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Connie Yaqub

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**PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRACTICES
RELATED TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

By

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M.S., Educational Administration, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1985

DISSERTATION

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Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine principals' perceptions of their responsibilities for English language learners (ELLs) and their beliefs about what contributes to these students' academic success. The growing population of ELLs in the US face increased risk for underachievement, as recorded by traditional measures, yet little research investigates the critical role of the principal in the education of ELLs. This study focuses on 7 principals (nominated by other educators as exemplary) in public schools with high enrollments of ELLs found in rural, suburban, and urban districts in a northeastern state. Data came from individual open-ended initial interviews and member-checking interviews.

Thematic analysis of the data revealed 5 themes: (a) *Student Progress*, (b) *Fostering Relationships*, (c) *Parents and Community*, (d) *Having "The Right People,"* and (e) *Language Development*. These themes describe the research participants' self-reported responsibilities for ELLs and their perceptions of what contributes to ELLs' academic success. Twenty-two subthemes were identified, called Key Administrative Practices (KAPs). These KAPs are the ways in which the participants reported carrying out their

responsibilities, i.e., their practices. The responsibility *Fostering Relationships*, with the following KAPs: (a) *building comfort, respect, trust, and a sense of belonging*; (b) *motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion*; (c) *understanding and accepting differences*; and (d) *dealing with the closed-mindedness and lack of understanding of staff members*, appears to be a contribution to the literature.

The study contains a review of the literature in second language acquisition (SLA); in English language development (ELD) programs; in educational leadership in general; in inclusive educational leadership for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students; and in educational leadership for ELLs. This project compares the research findings with leadership frameworks from Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), Riehl (2000), and Hamayan and Freeman (2006). It also discusses implications for principal preparation and practice and provides suggestions for further research.

Keywords: English language learners, principals, educational leadership, responsibilities, key administrative practices, inclusion, balanced leadership, CLD, ELD, ELLs, ESL, KAPs, SLA

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As the educational leaders of schools, principals have unique obligations, powers, and opportunities (Murphy & Forsyth, 1999). Due to their position, principals can influence a myriad of school structures and functions: schools' curricula, instructional and assessment practices; resource allocation; organizational visions; the professional development of teachers; and institutional cultures, for example (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). What principals do at school affects the lives of students, the school staff, other administrators, parents, and community members (Jason, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a; Meyers, 2006; Waters et al., 2003). Research shows that principals' responsibilities and practices correlate positively with student achievement (Waters et al., 2003). In sum, what principals do impacts a great number of people and influences much of what occurs in schools. The roles and responsibilities of principals have not remained constant over time, however. The next section examines the dynamic role of principals in schools in the US.

Background of the Problem

Forces shaping change in educational leadership. The research literature in educational leadership documents considerable change in the principalship over the past several decades and that the position of the principal continues to change at a rapid pace (Consortium, 2000; Ferrandino, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Howard, 2007; Murphy & Forsyth, 1999). A brief examination of some of the forces that shape this change follows. Leadership in complex organizations such as schools is no longer synonymous with management (Sergiovanni, 2001; Webb & Norton, 2003). A number of changes in the principalship resulted from increasingly hierarchical bureaucracies presenting "a torrent of unwanted,

uncoordinated policies and innovations” (Fullan, 2001, p. 109) on schools that already face “turbulent, uncertain environments” (Fullan, 2001, p. 109). Several modifications in the work of a principal have occurred due to legal mandates, changed expectations by stakeholders, and trends, such as the intense focus on standards (Consortium, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Menken, 2000; Murphy & Forsyth, 1999; Reeves, 2006, 2007). According to several researchers (e.g., Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Anderson, Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012; Crawford, 2004; Menken, 2008; Minnow, 2008; Wright, 2006), one recent piece of legislation in particular, The No Child Left Behind Act (2001), impacted the principalship by requiring that schools collect and use data from students’ standardized tests. Other changes occurred in the work of principals because research on teaching, learning, assessment, and leading informed many principals’ practices (Consortium, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Murphy, 2006; Murphy & Forsyth, 1999; Reeves, 2006; Spillane, 2005; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Waters et al., 2003; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1993). According to Ferrandino (2001), the impact of technology cannot be underestimated as a causal factor in the changing role of principals. Another catalyst of the modification of principals’ responsibilities and practices resulted from changes within communities and in American society (Consortium, 2000; Crawford, 2006; Dean & Behne, 2002; Ferrandino, 2001; Herrity & Glasman, 1999; Hoerr, 2007; Howard, 2007; Lapkoff & Li, 2007; Ovando & Troxell, 1997). The following section explores one example of this, the change in student demographics.

Shifting student demographics. In general, schools in the US are more diverse now than at any time in history (Riehl, 2000). Many geographic areas that previously housed rather homogeneous populations of students, including rural areas and suburbs, have experienced a growth in the number of diverse students previously found predominantly in

urban communities (August & Hakuta, 1997; Dean & Behne, 2002; Riehl, 2000; Shin, 2005; Shin & Bruno, 2003). For example, many school districts throughout the US now have populations that may include students who come from poverty, students who are English language learners (ELLs), and students from racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse populations (August & Hakuta, 1997; Dean & Behne, 2002; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Shin, 2005; Shin & Bruno, 2003).

Increasing numbers of English language learners. English language learners, the focus of this dissertation, experienced a rate of growth greater than any other population of students in the country according to analysis of Census 2000 (Shin, 2005; Shin & Bruno, 2003). More current Census data indicates that between 1980 and 2009, the percentage of school-age children who spoke a language other than English at home rose from 10 to 21 percent, that is, from 4.7 million students to 11.2 million students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012a). All but 13 states saw a percentage growth of ELLs from 2000–2001 to 2009–2010 (U.S. Department of Education, 2012b). Nevada, Delaware, and Kansas experienced the largest positive change in percentage points of ELLs during this nine-year period, with a gain of 9 points in Nevada and 5 percentage points in the latter two states. In 2009–2010, four states, Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, and California, had ELL populations in their public schools equal to or greater than 14 percent or more of their student enrollments (US Department of Education, 2012b). During the same year, ELLs in California constituted 29 percent of the total public school students enrolled there (US Department of Education, 2012b).

The percentage of ELLs in public schools varies considerably from state to state, within states, and within school districts. In addition, ELLs are not dispersed evenly from

kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) (US Department of Education, 2012a). In 2009, the percentage of children in the elementary grades who spoke English with difficulty [as reported by family members on Census forms] was 7 percent compared to 4 percent each in middle schools and in high schools (US Department of Education, 2012a). Most teachers, however, will have culturally and linguistically diverse students in their classrooms at some time, if not numerous times, during their careers (Valdés, 2001).

Unlike immigrants in previous generations, ELLs are now commonly found outside of cities (Dean & Behne, 2002; Donnelly Hill & Flynn, 2004; US Department of Education, 2012b). Urban areas in general still have higher percentage of ELLs than suburbs, towns, and rural areas: 14 percent, 8 percent, 7 percent, and 4 percent, respectively (US Department of Education, 2012b).

Changing demographics' impact on principals' work. Demographic shifts such as those described in the preceding paragraphs impact the responsibilities and practices of principals; they are partly responsible for the transformation of the principalship itself (Dean & Behne, 2002; Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Hoerr, 2007; Howard, 2007; Reeves, 2007; Santos, 2004). Although a more thorough review of the literature on educational leadership for diverse students, including ELLs, occurs in Chapter Two, I will provide a brief overview here. A linguistically diverse student body requires attentive and informed administrators in order to meet the students' educational, cognitive, and social needs (Collier, 1995; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006). Principals must be aware of schools' legal and ethical responsibilities towards these diverse students (Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007; Menken, 2008). Principals must build relationships between communities and schools (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003a;

Consortium, 2008; Ferguson, 2005; Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Hill, 2008; Howard, Lindholm-Leary, Sugarman, Christian, & Rogers, 2005; Jason, 2000; Meyers, 2006; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008a, 2008b; Riehl, 2000; Shields, 1996). Additionally, principals must become aware of the critical significance of setting high expectations for their linguistically diverse students (Gibbons, 2009; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Howard et al., 2005, Smiley & Salsberry, 2007; Zweirs, 2008). An example of the impact of the interaction of changing demographics and new legal mandates on the work of principals can be found by examining NCLB again. Although NCLB includes provisions that affect all students, numerous provisions exist specifically for ELLs (Menken, 2006), all of which have the potential to impact the work of a principal. Menken wrote that under Title III, for instance, schools must include ELLs in state assessments for the sake of accountability, with minimal consideration for the length of time immigrant students have been in the USA; they must make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the same curricular areas as native English speakers as well as in English acquisition. NCLB may have altered some principals' perceived and actual responsibilities and practices. For example, many principals request exemptions from state assessments during immigrant students' first year in the US and worry about the time when ELLs' scores must be counted with the other students' scores (Minnow, 2008). Low performance scores on NCLB-mandated tests often result in costly remedial efforts as well as stigmatizing sanctions for schools (Minnow, 2008). I believe these scenarios described by Minnow might impact principals' perceived responsibilities and practices toward ELLs.

As noted above, the role of the school principal has changed dramatically over the past half-century or more (Consortium, 2000; Ferrandino, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Howard, 2007;

Murphy & Forsyth, 1999). Principals face increasing responsibilities, new educational policies, growing assortments of data to consider, new legal mandates, changes in education leadership theory, rapidly changing student demographics, calls for greater accountability and reforms, and countless other foci that demand their attention (Consortium, 2000; Fullan, 2000, 2001, 2010; Howard; Murphy & Forsyth, 1999). Given the rapidly evolving work of principals and the many demands on their time, principals are required to make numerous daily decisions about how they will conduct themselves as the leaders of schools. For example, they must select, oversee, and evaluate instructional programs that promote student learning and the professional development of staff (Consortium, 2000). Principals also choose how they will interact with students, parents, and the community, such as how often, where, in what language(s) (Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Smiley, 2005; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007). With so many demands, they must prioritize their leadership responsibilities and practices (Fullan, 2001; Reeves, 2006, 2007). Because so much is changing that impacts principals, I believe the changes will impact principals' perceived responsibilities and practices.

However, despite the numerous, evolving, and influential roles that principals play in schools, especially in this time of sweeping school reform and hotly debated educational policy, little scholarship addresses what principals perceive to be their responsibilities. In particular, no research to my knowledge addresses principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices with regard to ELLs, the fastest growing group of students throughout the US (Dean & Behne, 2002; Donnelly Hill & Flynn, 2004; Shin & Bruno, 2003). This research project will address that gap.

ELLs face many obstacles. Many English language learners face obstacles at school, in their communities, and at home that can impact their educational progress (August & Hakuta, 1997; Wong-Fillmore, 1991, 2000). Other student subgroups share some of these challenges, but some are unique to ELLs (Chamness-Miller & Endo, 2004; Wong-Fillmore, 2000). I address some of the reasons for ELLs' underachievement, as reported on traditional measures, in more detail in Chapter Two, but I will introduce the problems here. ELLs often have lower scores on standardized achievement tests, lower grade point averages, higher drop out rates, and are more frequently placed in grade levels below age-grade norms (August & Hakuta, 1997). ELLs are disproportionately represented in special education (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; de Valenzuela, Copeland, Huaqing Qi, & Park, 2006a). Students who are identified as having a disability and who are ELLs face dilemmas in the assessment of their language proficiency (de Valenzuela, Yaqub, Mayette, & Causarano-Lin, 2006b). Multiple and complex reasons exist for these and other obstacles that some ELLs experience at school. Although some causes may fall within the purview of individual students and their families and others may result from problems in society at large, many others find their roots in the practices and expectations of educators and the structures, climates, and cultures of schools (Au, 1993; Collier, 1995; Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Jason, 2000; Riehl, 2000; Santos, 2004; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007; Taylor, 1995; Wong-Fillmore, 1991, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

“English language learners are not my responsibility. They are the responsibility of the ESL coordinator and the ESL teachers.” Anonymous quote from an elementary principal, 2007.

This comment surprised me when I heard it uttered in a doctoral level educational leadership course. I was taken aback further when the majority of the class [current and future administrators] agreed with the principal who made this comment and the professor said nothing. That experience made me begin to wonder *what* principals consider their responsibilities for ELLs and the ramifications of such beliefs, especially since ELLs in the US face considerable risk for underachievement, as recorded by traditional measures (August & Hakuta, 1997; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Wong-Fillmore, 2000). Although some of the reasons that lead to this underachievement fall outside the influence of principals, principals can engage in practices correlated with traditional academic success measures (Waters et al., 2003; Waters & Grubb, 2004). As the time-honored leaders of schools, principals also play a critical role in producing changes and reforms, which can impact students in numerous ways as well (Fullan, 2001, 2010; Jason, 2000). The recommendations made by researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) and bilingualism who suggest ways in which administrators should support ELLs seem important to me, but I do not know if principals know of these suggestions or if they value them. I outline many recommendations for principals of ELLs and other aspects of the relevant research literature in Chapter Two.

Paucity of research. Despite the burgeoning population of ELLs nationwide and the tremendous hurdles that they face both in and out of school, a paucity of research exists on educators', particularly administrators', preparedness to deal with these students. Much of the extant literature, though scant, suggests that educators must make considerable changes in school structures, relations, cultures, and practices so that ELLs and other diverse student succeed (Cummins, 2001; Davila, 2005; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Karabenick & Clemens-Noda, 2004; Ramos, 2001; Riehl, 2000; Santos, 2004; Smiley, 2005; Smiley &

Salsberry, 2007; Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004). For example, two research projects analyzed teachers' beliefs and practices related to ELLs. The results indicated that some teachers reported negative attitudes toward ELLs (Karabenick & Clemens-Noda, 2004) and that some preferred not to have ELLs in their classes (Walker et al., 2004). In another study, several teachers reported that they preferred that their ELLs not use their native languages at school, even though the teachers supported the theory behind the maintenance of home languages (Ramos, 2001).

The results of two dissertations suggested that many principals lack professional knowledge related to ELLs and that principals desire both resources and professional development on issues related to these students (Davila, 2005; Smiley, 2005). I should note that although Davila's dissertation title implies that he investigated and created administrative guidelines for dealing with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, his questions, conclusions, and analysis referred almost exclusively to English language learners, not to the larger population of CLD students. In his study of principals conducted throughout the state of Kansas, he found that principals reported a lack of basic knowledge about second language acquisition and ESL pedagogy. Some of his participants did not know what type(s) of English language development (ELD) program were implemented in their schools, for example. Davila's research participants also reported a desire to learn more about ELL-related issue. Another doctoral dissertation on ELLs and principals (Smiley, 2005) revealed a deficiency in the resource materials on ELLs available to principals. Of the extant literature on principals' leadership for ELLs, only Davila's work attempted to investigate what principals know and do in regards to their ELL students. However, since Davila used only a large-scale survey, it is difficult to ascertain if principals

actually engaged in the professional behaviors that they reported. Conclusions from both of these researchers included a need for additional research specifically looking at educational leadership for ELLs.

Beyond Davila's (2005) and Smiley's (2005) works, a gap exists between research and practice in educational leadership for ELLs. The available articles and books on leadership for ELLs (e.g., Bailey, 2006; Bielenberg & Wong-Fillmore, 2004-2005; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Howard, 2007; Simons & Connelly, 2000; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007; Thiers, 2007) contain suggestions about what principals *should* do. These authors do not describe what principals actually do with these students, if principals are aware of the recommendations that the authors make, whether following the authors' recommendations impacts students, or which of their recommendations principals value, for example. The quote at the beginning of this section indicates that at least some principals think that they have no responsibilities for ELLs. An essential link in understanding principals' leadership for ELLs is to understand their perceptions of their responsibilities and practices toward these students, and to learn what they think ELLs need to be successful in school. I intend to fill this gap in the literature with this research project.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine principals' self-perceptions of leadership responsibilities and practices related to English language learners and the principals' beliefs about what contributes to the academic success of these students. By examining the perceived responsibilities and practices of principals with regard to ELLs I may uncover patterns of beliefs about leadership that contribute to the success or struggles of English

language learners. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to contribute to the literature on leadership for ELLs.

I limited myself to studying exemplary public school principals in schools with high populations of ELLs. I constrained myself to studying exemplary principals because I believe that (a) they may be more informed of the educational research literature on ELLs than average principals, (b) they might have sought additional professional development opportunities on ELLs, and (c) they are likely to have superior administrative practices of the types that I discuss in Chapter Two. I focused on schools with high populations of ELLs because I believe that these principals are more likely to have more experience working with this subpopulation of students than principals in schools with fewer ELLs. Such experience might impact principals' perceptions about their responsibilities and practices with regard to ELLs as well as their beliefs about what contributes to the academic success of these students. I will define the terms *exemplary principal* and *high populations of ELLs* shortly.

Questions to be Addressed

The questions addressed in this study were:

1. What are exemplary principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices related to ELLs?
2. How do their responsibilities and practices align with identified best practices in the professional literature in second language acquisition and in educational leadership?
3. What do exemplary principals believe contributes to the academic success of ELLs?

Operational Definitions

Exemplary principals: Principals or assistant principals who are nominated by other educators as being administrators who perform their work as principals well above that of other principals in their district or geographic region.

English Language Learners (ELLs): “Linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified . . . as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade level content in English and thereby, qualifying for support services” (State Department of Education, 2007, p.101) [state not identified to protect participants’ privacy]. Some authors drop the middle term and refer to these students as “English learners” (ELs). In some federal government publications, references in the research literature, and older state and local publications, the term “Limited English Proficient” (LEP) students is used to denote the same students, but that term is becoming less commonly used because of its negative connotation (August & Hakuta, 1997).

High populations of ELLs: For the purpose of this study, I define schools with high populations of ELLs as those schools in which ELLs constitute 15% or greater of the school’s total student population. This figure is nearly five times greater than the average in 2009-2010 in the state in which I conducted this research (US Department of Education, 2012b).

Responsibilities: I define responsibilities as those aspects of principals’ jobs that would be expected of anyone in their position. Since I asked my research participants what *they* considered their principals’ responsibilities for ELLs, I did not define the term before the study. I discuss their answers to the question in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five I compare my results to three sets of responsibilities: responsibilities recommended by educational

leadership scholars for students *in general*, those responsibilities recommended for leaders of *culturally and linguistically diverse student*, and those recommended for leaders of *ELLs*.

Practices: I define leadership practices as the overt manifestations of principals' responsibilities. Practices are what they *do*, their actions, and how they demonstrate their responsibilities. Because the participants self-reported their practices, their statements were part of my data. I will discuss these practices in Chapter Four.

Researcher Stance and Theoretical Frameworks

I begin this research project wearing one hat but holding another. I identify myself primarily as an elementary school teacher with over 20 years experience. Currently, I teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in a medium-sized urban district in a state in the eastern US. My district has no bilingual education program. Previously, I taught gifted education and general education at the elementary level in New Mexico, at an international school in the Caribbean, and in three mid-western states. I have taught in a large urban district with high numbers of ELLs and pockets of well-developed dual language programs and strands, rural districts with virtually no cultural or linguistic diversity, suburban districts with some diversity, and mixed districts. My teaching includes work in public, private, and parochial schools. I also taught adult ESL students for a short time.

The other hat I carry but have not worn is that of a school principal. Though I earned my master's degree in Educational Leadership more than 20 years ago, I continue to read the field's literature and take courses in that area. I keep my principal's license current. I completed an administrative internship at an inner city, high-poverty, dual-language public school in New Mexico and another one in a parochial school in Madison, Wisconsin.

My life at home and in the community also impacts my stance as a researcher since it influences my understanding of second language acquisition. I am married to a first-generation immigrant for whom English is his second language. He is a political dissident from a country ravaged by international and civil wars. Attempting to raise our two children bilingually in a “low-status” minority language [that I began learning as an adult] also shapes my views as a researcher. My former volunteer work resettling refugee and immigrant families and serving as a consultant and board member for an elementary school made up entirely of immigrant families impacts my understanding of second language acquisition and the role of educators in this process as well.

Theoretical frameworks. I adopt balanced leadership (Waters et al., 2003) as the theoretical framework that informs my general views of educational leadership for all students. For leadership for diverse students, I rely on Riehl’s (2000) recommendations for creating inclusive schools. In brief, Riehl’s research suggests that principals wishing to create inclusive schools must engage in three tasks: foster new meaning construction about diversity amongst students, parents, the community, teachers, and within themselves; impact teaching and learning and shape a school culture that supports diversity by promoting practices and conditions within schools to address the needs of diverse students; and build bridges between schools and community (Riehl, 2000). I will discuss Riehl’s framework in more detail in Chapter Two. Narrowing my focus even further to leadership for ELLs, I will then invoke Hamayan and Freeman’s (2006) guiding principles for administrators of ELLs. This guide, described more fully in Chapter Two, recommended the following steps: understanding the nature of learning in two languages; understanding [and implementing] policies and accountability requirements; linking the school and community; developing, implementing,

and evaluating program development; ensuring that the best classroom instructional and assessment practices are implemented for ELLs; providing for professional development for all instructional staff members; and advocating for ELLs (Hamayan & Freeman, 2006).

Collectively, these three frameworks constitute what I consider the best practices for leadership, especially for ELLs. I will use these recommendations when I analyze my participants' responses in Chapter Five.

In addition to the authors and frameworks cited above, my literature review in the following chapter will examine the work of other scholars. I do this to see how favorably the frameworks that I have selected compare with the research results and best practices of others, and also to provide more background on these topics. I will also discuss the work of scholars who have opinions different from the ones above to illustrate more fully the breadth of information and opinion on these topics.

Underlying Assumptions

I believe that educational leadership matters, for all students and for all subgroups of students, especially for ELLs. I assume that what principals believe about their professional responsibilities and practices will, in fact, affect their professional practices. In addition, I assume that principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and professional practices are transmitted to the teaching staff, overtly or covertly, which then influences instruction. I believe that principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices have the ability to influence students through avenues that do not directly involve teachers as well. How principals interact with students, parents, and members of the community; how they view and interpret student assessments; how they set expectations of academic excellence for ELLs; what types of climate and cultures are created with regard to diversity; what principals

consider “normal” and “abnormal” academic development in students; and how schools address perceived achievement gaps are some additional ways that I believe principals’ perceptions of their responsibilities and practices impact students.

I hold several underlying assumptions about language development that shape how and why I study this topic as well. I believe that second language and literacy development are sociocultural processes. I assume that ELLs need considerable practice speaking, reading, and writing English with the help of a teacher trained in SLA, multicultural competencies, and specific techniques for assisting ELLs, and that the students need to converse with their peers for the sake of constructing meaning and practicing their language skills. Furthermore, I think that language instruction should include goals for content acquisition and specific language instruction. In addition, I believe that there are many possible serious barriers to the academic success of ELLs, many of which are imposed by teachers, administrators, and the community, possibly unwittingly. I also believe that everything about school has the potential to impact not only students, but also their families and communities. I hold firm to the belief that people have the right to use their native languages, and that students’ languages and cultures deserve the respect and attention of educators and of the other students, even if ELLs are not educated in a bilingual program. I repeat my assertion that educators, especially principals, have many responsibilities towards ELLs.

Importance of the Study

Principals have many different subpopulations of students whose progress they must monitor and for whom they are accountable. One of these groups, the population of ELLs, continues to grow in all types of districts and in all parts of the US (U.S. Department of Education, 2012b; U.S. Department of Education, 2009; Dean & Behne, 2002; Shin &

Bruno, 2003). Numerous studies employing multiple, traditional indices of academic success indicate that many ELLs are at risk for serious academic underachievement and other problems (see, for example, August & Hakuta, 1997; Christian, 2006a). Given the widespread growth of the ELL population and the seriousness of the risk factors they face, as the leaders of schools, principals must engage in leadership behaviors conducive to ELLs' success in school.

Very little scholarship addresses the nexus of educational leadership and the education of English language learners. However, from the general research literature in educational leadership [not focused on ELLs] come descriptions of principals' practices that have been shown empirically to impact student achievement in numerous ways (Hill, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012; Levine & Lezotte, 2001; Miller, 2003; Waters et al., 2003; Waters & Grubb, 2004). In addition, the professional literature on educating CLD students, though not specifically ELLs (e.g., Dean & Behne, 2002; Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Herrity & Glasman, 1999; Jason, 2000; Ovando & Troxell, 1997; Riehl, 2000), also provides suggestions for administrators. However, the vast majority of this body of literature, like the literature on SLA/bilingualism noted earlier, is prescriptive, not descriptive. Researchers in the field of second language acquisition make suggestions about what principals *should* do vis à vis ELLs (Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Simons & Connelly, 2000; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007). However, the extant research has not documented what practices principals actually engage in, nor what responsibilities and practices principals deem valuable with respect to ELLs. Furthermore, the normative claims contained in these SLA projects are rooted in SLA theories, rather than

the theory and practice of educational leadership. Scholarship coming from both of these academic areas is needed.

The improvement of the education of ELLs in the United States is a matter of vital importance. This research project will add to the professional literature in both educational leadership and SLA by describing exemplary principals' perceived leadership responsibilities and practices with regard to students who are English language learners and what the principals believe contributes to ELLs' success at school.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

I examined exemplary principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices in public schools with high populations of ELLs in an Eastern state in the US. I employed a naturalistic paradigm by interviewing my participants. Since I did not use an experimental design, my conclusions are limited to those participants in the study.

I conducted this research program recognizing the following delimitations. However, many of them are intentional aspects of the design of this study. First, I did not randomly select the research participants. I selected them based on nominations by other educational professionals who knew of their work. I needed to use purposeful sampling, since I wanted to focus on the perceptions of exemplary principals. Secondly, I acknowledge that an interview occurs in a social context, that an interview is influenced by that context, and that "researchers are not invisible neutral entities" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 716). In addition, response effects commonly affect interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Thirdly, by limiting myself to exemplary principals in schools with high populations of ELLs, not to exemplary principals of ELLs, I might have interviewed individuals who do an excellent job as administrators in general but who lack leadership traits related to ELLs. Furthermore,

because I relied on other educators to nominate the exemplary principals who became my participants, the nominators could have had differing ideas about what exemplary means. Others may not consider my participants exemplary, or, they may be considered exemplary for reasons unrelated to the education of ELLs and be less-than-exemplary in their leadership of ELLs.

Since the study was not conducted in my school district due to potential conflicts of interest, I did not have sufficient time to observe my participants firsthand, an important component of many qualitative research projects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b; Gay & Airasian, 2003). However, I argue this was not necessary since I focused on principals' perceptions and beliefs, not on their practices. In addition, I did not include students, staff, parents, and community members as participants in this study. Although human triangulation and participant observation are used in many qualitative studies (Creswell, 1998), they were not necessary steps in this research project because I did not compare principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices with their actual practices.

In the next chapter I will describe in greater detail the three frameworks I used to analyze my data. I will also describe additional research in educational leadership and second language acquisition. In Chapter Three I describe my methodology in detail and provide demographic information on my participants. I devote Chapters Four and Five to my research results and analysis, respectively.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

My literature review contains two main bodies of research that guided me when I planned my study and analyzed the data I collected from exemplary principals about their perceptions of their responsibilities and practices toward ELLs and what they believe contributes to the academic success of these students. The first body of literature I reviewed contains scholarship on language acquisition. The second body of literature I reviewed contains scholarship on educational leadership. This educational leadership literature review consists of three parts: (a) educational leadership in general, (b) leadership for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, and (c) leadership for ELLs.

I assumed when I began my study that an exemplary principal would have at least a passing familiarity with all of these areas of research and would draw upon them to formulate a conception of principals' roles and responsibilities with regard to ELLs. Furthermore, I believed that exemplary principals would draw upon this knowledge when asked to state what they believe contributes to the academic success of ELLs. I will discuss these assumptions and other findings in Chapters Four and Five.

Scholarship on Language Acquisition and Teaching ELLs

The works of a number of scholars in the field of sociolinguistics, SLA, psychology, education, sociology, sociocultural theory, and anthropology (e.g., Cummins, Krashen, Genesee, Wong-Fillmore, Lindholm-Leary, Valdés, Au, August, Hakuta, Collier, Heath, Freire, and Apple) have shaped my development as an emerging scholar. They have shaped

my understanding of how students develop oral language and literacy skills at home and at school, and helped me to understand the effects that schooling has on students, their families, and communities. Collectively, they have helped me to understand that language and literacy education are not neutral subjects taught as a collection of isolated skills. Rather, language and literacy (and schooling in general) rely heavily on context, and this context can foster or hinder language development, as well as a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Collier, 1995). What some policy makers, politicians, and educators see as an "achievement gap" between ELLs and mainstream students might stem from an instructional gap, or multiple disconnects between the ELL and school practices (Au, 1993; Cummins, 1994; Gibbons, 2002; Krashen, 1994; Menken, 2008; Wong-Fillmore, 1991, 2000). This may arise from instruction that conflicts with the students' patterns of language (Au, 1993; Heath, 1983); instructional language that is not accessible to the child (Gibbons, 2002; Krashen, 1994); and educators who discourage use of the home language without realizing its impact on the students' cognitive and academic development, family life, and sense of community (Wong-Fillmore, 1991, 2000). Federal and state education policies might contribute to this disconnect as well: they have mandated the adoption of academic standards with subsequent standardized testing (Menken, 2008). Menken's (2008) research suggested that standardized testing serves as de facto language policy that results in serious problems for ELLs. An instructional gap may also result from teachers and administrators who are unwilling to consider how a school's climate, culture, and curriculum reproduce existing power inequalities and impact student motivation, academic success, empowerment, and sense of identity (Apple, 1979, 1985; Cummins, 2001; Gibson, 1988; Willis, 1981). I will now

examine more closely one component of this last element, the concept of empowering minority students.

Empowering Minority Students

Cummins's work on the relevancy of power and identity to the school failure of minority students (2001, revised and reprinted from 1986) described two reasons why educational reform attempting to raise the achievement of CLD students will fail. The first, the current mindset of scientifically based or scripted instructional techniques to the exclusion of human relationships that value students' intellect, creativity, and cultural/linguistic identity, seriously devalues students and makes them susceptible to the continuation of oppressive power structures (Cummins, 2001). The second reason is that "there is deep antipathy to acknowledging that schools tend to reflect the power structure of the society and that these power relations are directly relevant to educational outcomes" (Cummins, 2001, p. 650). In my estimation, this explanation is similar to that proposed by a number of other scholars who wrote about social reproduction and oppression that occurs in schools and the workforce (e.g., Apple, 1979, 1985; Bourdieu, 1977; Freire, 1989; Gintis & Bowles, 1975; Willis, 1981). I address the importance of principals' responsibilities and practices with regard to the critical issues noted above later in this chapter when I review the literature on leadership for CLD students.

Some of Cummins's research and theories (1994) have particular relevance to the investigation of principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices toward ELLs and their views on what contributes to the academic success of these students. For example, I believe that his Conversational/Academic Language Proficiency Principle (1994) has implications for principals' responsibilities and practices in selecting and evaluating

programs and in evaluating teachers' instructional and assessment practices of ELLs. I think that principals who are knowledgeable of his Linguistic Interdependence Principle and his Additive Bilingualism Enrichment Principle could use that information when selecting and evaluating programs and evaluating teachers' instructional and assessment practices as well. I believe that if a principal has knowledge of these theories of Cummins (1994), the theories might influence the principal's thoughts about the factors that contribute to ELLs' academic success, which might then impact the principals' leadership practices. Cummins's (1994) Framework for Reversing School Failure challenges educators to "define their roles in relations to culturally diverse students and communities" (p. 30) by examining their goals, expectations, and assumptions about educating these students. I believe that Cummins's Framework for Reversing School Failure could contribute to a principal's theoretical understanding of responsibilities and practices in regard to ELLs. Furthermore, it is my opinion that his framework contains practical pedagogical implications that should guide a principal as the instructional leader of the school. These pedagogical considerations include the adoption and implementation of a model for teaching ELLs, that is, the school's English language development (ELD) program(s).

Critical Considerations for Educating ELLs

I will describe several ELD program models in the next section. However, first I provide some important recommendations from SLA scholars. The literature on the education of ELLs at the K–12 level contains several key considerations that I outline below.

- Educators hold high expectations for ELLs, i.e., they do not lower expectations for ELLs (Gibbons, 2009; Harper & de Jong, 2004)

- Teachers make learning opportunities cognitively challenging and engaging (Gibbons, 2009; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Zweirs, 2008).
- They integrate the teaching of content, language, and literacy (Freeman & Freeman, 2006, 2009; Gibbons, 2002, 2009; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Zweirs, 2008).
- Teachers provide *comprehensible input* and *scaffolding* to increase ELLs' language and literacy skills (Freeman & Freeman, 2009; Gibbons, 2002, 2009; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Zweirs, 2008).
- Homeroom and content area teachers become cognizant of the language demands in specific content areas (Gibbons, 2009; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Zweirs, 2008).
- Teachers develop ELLs' *academic language* (Freeman and Freeman, 2009; Gibbons, 2009; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Protheroe, 2011; Zweirs, 2008).
 - They develop students' language, literacy, and writing in the content areas.
 - They teach the language of academic discourse.
 - They develop bridges to texts and to students' existing knowledge bases.
- “Thinking is made visible” (Gibbons, 2009, p. 35), i.e., teachers and students engage in meta-discussions about thinking (Gibbons, 2009; Zweirs, 2008).

Program Models for English Language Development

Historically, there are numerous ways in which ELLs, both adults and children, have acquired English in the United States. Individuals frequently had unequal opportunities to learn the language or in some cases were forced to learn English against their will (Graff, 1979, 1987). Groups of language learners had different opportunities for education depending on several factors, including individuals' race, gender, religion, slavery or Native

American status, social class, country of origin, occupation, former level of education, urban versus rural setting, and region of the United States, for example (Graff, 1979, 1987). Beliefs influenced opportunities as well: hegemonic views held by the majority restricted the access to and quality of education for ELLs, while beliefs and fears held by some ethnic and religious groups influenced their decisions to attend school on a limited basis or to acquire only a limited amount of English (Graff, 1979, 1987).

In the following sections I limit my attention to contemporary models of English language development (ELD) for ELLs at the K–12 level in the US. For the sake of simplicity, I first divide the current types of English language development programs into two general groups: bilingual education programs and non-bilingual programs. Because none of my research participants worked in a bilingual school at the time of data collection, I discuss bilingual education only briefly. I include it here, though, because I believe no discussion of ELD models is complete without discussing bilingual education. Research suggests that dual language education, one type of bilingual education, is both the most successful bilingual program and the most successful ELD model overall for ELLs (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Furthermore, the number of dual language programs is growing in the US (Scholastic, 2009). In my on-going review of the literature during the past five years I have noticed an increase in the number of articles on dual language education in professional journals read by teachers and principals (e.g., Estrada, Gómez, & Ruiz-Escalante, 2009; Murphy, 2010; Scholastic, 2009). In the five to ten years before that, I found articles about bilingual education predominantly in academic journals that focused on bilingual education.

Bilingual education programs in the United States. Bilingual education's history in the US has changed rapidly (Baker, 2006). In the United States today, several types of

bilingual programs exist. The major bilingual program types today include dual language programs, also known as two-way bilingual immersion; transitional bilingual programs, also called early-exit bilingual programs; and developmental bilingual programs, also referred to as late-exit bilingual education (Christian, 2006a; Genesee, 1999). For a deeper discussion of bilingual education, see Baker (2006), in which he described 10 different types of bilingual education used throughout the world. Bilingual programs differ from each other in many ways, including the philosophies behind the programs, the services students receive, and the number of years during which services are provided. Bilingual programs also differ critically from one another in their language, literacy, academic, and sociocultural goals (Christian, 2006a; Genesee, 1999). These goals have profound consequences on how the students are taught and therefore on the educational outcomes for ELLs, their families, and their communities. I will return to my discussion about bilingual education at the end of the following section on non-bilingual programs to compare and contrast these two broad types of ELD.

Non-bilingual education programs. There exist a few types of non-bilingual models/pedagogies for ELLs as well. From my reading of the literature and from discussions with professors, I have found that researchers, practitioners, the public, and policy makers often disagree about whether some of the program models are true program models of ELD, they are [only] pedagogical methods, or they do not deserve either distinction because they do not result in English language development. Blurring these distinctions can result in false assumptions that lead to pedagogical problems (see Harper & de Jong, 2004). When mainstream (i.e., homeroom and content area) teachers believe that educating ELLs is not significantly different from educating other students, or that “the discipline of English as a

second language (ESL) is primarily a menu of pedagogical adaptations appropriate for a variety of diverse learners” (Harper & de Jong, 2004, p. 152), misconceptions can occur that result in inappropriate teaching of ELLs.

ESL and newcomer programs. English as a second language (ESL) programs and newcomer programs are widely considered true program models (Christian, 2006a; Christian, 2006b; Genesee, 1999), though not as effective as bilingual education (Krashen, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Students in ESL programs receive “carefully articulated, developmentally appropriate English language instruction” suited for their English proficiency (Christian, 2006a, p. 5). There are several *delivery types* of ESL. In the *pull-out delivery type of ESL*, students leave their homerooms and receive instruction from an ESL certified teacher in a self-contained classroom for around 45 minutes per day, depending on their grade levels and their language proficiency levels. In the *push-in delivery type of ESL*, an ESL teacher goes into the student’s classroom to assist the student as the homeroom or content teacher instructs the whole class, or the teachers co-teach. In the *content-specific delivery type* of ESL class, the student is instructed in both English language development and the content area (e.g., math, science, social studies, language arts/reading), by either an ESL teacher dually certified in the particular content area, or by an ESL teacher co-teaching with a certified content area teacher. In the state where this study was conducted, all three types of ESL class exist at the elementary level, but the first delivery type, pull-out ESL, is more common. At the secondary level, students commonly receive ESL instruction in a content-specific class or classes (e.g., ESL English, ESL Science, ESL Math, ESL Social Studies).

Newcomer programs are special intensive ESL programs for recent arrivals to the US with low or no English proficiency, found more commonly at the secondary level than the elementary level (Christian, 2006b). They exist to accelerate the acquisition of English and academic skills; students often spend a year in a newcomer program (Christian, 2006b). It is my experience that students in Newcomer programs often return to other ESL programs after being in Newcomer Programs.

Sheltered instruction and SIOP. The debate about whether a model is a program or a pedagogy begins when discussing sheltered instruction (SI). Christian (2006a, 2006b) and Genesee (1999) call SI a program, but according to Christian (2006a, 2006b), SI can be used to describe either an ESL model or pedagogy. I favor the pedagogy distinction because from my observations, teachers often state that they use it, but in reality they include very few of its components, if any. Because teachers not certified in ESL or bilingual education generally employ SI, I believe that the misconceptions about educating ELLs discussed by Harper and de Jong (2004) are likely. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008), an offshoot of SI, is another ESL program/pedagogical method found in some schools today. The same researchers who created SI also created the SIOP Model. It was initially created as a research and supervisory protocol to investigate how well teachers implemented SI (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). The researchers then developed it into an instructional model, the SIOP Model. Research on the effectiveness of the SIOP Model remains scant: “English learners in classes whose teachers had been trained in implementing the SIOP Model to a high degree demonstrated significantly higher writing scores than the control group” (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008, p. 239). According to the creators of SIOP, research continues. Although none of my participants specifically

mentioned using the SIOP Model/Method, I discuss it here because it is possible that some of the teachers in the participants' schools (or the principals themselves) may have received SIOP training. The state funded several multi-day SIOP training sessions for homeroom and content teachers. Similarly, the teachers or principals may have read one of the several books published by its creators in 2008.

Structured English immersion. Some educators and policy makers consider structured English immersion another ESL program type. This method is taught in a self-contained room in which most of the teaching is conducted in English; however, some use of the students' native language is allowed (Christian, 2006a). This method gained national attention when it replaced bilingual education in some state referenda, as when California passed Proposition 227 (Christian, 2006a). I have heard this model referred to as the “sink-or-swim” method by educators from California because ELLs are often placed in mainstream classes with no change in curricular, instructional, or assessment practices. Teachers in such situations often have no professional training in teaching language minority students or in second language acquisition. In such cases when there are no changes in the curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and when teachers have no training, I believe that this method is not a model but simply a poor approach, unsupported by research or theory.

Full inclusion for ELLs for social justice and equity. Another non-bilingual method is full inclusion, meaning ELLs study with mainstream students all day and are not separated for language instruction. The goals in full inclusion for ELLs vary significantly from those of structured English immersion. Principals and teachers engaged in full inclusion of this sort do so to create socially just, equitable schools for ELLs, to raise student achievement in ELLs, and to foster community building across the school (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). According

to these researchers, teachers in full inclusion schools may be dually certified in ESL and their content area, or they may have undergone extensive professional development in second language acquisition and the instruction of ELLs. They also describe another variation of full inclusion schools in which mainstream teachers and ESL teacher co-plan and co-teach all students. Theoharis and O'Toole's research on full inclusion for ELLs (2011) is limited to only two case studies. However, because three of my seven participants stated that they used full inclusion as their ELD model, I will consider it an ELD model in this study. It is important to note, however, that the seminal study on ELD models by Thomas and Collier (2002) cited throughout this review did not include full inclusion for ELLs, nor has any study by SLA theorists and researchers of which I am aware.

Differences among non-bilingual programs. The non-bilingual programs mentioned above often differ from one another in several ways. For example, they differ in the number of years in which students are in the programs; the training the teachers have in special pedagogical strategies for ELLs; and whether students are in self-contained classrooms all day, in pull-out classes for part of the day, or in mainstream classes for the entire school day (Christian, 2006a; Genesee, 1999; Rossell, 2004/2005). According to Christian (2006a), ESL models/methodologies also differ in their language goals. She claims that the goal of newcomer programs, ESL programs, and structured English immersion programs is for students to gain general English proficiency, whereas the language goal with sheltered instruction pedagogy/programs is proficiency in academic English (Christian, 2006a). I disagree with Christian's language goals discussion for the reasons cited above. In fact, the textbook descriptions of all of these programs may be different from how they are put into practice.

Differences between bilingual and non-bilingual programs. Non-bilingual programs differ from the bilingual approaches in important ways that cannot be covered in a research project focusing on perceptions of leadership practices and responsibilities, so I shall simply gloss over a few critical areas. One of the obvious differences is that the students' native language is used sparingly, if at all, in the non-bilingual approaches. Bilingualism is a language goal for dual language programs and developmental bilingual education, whereas English proficiency is the language goal for the other programs, including for transitional bilingualism (Christian, 2006a). In addition, the two camps have very different philosophies about what is valued, what should be taught, if ELLs should be segregated from native English speakers, and how language should be taught. These all have profound academic, cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural implications for students (Collier, 1995). According to Christian (2006a), cultural integration into mainstream American culture is a cultural goal for all of the program models noted above, both bilingual and non-bilingual. However, she added that only dual language and developmental bilingual programs have the additional goals of maintaining and appreciating the students' home culture. Other differences between bilingual education and non-bilingual education exist but are not included here because they are extraneous to this research project.

Although the literature on dual language bilingual education (c.f., Baker, 2001, 2006; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Howard et al., 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a, 2005b; Thomas & Collier, 2002) suggests that it is the most successful ELD program for all ELL students (and has substantial benefit for the language majority, i.e., the native English speaking students), it is often not possible to implement dual language education program in some settings or for some students (Genesee, 1999). Some researchers state

pragmatically that there is no one best model for all ELLs, in all schools, and in all communities for a host of reasons (Genesee, 1999; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a). It is my opinion that context is extremely important when deciding upon the program(s) to use for ELLs and that many factors must be considered when programs are selected, designed, implemented, and evaluated. Unfortunately, a discussion of these factors is outside the scope of this project. However, I encourage readers desiring information comparing the effectiveness of program models for ELLs to read Thomas and Collier's comprehensive long-term study of ELLs' academic achievement (2002).

What schools must do to support ELD programs. Genesee (1999) made the following recommendations for school districts using SI. However, I think these sound recommendations could apply to schools using *any* method of ELD, so I include them despite my reservations with SI. He recommended that districts provide on-going professional development for all teachers so that they can continue to learn appropriate pedagogical techniques to support the schools' ELLs. Research supports the idea that all teachers need to understand that they share the responsibility for educating ELLs, and they must know how to do so (Davila, 2005; Freeman & Hamayan, 2006; Genesee, 1999; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, Christian, 2006; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Simons & Connelly, 2000; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007; Theorharis & O'Toole, 2011). Genesee also suggested (1999) that districts [using SI] create sheltered, grade-level specific curricula for each content subject offered, curricula that would include language and content objectives, suggested strategies for instruction, and methods for alternative assessment. In addition, he stated that schools [using SI] must have a great deal of supporting material, such as models, visuals, audiovisual materials, additional reading materials, and other hands-on resources.

Disadvantages of ESL and ESL-like pedagogies. There are several disadvantages of non-bilingual ESL models and ESL-like pedagogies (e.g., SI and SIOP). One disadvantage of pull-out ESL classes, in my experience, is that when students go to ESL class, they miss instruction from their homeroom teachers, instruction that may be in math, science, social studies, or language arts. Also, Thomas and Collier's study (2002) suggested that ESL programs, over the course of a student's K–12 education, are the least effective models. Their research suggested that students who are taught in an enriched, challenging environment in their native languages, who have increasing exposure to the students' second language (L2) [English, in the case of all students in this study] over time, and who have access to strong L2 language models, as found in the dual language model, will perform academically at least as well as monolingual English-speaking students or ELLs in other ELD program models. Furthermore, ELLs in dual language education programs may experience cognitive, motivational, and affective advantages not found in other models of ELD (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Gandara, 1997; Genesee, 2000, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

In addition, early-exit bilingual programs and ESL programs, (and by extension, I believe, Sheltered English Immersion, SI, and other ESL-like programs or pedagogies), often do not provide students with enough time to acquire their L2 (Thomas & Collier, 2002). From this study, Thomas and Collier concluded that “students with no proficiency in English must NOT [emphasis in original] be placed in short-term programs of only 1-3 years. . . . Furthermore, only ELLs with at least 4 years of primary language schooling reach grade-level performance in L2 in 4 years” (Thomas & Collier, 2002, p. 7). Hakuta et al. (2000) agreed that short-term programs are unrealistic. They suggested that the entire time ELLs

spend in elementary school is more realistic for acquiring English, assuming that students have a balanced curriculum with full attention to the content areas.

To summarize the limitations of non-bilingual programs, researchers note the following concerns. Students in non-bilingual programs will not experience language development as rapidly and thoroughly in either language, their first language (L1) and their L2, as will students in dual language programs because the former group will not be able to comprehend much or all of what is said in the context-reduced, cognitively-demanding academic environment of schools (Baker, 2001; Collier, 1995; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Cummins, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 2002). The academic development of students who are not in bilingual programs cannot compete with those students who are in bilingual programs because students in bilingual programs will be able to access content better through their first language (Genesee, 2005). In addition, dual language students' vocabularies will be richer and students' knowledge can transfer (Collier, 1995; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Cummins, 1994). Furthermore, the non-bilingual program students' cognitive development will not grow at the same rate as that of students in dual language programs (Collier, 1995). This is due in part to reduced language and academic growth, to a less stimulating environment, and to the fact that students' sociocultural well-being is jeopardized in these other models (Collier, 1995). According to Collier (1995), the latter is due to prejudice, failure, subordinate status, assimilation, intergroup hostility, lack of access to the curriculum due to tracking, or other negative outcomes that may be present when students do not learn in their native languages. In addition, as I discussed earlier, ELLs often miss out on content area classes because they are pulled out for their classrooms. Collier's explanation is similar to

Cummins's (2001) description of the problems ELLs face due to lack of empowerment caused by factors in school and in society.

There is a wide variety of educational programs and pedagogies provided to ELLs in the United States (Christiana, 2006; Genesee, 1999); these services result in different levels of academic achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2002). The academic achievement of ELLs, according to traditional measures of academic success, falls significantly behind that of native English speaking students (Christian, 2006a; Hakuta et al., 2000) and ELLs have higher dropout rates than native English speakers (August & Hakuta, 1997; Lindholm-Leary, 2005b). They have other risk factors as well. Compared to native English speakers, ELLs come from families with considerably less education and lower incomes (August & Hakuta, 1997). ELLs are faced with the daunting task of learning not only a new language but also the knowledge and skills that native English speakers learn. Yet despite the convincing evidence that these students are at risk, ELLs in the United States are under-educated by our schools (Thomas & Collier, 2002). The education of these students is all the more critical given the fact that the number of language minority students continues to rise across the country, in rural, suburban, and urban areas, making them the fastest growing population of students in the country (Christian, 2006,a; Dean & Behne, 2002; Shin & Bruno, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Research strongly suggests that dual language instruction results in high achievement and in other positive outcomes for language minority and language majority students, their families, and their communities (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Howard et al., 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Although dual language education is not possible in all settings, Spanish speakers make up the largest segment of the

group of ELLs (Gandara, 1997; Shin & Bruno, 2003). Therefore, the number of Spanish/English dual language programs could increase throughout the country at both the elementary and secondary level, and dual language programs that utilize other L1 languages could be implemented in areas where there are high numbers of native speakers. However, implementing dual language education on a grand scale would take significant support at many levels. In settings in which students belong to language groups with insufficient numbers for dual language programs, schools must implement programs that better incorporate current research and theories on the sociocultural, cognitive, linguistic, and academic needs of ELLs.

Principals and ELD programs. With all ELD programs, numerous opportunities abound for principals to influence teaching and to create school conditions conducive to the success of ELLs (Davila, 2005; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Simons, 2000; Smiley, 2007). Collier (1995) suggested, for example, that teachers promote a great deal of student collaboration through problem solving and discovery in order for academic, cognitive, and language development to occur. Administrators also need to understand the benefits of ELLs maintaining their home languages (Wong-Fillmore, 1991, 2000), regardless of the ELD models employed. Although schools might not be able to use a bilingual model, principals must still encourage teachers to explain to parents the educational, cognitive, and social reasons why families should continue to speak their home languages and encourage parents to teach their children to read and write it (Collier, 1995; Meyers, 2006; Nguyen & Freeman, 2006; Wong-Fillmore, 1991, 2000).

The critical role of educators' attitudes. Emphasis on educators' positive attitudes toward the language and sociocultural development of ELLs is found in the research of

nearly all of the researchers in psychology, sociology, anthropology, second language acquisition, and bilingual education whose work I have read (e.g., Au, 1993; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1994, 2001; Heath, 1983; Howard et al., 2005; Howard, 2007; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a; Piper, 2003). Educators' attitudes toward ELLs (including those of teachers, principals, and paraeducators), the students' languages, and their cultures manifest themselves in numerous ways. Collier (1995) wrote that all of the cultural and social processes occurring around ELLs at school, at home, and in the broader context of the community at large influence these students. She stated that if students have socioculturally supportive environments, the students' learning will most likely be affected positively. However, Collier's research indicated that if the instructional environment contributes to social distance, prejudice, failure, subordinate status, assimilation, stereotyping, intergroup hostility, fear, lack of access to the curriculum through tracking, or other negative outcomes, students' ability to learn the new language may be diminished. Collier's research suggested that sociocultural processes strongly influence not only students' access to language, but also their academic and cognitive development.

For this reason, principals must be certain that ELLs' sociocultural development receives adequate consideration. This may require continuing professional development and dialogue with teachers. It surely requires monitoring how students' language and culture are reflected and respected at school. I will address the notion of leadership for social justice and inclusivity, which I believe impacts all areas of development for ELLs, in the Leadership for CLD Students and Leadership for ELLs sections that follow.

Educational Leadership at the K–12 Level

This next section contains a review of research and best practices in the field of educational leadership in general. Then comes a review of scholarship on the topic of educational leadership for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Finally, I will review the literature on educational leadership for ELLs.

Educators have known intuitively for many years that educational leadership makes a difference at school, but determining in what ways school leaders make a difference is a rather recent area of research, according to Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003).

Researchers in educational leadership investigate a variety of factors that influence student learning and students' experiences at school in general, many of which may be important for ELLs in particular. For example, researchers have uncovered characteristics of effective teaching in general, as well as leadership practices that improve teacher motivation and increase student learning (see, for example, Bielenberg & Wong-Fillmore, 2004-2005; Elmore, 2000, 2005; Fullan, 2001; Gray & Fleischman, 2004-2005; McGinn & Borden, 1995; Reeves, 2006, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Waters et al., 2003). Other researchers, such as Senge et al. (2000), have investigated successfully the notion of organizational learning and how it influences schools. A different yet also popular approach to leadership and teaching involves focusing first on understanding *what* educators want students to gain and then teaching for meaning and transfer in a manner that requires educators to rethink instructional sequencing via *backward design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006, 2008). One more leadership approach described in a journal for principals (Fullan, 2010) takes what I consider a more humanistic view of the principalship than many other approaches, a view that might be especially helpful when considering leadership for ELLs. It

includes such things as capacity-building in teachers and students as well as principals participating as learners in assisting teachers learn how to make progress (Fullan, 2010). This includes something he calls “realizing moral purpose” (Fullan, 2010, p. 15). He described this as helping teachers to realize success with those students whom the teachers had not had previous success.

Distributed leadership is a different educational leadership model that advocates distributing leadership among informed teachers as well as administrators (Consortium, 2008; Elmore, 2000, 2005; Massachusetts Department of Education, 2004; Spillane, 2005; Spillane et al., 2001). It is my understanding of distributed leadership that it focuses strictly on school improvement via instructional leadership. Although I am highly supportive of distributing leadership across a school’s professional staff and of continuous improvement of instruction, I think that principals limiting their focus to these two practices, as Elmore suggested (2000), might miss the opportunity for the many other changes required in this period of rapid change within the principalship (Fullan, 2001). It is my opinion as a researcher and practitioner that school leadership requires many additional foci. Some educational organizations now include the term *distributed leadership* or *shared leadership* in their standards and vision statement, but these organizations, such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), do not limit the term to school improvement via instructional leadership. They realize that principals must practice leadership in many arenas, not just instruction, to insure education of the whole child (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008a). I favor the broader array of leadership responsibilities found in Waters et al.’s (2003) model than in distributed leadership. They found that school leaders who impacted student achievement forged

connections within the school community; worked as agents of change; remained situationally aware in order to meet current or future problems; and knew which areas of leadership practice to implement, at the appropriate time, in order to produce the greatest positive change (Waters et al., 2003). I will discuss this model of educational leadership in greater detail below.

Balanced leadership. Since the 1970s, practitioners and researchers have shared theories, anecdotes, and perspectives about what the relationships might be between leadership and school improvement, but none of this research included analyzing large amounts of quantitative data (Waters et al., 2003). A recent meta-analysis of 30 years of research studying the effects of various leadership practices of principals on student achievement has filled that void and given educators an intuitive framework called Balanced Leadership (Waters et al., 2003). The 69 studies combined in this meta-analysis created the largest sample ever examined for the sake of studying leadership practices—14,000 teachers and 1.4 million students in nearly 3000 schools (Waters & Grubb, 2004). The results of this seminal study indicated a significant positive correlation between effective leadership (both knowledge and skills), empirically defined by identifying 21 leadership responsibilities, and student achievement (Lyons, Schumacher, & Cameron, 2008; Waters et al., 2003; Waters & Grubb, 2004). According to Waters et al., the results provided more than a label for the 21 leadership responsibilities the researchers identified: they described the strategies, skills, and knowledge associated with the responsibilities. The results indicated that effective principals have not only knowledge and skills, they understand the rationale for what they do and when they should do it (Waters et al., 2003; Waters & Grubb, 2004). The study has been elaborated upon by the original authors and others, resulting in The Balanced Leadership Framework,

with additional publications and leadership workshops under the same title (Lyons et al., 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Waters & Cameron, 2007; Waters & Grubb, 2004). I will use the Balanced Leadership Framework (BLF) as the first tool for analyzing my research participants' stated responsibilities. I must stress that the BLF is not designed as a framework for administrators of CLD students or for ELLs. However, I believe it can be employed to examine and improve leadership for particular subpopulations of students. When I compare the BLF to my results in Chapter Five, therefore, I consider this framework in terms of how it could be implemented for ELLs.

The 21 leadership responsibilities of the BLF that have an effect on student achievement are: culture; order; discipline; resources; [direct involvement in design and implementation of] curriculum, instruction, and assessment; focus; knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; visibility; contingent rewards; communication; outreach; input; affirmation; relationship; change agent; optimizer; ideals/beliefs; monitors/evaluates; flexibility; situational awareness; and intellectual stimulation (Waters et al., 2003). In Chapter Five when I compare the BLF to my participants' stated responsibilities for their students who are ELLs, I will describe the BLF's 21 components in more detail. It is interesting to note that in this study, teachers' perceptions of leadership served as the independent variable, not the principals' self-reporting of their leadership. Student achievement, as measured by performance on norm-referenced, standardized tests or another "objective measure of achievement" (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p. 2), served as the dependent variable. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) argued that multiple measures of assessment should always be used to determine student success and for improving instruction (2009). However, this limitation in the Waters

et al. study is one that I am willing to accept, since no other comprehensive research project of which I am aware attempts to link principals' behaviors to student achievement so thoroughly. Moreover, I do not constrain myself to the Waters et al.'s framework. I will use two additional frameworks, described below, that are not tied to testing.

Educational Leadership for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

In the previous section I discussed the notion of effective educational leadership in general. Now I focus my attention on the concept of educational leadership for CLD students because this literature contains some important research results and guidelines not found in the educational leadership literature in general or in the literature for ELLs. After I review the literature for CLD students, I will turn my attention to leadership specifically for ELLs.

However, I must note that the recommendations found in the relatively small corpus of literature on leadership for CLD students do not apply to all students who are ELLs. All students, regardless of their linguistic or cultural backgrounds, belong to multiple sub-populations, but it is my experience that some characteristics of students' identities are more salient, from a student's perspective and an educational leader's perspective, than others. For example, one ELL's linguistic diversity might influence his or her access to the curriculum, participation in and outside of the classroom, academic performance, and acceptance at school more than that student's cultural diversity does. Another student, however, might be more impacted at school by his or her cultural identity than by that child's linguistic status. Furthermore, although I could argue that all linguistically diverse students are culturally diverse, the converse is not true: many culturally diverse individuals are not linguistically diverse. Therefore, some of the literature on leadership for CLD students is not applicable in this study.

Creating inclusive schools. Riehl studied effective school administration in general (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) as well as the role of administrators in creating inclusive schools in particular (2000). In the latter publication, a comprehensive review of the literature from numerous disciplines, she wrote about diverse students broadly: students who are CLD are included in her wide net, but other diverse students are included as well. She utilized normative and empirical literature, organizational and critical theories, and drew upon the work of philosophers, psychologists, educators, linguists, and sociologists, among others, to reach her conclusions about inclusive administrative practices.

What's required of principals? Riehl (2000) stated that principals wishing to create inclusive schools must engage in three tasks:

- fostering new meaning construction about diversity among students, parents, the general public, and themselves;
- promoting specific practices and creating specific conditions within schools to address the needs of diverse students. That is, impacting the teaching and learning and shaping a school culture that supports diversity, and
- building bridges between schools and communities.

Furthermore, she added that inclusive practice must be grounded in equity and social justice. Riehl's framework for creating inclusive schools is compatible with the work of many other scholars. For example, I find the results of research in social justice leadership (e.g. Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010; Theoharis, 2007, 2010), civic activism and school–community relations (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003b; Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2003), multicultural leadership (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006), empowerment of minority students (Cummins, 2001), and leadership for ELLs (Freeman & Hamayan, 2006; Hamayan &

Freeman, 2006; Meyers, 2006) consistent with Riehl's framework for creating inclusive schools.

For example, Riehl's tasks for creating inclusive schools coincide well with some principles for educating second language learners espoused by Collier (1995), a second language acquisition researcher [and other researchers below]. One could argue that the *cognitive, academic, and language processes* found in Collier's model can all be located in Riehl's second task, promoting specific practices and creating specific conditions within schools to address the needs of diverse students. I think that Collier's *sociocultural processes* are also consistent with Riehl's framework, since Riehl's first task, fostering new meaning construction about diversity among students, staff, parents, community members, and administrators, deals with making psychologically safe places for diverse learners. In addition, Riehl's third task, connecting to the students' families and community members, will also contribute to students' *sociocultural development* (Collier, 1995), as well as to students' language and academic development (Antunez, 2000; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Meyers, 2006; Simons & Connelly, 2000; Smiley, 2005; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007). Riehl's call for schools to build bridges with families and communities compares to recommendations by educational researchers who work outside the study of CLD students and SLA (e.g., Blank, Melaville, & Shah, B., 2003b; Senge et al., 2000), as well as by researchers outside the field of education (Putnam et al., 2003).

Obstacles to developing culturally responsive, socially just schools. Little research examines the topic of culturally responsive leadership, sometimes called leadership for social justice or social activism. Perhaps this is partly due to the way in which the principalship has been perceived historically in the US. Until fairly recently, principals viewed themselves

largely as business managers trained primarily in efficiency and productivity (Sergiovanni, 2001; Webb & Norton, 2003), leaving little room for much else, including diversity, equity, or inclusivity (Taylor, 1995). Another possibility is that the principalship is, by nature, a conservative position that reproduces the culture and values of the majority (Taylor, 1995).

However, a few researchers have made noteworthy additions to the emerging research on developing culturally responsive schools, beginning with the role of administrators. For example, Riehl's suggestions above are consistent with a framework developed by Taylor in 1995 to change principals' perspectives and actions for cultural responsiveness. Taylor's (1995) research suggested that principal preparation must be critical, concerned with social justice, reflective, inquiry-oriented, and geared toward praxis. Theoharis's research (2007, 2010; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011) has contributed substantially to this field as well. The work of the researchers above compares favorably to the theory, research, and bold call to action made by the few additional researchers I found who examine culturally responsive, transformational leadership for social justice, equity, and inclusivity (Brooks et al., 2010; Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Hoffman, 2009; Jason, 2000; Place, Ballenger, Wasonga, Piveral, & Edmonds, 2010; Santos, 2004; Shields, 1996.)

However, works such as these studies are published in academic journals, not journals typically read by most practicing principals. Articles on leadership for diverse students found in journals, policy briefs, and chapters targeted at principals (e.g., Chamness-Miller & Endo, 2004; Flynn & Hill, 2005; Herrity & Glasman, 1999; Hoerr, 2007; Howard, 2007; Ovando, 2002; Ovando & Troxell, 1997) do not suggest the difficult introspection and discourse found in the studies cited above. Rather, they may simply suggest that principals create an environment that accepts diversity, with no guidance on how to begin such a daunting task.

Riehl's scholarly article helps to illustrate the divide between literature for practitioners and literature for academics. Riehl suggested deep, serious inquiry, unlike what is found in the journals for practitioners. However, Riehl's work was not specific about *how* principals should promote *which* specific practices and conditions for diverse learners. These additions would have made her work more accessible to busy principals. This problem is not unique to Riehl, however. Many of the research studies in the academic journals noted above, though well grounded in research, theory, and the literature, lack the practical guidelines that principals need.

Discussions about such topics as social justice, equity, critical theory, racism, classism, and empowerment of diverse students are typically avoided in principal preparation programs and discourse among practitioners (Place et al., 2010; Taylor, 1995). My experience has taught me that if diversity is discussed among educators, it is almost always conducted at a very shallow level. Furthermore, I have never seen any publications from state governments or the federal government on leadership for CLD students that discuss social justice, equity, critical theory, racism, classism, or empowerment of diverse students.

If detailed information about the need for social justice and equity in schools and suggestions about how to begin to make such changes were readily available in principal preparation programs, journals for principals, and policy documents from governmental agencies, I would expect principals to feel responsible for carrying through with the recommendations made by the scholars cited above. Still, the emerging body of literature on leadership for inclusivity and social justice, though small, is promising. In this section I reviewed literature on educational leadership for CLD students in general. In the following section I will review the literature on leadership for one subgroup of CLD students, ELLs.

Literature on Leadership for ELLs

Due to the availability of information in professional publications about the critical pedagogical issues surrounding ELLs, I assume that practicing principals have an understanding of their responsibilities for these students. Furthermore, given the stricter accountability measures placed on schools to examine the academic progress of all students and to disaggregate the data by subgroup, including ELLs (Menken, 2008), I believe that principals should be cognizant of their responsibilities for all CLD students, including ELLs. This research project will investigate principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices for ELLs.

In Hamayan and Freeman's edited book (2006), more than 50 leading scholars and practitioners in SLA and other fields associated with language development in schools (e.g., Cummins, Krashen, Genesee, Crawford, August, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, Short, Freeman and Freeman, Menken) synthesized research and described administrative responsibilities and practices with regard to ELLs at school. These guiding principles fall under the following themes, slightly reconfigured by me:

- understanding and implementing policies and accountability requirements;
- linking the school and community;
- understanding the nature of learning in two languages;
- developing, implementing, and evaluating programs;
- ensuring that the best classroom instructional and assessment practices are implemented for ELLs;
- providing for professional development for all instructional staff members, and
- advocating for ELLs

All seven of the administrative guiding principles for ELLs above are found, in part or whole, in the following examples from the extant literature on teaching or leadership for ELLs (c.f., Antunez, 2000; Bradfeldt-Waring, 2006; Davila, 2005; Donnelly Hill & Flynn, 2004; Flynn & Hill, 2005; Herrity & Glasman, 1999; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Howard et al., 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a; Nieto, 1999; Paez, 2005; Santos, 2004; Simons & Connelly, 2000; Smiley, 2005; Smiley & Salsberry, 2007). I find Hamayan and Freeman's text unique and highly beneficial because of the breadth of topics covered. To its credit, their guide is not written as a research monograph: each section is divided into short, readable subsections that are accessible to practicing principals and teachers who often do not have the time to read academic papers.

However, Hamayan and Freeman's guide (2006) has some limitations. Some critical issues are not addressed at all, and other topics are covered in insufficient detail, especially in regard to disabilities and ELLs. I list below only a few of these gaps. The disproportionate representation of CLD students receiving special services education (de Valenzuela, Copeland, Qi, & Park, 2006a) is not addressed in the guide, yet it demands attention and action by principals. The dilemmas faced by schools when assessing the language proficiency of ELLs who are in special education (de Valenzuela, Yaqub, Mayette, & Causarano-Lin, 2006b), and the educational implications of linguistic diversity among students with intellectual disabilities (de Valenzuela & Mayette, 2006) also warrants coverage. In addition, determining if an ELL who is experiencing learning difficulties has a language difference or a language disorder (Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004), deserves greater coverage than Hamayan and Freeman offer. In addition, Hamayan and Freeman's edited guide (2006) only introduces the notion of creating a positive climate for ELLs. It does

not call for the serious introspection, difficult dialogues, time-consuming negotiating, and other work required by administrators who truly wish to push the social justice agenda to become inclusive schools, as described by the authors noted in the section above on leadership for CLD student.

Summary

In this chapter I reviewed literature on the research and best practices in second language acquisition, educational leadership for all students, educational leadership for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse, and educational leadership for ELLs. From this review, I selected three frameworks that best describe my understanding of what a principal's roles and responsibilities are with regard to ELLs. The first, the Balanced Leadership Framework (Waters et al., 2003), does not address roles and responsibilities with regard to ELLs, the focus of my research project. However, I believe that the roles and responsibilities found in the BLF are general enough that they should benefit all students, including ELLs. In addition, even if exemplary principals are not familiar with the BLF, the roles and responsibilities contained in the framework are not new ideas—exemplary principals should know from their reading, coursework, or professional development which administrative practices are linked to student achievement. I also believe that it is critical for exemplary principals in schools with high populations of ELLs to engage in the three tasks for creating inclusive schools described by Riehl (2000). To target the needs of linguistically diverse students even further, I posit that administrators should follow the guiding principles outlined in Hamayan and Freeman's guidebook for administrators of ELLs (2006).

In the following chapter I will describe the methodology I used for exploring my research questions: What are exemplary principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and

practices related to ELLs, and What do exemplary principals believe contributes to the academic success of ELLs? In Chapter Four I discuss my research findings. In the final chapter I return to the literature to answer my related research question, How do the exemplary principals' stated responsibilities and practices align with identified best practices in the professional literature in second language acquisition and in educational leadership?

Chapter 3

Methods

Overview

I undertook this research project to increase my understanding of the leadership school principals provide for ELLs. Specifically, I sought to understand exemplary principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices related to ELLs and their understanding of what contributes to the academic success of ELLs. In addition, I compared my participants' stated responsibilities and practices with identified best practices in the professional literature in SLA and in educational leadership. While both quantitative and qualitative approaches help researchers in education investigate the questions posed above, a qualitative approach best suited my research goals and my nonnumeric data (Gay & Airasian, 2003). I chose a natural setting for data collection, reduced my data to themes or categories, provided a detailed description of my procedures, and showed the perspectives of multiple participants (Creswell, 1998). Because I sought to understand principals' perceptions and beliefs, I employed interviewing, the recommended method for collecting this kind of data according to Bloor and Wood (2006).

Research Paradigm and Design

I describe my design and research processes in detail in order that others can be fully aware of my thought processes. Furthermore, these details helped me to understand better qualitative research, to design my study, and to be sufficiently immersed in my processes.

Research paradigms are those worldviews and basic belief systems (metaphysics) that guide researchers and inform and guide the inquiry process, especially qualitative inquiry

(Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They represent distillations “of what we *think* about the world (but cannot prove)” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15). Researchers must understand inquiry paradigms because the paradigms “define for inquirers what it is they are about and what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). That is, paradigms carry with them ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions and implications for researchers (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In order to place myself within a paradigm, I found it helpful to look at the following questions and then address each question separately below. This helped me design my study and aided me while collecting and analyzing data. Quoting from Guba and Lincoln (1994), researchers’ responses to the following basic questions define the researcher’s inquiry paradigms:

- *The ontological question.* What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it? . . .
- *The epistemological question.* What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known? . . .
- *The methodological question.* How can the inquirer . . . go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? . . . (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108).

Creswell (1998) adapted Guba and Lincoln’s work (1994) by asking additional questions that shape the researcher’s paradigm selection:

- What is the role of the researcher’s values and biases? (The axiological question)
- What language of research is used? (The rhetorical question)

As qualitative research has become more widespread and developed, the number of paradigms discussed in the research literature on qualitative research has grown. Furthermore, over time the paradigms have been grouped together in different ways. In their seminal 1985 publication, Lincoln and Guba wrote about the prepositivist, positivist, and postpositivist perspectives and the advantages of the naturalist paradigm. Later they wrote at length about four paradigms: positivism; postpositivism; constructivism, and critical theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Another decade later, Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) identified seven interpretive paradigms in qualitative research. They grouped them as follows: positivist and postpositivist; constructivist; feminist; ethnic; Marxist; cultural studies; and queer theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). It is my understanding that the names of these paradigms and their numbers are not universal: other researchers might recognize different numbers of paradigms and have various other labels for them. Despite the addition of paradigms over time and changing associations made between the paradigms, the majority of researchers who write about this perspective seem committed to three central tenets in qualitative research: (a) the notion of multiple constructed realities (“relativistic ontologies”), including the notion that no researcher is free of bias; (b) the understanding that the researcher and the research participants interact and shape one another (“interpretive epistemologies”); and (c) the dedication to naturalistic, interpretive methodologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, p. 22). However, as helpful as they might be to researchers and to those who read their work, the paradigms themselves are human constructions, subject to human error (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Although I find it somewhat difficult to place myself within a single paradigm from Denzin and Lincoln’s list above, I can align myself with two of them, both the ethnic paradigm and the cultural studies paradigm.

On nomenclature and positionality. Although I engaged in naturalistic inquiry, I do not accept a few common terms used by some researchers who use this type of inquiry. I will not use the terms *multiple constructed realities*, *relativistic*, *relative*, *relativism*, and *cultural relativism* commonly found in the literature in many disciplines today. I understand why these terms are appealing to researchers, especially people who reject the positivist perspective and who work to promote justice and equity, especially among marginalized populations, as I do. However, I believe that these terms are frequently glossed over, oversimplified, and misunderstood in the research literature in education, sociology, anthropology, the arts, and other fields in the social sciences and humanities. These terms have specific meanings in philosophy that are not explicated fully by most social science researchers writing about the practice of qualitative research. I believe that a better understanding of these philosophical terms requires one to accept conclusions that I believe would be objectionable to most researchers. I base this perspective on my reading of philosophy as well as numerous discussions about these terms over nearly three decades with several philosophers in different areas of specialization throughout North America. I will outline my concerns with one of these terms, cultural relativism, below.

There are both positive and negative aspects to cultural relativism (Rachels, 2000). It is constructive in that this ethical theory “warns us, quite rightly, about the danger of assuming that all our preferences are based on some absolute rational standard. They are not. Many (but not all) of our practices are merely peculiar to our society. . . . In reminding us of this, the theory does a service” (Rachels, 2000, p. 254). One other positive aspect of this theory, Rachels noted, is that it encourages people to keep an open mind, since it stresses that our views on ethics can reflect prejudices in our society.

However, the challenges of the philosophical theory of cultural relativism are serious enough to outweigh its positive side. For one thing, Rachels (2000) wrote, adopting cultural relativism requires accepting an argument that is logically unsound or fallacious, which means it does not prove what it sets out to prove. Second, Rachels stated, even if it were not logically invalid, the consequences of accepting this theory would be grievous. He explained that accepting cultural relativism would force us to accept abhorrent social behaviors. Since all social practices are immune from disapproval under social relativism (Rachels, 2000), slavery, childhood prostitution, honor killing, female genital mutilation, and genocide, and various other horrors must be accepted. Acceptance of these and other dreadful behaviors creates tremendous ethical dissonance (Rachels, 2000). Another reason why the consequences of accepting this theory are problematic, Rachels explained, is that it calls into question the idea that there has been at least some moral progress over time. He acknowledged, however, that some moral changes have not been positive (Rachels, 2000). Even Guba and Lincoln stated that they are not doomed “to a radical relativist posture” (1994, p. 108). I acknowledge that my research participants and I have a multiplicity of experiences, understandings, beliefs, and practices that many researchers may dub multiple constructed realities, but I use the phrase *multiple constructed perspectives* and avoid anything related to the term relativism.

Assumptions and Implications that Shaped My Research

I return now to addressing the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions and implications introduced earlier. First I will comment on the ontological question. The form and nature of the phenomenon that I studied were grounded in my research participants themselves, exemplary principals in schools with high

populations of ELLs. Specifically, the phenomena were the participants' stated responsibilities and practice related to ELLs and their statements about what contributes to the academic success of ELLs. The next question, the epistemological issue, the nature of the relationship between the knowers and the known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), remains rather difficult to ascertain. Several scenarios could have played out that make it difficult to address the epistemological question. For example, perhaps the participants did not thoroughly consider my questions before they spoke, and therefore they did not articulate their true beliefs. This is a possibility since they did not have the questions before I arrived. Or, it may be the case that participants answered my questions in a manner that they thought was the *right* way, rather than tell me what they truly believed, as a result of bias due to the observer effect (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

Some preconceived values and biases. Being mindful of the next question, Creswell's axiological question (1998), helped me to think about another type of bias. I tried to refrain from the observer bias (Gay & Airasian, 1998), but I no doubt brought to my participants and their remarks my values and biases. I have preconceived notions of what constitutes educational leadership for English language learners that come from many personal and professional sources: my review of the literature in educational leadership and in SLA, personal experiences as a member of an immigrant family, life and work in the officially bilingual state of New Mexico, interviews of principals in dual language schools in New Mexico, classes and conferences, work as an ESL teacher in other states, and from my administrative internship in a dual language school. There may be other sources as well, many of which I have not yet consciously recognized. These values and biases may have

impacted my questions, my demeanor during the interviews, and my evaluation of the participants' remarks when I did my analysis and reporting.

The language of research. Creswell's discussion of the rhetorical question, that is, the research language (1998) used, impacted my work from the study design to the final analyses. I addressed this slightly in the section above in which I rejected some commonly used terms in qualitative research. Since I did not wish to bias my subjects, when interviewing I refrained from using specific SLA terminology that may have been unknown to participants. I also used open-ended questions. In addition, I shared all stages of this research project with a peer debriefer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), also known as a critical friend, as well as a cohort of doctoral students facilitated by a scholar in SLA. Feedback from all of these sources helped me to choose my research language carefully throughout the process. I will say more about my steps to increase trustworthiness later in the chapter. The methodological question noted above posed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) will be addressed at length in the following sections.

Description of Methodology

I used open-ended interviewing as my primary method of obtaining data. I engaged in purposeful sampling (Creswell, 1998) to find my research participants, since I sought certain types of participants: exemplary principals in schools with high populations of ELLs who had three or more years of experience. I found these exemplary principals by soliciting nominations from other educators, my nominators. The section below describes how I found the exemplary principals, my research participants. In order to obtain multiple perspectives, I interviewed seven participants individually, each from a different school. I conducted the interviews in the Spring of 2010. The open-ended interviews lasted approximately 1¼ to 2

hours each. I had prepared to do short follow-up interviews if I had questions after transcribing my interviews, but it was not necessary. In order to engage in member checking after analyzing my data, I conducted a final interview in the Spring of 2012. A more detailed description of my procedures follows.

Human research protection. Before I solicited research participants, I underwent training in conducting research with human subjects as required by my university and federal law. I applied for and received approval for an Expedited Review from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of New Mexico and obtained informed consent of all participants.

Selection of participants. I limited the study to experienced exemplary principals in public, non-charter schools with high populations of ELLs. As stated earlier, I defined exemplary principals as principals or assistant principals who are nominated by other educators as being administrators who perform their work well above that of other principals in their district or geographic region. For the purpose of this study I defined *high population of ELLs* as a school with an ELL population of at least 15% since this percentage is nearly five times the state average. Before I recruited participants, I first sought names of possible research participants from people through a nomination process described below.

Finding people to nominate research participants. I obtained the names of potential research participants through nominations by other educators. I sought nominations from the following groups of educators: district ESL coordinators, teachers, university professors, assistant principals, principals, superintendents, researchers at a Regional Educational Lab (REL), the head of the ESL/Bilingual Education Department in the state's Department of Education, and an individual who provides ESL professional development to ESL teachers,

other teachers, and administrators in the local Intermediate Unit (IU). These nominators were people with whom I had professional contact or persons who had been recommended by other educators. I found the names of two of the ESL Coordinators on their district websites. I limited the choice of nominators to individuals in an eastern state in the US who worked within a 100-mile radius of my home in the same state. In all, I asked a minimum of 16 educators to nominate exemplary principals. However, I contacted additional potential nominators via a listserv of graduate students who were members of a regional Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) group. I could not obtain the exact number of graduate students who received my solicitation through the regional TESOL group.

Contacting nominators. Potential nominators were contacted via email (see Appendix A, Nominators' recommendations of exemplary principals) to determine their willingness to nominate exemplary principals. Most of the nominators opted to nominate potential participants via email only. Two preferred to nominate exemplary principals via telephone. As noted in Chapter One, *exemplary principals* refers in this study to principals or assistant principals viewed by nominators as administrators who perform their work as principals well above that of other principals in their district or geographic region. I purposely left the term exemplary principal quite vague so that the nominators could construct their own meanings of exemplary. Of the 16+ people whom I asked to provide nominations, 11 persons gave me nominations of exemplary principals.

Confidentiality of nominators and participants. The nominators provided no additional information other than the names and sometimes contact information of potential participants. I used no other information from the nominators in this study. Therefore, the nominators were not research participants. The names, job locations, and positions of all

nominators remain private and confidential. Potential and actual participants never knew the identity of their nominators. Similarly, I told nominators in advance that I could not tell them whether the people they nominated became participants in order to keep the identity of the participants private.

Excluding nominees. Through this process, I obtained a list of 22 exemplary principals, my potential participants. I did not contact ten principals for the following reasons: (1) I learned that two nominated principals did not meet my criteria of having a student populations of 15% ELLs from the school's ESL coordinator; (2) One nominator of seven potential participants asked me to postpone contacting her nominees until after the state's testing window (approximately one month in duration), at which time I already had a sufficient number of participants; and (3) I obtained the nomination of one person during the testing window and opted to postpone contacting her for the same reason noted above. By the time the testing was completed, I had a sufficient number of participants to meet my purposive sampling and I had participants with a variety of experience and background.

Contacting potential participants. I first sent the remaining 12 potential participants a hard copy of my query letter (see Appendix B, Letter to potential participants), immediately followed by a brief email asking the potential participants to look for my letter in the mail. In the letter, I described my research project and its time commitment, and I solicited these principals' involvement. To thank my potential participants for their time spent reading my query letter, I included three bags of Bigelow herbal tea with each letter. After mailing the letters and emails, I made follow-up contact with these potential research participants by telephone to determine their willingness to participate. Two principals never responded. One

principal said it was not a good time, but might participate later, if needed; nine principals expressed an interest in participating in the study.

Subsequent communication about possible participation took place by phone or email, whichever each person preferred. When I contacted the nine principals who had expressed interest in participating, I thanked them for their interest and I asked them three questions. I asked if the population of ELLs in their school met or exceeded 15% of their student body, the criteria I set for having a high population of ELLs in. I inquired about the length of time they had been principals or assistant principals because I wanted experienced principals, that is, principals who served for at least three years as an administrator. Finally, I asked if they worked in public, non-charter schools because I was interested in studying principals in the type of school that most students in this state attend.

Exclusion and inclusion of participants. I considered nominated principals for participation in my study regardless of the type (or lack of) English language development programs used in their schools. Furthermore, I did not include or exclude participants because of race, religion, disability status, ethnic background, gender, sexual preference, or language usage. However, I did seek participants from all three levels in the K–12 system: elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. Individuals were excluded as research participants for a few reasons. First, if principals did not meet all of the criteria noted in Chapter One and above, I excluded them. Second, I excluded principals in the district where I work because of the potential for conflict of interest. Furthermore, I planned to exclude potential participants who would have disallowed me from audio taping my interview because I needed to have an exact record of everything each person said for complete data analysis. However, all participants allowed me to tape record their interview.

Participants selected. Of the nine exemplary nominated principals who expressed interest, seven of them met the inclusion criteria, so I ceased taking nominations and scheduled interviews at their convenience. My self-imposed minimum for participants was five. Beginning the study with seven participants allowed me to meet this minimum even if two participants dropped out. None did, however. I told both the nominators and the participants that they would not receive remuneration.

Conducting the interviews. I met the participants and conducted the interviews individually at locations and times of their choosing. Five of the participants opted to have the interviews in their school offices, one chose a coffee shop, and one chose her home. With the exception of the coffee shop, all interview locations were quiet. I used open-ended questions in the interviews (see Appendix C, Interview protocol for principals). I held postanalysis member checking sessions in the participants' offices. Table 1 (at the end of the chapter) contains personal and professional demographic information about each of the seven participants. Chapter Four contains additional information about the participants. More details about the interviewing follows.

Additional data collection. I collected other data as well to understand and situate my participants. I examined extant, aggregated, publicly available school, district, and community demographic data. The districts' and schools' websites did not contain demographic information. I searched other websites on the communities and districts, and I asked the participants for demographic information. Table 2, at the end of this chapter, contains information that comes from a variety of sources about the communities and the school districts. Table 3, also at the end of the chapter, provides school-specific information, largely obtained from the participants. By looking at these multiple sources of information I

gained a greater understanding of my participants and of their contexts (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Data Collection and Recording

I took notes during the interviews and recorded the interviews using a micro-audiocassette recorder with an external microphone. My questioning of the participants focused on the participants' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices towards ELLs in their current work locations. To further understand my participants in their environments, I took field notes describing the physical environment of the school itself. In particular, I looked for multilingual signs or information for parents, or other items that might be helpful to parents or indicative of openness and respect for CLD students, their families, and their communities. My interview questions were purposely general and open-ended to allow for participants to be introspective, relate personal experiences, and describe life experiences that might influence their answers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). This allowed the participants to give thorough answers to the research questions and allowed me to understand my participants' answers and their situatedness.

Data management and protection of participant information. I maintained strict adherence to IRB guidelines and regulations to protect my participants. Identifying data were removed when the interviews were transcribed so that the identity of the research participants remains private. Participants' schools, school districts, and communities also remain confidential. I used pseudonyms for all persons and all places. I kept only one link in a locked location between the pseudonyms and participants' ID numbers. Throughout the research process, all audiotapes and field notes were locked in my home office. After I successfully defend my dissertation, I will destroy the audiotapes.

Thematic Analysis

Understanding naturalist inquiry before analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) described qualitative research as an activity that “consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 3). To make a principal’s world visible in the context of my research questions, I first attempted to “see” a principal as the principal sees himself or herself as the leader of students who are ELLs, if the person envisioned his or herself in that manner. Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) also suggested that qualitative researchers should attempt “to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3) To capture the meanings that my research participants bring to their work as principals in schools with high populations of ELLs, I carefully recorded their stated perceptions of their responsibilities and practices with regard to ELLs, as well as their understandings of what contributes to the academic success of ELLs, described in the next section. Then I engaged in analysis of each person’s responses. It is not enough, however, to simply report participants’ comments: researchers must discover how informants organize their cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1979). As I interpret Spradley, the term cultural knowledge could include the answers that participants give to my questions regarding their responsibilities and practices with regard to ELLs as well as their understandings of the factors that contribute to the academic success of these students, my research questions. He also stated that researchers must realize that their informants’ cultural knowledge is already organized into categories, “all of which are systematically related to the entire culture” (Spradley, 1979, p. 93). As I understand it, my job was to “search for the parts of a culture and their relations *as conceptualized by informants*” (Spradley, 1979, p. 93).

Therefore, I analyzed the data to discover patterns or recurrent themes both within and between participants' responses, as explicated below.

Methods employed for analyzing transcripts. After I manually transcribed the interviews, I listened to each audiotape at least three more times. The first two times I listened only, without the transcription before me; the third time I read each transcription as I listened to the recording, making any necessary corrections. I then began the initial coding of the transcriptions. To help with this work, I employed both qualitative analysis (QA) software and manual methods, as Saldaña (2009) suggests for students, relying more heavily on the former method. I used Thematic Analysis Mark-up System Analyzer (TAMSanalyzer, Weinstein, 2002), an open-source QA software. I exported each transcript from Word 2008 to TAMS.

Identifying salient passages. I first identified and marked (electronically highlighted) salient passages in each participant's transcript using TAMS. I identified passages as salient if one or more of the following occurred: (1) participants stressed something by using intonation or volume change; (2) they reiterated words or phrases; (3) they used signal words, such as *critical*, *vital*, *important*, and *necessary*; or (4) participants gave direct answers to one of my open-ended questions. I selected and highlighted these passages on screen in different colors and assigned them preliminary code names. I also recorded a short definition of each code name in TAMS that I thought described the participants' comments. Throughout this recursive process, I maintained all code names and definitions in my TAMS code list, including code names that changed, were removed, or became embedded, for reference and for refining my coding.

Code development using qualitative analysis software. Initially, I employed Process Coding, making all codes gerunds (Saldaña, 2009). However, this approach led me to overanalyze and subdivide both the selected passages and the codes excessively: I developed codes, subcodes, and subcodes of subcodes on my first cycle of coding. I learned from my debriefer and doctoral student cohort that this “splitting” resulted in a lack of context and meaning and made it difficult for them to see patterns in the data. Therefore, I had to deliberately work to “lump” more, engaging Holistic Coding that gave “a broad brush-stroke representation” of each coded passage (Saldaña, 2009, p. 19). When I subsequently reworked the codes, I then marked up several consecutive sentences for each coded passage to provide sufficient information about the context of each participant’s statements. Using relatively long passages helped my peer debriefers and my participants, during member checking later, understand why I selected the code names that I used. It also gave others sufficient context to challenge my theme names and the examples of them from my transcripts. I did several rounds of First Cycle Coding in TAMS, as I engaged in more Descriptive Coding and In Vivo Coding (Saldaña, 2009).

Manual coding. After this First Cycle Coding using the QA software, I switched to using colored index cards that matched the color-coded passages in TAMS. On each card I handwrote the name of one initial theme [code] as I had named and described it in TAMS. Each card also contained a brief quotation from the transcripts that illustrated each initial theme, as well as the pseudonym of the participant who provided the quotation. For each participant I created a short stack of these multicolored cards. Each participant’s stack contained approximately one to four cards per theme. I limited myself to five to seven themes per participant (Creswell, 1998), a number that I found manageable. Next, I created a

working handwritten table in pencil that contained the pseudonyms of the participants and these initial themes with examples. I studied this table to identify main units of meaning and recurring concepts from the participants' quotations. I looked for patterns, similarities, and differences across all participants, as well how the codes interacted. I collapsed and expanded units, and made changes as needed in the table. Then I resorted the index cards by theme rather than by participant, relabeled (recoded) the cards as needed by using colored highlighters and sticky notes, and again made corresponding changes in my table. Finally, I resorted the cards once again by participant. This manual manipulation of the codes was helpful to gain control over my data and the coding process.

Using the more developed, comprehensive codes discovered when I used manual coding, I returned to TAMS for all subsequent recursive analysis and Second Cycle Coding (Saldaña, 2009). I used TAMS to review each participant's transcript numerous times, to search for key words and phrases in order to recode as warranted by the data, and to locate and label subthemes, and often subthemes of subthemes. I also used it to sort the data in various ways for analysis and for generation of reports and tables, both by individual participant and by theme or subtheme. I printed the tables and reports in TAMS and exported them to Word documents to share easily with my peer debriefer and doctoral student cohort. The reports and tables also allowed me to be certain that I had a sufficient number of examples of each theme and subtheme. I had approximately six to twelve examples of each theme per person, but I continued researching and coding each transcript until the themes became saturated (Creswell, 1998), that is, I found no further instances of a theme in the data. I returned to manually handling my data when I compared my findings to the three

educational leadership frameworks described in Chapter Two. I will describe my methods for that analysis later in this chapter.

Establishing Trustworthiness by Increasing Credibility

Creswell (1998) recommended that “qualitative researchers engage in at least two” (p. 203) of the eight procedures for verification that he outlined. I engaged in two of these procedures, peer debriefing and member checking. I also incorporated *aspects* of three additional procedures (triangulation; rich, thick description; and prolonged engagement), all described below.

Peer debriefing. To establish credibility throughout the entire process of coding, recoding, data analysis, and the discovery of results, I shared my findings with a critical friend, or a peer debriefer, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). I also shared the processes and products above numerous times with a core group of doctoral students and often my faculty co-advisor. They probed, asked searching questions and for clarification, and played the devil’s advocate to ascertain that I was fully aware of my posture and my processes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They read numerous drafts of my coding, including dozens of pages of quotations and reports from TAMS that we then discussed via Skype or the video chat platform of Google+. I took notes during these virtual meetings and they mailed or emailed comments about my analysis and writing. Their comments helped me view my data through other lenses, challenged me to defend my themes and subthemes, and supported me. Numerous discussions with my advisor about my study, recursive analysis, and emerging and final results also proved invaluable in articulating my thought processes and clarifying my ideas (Saldaña, 2009).

Member checking. To further increase trustworthiness, I engaged in member checking, both “in process and terminal” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 328). As I interviewed the participants, I summarized their remarks and asked for feedback on my summaries to be certain that I understood their remarks and their intentions. I also asked for clarification and elaboration. To ensure that my thematic analysis captured the perceptions and opinions of the participants in a manner that they found accurate and true to their intentions, I attempted to contact them all again after I obtained my results for terminal member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Two participants had retired in the interim. I hand-delivered sealed letters to these participants’ former schools. In the letters, I asked for the opportunity to meet again to discuss my findings and solicit their comments. I asked the office staff members to address the stamped envelopes and mail them to their former principals. I was not contacted by these participants or by the participant who had retired shortly before I interviewed her. That participant I attempted to contact via email, her preferred form of communication. Member checking with only three of the seven participants is a limitation of the study.

The three participants who contacted me agreed to meet for member checking at a time and location of their choosing. I audiotaped those meetings in their school offices. They lasted from about 30 to 60 minutes each. I gave each participant a set of typed papers, one per theme. Each paper consisted of two parts: (1) the name of a theme and its definition, and (2) examples of each theme. I created these definitions by reviewing all examples of each theme and subtheme. Therefore, the definitions remained nearly identical for each participant. If a participant’s transcript did not contain a subtheme, however, it was not included on that person’s page. The participants’ themed papers also contained three to six of their own quotations that illustrated each theme. I encouraged my participants to comment on

my findings and question my interpretations. The three participants who participated in member checking stated that they agreed with my findings. Later, I transcribed the member-checking interviews.

Triangulation. Qualitative researchers often engage in the process of triangulation to improve credibility (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I studied principals' *perceptions* of their responsibilities for ELLs and what they think is responsible for the academic success of these students. I did not study their practice, that is, what they actually *do* for ELLs, or what actually contributes to the success of ELLs. That would require another study, and that study would benefit from the process of traditional triangulation by using multiple and different sources or methods (Creswell, 1998). However, Creswell stated that triangulation also includes making use of "multiple theories to provide corroborating evidence" (1998, p. 202). By comparing the themes that emerged from my data with three extant comparative frameworks, each coming from a different perspective, I did corroborate my evidence.

Rich, thick descriptions. Creswell (1998) described rich, thick descriptions as details about the participants or the setting of the studies. I provided both to the best of my ability given the time I spent with each participant. I provided personal and professional demographic information about each participant (that came from the participants) in Table 1. I provided contextual information about each locale and district in Table 2. This information came from the participants and from various websites described in Table 2's Note. In Table 3, I provided additional demographic contextual information about the participants' schools. In Chapter Four, I will provide additional thick descriptions of the research participants.

In the state where I conducted this study, school districts are given much latitude in designing the grouping of their students by grades, especially in smaller districts. Elementary schools may consist of grades K–5, K–4, or they may be split further, e.g., K–1 in one school, grades 2–3 in another building, and so on. This variable grade grouping is seen in Table 3. Tables 1, 2, and 3 are located at the end of this chapter. In addition, some districts require schools to use certain ELD programs, whereas other districts allow principals and ESL teachers to implement their preferred ELD programs.

Prolonged engagement. I did not engage in prolonged engagement. This is a limitation in the study. My initial data collection took place during one session per participant that ranged in length from about 75 to 120 minutes each. Member checking sessions lasted approximately 30-60 minutes each. However, I engaged in prolonged engagement with tape recordings of each interview. During the manual transcription of an interview, each utterance was played and replayed countless times to insure accurate transcription. I then listened to each audiotape at least three additional times after I transcribed it. I engaged with the recordings for such prolonged periods that I memorized a sizeable portion of them. I also spent many months engaged in reviewing and analyzing the transcripts.

When discussing prolonged engagement, Creswell (1998) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that researchers learn the culture of their research participants to increase credibility. I think that I have learned the culture of the participants in this study because of the following activities: I have spent over two decades teaching at the K–12 level, I earned a master’s degree in educational administration and have maintained my principal’s certification for 27 years, and I interviewed twelve principals prior to commencing this study

for coursework and to increase my knowledge during administrative internships in two states. Therefore, I felt comfortable speaking with principals. I established trust with my participants (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by assuring them, orally and in writing (by adhering strictly to my university's IRB process, including using Informed Consent) that their identities and all identifying information would remain private and all documents would be confidential, and by treating them with respect.

Rigorously ethical. Saldaña (2009) described seven personal attributes necessary for a researcher engaged in qualitative analysis. One attribute, being rigorously ethical, contributes to credibility and therefore trustworthiness, I believe. I did my best to follow this ideal. He stated that a researcher must be

rigorously ethical with [her] participants and treat them with respect; rigorously ethical with [her] data and not ignore or delete those seemingly problematic passages of text; and rigorously ethical with [her] analysis by maintaining a sense of scholarly integrity and working hard toward the final outcomes. (Saldaña, 2009, p. 29)

Comparing the Research Findings to Extant Leadership Frameworks

Chapter Four contains the results of my study. There I will describe the five themes that emerged from my data, i.e., the participants' perceptions of their responsibilities for ELLs and what they believed contributes to the academic success of these students. I will also discuss the salient subthemes, or practices. These practices are the ways in which the principals reported carrying out their responsibilities. I call these practices Key Administrative Practices (KAPs). The results are summarized in Table 4 at the end of Chapter Four. Chapter Five contains my interpretation and analysis of the data, including a comparison of the research findings with three leadership frameworks that are described in

Chapters Two and Five. I will describe below the methods I used to compare my findings to those extant frameworks. Although I could have used TAMS to do the following analysis, I opted to do it manually because I felt it gave me more control.

After I found the five themes (responsibilities) and 22 subthemes (KAPs) that emerged from my data, I printed them on one sheet of paper (enlarged to make it easier to use) and color-coded each theme using a different highlighter. Then I returned to the literature. I printed three sheets of paper, one sheet of paper containing the essential elements (enlarged) for each of the three comparative frameworks. These frameworks are the Balanced Leadership Framework (Waters et al., 2003), consisting of 21 leadership responsibilities, with my paraphrased definitions of each responsibility (see Chapter Five for a description of how I employed this framework in this study); Riehl's (2000) framework for principals desiring to create inclusive schools for diverse students, containing three main tasks (see Chapter Five); and Hamayan and Freeman's themes for leadership for ELLs (2006), slightly reconfigured to give seven themes (see Chapter Five). In addition to using the outline of each framework printed on a separate sheet of paper, I had the original frameworks (two articles and a book) nearby that I consulted frequently.

As I read through each sheet containing the fundamentals of each framework, I compared it to my findings (Table 4). I color-coded elements in each framework that corresponded with the five responsibilities and 22 KAPs from my analysis (using the same 5 colored highlighters). I read and color-coded each component of each framework, one framework at a time, if a component corresponded to my results. If a component did not correspond, I did not color-code it. Color-coding allowed me to see how my five responsibilities and 22 KAPs corresponded with each element in all of the three comparative

frameworks, as well as to see components of the comparative frameworks *not* found in my findings. It also allowed me to see which of my themes and KAPs corresponded most significantly with items from the frameworks.

In this chapter I described my methods throughout the study. Tables providing information about the participants and their contexts follow. Chapter Four contains my results. In Chapter Five, I will discuss my interpretation of the data, including how my findings aligned with the frameworks mentioned above. I will discuss inconsistencies and concerns with my data and limitations of the findings. Finally, I will discuss some implications of the study.

Tables

Table 1

Participants' Personal and Professional Demographics

Name	Administrative Experience	Job title	Multilingual
Carmen	16 yrs.	Principal	Spanish/English
Faith	4 yrs.	Asst. Principal	Spanish/English
Maria	23 yrs.	Principal	Spanish/English
Mary	10 yrs.	Principal	No
Monica	12 yrs.	Principal	No
Nate	8 yrs.	Principal	No
Sam	28 yrs.	Principal	No

Table 2

Community and District Demographics

School districts and participants	Types of locale	Approximate total populations residing in district	Historical cultural diversity in locale
Coal Town School District (Monica)	Small towns, boroughs, and rural area. Geographically isolated but large area, 250 sq. miles	70,000	20% foreign born. 40% Hispanic. 4% Black, 1% Asian, but historically White. “Huge increase (in ELLs) within last 5-6 years...due to meat packing plants.”
Germantown School District (Carmen, Mary, Maria, Sam)	Small city	75,000	Established diversity. 7% foreign born. 25% Hispanic. 7% Black. 3% Asian.
Jamestown School District (Faith)	Mid-size city	120,000	State’s fastest growing city. 14% foreign born. Hispanic population doubled in past decade. 43% Hispanic. 13% Black. 3% Asian.
Windham School District (Nate)	Suburban community	30,000	“Recent: <20 years,” 9% foreign born. 1% Hispanic. 90% White. 4 % Black. 4% Asian.

Note. I obtained the total population living within each school district, the locale descriptors, and the history cultural diversity in the area (except when participants provided direct quotations) from websites on the communities, the school districts, the state’s department of education website, the U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html> and/or the School District Demographics System (SDDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/2010/>). I rounded the populations. I changed the type of locale descriptor for Coal Town to reflect its context better than the NCES label of “suburban-small.” I do not list the complete URLs to safeguard the identity of the communities and therefore the participants.

Table 3

School Demographics

Participant	Grade levels	ELL population in schools	ELD program types	Languages other than English	SES of families in school
Carmen	Elementary School	“13%”	“Full Inclusion” with co-teaching by ESL teachers and co-planning of teachers	Multiple languages, mostly Spanish	Mixed; “very high and very low”
Faith	High School	“maybe 15-18%”	ESL classes for English. Mainstream classes for other subjects without co-teaching or co-planning with ESL teachers	Mostly Spanish	“Very low”; City’s poverty level is double the state average
Maria	Elementary School	“63%”	“Full Inclusion” with co-teaching with ESL teachers; co-planning of teachers	Mostly Spanish	“Very poor”; “Surrounded by housing project”; “85 % free lunch”
Mary	Intermediate School (Special school for struggling students)	“27%”	“Scaffolding with some support of ESL teacher”	Mostly Spanish	Mixed
Monica	Elementary & Middle School	“60-70%”	ESL Classes for English in middle school. ESL pull-out + literacy block in homeroom for elementary	“100 % Spanish,” including migrants	Mixed, but median income much lower than state average; “70-80% free lunch

Table 3 Continued

Participant	Grade levels	ELL population in schools	ELD program types	Languages other than English	SES of families in school
Nate	Primary School	“22%+”	ESL pullout classes replace literacy block for newcomers and beginners. Others get ESL pullout + literacy block in homeroom	“Multiple languages: 22 languages in district, but mostly equal mix Spanish & Arabic”	Mixed; “25% FRL”; poverty level is below state average; high school and college graduate levels are higher than state average
Sam	Middle School	“probably 20%,”	“Full inclusion,” with co-teaching/co-planning of ESL teachers, content teachers. Newcomers have ESL pull-out classes	“Mostly Spanish”	“Very needy, very transient”; “high 80% free lunch”

Note. Participants provided demographic information in quotations. Other data come from U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.htm>, and/or the School District Demographics System (SDDS) of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/2010/>). I do not list the complete URLs to safeguard the identity of the communities and therefore the participants. All participants noted that the ELL population changed often, sometimes daily. I included Carmen as a participant even though her ELL population did not meet my criteria of 15% because it had met the criteria earlier that year.

Chapter 4

Results

In this chapter I will describe the research findings. My goal throughout this dissertation has remained constant: to study exemplary principals' perceptions of their responsibilities for ELLs and what ELLs need to be successful at school. In the next chapter I will compare my research findings with principals' practices found in the research literature, describe some concerns I have with some participants' responses and limitations of this study, and discuss some implications of the research findings.

Description of Research Participants

The participants brought with them a vast array of experiences, personal and professional. Together, they had over 100 years of administrative experience. The populations of students they served and the communities where they worked have similarities but significant differences. I will begin with a short description of each of the seven research participants, the exemplary principals of ELLs, so that their quotations below have some context for the reader. Tables 1, 2, and 3 at the end of Chapter Three contain additional demographic information about each participant and the schools and communities in which they are situated. All names of people and locations are pseudonyms to protect the participant's privacy. I will describe them in alphabetical order.

Carmen. Carmen is a middle-aged Puerto Rican woman, fluent in Spanish and English, who was raised in a very large urban city. Before becoming a principal in the school where she works now, she served as a bilingual teacher in the same school where she is now principal, and as an administrator in other schools, including in another state. She also

worked providing professional development to teachers and parent education throughout the country. She continues to provide professional development on occasion to other teachers in her district. She is a staunch supporter of bilingual education. Even though her district no longer allows bilingual programs, she hopes that her students will become bilingual and biliterate. Carmen is very familiar with the research in SLA. She appears to be a very strong advocate for her ELLs.

Faith. Faith is also a middle-aged Puerto Rican woman who spent much time working in a different large urban city far from this region. She was the first person in her monolingual Spanish-speaking family of origin to finish high school. She attended college as a nontraditional student, so she started her career in education rather late. When she saw that the ELLs in the city where she taught were receiving substandard teaching, she decided to get a master's degree in ESL so she could better serve "[her] race." She is passionate about her first love in teaching, mathematics, and about ELLs having equal opportunities and good mentors, something that she was denied as a youth. In this study, Faith is the least experienced administrator, the only administrator at the high school level, and the only assistant principal.

Maria. Maria retired from her career in the public schools a year before I interviewed her. However, because three persons nominated her as being an exemplary principal for ELLs, I included her in the study. Currently, she works for the state's Department of Education as a Distinguished Educator. In that capacity, she is charged with "turning around" several low performing districts and schools. A native Spanish speaker, Maria grew up in Puerto Rico but came to this region as a young adult. She immediately began teaching bilingual education and attending graduate school.

Mary. Mary is a middle-aged woman whose ancestors came from Europe. She continues to live in the same part of the state where she was born; she has worked her entire career in the same school district. However, Mary has taught and served in various capacities throughout the district. She loves technology and uses it often for the professional development of her teachers. She is the only participant who discussed a portal in the state's Department of Education website. It contains overlays of the TESOL standards and the state's content standards, allowing teacher to learn what accommodations should be made for ELLs at different levels of language proficiency. At the time of the interview, she was principal of a school within a school, a district-wide program for at-risk students. They typically achieved at a level considerably below that of their age-level peers. Mary was passionate about getting to know her students as people so that she could use their interests as springboards for new learning.

Monica. Monica is a monolingual English-speaking woman, nearing retirement age, of Irish and Italian heritage. She was raised in the same coal mining area where she has served as an educator for over 30 years. Before she became an administrator, she served as a reading/language arts secondary teacher. Her district has experienced very significant demographic shifts (cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic) within in the past decade due to the arrival of predominantly Spanish-speaking people who have come to work in the new meat packing packs. The area has experienced ethnic and linguistic tension and a dramatic rise in gang activity.

Nate. Nate is a former college athlete and college coach. In those capacities, he traveled across the US and abroad. He attributes these experiences to his learning to see people as people, not as members of a particular ethnic, linguistic, or religious group. Before

becoming a principal, he was a teacher, a guidance counselor, and the district's ESL coordinator. He credits this experience for his desire to be "the champion for" his ELLs. He describes his suburban hometown and the entire school district, where he now serves as principal, as rather "closed minded" and hostile to people who are not White, European-American, and English-speaking. Glenn is in his early 40's; he is ethnically Scottish and German. He mentioned often that he hears people in the community and district say, "This isn't Windham, this isn't Windham," in reference to the changing demographics. However, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, his community is still 90% White and has a higher SES status (income, college degree holders) than the state average. The shift in Windham, therefore, is considerably less than in a few neighboring cities.

Sam. Sam is straight talking, third generation Italian American nearing retirement age. He works in the same community where he grew up. More people nominated him as an exemplary principal than any of the other participants. A few of the other participants worked under him as teachers or assistant principals. He spoke at length about the new school that he helped create over many years that had just opened its doors. He and his staff simultaneously designed the curriculum and the building [with architects] to make it adaptable to current and future technologies and the sciences in order for his needy students to have the best learning opportunities available. His many varied partnerships with community agencies, a nearby university, and federal scientific agencies are remarkable. With these vignettes completed, I will now describe the findings from my analysis.

Research Findings

When I analyzed the transcripts of the seven exemplary principals whom I interviewed, I identified five major themes across all research participants' comments:

Student Progress, Fostering Relationships, Parents and Community, Having “The Right People”, and Language Development. These themes described their self-reported responsibilities for their ELLs and their perceptions about what contributes to the academic success of these students. All of the themes had several subthemes. These subthemes are the ways in which the participants carried out their responsibilities, that is, their practices. The most salient practices I call Key Administrative Practices (KAPs). Table 4, at the end of the chapter, contains a list of the themes and the associated KAPs. I will describe each of the themes and their corresponding KAPs below and provide examples from the interviews that I think illustrate each theme. The pseudonyms of the participants are provided with their quotations, unless doing so would increase the possibility that their identity would be discovered. I present the five major themes below according to the frequency with which they were reported, from the most reported to least reported.

Student Progress

All principals I interviewed stated that it was their responsibility to be sure that their ELLs were learning. I call this theme *Student Progress*. Sometimes participants used the phrases *student improvement, student growth, student success*, or as Carmen stated, she was responsible “to make sure that these students are learning.” The concept was the same in all cases: participants stated that they were responsible for their ELLs’ progress in all areas of the curriculum.

I found several subthemes included under the responsibility *Student Progress*. I shall introduce them here and then discuss them at length below. Since the participants often discussed the subthemes *monitoring student progress* and *preparing for assessments* together, I list them as one KAP. Other KAPs under *Student Progress* include *articulating*

visions and goals for learning, ensuring that ELLs got “the education they are entitled to,” setting high expectations, and sharing decision making. Two additional subthemes, *giving ELLs enough time to learn English* and *being concerned about the high dropout rate of ELLs*, were not discussed by enough participants to warrant KAP designations, but I note them here because these things were important to some participants.

The participants’ discussion of student progress was not limited to students’ acquisition of English. Because all research participants also made multiple comments about ELLs acquiring English, language development reached saturation. I discuss it as a separate theme later in this chapter. However, because English was the language of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment in these schools, comments made about student progress and language development often overlapped.

Monitoring progress and preparing for assessments. All principals stated that monitoring their students’ progress was one of their major responsibilities. The participants discussed monitoring progress and preparing for assessments more than any other subtheme under *Student Progress*. The participants used a variety of terms for monitoring progress: *monitoring the data*, *[doing] data analysis*, *monitoring students*, or often simply as *progress monitoring*, as illustrated in the following examples from Monica and Mary:

Monica: We do a lot of progress monitoring in the building. We do a lot of it in the district, but they [teachers] have to give me scores to see if students have progressed, from one level to another. Because unless you progress monitor, you are not going to know where they are.

Connie: Mary, why do you consider these [practices that you mentioned] your responsibilities, and how important are they?

Mary: Well, monitoring kids, I think that is really the responsibility of every administrator! [laughter] I think if I read my job description, it probably is there, [laughter] not that I refer back to my job description often. But every administrator, it's in the job description. And I also believe that we have, as administrators, we HAVE the data and we are able to share it and show it to faculty, and make changes, so that it impacts instruction. So I do that. The data analysis aspect is pretty important.

Most principals reviewed a variety of student data. As one administrator said, “We have a whole child study format. . . . It is a real snapshot of the student.”

Examples of what principals used to monitor student progress included but were not limited to (a) formal and informal assessments, both summative and formative; (b) student behavioral reports; (c) teachers', counselors', and (for two participants) parents' anecdotal comments about student progress; and (d) assessments given on-line. I will discuss assessments in greater detail below. Two elementary principals also added that their own informal discussions with students were critical to their ELLs' progress, as in this example.

Mary: Because as we embrace our ELLs, helping our ELLs accelerate, we have to find connections that the kids can make [to prior knowledge]. And without knowing the kids, we can't do that by taking a generic fix for everything. We have some kids that are so interested in zombies! Am I interested in zombies? No, but maybe I can hook up with the kids over that, their fascination about that. And them making the connection as the learning is occurring. Because, well, our studies show that the lack of background knowledge, and lack of vocabulary development, that affects the

reading comprehension. Probably the most. The fluency, yea, but the background knowledge and the vocabulary.

Standardized, formative, and summative assessments. Every principal discussed scores from the State Standardized Assessment (SSA) and other standardized tests administered throughout the academic year. The SSA is administered annually statewide to students in the intermediate grades and grade 11 to fulfill testing requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and state regulations. Principals varied with regard to their emphasis on the SSA. One stated that she did not emphasize it at all. Others described many activities to prepare and motivate the students for the SSA and to inform the parents about how to help their children on the test. Several principals noted caution when reviewing the data, as seen here:

Mary: When we study the student data, we must look and say, are we gaining anything from this? . . . We hold it [the different types of data] all in balance.

Some secondary principals' discussions focused more on summative assessments than formative assessments. Two of the secondary principals did not discuss students' performance in class or their grades on report cards at all: their discussion of student progress and assessment focused solely on prepping students for the SSA and on SSA scores and scores from other standardized tests. The other two secondary principals, however, reported using formative assessments considerably, as described in these two excerpts from Sam:

I tell my teachers this a lot: The end result of teaching is not teaching, it's learning. If you don't have learners, then you need to change what you are doing because your teaching isn't cutting it.

Whenever the team brings a parent in, I have them complete . . . a LOG of questions to be asked: What is the problem? When was the kid last successful in your class? It is not all about the kid failing. It is about the teacher recognizing, you know, you were successful when you did this or you do that.

Articulating visions and goals for learning. The majority of the principals interviewed stated that their articulation of a vision or focus for the students' learning was instrumental to student progress. Some participants used the phrases *having a goal*, *having a focus*, and *being on the same page* as their teachers to describe this concept. These goals or visions were usually set for the whole school or for subgroups of students. However, all principals also discussed setting goals in a team setting for individual students who were struggling academically. In addition, one principal stated that her teachers taught students to set their own goals and to monitor their own progress. In all cases, the goals were not considered permanent. Rather, principals stated that the goals kept evolving. Many participants stated that they expected instruction and learning to keep improving, and therefore set higher goals for their students and teachers, as illustrated in Sam's statement that:

And as the principal, if you don't have a focus and people don't see the focus, even if you have it, you aren't going anywhere. . . . At the end of the year, I tell the staff the same thing, "Good job, Wow! Great! If the kids do well, you own part of that, too....And rest up, because you know when you come back in the fall, we are going to ramp it up a bit!"

Ensuring that ELLs got “the education they are entitled to”. These principals stated firmly that in order to progress academically, ELLs must get the education to which they are entitled, as illustrated in the following quotation:

Carmen: It is my responsibility to make sure that all of these students are getting the education they are entitled to. And it is my responsibility, just like I give clear directives and my expectations of what my vision is, it is my responsibility to help them get to that vision. And that means, supporting my teachers.

The participants also stated that ELLs must have the same opportunities as other students, including access to the same curriculum, but with additional support, materials, and accommodations, as needed. In order for the ELLs to access the same curriculum as their native English-speaking peers, most of the participants related that they provided supplemental curricular materials for their ELLs with training for teachers on how to use them. Many principals also cited the importance of teachers’ direct instruction of vocabulary, including *academic English*, so that ELLs could access the curriculum. Since all principals described several practices directly tied to ELLs’ acquisition of English, *Language Development* will be discussed as a separate theme later in this chapter. Tied to the notion of getting the education to which they are entitled is the next KAP, *setting high expectations*.

Setting high expectations. Most of the participants discussed the importance of setting high expectations for ELLs during their discussions of equal opportunity. Most principals said that they felt confident that their ELLs did, in fact, have equal opportunity, and they and their staffs had high expectations for them. When I asked one participant how setting high expectations for ELLs was addressed with the staff, the participant described a presentation given to the teachers:

I would make slides in a pretty cool Power Point, where I have a picture of a Hispanic child, and I would have, like a quote, maybe a quote that a kid said, like, “Not everybody thinks I can read.” Or something like that. Then the next slide would be the same picture of the child, and the data that supported, hey, as a building, you know, [grade X] Hispanics are this proficient in reading. That kind of thing. I would do that with a lot of different subgroups. The poor, the Hispanics, the African Americans, the ELLs . . . And then I would talk to the whole staff about, you know, that, I am sympathetic, and I am sensitive to the shift that is going on in our community. But at the same time, this is what we are capable of doing. And if we believe and if we work hard and keep the expectations high with these guys, let them surprise you.

I will also discuss this participant’s comments about the demographic shift occurring in that community in Chapter Five. Another participant, however, expressed strong feelings that many teachers in her school did not have high expectations for the ELLs at her school:

Faith: I think many times . . . we lower the bar! Oh, these are just the ESL kids. I think we lower the bar and we say, Well, that’s OK because he doesn’t know English!
IT’S NOT OK!

Sharing decision making. Many participants stated that supervising instruction and being the instructional leader were important responsibilities of theirs that impacted student progress. Although principals said that they felt responsible for the academic progress of their ELLs, they remarked that teachers’ excellent instruction was vital for student progress. In addition, most participants also listed several ways in which they shared decision-making and the responsibility of student progress with other staff members. Participants often

included school counselors, home-parent liaisons, content area teachers, and ESL teachers among those with whom they shared decision-making. Four of the participants made frequent mention of shared decision making with their staffs in ways that they believed impacted student progress. They stated that they shared responsibilities with their staff members for many different tasks that included, but were not limited to, (a) analyzing student data in teams, (b) creating goals to increase student success (for individual students, student subgroups, and all students), (c) developing goals or a vision for the staff, (e) increasing parental and community involvement, (f) raising test scores, (g) designing curricula, (h) writing grants to support students and parents, and (i) obtaining support from public and private agencies and from universities to support students and their families. Although four principals discussed frequent instances of shared decision making, the other three principals discussed it as well, though less often. Principals' comments about their responsibilities for and expectations of their staff members reached saturation levels. Therefore, it will be discussed again later under the theme *Having "The Right People"*.

The following two subthemes did not reach saturation, so I do not include them as KAPs. However, some participants deemed them important. Therefore, I include them here to describe more fully the participants' understanding of student progress.

Some participants mentioned that time itself was linked to student progress. For one participant, that meant having enough minutes carved out of the day for the ELLs to study language and literacy with their ESL teachers. Other participants considered time over the long haul. One participant stated that it took "five to seven years" for the ELLs to catch up to their native English-speaking peers academically. A few principals mentioned wanting

students to learn English quickly so they would have the same learning opportunities as their English-speaking peers. I will discuss this in Chapter Five.

Two principals, (both raised bilingually: one elementary, one secondary) discussed their concern about ELLs dropping out. They both noted that students did not physically drop out till high school, but started “mentally” dropping out in elementary school. Therefore, it was important to them to engage, motivate, and respect ELLs from the start, and to ascertain that they had the skills and knowledge to succeed.

All participants stated that they were responsible for their ELLs’ progress. They discussed five Key Administrative Practices, described above, that they felt helped them reach that goal. The next theme, *Fostering Relationships*, was the second most commonly cited responsibility by the participants. The number of times *Fostering Relationships* was mentioned was nearly equal to that of *Student Progress*.

Fostering Relationships

The participants spoke at length about the importance of fostering positive relationships with their ELLs, both their teachers and/or themselves. Several participants stated that this was their most important responsibility as principals. The participants used various terms to discuss these relationships, both theirs and those of their staff members. Several administrators stated it was important for teachers (and sometimes themselves) to “get to know” their students; others said that they felt they needed “to connect with the students” or bond with them. I found four KAPs that define *Fostering Relationships*: (a) *building comfort, respect, trust, and a sense of belonging*; (b) *motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion*; (c) *understanding and accepting differences*, and (d) *dealing with the closed-mindedness and lack of understanding of the staff*.

Building comfort, respect, trust, and a sense of belonging. The majority of the participants affirmed that in order for their ELLs to be successful, teachers needed to gain the respect and trust of the students. For these principals, respect was discussed as a mutual relationship, as noted below.

Sam: We tell the kids, You are expected to learn. . . . So it is about, How do you set the expectation? You build it through mutual respect.

One individual spoke about building mutual respect and trust more than anything else. She stated several times that it was key. Here is just one illustration:

Monica: Successful-wise, I think it is the respect level here. . . . You need the kids to be the most comfortable [they can be] and not be afraid. Like the trust issue is a big thing with me. Trust and respect are my 2 biggies.

Others articulated the need to know some key information about the students' lives, information that can only be obtained by talking with the students about their lives, their interests, and their families, as illustrated here.

Carmen: Every teacher has to give me . . . a snippet on every student in their class. They have to tell me where that student is from, the background on the student and parents. . . . I want to know a little bit about each student in your class and you have to make it your business to find out . . . not just, Mary likes the color blue, What about Mary?"

Motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion. All of the principals with whom I spoke also stated that their ELLs needed to know that the people at school cared for them. For Monica, that meant spending many hours attending her students' events.

You just have to show up at everything. National Jr. Honor Society, Student Council, basketball games. . . . You have to try to be there, to show them that you are interested, or else they give up. Because you might be the only person to show that you're interested.

Some participants used these connections to further the students' learning, as Mary discussed in these two examples:

Mary: I have been able to get to know every kid. And I think that is important.

Because it is a journey together with the kids. And I believe they buy into that. And so, that is part of the responsibilities I have in this particular position . . . to have the kids read to me, or to read to them, to discuss things.

Mary: But without that connection with the kids, without learning where the gaps are . . . where their preferences are . . . That is one of the important aspects of getting to know a child. Because not only do you know what they know, you know what they don't know, so you can help.

Many individuals discussed ways in which their staff member or they demonstrated such concern, caring, or compassion. Sometimes they wondered aloud about how they could do more, as seen in this statement by Faith:

She dropped out, had a kid. But still, it is like, way down in my heart, I ask, "What else could I have done, what else could I have said?" I could have changed her life.

And it is like, changing their lives, one at a time.

In addition to modeling and encouraging concern, caring, or compassion, principals stated that students also needed to know that the staff and principals cared *specifically for them to*

be learning. They often discussed the importance of encouraging and motivating their ELLs, especially students at the intermediate and secondary levels, as seen in this statement:

Faith: I never knew that I could go to college. . . . [So I tell the kids,] Hey, you know, it really is possible! Don't let anyone stop you from doing it! There are people who are going to help you! . . . We just had a function by our Latino/a Leaders... it was fantastic. We had people from all over, just trying to motivate and tell these kids they can do it.

Many individuals stated that forming positive student relationships was a reason that their ELLs were successful at school. These quotations by Nate and Sam illustrate this concept:

Nate: They have at least 2 adults [the homeroom teacher and the ESL teacher] that they can go to and feel very comfortable talking to at any time of the day that would support their needs and their concerns.

Sam: If you don't connect with the kids, they will see right through you. And for whatever reason, the end result is that they don't learn! Because they don't want to listen to you!

In addition to the two KAPs described above, *building comfort, respect, trust, and a sense of belonging*, and *motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion*, the participants spoke of another way of fostering relationships, the KAP *understanding and accepting differences*, as described in the following section.

Understanding and accepting differences. The research participants indicated in numerous ways that they were able to understand perspectives and life circumstances that were different from their own, even if they were raised in the area where they now served as principals, as four of the participants were. As Sam stated:

Sometimes I have to go back to the teachers and say, understand their plight, if you will. There are kids in this building who have experienced more TRAUMA than you ever will until you die.

The participants' understanding of different perspectives was not limited to those of their ELLs. They often mentioned, with empathy, an understanding of the many serious challenges faced by the students' parents and community members. These two examples illustrate how the participants worked to increase understanding of parents and to gain their trust.

Mary: We have to try to reach out as much as possible. And to figure out how we can gain the trust of the parents. And to understand where they are coming from.

Maria: [We want parents] to trust that they [are] going to be treated fairly . . . because a lot of parents did not have a very pleasant school experience when they were in school. . . . So it took some work to get the parents to trust the people in the building, even to trust me. But once we get them, they are yours!

Because comments about parents and community members reached saturation levels, I included it as a separate responsibility following the next KAP.

Dealing with the closed-mindedness and lack of understanding of the staff. Some principals stated that the communities where they worked, and sometimes that included staff members, were not open to influxes of culturally and linguistically diverse people. Carmen described one way in which she dealt with this:

The teachers need to know a little bit more about the culture of the students. And I said, . . . Learn about these students. Get to know where they are coming from. Find out if they are coming from Santo Domingo, from Puerto Rico, from Mexico, from Costa Rica. Notice how I am saying it. I am saying it in Spanish. Not *Porto Reeco*. . .

Learn to say their name and pronounce it the way you love to have your names pronounced appropriately. Learn about where they are coming from. I think if you get to know them, you will see that they are just like everyone else who is here.

A few participants described what I consider overt hostility, xenophobia, and racism faced by ELLs, by family members, and/or members of their community. It was especially important for students in such environments to experience a sense of belonging in the school community, they said. Many participants said that they talked with their staff members about the need for them to understand, embrace, and accept the differences brought to the school by children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. They acknowledged that changing the culture of the school proved difficult sometimes. Dealing with closed-mindedness that was more pervasive, such as when the entire district and community are affected, seemed nearly insurmountable, as demonstrated here:

Nate: I think the high school is more representative of our community. . . . [I hear] more of, These are not Windham kids. And, What has happened to Windham over the years? So that, it is not as friendly to the ELLs or other minorities. And therefore they don't feel connected. They don't feel like it is *our school*. . . . And then you tend to have more aggression.

Connie: Ya, that must be hard.

Nate: Ya, it is. I feel bad for those kids [in high school]. Boy, it is going to take a lot to change.

Connie: What do you think it will take?

Nate: Well, I think first you have to have a pretty big shift in the staff. And it has to come from the top, you know, whoever the leader is. He has to start putting programs

[in place], maybe mentoring programs for all of the students who need them. And better representation across the board in terms of the staff, having minorities on staff. But that is a hard one because you can have a job open and never have any minorities apply for it. And sometimes when you do hire them, they feel uncomfortable in the community because they are not supported in the community, so then it is an even deeper problem. Now you need to fix the community first, and make them feel comfortable to drive down the street and shop and go to church. And if that is not in place, well then, why are they going to feel comfortable in your school? Big issue. We have our own little school culture going here that is somehow insulated from of all of that. I think it is a little different here than it is in other buildings.

Through the examples, descriptions, and KAPs listed above, I have illustrated how the research participants declared their responsibility for *Fostering Relationships* with their ELLs. Because all participants spoke several times about the importance of the ELLs' families, I include that as a separate responsibility that I will describe below.

Parents and Community

All of the research participants discussed numerous different interactions with the parents of their students who are ELLs. Since several principals mentioned involvement of the larger community beyond the schoolyard as well, I call this theme *Parents and Community*. The four subthemes under this theme were (a) *understanding the challenges that parents of ELLs face*, (b) *helping families get services and other assistance*, (c) *providing classes for parents and community members*, and (d) *communicating with parents*. Most participants discussed all four of these subthemes.

Understanding the challenges that parents of ELLs face. Nearly all of the participants stated that parents and their children, as immigrants, children of immigrants, or newcomers from Puerto Rico, faced multiple, substantial challenges. All principals noted that learning a new language was often a significant challenge for the students' parents and extended family members. To help with the language acquisition, some schools offered ESL classes for parents and community members. Many principals discussed the fact that most of their ELLs came from poverty, sometimes generational poverty. Principals also stated that unemployment was another challenge for some families. Some parents also had to deal with societal status changes when they immigrated. Below Carmen described this, as well as her school's response to helping with that transition.

And we have to realize that those families come to us, some of them are professionals coming to us... but they also have to acquire that professionalism here. ... It is not easy, even as adults, to come here as a professional, to work. So they come with their own issues and have culture shock that they have to work through. We need to be sensitive to the families, and we need to kind of take a little bit of the load off the families to work with their kids. And then slowly progress to work with the families. It is a balance that we have to find.

In the large urban high school where one administrator worked, the student dropout rate and teen pregnancy rates were high. Living in neighborhoods with very high crime rates and the presence of gangs posed a concern for some families. Monica described the situation in her town:

We do have a lot of gangs in the area, coming from New York and that. We have them starting in the elementary. Mostly they try to get them on board. The high school has them.

Later she mentioned how the high crime rate deterred her from scheduling evening events. Another challenge faced by many parents of ELLs is lack of a car, Nate said. This makes coming to school for conferences, evening events, or meetings difficult.

As I discussed in my section on *Fostering Relationships*, closed-mindedness, intolerance, and xenophobia posed a problem for some families, especially in a few communities that I visited. This closed-mindedness was institutionalized in one area, as described by this principal:

Principal: And then the elected official wanted to do something... The ones that didn't have their cards. He made a big deal over people that came here.

Connie: Did he win?

Principal: No, he lost the first time, but he fights a lot of that stuff. So it didn't make it a very easy, comfortable situation at first, because they felt like they were being picked on. But I don't think our kids feel that way now.

Given the varied and numerous obstacles often faced by immigrant families, it is not surprising that they can benefit from assistance. Fortunately, people who work in schools are often able to refer families for assistance, and sometimes they are positioned to provide assistance directly.

Helping families get services and other assistance. Most principals I interviewed described numerous programs, services, and/or school family centers to which parents were referred. School counselors, home-school liaisons (if the school had such people employed),

teachers, and sometimes the principals themselves made these referrals. Some schools had Family Centers housed in their buildings. The facilities and programs at the Family Center in Sam's school were more extensive than others. No other principals with family centers mentioned the involvement of the parents and community members and the amount of services provided at school that Sam did:

The district provided bricks and mortar dollars . . . for a family center. . . . We have a full dental facility, 2 exam rooms for doctors, a school psychologist. . . . We have this eclectic group of some university folk, United Way folk, my school people, a couple of parents who are engaging in these meetings saying, What does the community need? What do our parents need to be better parents, better advocates of school? What services do we have that we want to provide? We are working with St. John's Hospital . . . and the city in doing some clinics for the community, [like] inoculation services.

Some of the programs and partnerships that provided services to parents and other community members were created by the principals themselves, or by a principal and other school employees. An example of this is one started by Nate:

We developed an Ambassador Program. We get them [parents] in contact with somebody in the community that spoke their language; they needed to know where the community went to shop for their food, and they were also people who had gone through the school system.

Maria described another innovative and helpful program for parents created by her and her staff:

We did a job fair for the parents. One of the teachers said, Why don't we help them find a job? I said, Tell me more. How can we get that done? Maybe we can call Career Makers, and maybe they can do a job fair for us? . . . They help people to search for jobs. And they have training and . . . help them with filling out an application. . . . They came in and they had all kinds of businesses represented in the school! . . . We had SO many people come out....It was another way to reach out to the parents and tell them that we are not the bad guys here. We want to work with you and help you.

Providing classes for parents and community members. A third manner in which administrators were involved with parents and community members was providing learning opportunities for them. Most participants described workshops, classes, discussions with parents, and/or other avenues of learning for parents that occurred at their schools. Although the content of these parental learning opportunities varied, they often served two functions: to help the parents understand what and how the students were learning at school plus ways in which the parents could further the learning process at home; and to provide the parents with training that would help them in the community and at home. Here are two examples.

Sam: We have had some ESL for parents; we have had classes for parents to become better at parenting. We just made a connection with Channel 79 and they will be doing some afterschool work with kids and caregivers on how to handle finances. And on being tech savvy: What do parents need to know to be [tech] users and monitors for their kids?

Carmen: We have... a lot of workshops for parents. . . . The focus has been on reading and reading strategies. . . . So we can take pride in that parents see that

everybody learns differently. And that their child WILL get from here to here, maybe not as quick as this other child will, but they will get there, and these are the strategies that [they] can assist us with at home.

Communicating with parents. Every principal stated that communicating with parents was an important part of the principal's job. They used both oral and written language for this purpose, though not to the same degree. Some participants put out a newsletter for parents; a few mentioned that they "should get it translated," but they did not because of the turnaround time. A few of the principals who are not bilingual stated that the language differences sometimes impeded communication. As we can see from these illustrations, educators use a variety of ways to communicate with parents.

Mary: This year we have 1/3 of our parents who have given us their email addresses. That is another way we can communicate. One of the things that I require is that they [teachers] make 6 contacts with parents per week, 3 positive, and 3 may be more constructive. Because unless parents know the positive things that kids are doing . . .

Monica: Agendas are a big parent contact. So that's a big communication, with all parents. . . . Our K-2 kids get folders. They look like these. They are called the Teacher Communicator. Parents know that this is what is coming home every day.

Monica: First, they [parents] usually ignore my calls. Sometimes if they see a school number, they won't answer. But if it's blocked! They will answer. And then I will say, You need to get over here now or I am sending the police to your house, because we have an issue here with your kid. They will come over in a heartbeat.

All of the principals noted that they and their teachers used translators to assist with communication, in various degrees. Sometimes translators came from the ranks of the

professional or para-professional staffs, sometimes home-school liaisons translated. One participant mentioned using an Internet-based service (TransAct) that provides *pre-translated* standard documents and forms, and other times districts paid members of the community to translate. One principal made a point of stating that he did not pull teachers to interpret in order to protect their instructional time. A few illustrations follow describing how the participants used translation and interpretation.

Nate: We also have a pretty extensive interpreter/translator service that we provide.

Connie: Is that TransAct?

Nate: No, we use TransAct to a degree, but we would sooner pay the money for the service . . . to get the person in here face to face. Yea, one of the things I established is this language translator/interpreter list. I don't know if it is lengthy, but we have a couple of go-to people for each language. And then we pay for it. Providing somebody who speaks their language makes them more comfortable, and it is important to us.

Monica: Pretty much most of our stuff is translated through the district. And if there is anything we send out, permission slips, or, parent notifications of any sort, my translator interprets, translates them into Spanish, if I need them.

In the pages above I described three of the five responsibilities for ELLs that I found when I analyzed my data and the KAPs associated with each responsibility. Next, I turn to another responsibility that focuses directly on people, which is *Having "The Right People."*

Having "The Right People"

All principals discussed the importance of *having "the right people"* work with their ELLs. Individual principals varied with regard to what attributes or traits they expected in

their professional staff members in order for them to be considered the right people to interact with their ELLs. However, these attributes generally fell into two categories (a) possessing and perfecting excellent professional knowledge and skills, and (b) working with the ethos cultivated by the principals. I discuss professional staff members' traits that fall into these categories throughout this section as I describe the four KAPs that define *Having "The Right People"*: (a) *hiring and training excellent teachers*; (b) *expecting staff members' continuous professional development*; (c) *having the right attitude*; and (d) *being the right leader for the school*.

Hiring and training excellent teachers. The job titles of "the right people" to work with ELLs also varied by principal. All participants stated that ESL teachers were not the only ones responsible for ESL students. They said that they had high expectation for the ESL teachers, but also for homeroom and content area teachers. The principals expected all teachers to have an excellent grasp of their subject matter and of good pedagogy. At the elementary and middle school level, several principals arranged schedules so that ESL teachers co-planned and often co-taught with homeroom and content area teachers to support the ELLs. The participants stated that they wanted all of their teachers to make appropriate accommodations for their ELLs, though they did not discuss specific accommodations, which I will discuss in Chapter Five. Most participants stated that they wanted all teachers to have at least a basic understanding of SLA. Many principals provided the professional development on SLA to their staffs themselves. Two participants described this aspect of professional development.

Carmen: When you do your professional development for your teachers, you go back on the research. You have to go back to Cummins, you have to go back to all these

people who were the gurus of English language learners that they have never heard about. . . . To go back and just provide for them . . . some scenarios as well as good data and research that has been done so that they really understand what it is all about.

Connie: Can you tell me which [of the responsibilities you discussed]...are most important?

Faith: I think training. It is not something that I do, but something I look forward to doing? ...Trying to train the regular ed[ucation] teachers how to work with ELL kids.

And it is an uphill battle, but I think in small groups, I think it is doable.

The participants discussed the importance of having the right people from the ranks of other school personnel as well. Many principals spoke about the vital role that guidance counselors and the district's ESL Coordinator played for ESL students, for example. A few principals included other teachers and staff (e.g., secretaries, nurses, and parent liaisons who spoke a second language or who shared a common culture with students) when they discussed essential people for their ESL students.

Expecting staff members' continuous professional development. For many principals, having the right people started with hiring the right people, as illustrated in the following statement.

Sam: I hired everybody in the building. Everybody here is somebody I want. We hire people, we don't just hire bodies. . . . It is not about getting the position filled. It is about the right person in the position.

The notion of having the right people was not a static concept that ended with hiring, however. These exemplary principals expected their teachers to work hard to become the

right people for their students and for their subject areas, and to keep improving. The continuous improvement occurred through several traditional professional development avenues, but through many innovative practices as well. One secondary principal mentioned what she deemed ineffective professional development in the traditional form of an ESL coordinator lecturing all of the teachers in her large school at once. She proposed an alternate method.

Faith: I think it has to be done a different way. . . . Maybe we will start with one department. . . . Let's start with math! How can I teach the math teachers to understand [how to teach ELLs]? How can I get THEM on my side?

Other forms of professional development directly related to ESL students included reading and/or discussing professional articles provided by these principals as well as these principals lecturing the teachers about various topics in SLA. All principals articulated the importance of professional development that would help teachers develop strategies and use materials that support ELLs and their learning. All participants also stated that they required teachers' professional development in their content areas as well. One administrator required teachers to conduct action research because the district required it; two participants established professional learning communities; another principal arranged partnerships with a university and governmental agencies that supported teachers' growth, as illustrated here.

Sam: We are an integrated professional development school with DR University. . . . My goal is to have professors down here teaching our teachers how to be a better chemistry teacher, or how to teach this chemistry thing better, or how to use this technology better. . . . It opens up opportunities for workshops or training that teachers can take part in, or conferences, or coursework . . . [and] connections to the

DR University libraries. . . . We became an Explorer School for NASA, so it went hand-in-hand with the theme of our science signature.

The KAPs mentioned in the preceding sections of *Having “The Right People”* have focused thus far on teachers’ skills and knowledge. The next KAPs go beyond these technical aspects.

Having the right attitude. Analysis of the administrators’ statements revealed that they required more than teachers’ skills and their attainment of knowledge. For many principals, it was critical for their teachers to have the right attitude about working with these linguistically and culturally diverse students, many who live in poverty. They acknowledged that gauging the right attitude in teachers is difficult, as illustrated below.

Sam: You know, you get people who can’t deal with the cultural issues. And they are not as obvious. People will tell you everything is just fine. . . . And you make some judgments. And you hire the right people. If you don’t like our kids, you can’t work here. I will tell you that right now. If you can’t get the feel for it, they are not going to be successful here.

The participants expected teachers to have a high degree of commitment to the students and willingness to work hard. Often they expected them to give extra help to their ELLs. Several principals mentioned that their teachers worked long hours outside those prescribed by their contracts. Many participants mentioned that their teachers had compassion toward the ELLs. Several principals said teachers needed to have an understanding of the challenges the ESL students and their parents (often immigrants) face at school, at home, and in the community. For one principal in a formerly all White, English-speaking, homogenous district that experienced a moderate influx of diverse students, his teachers’ having the right attitude meant their acceptance of the ELLs and their families as true members of the community.

Nate: That is one of the biggest challenges, [teachers saying] This isn't Windham.

These aren't Windham kids. But the staff members who see these kids, they see these kids as Windham kids! And they are VERY nurturing, very open-minded. So, rather than trying to change someone's way of thinking, the old school, rather than trying to change the way they think, I made sure that the kids were exposed to the ones who already had the philosophy that I had.

Being the right leader for the school. After interviewing the participants, listening to each recording repeatedly, spending months analyzing each transcript recursively, and discussing my analysis throughout the process with a small group of critical friends, I believe that all of the principals are the right people for their ELLs. Certainly, they are well educated. Many hold two or more master's degrees each, and yet they often sought out additional workshops, lectures, and graduate classes. Three individuals had degrees in bilingual education or TESOL. Several participants frequently searched for research articles in SLA to read themselves and to share with their staffs. They stated clearly that they "set the bar" as high for the ELLs as for their native English speaking students. They wanted their ELLs to have the same opportunities as their peers. Each principal's discussion also demonstrated considerable commitment to and acceptance, compassion, and understanding of their students who are English language learners. It was easy for me to envision the transformative leadership that I suspected each of these individuals practiced, as well as the positive impact they had on their students, the students' families, and their staff members. A few principals clearly viewed their role as the school's leader as an opportunity to help their teachers become not simply the right people for their students, but to become better human beings.

Mary summarized well her responsibilities as the instructional leader and the leader of the staff:

[I am] sometimes cheerleader, sometimes confidante. Trying to help them to be the best possible persons and the best teachers. And to look for shared resources. I definitely do not believe that I have all the answers! I am on this journey myself. But at least we can find the answers together.

Language Development

The final theme in my study, the one the participants discussed the least, is *Language Development*. However, all participants stated in multiple ways that it was important for their students who are ELLs to learn English. Sam and Maria stated that it was their primary goal, in fact. The participants described five KAPS that support students' language development: (a) *providing good language role models*; (b) *establishing ELD programs and professional development*; (c) *providing practice, time, materials, space, and teacher support*; and (d) *using the home language*.

Providing good language role models. One way in which principals supported language development was to make certain that their ELLs were heterogeneously grouped with native English speakers. They did this so that the ELLS could have good language role models. More than one-half of the participants stated that they purposely grouped students for this reason. I must note, however, that the research strongly suggests that simply engaging in heterogeneous grouping is not effective by itself (c.f., Krashen, 1994; Protheroe, 2011).

Establishing ELD programs and professional development. About one-half of the participants also stated that their ELLs were fully included. That is, they did not receive ESL

language instruction through a pullout program. The ESL specialist consulted with the homeroom or content area teachers and often co-planned and co-taught with them. Other schools had strictly a pullout program, in both elementary and secondary schools. For Monica, in her K–8 school, a pullout program is the only model that seemed logistically possible to her:

Monica: It is all taught in English. Should it be? Yes. Because we are finding that the kids being in the regular ed[ucation] classroom, they are learning English. That is why it is a pullout program. Now, if [the ESL teacher] needs to support somebody, she does...But there are so many kids here, they can't go into all of the classrooms.

There couldn't be that kind of scheduling. It is impossible.

The research participants, with the exception of two, all noted ways in which they structured the day to make it possible for their ESL teachers to plan and often co-teach with the homeroom or content area teachers. This was true at the elementary level as well as the secondary level, as described by this middle school principal.

Sam: These ELL teachers . . . are involved in team meetings, team co-planning; they all get to co-plan with their co-teachers... If it is the ELL teacher and the science teacher, in 7th grade, because they teach a class together, I provide them co-planning time... It is not their prep period. This is in addition to that.

When the participants stated that all of their teachers were expected to differentiate their instruction for their ELLs to make the content accessible to them, they demonstrated a concern for the ELLs' language development. This is seen in these secondary principals' remarks:

Faith: [I say to] the math teachers . . . You need to differentiate for these kids. And they think that differentiating means speaking slower or louder, like they are deaf! . . . I make sure that when I go to evaluate them, I am looking to see that they have ESL built into it, and I want to see, What are you doing for these kids? So, it is kind of good that I can cross over the two [math and ESL] subject areas.

Sam: It will be the same curriculum, but the pace will be different, the way they present information will be different, the vocabulary development is going to be different, much more intense.

Providing practice, time, materials, space, and teacher support. Many participants stated that they made certain that their ELLs had much instruction in and practice using their new language. To make time for instruction and practice, nearly all of the participants created after-school programs, summer programs, and/or additional literacy periods during the school day for their ELLs. This included one of the middle school principals. All of these principals stressed the importance of supplying their teachers (ESL, homeroom and/or content area teachers) with materials that were appropriate for their ELLs. Some participants specifically discussed oral language development as well as literacy. One principal discussed many of these items above but added the creation of a welcoming, literacy-rich place for his ELLs:

Nate: And then, resources, and the curriculum is important. And the time for the program. . . . We have a pullout 90 minutes literacy block. . . . And those kids go up to . . . our “ESL Academy.” And that is just two classrooms with the wall opened. It is like 2 huge classrooms with a bank of computers, guided reading tables, centers all over the place, and it is just really literacy rich.

I asked to see this ESL Academy. Not only was it literacy rich, it was welcoming and decorated with items from the students' home cultures.

Using the home language. Many participants also noted the importance of teachers or para-professionals using the home language “to give concepts or clarification,” as Sam explained. For Carmen, who has experience and a degree in bilingual education, the use of the home language took on greater significance. She stated that she often spoke to parents about the importance of maintaining the native language at home. She reported telling her faculty members (when she was the ESL teacher at the same school) the following:

Carmen: If they don't want me to clarify for a Latino student in this district, I said, then you might as well start writing me up now and filing grievances, because it is going to happen...The goal for these students is to be fluent at some point in two languages. I am not here for them to forget their native language. I am here for them to absolutely maintain their native language and learn a new language.

This was a brave and ambitious thing to say, I believe, because her superintendent had eliminated bilingual education in the district. She was not allowed to teach students Spanish because it would defy his mandate, but still she wanted her students to become truly bilingual. Another principal took a very different approach. She told parents to stop using the native language at home and insisted that her students speak English even when socializing at school:

Monica: We try to communicate with the parents, . . . You can't just speak a little English at the table at night. You can't have your conversation only in Spanish, because the kids are not hearing this in school. You know, even in the cafeteria though, they talk in Spanish and I say, I need to hear this. You need to talk to me in

English so I understand this. Even though I know what they are saying in Spanish.

They will say, “Sorry, Miss.” And then they will speak it in English.

I believe that Monica thought that she was furthering her ELLs’ language development by forbidding them from using their L1 socially at school and by telling parents to abolish the L1 at home. However, I do not support these practices because they are contrary to most research in the fields of SLA and in the education of CLD students. I believe such practices are also contrary to the next KAP, *valuing students’ culture*. I will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Valuing students’ culture. Several of the participants made comments that suggested that they understood that they, their staffs, and their students needed to know something about and value the students’ culture. They described different things they did as educational leaders to help their teachers realize the importance of valuing students’ cultures. For example, I saw the large, attractive flags of the countries from which Nate’s ESL students came hanging in his school cafeteria. He stated that he would also “showcase their country” over the public address system at lunch when his primary aged ELLs earned recognition at school. In a different conversation about older ELLs who failed to master their L1, Spanish, Faith lamented that her teenaged Latino/a students were “losing that part of who they are, because they are assimilating into the culture here.” Two administrators discussed the importance of having teachers who are diverse. As Carmen stated:

We have a very diverse population here. My mission when I came to this school was to make sure we had a diverse staff also. So at every grade level . . . there is second language person. . . . I wanted to make sure when students came to this building, especially a second language student, there were people that looked like them.

Summary

In this chapter I first presented vignettes of each of the seven research participants, public school principals in the eastern US with high populations of ELLs who were nominated by other educators as being exemplary. Collectively, these principals have over 100 years of administrative experience. They come from rural, suburban, and urban areas. Then I discussed the five major themes I found when I analyzed their transcripts in the manner discussed in Chapter Three. These themes, the principals' reported responsibilities for ELLs and what they believe contributes to the academic success of these students, are: *Student Progress, Fostering Relationships, Parents and Community, Having "The Right People,"* and *Language Development*.

All of these themes had several subthemes. These subthemes are the participants' stated practices. The practices are the ways in which responsibilities were carried out, they stated. I called these practices Key Administrative Practices (KAPs). Table 4, at the end of this chapter, contains the responsibilities and KAPs. I described each of the five responsibilities, their corresponding KAPs, and provided examples from the interview transcripts that illustrate them. In the following chapter I will compare my findings to three frameworks for administrators found in the academic literature and examine critically comments made by some research participants. Finally, I shall discuss some limitations and implications of my findings and make suggestions for future research.

Tables

Table 4

Participants' Stated Responsibilities for ELLs and Key Administrative Practices (KAPs)

Responsibility	Key Administrative Practice (KAP)
Student Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring progress and preparing for assessments Articulating visions and goals for learning Ensuring that ELLs got “the education they are entitled to” Setting high expectations Sharing decision making
Fostering Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building comfort, respect, trust, and a sense of belonging Motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion Understanding and accepting differences Dealing with the closed-mindedness and lack of understanding of the staff
Parents and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the challenges that parents of ELLs face Helping families get services and other assistance Providing classes for parents and community members Communicating with parents
Having “The Right People”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring and training excellent teachers Expecting staff members’ continuous professional development Having the right attitude Being the right leader for the school
Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing good language role models Establishing ELD programs and professional development Providing practice, time, materials, space, and teacher support Using the home language Valuing students’ cultures

Chapter 5

Analysis and Conclusion

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the emerging literature on school leadership for ELLs. In particular, I undertook this research project to examine school principals' self-perceptions of leadership responsibilities and practices related to English language learners and these principals' beliefs about what contributes to the academic success of ELLs. It is my opinion that strong and effective school leadership for ELLs is of vital interest and requires further research. Therefore, I sought to uncover patterns of beliefs about leadership responsibilities and practices for ELLs by interviewing principals nominated by other educators as being exemplary (defined in Chapters One and Three).

First, I will summarize here my research findings. Then I will review theoretical frameworks that come from three perspectives in the academic literature. Next, I will compare and contrast my findings with the three frameworks. After that, I will address inconsistencies and concerns I found in the results. Finally, I will discuss the limitations and implications of my findings and give suggestions for future research.

Findings

Using purposive sampling, I located seven principals in public (non-charter schools) in the northeastern US who met my selection criteria and who agreed to participate in this research project. I interviewed them in 2010. Next, I engaged in thematic analysis of their statements and returned for member checking in 2012. Chapters Three and Four contain demographic information about the participants, their schools, and their school districts.

When I recursively analyzed the transcripts of the seven research participants, I identified five major themes in the participants' stated responsibilities and several practices subsumed under these responsibilities that I call Key Administrative Practices (KAPs). I also found these themes in the participants' stated beliefs about what contributes to the academic success of their ELLs. Chapter Four contains an in-depth discussion of the findings and examples from participants' transcripts of each of these five major themes that follow. Underneath each of the five responsibilities below I list the corresponding 22 KAPs:

- Student Progress
 - Monitoring progress and preparing for assessments
 - Articulating visions and goals for learning
 - Ensuring that ELLs got “the education they are entitled to”
 - Setting high expectations
 - Sharing decision making
- Fostering Relationships
 - Building comfort, respect, trust, and a sense of belonging
 - Motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion
 - Understanding and accepting differences
 - Dealing with the closed-mindedness and lack of understanding of the staff
- Parents and Community
 - Understanding the challenges that parents of ELLs face
 - Helping families get services and other assistance
 - Providing classes for parents and community members
 - Communicating with parents

- Having “The Right People”
 - Hiring and training excellent teachers
 - Expecting staff members’ continuous professional development
 - Having the right attitude
 - Being the right leader for the school
- Language Development
 - Providing good language role models
 - Establishing ELD programs and professional development
 - Providing practice, time, materials, space, and teacher support
 - Using the home language
 - Valuing students’ cultures

Theoretical Frameworks Used to Analyze Findings

I used frameworks emanating from research in three areas to analyze my findings in this chapter. Waters et al. (2003) discussed general educational leadership practices. Riehl (2000) provided an outline of inclusive administrative practices for diverse students. Hamayan and Freeman (2006) described leadership for ELLs in their edited book. Chapter Two contains a detailed description of each framework. I summarize them below for expediency.

Balanced leadership. Waters et al. (2003) conducted a large meta-analysis of 30 years of research studying the effects of various leadership practices of school principals on student achievement. Their results indicated a significant positive correlation between effective leadership practices and student achievement. With these findings, an exhaustive review of literature, and their experiences as researchers and practitioners, Waters et al.

developed what they call the Balanced Leadership Framework (BLF). The results indicated that effective leaders possessed not only knowledge and skills, but the rationale for what they do and when to do it (Waters et al.). Since its publication, these researchers and others at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) have elaborated on their findings, products, and services. They have generated additional articles and books (e.g., Lyons et al., 2008; Marzano et al., 2005; Waters & Cameron, 2007; Waters & Grubb, 2004), provided leadership and teacher professional development and consultation, offered an on-line assessment of leaders' practices, and provided additional products and services based on the BLF.

I list below the 21 leadership responsibilities identified as significantly correlating with student achievement by Waters et al., taking the names of these responsibilities directly from the authors' framework (Waters et al., 2003 p. 4). For clarification, I paraphrased Waters et al.'s definitions in brackets:

- culture [cultivates cooperation, community, and shared beliefs]
- order [sets standard procedures];
- discipline [shields instructional staff from that which detracts from their teaching];
- resources [ensures teachers have both the professional development and materials needed];
- [directly involves in] design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- focus [sets goals and keeps them visible to school];

- [demonstrates] knowledge of current curriculum, instruction and assessment; visibility [interrelates with students and teachers];
- contingent rewards [acknowledges accomplishment of individuals];
- communication [creates solid communication between students and with professional staff];
- outreach [serves as promoter and communicator for school];
- input [engages teachers in creating and putting into action guiding principles and decisions];
- affirmation [acknowledges and honors school's accomplishments and recognizes its failures];
- relationship [has awareness of teachers' and staff's personal dimensions];
- change agent [dynamically challenges the way things are];
- optimizer [serves as inspiration and leader of novel changes];
- ideals/beliefs [communicates and functions from solid convictions and principles about education];
- monitors/evaluates [examines efficacy of school practices on students' learning]; flexibility [displays leadership behavior that is adaptable; demonstrates comfort with difference of opinion];
- situational awareness [shows awareness of details of the school's operation; employs this attentiveness to circumvent problems];
- intellectual stimulation [makes certain that school employees know present-day theories and practices and that discussions of these things are an integral part of the ethos of the school].

Inclusive administrative practice for diverse students. Riehl (2000) stated that principals who desire to create inclusive schools for diverse students must engage in three tasks. In the first task, a principal fosters new meaning construction about diversity among staff, students, parents, the general public, and within themselves. Riehl described many components of this task, including ensuring the presence of culturally responsive teaching, valuing culture, engaging in democratic discourse, and building trust, for example. Riehl reported that in the second task, a principal promotes specific practices that impact teaching and learning and creates specific conditions within schools to address the needs of diverse students and shapes a school culture that supports diversity. Among other things, the researcher included here such practices as hiring new teachers carefully and establishing professional learning communities. This task also includes the important process of helping teachers focus on specific student learning goals and showing teachers that they have met their goals. Riehl included in the latter component of this task cultural empowerment, advocacy and critique, and educational equity. In the final task, Riehl described how principals should bridge connections between schools and communities. That is, principals realize how schools are embedded in the community and simultaneously work to provide services that meet students' needs and also strengthen communication between the school and the community. Furthermore, the author added that inclusive leadership practice remains grounded in equity and social justice.

Leadership for ELLs. In Hamayan and Freeman's edited book (2006), many researchers in SLA and related fields described specific guiding principles for English language learners at school. These guiding principles fell under the following themes that I slightly reconfigured into the following list:

- understanding and implementing policies and accountability requirements;
- linking the school and community;
- understanding the nature of learning in two languages;
- developing, implementing, and evaluating programs;
- ensuring that the best classroom instructional and assessment practices are implemented for ELLs;
- providing professional development for all instructional staff members, and
- engaging in advocacy and activism for ELLs.

Comparing My Findings to Best Practices and Research in the Literature

Employing the frameworks for my purposes. In Chapter Three I described my methodology for comparing the frameworks to my findings. When I compared the findings to the three frameworks for school administrators listed above, I discovered some interesting similarities and differences that I describe below. Of course, the authors of the frameworks designed them each with a particular focus. For example, it seems to me that the BLF (Waters et al., 2003) is intentionally broadly configured: I think it is designed to cover leadership for all students. However, in my opinion, an administrator or researcher can employ the BLF to examine and improve leadership for particular subpopulations of students. Therefore, when I comment on its similarities and differences below, I employ the BLF as a lens to view principals' leadership responsibilities toward ELLs. Similarly, Riehl's (2000) inclusive administrative practice framework focuses on diverse students in general, but I also comment below on how Riehl's framework compares to my findings on principals' specific responsibilities and practices for ELLs. Finally, Hamayan and Freeman's (2006) administrative guidebook described leadership for several ELD program models. I use their

framework to examine its fit to the types of ELD program models used in the schools where I did my research.

Similarities and differences. I found all five of my themes, that is, the principals' five perceived responsibilities for ELLs, in all three of the frameworks when I employed them as described in the preceding paragraph and in Chapter Three. Furthermore, I found many of the subthemes of my data analysis, the practices subsumed under the administrative responsibilities, in the three frameworks as well. However, I also identified differences: these three frameworks contain elements not found in my data, and my data revealed administrative responsibilities and practices not found in the frameworks. In the following section I discuss how the five responsibilities identified by the participants in this study compare to those in the comparative frameworks.

Student progress. All the principals I interviewed stated that they were responsible for ELLs' progress in all areas of the curriculum, not just the students' acquisition of English. Interestingly, none of the three frameworks made any *direct* statements about principals' responsibility for learning. However, many of the KAPs found in my data from *Student Progress* did align with practices found in the comparative frameworks. More KAPs from *Student Progress* correspond with practices in the three comparative frameworks than do KAPs from the other four responsibilities. For example, all three frameworks contain administrative practices identical or similar to the KAP *articulating a vision for improved learning*. Elements that fall within the realm of my KAP *monitoring progress and preparing for assessments* exist throughout many of the 21 components in Waters et al.'s (2003) work and in two of the seven practices in the Leadership for ELLs (Hamayan & Freeman, 2006), but not in Riehl's (2000) Inclusive Administrative Practice framework. Riehl's (2000) and

Hamayan and Freeman's (2006) frameworks contain comparable practices to my KAP *ensuring that ELLs got "the education they are entitled to."* The KAP *sharing decision making* aligns most strongly with Riehl's framework but can also be found in Waters et al.'s work.

Fostering relationships. My research participants spoke at length about the responsibility of their teachers and themselves *Fostering Relationships* with their ELLs. Several participants deemed fostering these relationships their *most important* responsibility for this group of students. A few stated that these relationships furthered the students' learning. This was a robust theme in my study, nearly as robust as the responsibility *Student Progress*. However, *Fostering Relationships* overlaps very little with the three frameworks that I examined, so I consider this a possible novel contribution to the literature.

Hamayan and Freeman's framework (2006) does not appear to address this very human side of principals' responsibilities for ELLs. The BLF framework of Waters et al. (2003) barely touches upon this personal aspect under their responsibilities of visibility (i.e., interrelating with student and teachers), and communication (i.e., creating solid communication between students). Riehl's framework comes a bit closer to fostering relationships than the other two frameworks through her discussion of promoting a caring environment and "molding inclusive school cultures" (2000, p. 64). However, Riehl's discussion of the principal's role in impacting the factors above and in shaping schools that support diversity in general focuses heavily on the *organizational* conditions of the school (e.g., curricular tracking, class size, instructional programs, looping), rather than then *interactional* conditions that my participants described.

All of my participants spoke of the KAP *building comfort, respect, trust and a sense of belonging* with their ELLs. They also discussed the KAP *motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion*. A few participants stated they used these relationships to further the students' learning by discovering gaps in the students' knowledge; gaps that these participants felt could not be ascertained through other means. Other participants felt that this humanistic element was critical for the students to succeed. I believe that administrators need both foci: examining and changing organizational conditions that will support the academic success and well being of the ELLs, as Riehl described, but also the interactional, humanistic component that my participants described, discussed in Chapter Four and summarized above.

Dealing with closed-mindedness and lack of understanding of the staff. I could have situated this KAP under any of the other responsibilities I uncovered. It rests under the responsibility *Fostering Relationships* because the participants made it clear that by addressing and changing such difficult mindsets, opinions, and emotions as closed-mindedness, fear, xenophobia, prejudice, ignorance, and classism, relationships with and between students, as well as with parents, could be transformed. With this positive transformation of *Fostering Relationships*, the other four responsibilities they described (i.e., *Student Progress, Parents and Community, Having "The Right People," Language Development*) had a better chance of realization. I will discuss this further in the section *Inconsistencies and Concerns* later in this chapter.

Parents and community. All research participants in this study discussed their responsibility of having varied, multiple interactions with the *Parents and Community*. I identified four KAPs under this heading: *understanding the challenges that parents of ELLs*

face; helping families get services and assistance (often through parent-school liaisons); *providing classes for parents and community members*; and *communicating with parents*.

Most principals included all four types of parent interaction in their discussions with me. The three comparison frameworks have vastly different approaches to parent and community relations with schools. For example, the table that lists Waters et al.'s (2003) 21 principal leadership responsibilities does not mention the word "parents;" the authors use "community" only as it relates to the school's culture and principals' cultivation of cooperation and community within the school (p. 4). However, parents and community might be inferred in Waters et al.'s responsibility Outreach, in which the principal is the advocate and communicator to all of the school's "stakeholders" (2003, p. 4).

Hamayan and Freeman's edited book (2006), in contrast, contains a chapter dedicated to linking the school and community. Their framework contains several practical and important suggestions for making such links, generally falling into the following categories: viewing linguistic diversity in a school and community as a value rather than a problem; integrating ELL families into the school; and using the ELLs' home languages to communicate with parents, to make the school accessible to them, to welcome parents, and to fulfill the legal mandates for communication with parents (2006). These practices exhibit a moderate degree of overlap with my results. For example, some of my participants discussed *valuing the students' cultures*, which I included as a KAP under my responsibility *Language Development*. Hamayan and Freeman's (2006) framework includes offering workshops and classes for parents, something that many of my participants did for the parents of their ELLs, and sometimes other members of the community as well. All of my participants discussed practices I felt converged under the KAP *communicating with parents*. Most of my

participants acknowledged that coming to school or communicating with school personnel proved difficult for parents of ELLs. Therefore, many of my participants reported sometimes arranging for the translation of written documents and forms and for having somebody interpret orally, a practice recommended in Hamayan and Freeman's (2006) guidebook. One participant related that "everything" was translated into Spanish for parents of her ELLs. She reported that her district translated all bulk written communication for parents and that she had a translator/interpreter in her school as well. Her district also provided a translation mechanism on the district's and the schools' web sites that I saw.

Among the three frameworks that I compared to my findings, Riehl's (2000) framework contains the lengthiest and most theoretical discussion of building bridges to connect schools and communities: it comprises one-third of her tasks for creating inclusive schools. One difference between my results and Riehl's framework is that Riehl wrote mostly about school-*community* bridges, whereas my results point toward school-*parent* bridges, with *community* playing a much smaller role.

Both Riehl's (2000) framework and Hamayan and Freeman's (2006) guiding practices include schools helping families get assistance from outside agencies. My data revealed the same practice, that is, my KAP *helping families get services and assistance*. In some cases, parents of ELLs were referred to agencies outside of school. In other schools, principals (and sometimes professional staff) arranged for outside agencies to come to the schools to provide services to families and the community. Under the responsibility *Parents and Community*, my data revealed one KAP not found in the three frameworks, *understanding the challenges that parents of ELLs face*. My participants reported, and I concur, that this is an important part of serving as a principal of ELLs.

Having “the right people.” All three frameworks contain several elements that align with the responsibility *Having “The Right People”* and the KAPs associated with it. Two of my KAPs under this responsibility, *hiring and training excellent teachers* and *expecting staff members’ continuous professional development*, are found in all three of the frameworks I use for comparison. For example, Waters et al.’s (2003) BLF contained reference to teachers having knowledge of current theories, practices, and use of materials. It also mentioned the importance of intellectual stimulation (i.e., ongoing discussion of theories and practice by employees). Hamayan and Freeman’s (2006) framework stated that *all* instructional staff members need extended professional development to acquire the knowledge and skills to implement effective programs for ELLs. Riehl (2000) discussed restructuring schools to become professional learning communities to improve teacher quality and raise achievement.

Another KAP, *ensuring staff members have the right attitude* [for teaching ELLs], compares favorably to Riehl’s (2000) first task. This task, fostering new meaning construction about diversity among staff, implies that they need to have the right attitude for working with CLD students. Riehl’s task includes other components as well. I also find considerable overlap between my KAP *ensuring staff members have the right attitude* [for teaching ELLs] and numerous practices prescribed in Hamayan and Freeman’s guidebook (2006).

Finally, my KAP *Being the right leader for the school* shares similarities to elements in all three frameworks. Waters et al.’s framework (2003) included several practices that could make a principal the right leader for a school with a high population of ELLs: situational awareness, being flexible, being a change agent, and being an optimizer. Riehl (2000) described tasks for principals that are similar to my KAP *being the right leader for the*

school, but she took it to a deeper level. I agree with her suggestions, but recognize that what she recommends might be quite difficult to put into practice. For example, she described the need for principals to foster new meaning construction about diversity among various groups of people *and within themselves*. In this current study, one participant described such a change within himself and how he created a new personal understanding of diversity. This personal transformation, he reported, resulted in him having ideas about diversity that were different from the closed-minded and conservative ideas held by members of his family, the school community, and the community at large.

Finally, I found that the guiding practices in Hamayan and Freeman's edited guidebook (2006) align very well with the responsibility *Having "The Right People."* In fact, I think the goal of their book is exactly that, to help principals *become* "The Right People" for ELLs. The book discussed knowledge and skills, but went beyond the technical work of a school leader, discussing being an agent of change, introspection, advocacy and activism for ELLs. I will discuss this concept more in the section Inconsistencies and Concerns.

Language development. *Language development* is the final responsibility in my findings. All research participants in this current study stated in multiple ways that it was important for their ELLs to learn English. Indeed, two stated that it was their primary responsibility for their ELLs. The KAPs included in this final responsibility include: *providing good language role models; establishing ELD programs and professional development; providing practice, time, materials, space and teacher support; using the home language; and valuing students' cultures.* Hamayan and Freeman's (2006) guidebook contains much discussion of language development in ELLs at the K–12 level. Their book, a compilation of research and practices by 50+ scholars, is much more comprehensive than my

study. I found that their work includes most of the KAPs mentioned above and is consistent with most of my findings. However, I did not find my KAP *providing . . . space... [for ELLs]* in Hamayan and Freeman's (2006) guiding practices. It is understandable that students will have space, but one participant spoke at length about the *quality* of the space(s), describing the ESL classroom as literacy rich, equipped with the latest technology, decorated (inside the classroom and in the hallway) with realia from the students' home cultures, and inviting. I saw this area and concur that it is inviting, well equipped, and appealing academically and culturally. In addition, I saw the cafeteria where large flags hung, representing all of the countries from which the students' families came. He reported that he wanted these spaces and realia to send a message to the majority culture that "this is a diverse place," and a message to the ELLs that their culture is valued, they are welcomed, and the school is "their school."

Waters et al.'s (2003) framework contains many practices that would support a principal's desire to foster *Language Development* among ELLs. For example, my participants named several KAPS important for ELLs' *Language Development* that have similar (generically named) elements in Waters et al.'s framework. These include ensuring that teachers have professional development and materials; having knowledge of and involvement in designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices; and shielding instructional staff from things or issues that take them from their teaching. Similarly, Riehl's (2000) framework contains some generic elements (e.g., promoting specific practices and creating specific conditions within the school that address the needs of diverse students) akin to specific KAPS that my participants said contributes to ELLs' language development.

In the sections above I discussed my research findings and how they compare with research in three areas, leadership in general, leadership for diverse students, and leadership for ELLs. Next I will discuss inconsistencies and concerns, then some limitations of this study, and finally several implications of the findings.

Inconsistencies and Concerns

Although all participants reported engaging in many KAPS that might benefit ELLs, I found some inconsistencies in their remarks and reasons for concern. Riehl (2000) noted that inclusive practices must be grounded in equity and social justice. All of the participants in this current study spoke of giving their ELLs an equal opportunity. If, however, schools are not grounded in equity, I believe that an equal opportunity is not sufficient. For example, some participants said that the ELLs were “treated the same as everybody else.” If adequate attention is not paid to the language, academic, and sociocultural needs of ELLs, they are not given an equal opportunity nor are they treated equitably.

One participant stated that he understood that the parents of ELLs faced many challenges, but then remarked that he expected them to ascertain that their children did their homework. This could be impossible if the parents are not literate in English or work multiple jobs, for example. Hamayan and Freeman (2006) recommended integrating ELL families into the school. No participant of this study discussed the importance of integrating ELL families. This is an important omission, I believe. ELL families often do not participate in school events for many reasons. One research participant told staff members she was “sympathetic” to their anxiety over an increasing minority population. I think that the use of the word “sympathetic” to describe demographic changes in a community reinforces xenophobia and prejudice. Hamayan and Freeman’s work (2006) also discussed principals

being agents of change, engaging in introspection, and engaging in advocacy and activism for ELLs. I concur that these are important tasks for leaders. The data suggested that a few of my participants reported engaging in being agents of change and introspection, but they did not report engaging in advocacy or activism. Depending on the political environments in their communities, and their districts' policies about employees' political activities, it is possible that they did not feel they could engage in advocacy or activism, or could not tell me about it if they did. I do not have any data on this topic, but it could represent an avenue for further research.

Another participant had many Spanish-speaking staff members in the building but did not get interpreters for parent meetings if the *child* could interpret for the parent. Relying on children to translate for adults is a practice that can result in problems at home and for the school (Wong-Fillmore, 2000). I also found it disconcerting that no participant mentioned the legal mandates for translation and interpretation when practicable. All of the districts in the state in which I conducted this study have Internet access to TransAct, a service that provides NCLB parent notifications, plus general education and special education notifications, already translated into many languages. Because of this access to translated forms and notices, I expected to hear participants mention using TransAct. Only one participant did so, however.

Riehl discussed promotion of “transformative practice that explicitly seeks justice and social transformation” (2000, p. 65). Although most of my participants spoke of organizational conditions that they said they put in place to support their ELLs, they did not speak directly of transformative practice. However, several participants implied that transformation was indeed needed from the school level up to the level of the entire

community. I realize that working for social justice and transformation is very difficult, and the demands upon principals are immense. Still, I did not hear participants describe measures they could have taken to hasten a transformation, including transformations within their schools.

I have a few concerns with statements and omissions concerning *Language Development*. One concern rests with using the home language. Monica's practice of forbidding ELLs from using their L1 socially at school and telling parents to speak English at home is highly problematic. I found this practice contrary to the research in the fields of SLA and the education of CLD students. Abandoning the L1 can be a major detriment to the ELLs' academic progress (Valdés, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 2000). The L1 can be used to *help* students learn both the L2 (English) and build knowledge in the content areas (Cummins, 1994, 2006; Protheroe, 2011). Loss of the family language can have numerous additional undesirable consequences at school, at home, and in the community (Valdés, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 2000, 2006). I believe such practices are also antithetical to the KAP *valuing students' culture* and to other researchers' work on valuing diversity in schools (e.g., Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2001; Riehl, 2000). Restricting the home language is also contrary to empowering the community (Riehl, 2000) and to the empowerment of minority students (Cummins, 2001). These remarks are also inconsistent with Monica's own statements about respecting students and parents. Only one participant reported telling parents that they should continue using the home language. The other participants did not discuss recommendations for or against use of the home language by families. While several participants stated that Spanish was sometimes used for clarification, they did not state whether this was done orally

or in writing. According to Cummins (2006), using the written L1 can help students learn and remember new information, even when students are instructed in English.

Another concern about *Language Development* resulted from two participants' statements that they wanted the ELLs to learn English quickly. Research indicates that it takes many years, depending on numerous factors, for ELLs to acquire the type of language needed to succeed in school (e.g., Hakuta et al., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Valdés, 2001). Lack of knowledge about this key point in second language acquisition troubles me. According to Harper and de Jong (2004), misconceptions about teaching ELLs abound, even among well-intentioned educators. If principals do not have a deep understanding of how students develop a second language at school and knowledge of the appropriate pedagogy for ELLs, they cannot ascertain if teachers are adequately scaffolding language and learning (Gibbons, 2002, 2009), teaching for language and content (Zwiers, 2008), providing cognitively challenging learning experiences including literacy engagement (Cummins, 1994, 2011; Gibbons, 2009), providing opportunities for ELLs to engage orally with students and teachers about academic content (Cummins, 1994), and properly differentiating assignments and assessment based on the students' language proficiency (Hamayan, 2006). The negative outcomes for students, academically and emotionally, can be immense when teachers and administrators do not have the knowledge, skills, and willingness to engage in these and other differentiated practices for ELLs. Acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to teach ELLs the language they need in the content areas takes time and practice; it is more complex than most educators realize (Zwiers, 2008).

Two participants stated that they thought that the enactment of No Child Left Behind had a positive impact on ELLs because it made principals look carefully at the students'

progress. All participants discussed monitoring ELL's progress and using the State Standardized Assessment and other standardized tests for this purpose, as they are required to do by state (and federal) law. Two participants did not discuss using classroom assessment to make decisions about whether students needed interventions; they only discussed using state-mandated tests. These statements give me reason for concern. Menken (2008) and Crawford (2004) described numerous problems with the use of NCLB-mandated tests for ELLs and the manners in which schools use the data from them. I have found from my professional experience that the interventions implemented for students who do poorly on these standardized tests are often not designed for ELLs; therefore, ELLs do not benefit from the interventions as well as native English speakers. This is consistent with research by Harper and de Jong (2004).

Above I discussed some concerns I have about comments made by the research participants. Next, I will describe some of my own limitations with this study. Finally, I will discuss several implications of these research findings.

Limitations of the Study

I used qualitative methods for this research project. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to any larger population. In addition, I employed purposive sampling by using educators to nominate potential participants as *exemplary principals*. I defined *exemplary principals* as principals or assistant principals who the nominators believed did their work as principals well above that of other principals in their district or geographical region. I believe that the notion of exemplary varies by context, including the context of the principals and the nominators. I sought the nominations from a wide variety of educators, including but not limited to district ESL Coordinators, administrators, teachers, and

professors. Perhaps if I had taken nominations only from one of those groups, my results would have differed. In addition, other researchers might choose to use a different metric to define *exemplary principals*. Some may reject my use of the term altogether. Another limitation is that I was able to only contact three of my seven participants for member checking. Furthermore, I limited my definition of ELLs to those students who were in an ELD program at the time or who had exited ESL within two years from the time of the interviews, i.e., to students who were on their districts' ESL rosters. Clearly, students who have been out of ESL more than two years often continue to need scaffolding, support, and understanding, especially in the secondary grades. I did not ask my participants about their responsibilities for those students or for their bilingual students who never qualified for ESL, who also may need support.

Implications of the Findings

In this section I will discuss the implications of my findings. I have three sections. They are implications for principal preparation, implications for practice, and implications for research.

Implications for principal preparation. I believe that the findings of this study have several implications for *how* principals are prepared to lead ELLs. Comments made by some participants suggest that they need to learn more about SLA and leadership for ELLs. My findings concur with the research (see Davila, 2005) that suggests that principals and aspiring principals should receive continuing, accurate, and adequately deep information from current research about the complexities of educating linguistically diverse students. Educating principals about ELLs should occur in many places: in educational leadership programs at universities; in professional development workshops offered by districts, states, and

professional associations; in the professional journals and books aimed at principals; and also in the countless emerging learning opportunities made possible by rapidly changing technologies.

Implications for practice. Learning about second language acquisition is not sufficient, however. I strongly believe that principals must demonstrate the leadership practices that help their ELLs experience success in school and in the community. My literature review contains many suggestions for such leadership practices. My research findings contain another 22 Key Administrative Practices that principals might consider implementing, i.e., implications for practice. I arranged my implications for practice by listing them under the five responsibilities I discovered in my analysis. The responsibilities are arranged in descending order, from the most commonly stated to the least commonly stated responsibility. The first responsibility in my list, *Student Progress*, and the last responsibility I uncovered, *Language Development*, loosely fit under the heading of technical or administrative or procedural knowledge and practices. The middle three responsibilities are largely interpersonal and intrapersonal in nature. Implications for practice, therefore, fall under the same two general headings.

Student progress. As the instructional leaders of schools, I believe that principals are responsible for the learning of all of their students, including ELLs. My participants confirmed their belief in this statement. They said that their ELLs experienced success when they and everyone at school held high expectations for these students, articulated a vision for improved learning, and ensured that these students had equal access to the curriculum as the mainstream students have. My participants also stated that they were responsible for monitoring the ELLs' academic progress and ensuring that they received additional support

when needed. Most participants commented that it was important that ELLs do well on state- and district-mandated assessments. All of my participants stated that they shared decision-making at school with teachers and other staff members.

Relationships. This is the area where my findings deviated the most from the literature that I examined. All participants stated that ELLs needed to experience comfort and a sense of belonging. There had to be mutual trust and respect between the professional staff and the students. My participants spoke about the need to demonstrate compassion and let the students know that the teachers cared about them. Each principal spoke about needing to deal with the staff's (and sometimes the community's) closed-mindedness and lack of understanding about some differences between ELLs and mainstream students and between their parents. Some of these differences were due to cultural or linguistic differences, while others were due to some students' poverty.

Parents and community. Many researchers in educational leadership and in the area of culturally and linguistically diverse students discuss the importance of establishing good relationships between the school and parents. My results indicated this as well. Several discussed novel, vital ways in which they found services and assistance for their ELLs, their families, and sometimes members of the community that the reader might find helpful. One practice in which my participants engaged that I did not find in the literature was having an understanding of the many significant challenges that parents of ELLs often experience.

Having "the right people." My participants made comments that I anticipated about hiring and training excellent teachers and their expectation of continuous professional development on the part of their teachers. However, I found their commitment to ensuring that their staff members have the right attitude about working with ELLs unexpected and

novel. I also found these principals' commitment to their CLD students, their hard work, and their creative approaches to difficult problems in their schools very inspiring.

Language development. Some statements my participants made about ensuring the English language development of their ELLs are commonly found in the literature but deserve repeating: students need a good ELD program, good language role models, opportunities to practice their new language skills, time to learn the language, and teachers who receive continuous professional development in the area of SLA and related areas. They commented that teachers of ELLs need differentiated materials, time to learn the materials, and the principal's support in working with ELLs; the students need their home culture to be valued by the people at school. I have not heard or seen principals discuss these needs previously. Most participants also mentioned that teachers use the home language to clarify, if needed and if possible.

Implications for research. My research studied principals' *perceptions* of their responsibilities and practices related to ELLs. I think that studying what principals *do* for their ELLs would expand upon this project. Other researchers might wish to replicate the study in a different part of the country, or in schools that implement different ELD programs than the programs found in this project. Since my participants noted that *Fostering Relationships* with ELLs is an important responsibility but I did not find reference to this responsibility in the literature, further investigation of this topic might prove informative.

Because all of my participants discussed monitoring the progress of ELLs and this practice is also found in the extant literature, research studying the types of data collected on ELLs that principals employ when monitoring ELLs' progress would be informative. Researchers might also wish to investigate the types of support [often called *interventions*]

that principals and teachers recommend for ELLs if their review of student data suggests that extra support is warranted. In particular, researchers may investigate the data used to make these decisions and the interventions employed to determine their appropriateness for ELLS.

Although I did not focus on educational leadership for social justice and equity, I find the emerging literature on the topic worthy of note and of further attention. Studies from this critical perspective have been small in scope. Researchers may wish to study principals' practices for ELLs from an educational leadership for social justice and equity perspective (see, for example, Brooks et al., 2010). I believe that principals who hold this perspective may impact favorably not only ELLs, their families, and their communities, but students, families, and communities from the dominant culture(s) as well.

Conclusion

In this qualitative study I examined exemplary principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices related to ELLs and their ideas about what contributes to the academic success of ELLs. I interviewed seven principals in four districts who served in public schools with high populations of ELLs. Their students ranged from grades K–12. The research participants collectively had over 100 years of administrative experience. Using thematic analysis, I identified five major responsibilities for ELLs and 22 practices, i.e., the actions and manifestations of the responsibilities that I call Key Administrative Practices (KAPs).

The data revealed the following themes: *Student Progress*, *Fostering Relationships*, *Parents and Community*, *Having “The Right People,”* and *Language Development*. I compared these five responsibilities and the 22 KAPS associated with them to best practices and research in the literature. I drew upon scholarship in educational leadership, especially as

found in Waters et al. (2003), upon leadership for creating inclusive schools detailed in Riehl (2000), and upon leadership for ELLs as described in Hamayan and Freeman (2006). From this process, I uncovered many commonalities but also elements in the frameworks that were not found in my data.

My data revealed some unique elements. I discovered one responsibility, *Fostering Relationships*, that I did not find described in the literature in any significant detail. This theme referred to relationships between teachers and students, directly between the participants and their students, or both, depending on the participants. The key administrative practices that principals described when they spoke about *Fostering Relationships* were: (a) building comfort, respect, trust, and a sense of belonging; (b) motivating students and demonstrating care and compassion; (c) understanding and accepting differences; and (d) dealing with the closed-mindedness and lack of understanding of staff members. The KAP *understanding the challenges that parents of ELLs face* under the responsibility *Parents and Community* is also a new contribution to the literature, I believe. In addition, although I found a few references in the literature to teachers *having the right attitude* about working with ELLs, this KAP under my responsibility *Having "The Right People"* was particularly salient and also appears to be a responsibility valued by my research participants.

I also discussed concerns I had about statements made by a few of the research participants. These concerns lead me to believe that some principals need further education on educational leadership for ELLs. I commented on implications for principal practice and recommendations for further research as well.

In addition, I reviewed the extant literature in the areas of second language acquisition and educational leadership. For numerous and complex reasons discussed in

Chapters One and Two, ELLs are at greater risk for problems at school than their native English-speaking peers. For example, ELLs often have lower scores on standardized achievement tests, lower grade point averages, higher drop out rates, and are more frequently placed in grade levels below age-grade norms (August & Hakuta, 1997), and ELLs are disproportionately represented in special education (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; de Valenzuela, Copeland, Huaqing Qi, & Park, 2006a). I came to the conclusion that the education of ELLs, a fast-growing subpopulation of students found in cities, suburban areas, towns, and rural areas throughout this country (U.S. Department of Education, 2012b), is critically important.

I found encouragement from research suggesting that what principals do at school affects students, including their academic achievement, (e.g., Anderson, Leithwood, & Seashore Louis, 2012; Hamayan, & Freeman, 2006; Jason, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2005a; Meyers, 2006; Waters et al., 2003). I was deeply inspired by the statements made by the participants in this study as well. This research project discussed principals' practices that matter from the extant literature, from the research participants' statements about their responsibilities for ELLs, and from what they believed ELLs needed to succeed at school. We should continue to strive for understanding how educational leadership impacts students, especially our ELLs.

Appendices

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Appendix A

Nominators' Recommendations of Exemplary Principals

Number of the Nominator _____ Date _____

Dear _____:

Introduction

I am a doctoral student at the University of New Mexico. I am conducting my dissertation research on school principals' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices toward English language learners (ELLs) and their beliefs about what contributes to the academic success of ELLs. I am contacting you with the hope that you can help me locate a principal or principals who might be interested in allowing me to interview them.

In particular, I am interested in learning the names of persons whom you consider exemplary principals/assistant principals in schools with high populations of ELLs. Of course, providing names is completely voluntary and your identity and your institution will never be disclosed to the principals or in my dissertation. In addition, I will keep any information you provide me separate from your name in a locked cabinet. Any information you provide about principals will not be used in my research. My research participants will be the principals. However, you can play an important part in my study by nominating principals. If you provide me with a name or names of principals, I might contact them to see if they would be interested in being interviewed. The identity of the principals, their schools, and their districts will remain confidential in my study as well.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this request. Please contact

me at [my phone number] or by return email if you have any concerns or questions.

Sincerely yours,

Connie Yaqub

Nomination question

Consider for a moment all of the principals and assistant principals in [the eastern part of your state] whom you know who work in public, non-charter schools with a high population of English language learners. By that, I mean an ELL population that is at least 15%. The ELL population may consist of students with the same language, or there can be many languages represented in a school. Now, limit yourself to considering those principals who are experienced principals, say, those who have served for three or more years as administrators.

1. Whom among them do you consider an exemplary principal? If you have more than one in mind, I will take them one at a time:

Name of the principal _____, the school _____, and the district _____ where the principal works.

Contact information, if available, for nominated principal _____

2. Can you name any other experienced, exemplary principals in public, non- charter schools with high populations of ELLs? If so, please provide the same information for the new person(s). _____

Appendix B

Letter to Potential Participants

[My home address]

[My phone numbers]

[My email address]

INSERT DATE

Dear _____:

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of New Mexico in the Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies. I am conducting my dissertation research on exemplary principals in [participants' state], near where I now reside.

Another educator has nominated you as an **exemplary principal**. I am writing to ask if you would chat with me about your perceptions of your responsibilities and practices as a principal in a school with a high population of English language learners. Our conversation would occur at a place and time convenient to you, by phone, or by videoconference, if you prefer. I anticipate that our conversation would last about 1–1½ hours. After I analyze my notes, I would like to share with you my summary to give you the opportunity to correct any misunderstandings that I might have.

I hope that you will consent to be one of a small group of principals whom I will interview. Once my dissertation is published, other educational leaders can improve their practice by reading about your ideas. Of course, if you agree to let me interview you, your

identity and the identities of your school and community will never be disclosed. The identity of the person or persons who nominated you will remain confidential as well.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. You may also contact my dissertation supervisor, Prof. Julia Scherba de Valenzuela, University of New Mexico, [supervisor's phone number and email address], for any questions related to this study.

As a token of my appreciation for reading this letter and a symbol of my desire to have a leisurely professional conversation with you, I am enclosing a few bags of tea. I will be calling you within the next ten days to see if you would be willing to set up a time and place to chat with me.

Sincerely yours,

Connie Yaqub

Appendix C

Interview Protocol for Principals

Participant's name:

Participant's title, school, and mailing address:

Participant's email address:

Introductory questions: demographics

1. Tell me a bit about where your career as an educator has taken you (e.g., other positions held, in what locations, how long in this position).
2. Would you please describe the demographics of your student population?
3. Can you tell me anything more about your ELL students in particular?

Main questions:

1. Tell me about your responsibilities related to the ELLs in your school. Why do feel that these are your responsibilities? How important are these responsibilities to you?
2. If we were to break down the responsibilities that you just described into smaller units of action, which I call practices, describe the practices in which you engage that are related to ELLs. Can you give me examples? How important are these practices to you? Why?
3. What do you think contributes to the academic success of English language learners in your school? Can you give me examples of these? Please describe factors that may contribute to the success of some of your ELLs but not others. Can you provide examples? Why are these contributors for some but not others?

Confirmation questions:

1. I would like to summarize some of the things we've talked about today. Please interrupt me and correct me if I misunderstood something. I SUMMARIZE.
2. Is there anything else about your responsibilities and practices toward ELLs that you think I have missed?
3. What other thoughts do you have about what contributes to the academic success of ELLs?

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