved July 7, 2013, from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/improving-educational-opportunities-and-outcomes-for-latino-students.pdf>
- Willon, P. (2011, May 15). Noxious odor plagues poor desert communities. *Los Angeles Times*, Retrieved July 12, 2013, from <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/may/15/local/la-me-indian-toxic-waste-20110515>
- Zwiers, J., (2008). *Building academic language: Essential practices for content*

classrooms. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.