BILINGUAL EDUCATION: SELECTED PRINCIPALS EXPERIENCES WITH PROGRAMS AT THEIR SCHOOLS

BY

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DISSESSATION

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Abstract

Principals in school districts throughout the United States have seen an increase in the number of English Language Learner (ELL) students entering their schools. ELL students continue to be the fastest growing student population in many school districts throughout the United States. This has a dramatic impact on the work of school principals in that, historically, ELL students have the highest high school dropout rates and have been consistently underperforming in terms of academic achievement. There currently exists a plethora of different ELL programs aimed at addressing the academic needs of ELL students. However, there exists little or no research on the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs.

This study examined the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs for their ELL student populations. More specifically, I examined the challenges and successes principals experienced with their bilingual educational programs. This study found that there are several factors that influence a principal’s experience with bilingual programs as well as multiple challenges as well. Furthermore, this study found that there is a tremendous amount of autonomy for principals in working with their bilingual educational programs. In order for principals to experience success with their bilingual educational programs they must adequately address their ELL student population’s needs. This can be accomplished by being aware of the research on bilingual programs. In addition, principals must address the deficit thinking that exists in their respective schools as it relates to their ELL students. Finally, principals must work hard to increase the level of parental involvement in their schools to adequately address and meet the needs of their ELL student populations.
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Chapter I
Introduction

In 2007 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that there are currently 55 million immigrants in the United States. They further found that many of these immigrants speak a language other than English in their homes. In other words, many of these immigrants are second language learners since English is not their native language. The children of these immigrants are present in our public educational systems throughout the United States. They often speak a language other than English, which makes them English language learners (ELL) since English is not their native language (Crawford, 2004). This growing population has had a significant impact on schools and school districts because of their academic struggles (Gandara & Baca, 2008). This then poses a significant problem for educators throughout the country given the high accountability measures of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the fact that ELL students have often historically been identified as struggling students (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003). Furthermore, educators and in particular school principals have to ardous task of ensuring that their instructional programs are adequately aimed at addressing the academic needs of ELL students; yet, very little if any, attention is given to the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs.

As a result of the ever-growing ELL population throughout the United States, it is of no surprise that educators and even legislators have debated and continue to discuss, how to help ELL students succeed. However, despite the continued growth in numbers, there are educators throughout the country that are unaware of or simply do not know which bilingual education program is best for ELL students (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Further, research varies in terms of the names and numbers of different bilingual educational programs that exist. There is also very
little, if any, research on educators’, more specifically, school principals’ experiences with bilingual educational programs and the challenges they face in meeting the needs of their ELL student populations.

The ELL student population is currently the fastest growing student population in the United States and as such warrants attention (Crawford, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2002). However, there are many people who do not believe that bilingual education should even be a topic of importance or discussion in the United States (Garcia & Bass, 2007). They believe that all students should simply speak English and that educators should not provide any native language support to ELL students (Garcia & Bass, 2007). However, it is important to provide native language support to the ever-growing ELL student population. According to Garcia and Bass (2007) native language support has been shown to improve second language acquisition and subsequently leads to more student academic success (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

It should be noted that many different terms are used in the research when referring to ELL students. Some of these terms include English Learners (EL), Emergent Bilinguals and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The terms all refer to bilingual students whose native language is not English and who subsequently have limited English skills. For purposes of consistency and clarity I will use the term ELL students when referring to students whose native language is not English. In 2000 there were 3.9 million students classified as limited-English-proficient (LEP), which is double what that number was just 10-years earlier in 1990 (Crawford, 2004). Of the new ELL student population, 38 percent are of Mexican descent and 20 percent are from other Latin American countries (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Thus, 58 percent of the classified ELL students are Spanish speaking.
In 2014, a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, found that in 2011-2012 the number of ELL students in the United States was estimated at 4.4 million students or 9.1 percent of the total student population in the United States. Their findings also showed that between 2002-2012 the ELL student population increased in all but 10 states in the United States. They further found that in 2011-2012, ELL students constituted 14.2 percent of the total public school enrollment in large cities with the percent of ELL students decreasing to 9.4 percent in large suburban areas. The percent decreases the further the public schools are from large urban areas.

Bilingual education is the term that is utilized when referencing programs that, to some degree, provide language support to students in their native language, although the bilingual educational programs themselves vary in how the support is actually provided to the students. In addition, implementing bilingual educational programs in the United States has been very difficult due to a number of factors, including politics, cultural differences and language differences to name just a few. Thomas and Collier (2002) projected that by 2030, 40 percent of our total student population will be comprised of ELL students. They went on to say that current bilingual educational programs under-educate ELL students. Thus, it is extremely important to identify the most effective bilingual educational program in order to improve the educational experience of our ever-growing ELL student population (Thomas & Collier, 2002). The growing ELL student population has subsequently become an even greater focus for school districts across the nation.

Statement of the Problem

As a school principal and former ELL student myself, I am aware of the importance of having a sound bilingual educational program for ELL students. All too often I have heard
statements from fellow educators saying that their ELL students are not making progress and they don’t know what to do. This is important so that as educators we are able to help students make academic progress. ELL students’ academic progress has been further highlighted by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) which now identifies ELL students as a subgroup for many districts and in all too many districts these students are not performing well academically. ELL students have often historically been identified as underperforming students with higher truancy problems, school disciplinary problems, lower levels of academic performance/achievement, and higher levels of dropout rates when compared to non-ELL students (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003).

Subsequently the type of bilingual program that a student is enrolled in not only has a significant influence on the learning outcomes of students, but also for their social and emotional well-being (Thomas & Collier, 2002; Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003). Thus, it is absolutely imperative that school principals, district administrators and all educators implement the most effective bilingual educational program for their ELL student populations. However, there currently exists very little if any research on the experiences of principals with bilingual programs. Thus, it is important to have an understanding as to the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs for their ELL students. Principals play an important role in their respective schools with all educational programs including bilingual educational programs and it is imperative to understand principals experiences with bilingual educational programs as they can impact the educational outcomes of students (Thomas & Collier, 2002). This research
was intended to shed some light on the experiences and challenges experienced by school principals with their respective bilingual educational programs. This understanding can in turn lead to a better understanding of bilingual educational programs, ways to address challenges faced by school principals and manners in which principals can improve upon their bilingual educational programs for their ELL students.

**Research Questions**

The guiding research question is how do school principals describe their experiences leading bilingual educational programs in their schools? To gain a better understanding of this research question, there were three sub-research questions that assisted in addressing the research question.

1. What factors do school principals take into consideration when making decisions about bilingual programs at their school?
2. What challenges do school principals face in the implementation of their selected bilingual education program?
3. What adaptations have been made and why as a result of their experiences with their bilingual educational program?

**Rationale**

In order to ensure that ELL students are academically successful, school leaders must explore a variety of educational programs that are available. School leaders can only do this by reviewing the research and becoming familiar with the benefits and challenges of each bilingual program available for ELL students. There cannot be a one-size fits all approach to ELL students as this can create a further widening academic gap between ELL and non-ELL students (Barker & Giles, 2002). There is research to suggest that school leaders can improve the instruction that
ELL students receive by making programmatic changes to how ELL students receive their instruction (Thomas & Collier, 2002; Gandara & Baca, 2008). However, these changes in and of themselves will not lead to changes in academic outcomes. The changes must be systemic and specifically geared towards the needs of individual schools (Thomas & Collier, 2002). One bilingual educational program may be appropriate for one school, but it may not be necessarily appropriate for a different school as each school has its own unique characteristics and student needs. So it is essential that school principals look at the needs of their respective ELL student population and appropriately implement bilingual educational programs based upon the needs of their students.

School principals face enormous pressures from their school districts, their states, and the federal government in ensuring that all students are academically successful. NCLB has made the challenge of working with ELL students more cumbersome in that their achievement is compared to their non-ELL counterparts’ academic achievement levels (Freeman, 2005). High stakes testing such as those mandated by NCLB and other increased accountability measures have led to many programmatic changes for ELL students in an effort to improve their academic proficiency (Gallagher, 2007). However, in many instances these changes have led to unintended consequences such as further isolating ELL students, implementing ineffective programs, or focusing on English-only instruction (Menken & Solora, 2014). This has led to further widening the academic achievement gap of ELL students (Gandara & Baca, 2008; Johnson, 2010). Menken & Solorza (2014) stated that NCLB is a restrictive language education policy that has led to many districts focusing on eliminating bilingual education programs and replacing them with English-only programs. So it is essential to understand principals experiences with bilingual educational programs.
Other researchers have also found that current language policies, such as English-only initiatives for ELL students, further perpetuate systems of social inequality and more specifically that some policy makers promote the interests of the dominant social groups (Johnson, 2009; Tollefson, 2012; Tollefson, 2006). In other words since the dominant language in this country is English there is a tendency for the dominant social groups to promote their language, in this case English. This however does not take into account the minoritized group’s (students from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds and/or students from low socio-economic status) own culture or language and has not been found to be the best way to promote student learning (Johnson, 2010). Unfortunately, several states have implemented English-only initiatives, including Arizona, California and Massachusetts.

Freire (1995) states that marginalized groups, including those who speak a different language, are often divided from the dominant group, and subsequently, are not treated as equals. This then further marginalizes and oppresses the minority groups. Other researchers suggest that bilingual educational programs are marginalized or unsupported due to other underlying issues of social control and cultural invasion (Olivos & Quintana de Valladolid, 2005). Thus, some programmatic changes intended to help ELL students such as English-only initiatives may simply be further marginalizing students.

Olivos and Quintana de Valladolid (2005) concluded that in many of our educational systems the disadvantaged students, in this case ELL students, are often blamed for their deficiencies. The fact that they are ELL students and not performing well academically is seen as their own fault and not as a fault of the educational system or structures currently in place. However, some argue that critical pedagogy would allow us to look beyond this by looking at our society to determine the true origins of the inequities that exist and ultimately allow us to
make the necessary changes to best serve students (Olivos & Quintana de Valladolid, 2005). Educators must look at all of the variables impacting ELL students to more adequately make programmatic instructional decisions for ELL students.

**Review of Literature**

The review of literature for this study focused on the empirical research on the variety of bilingual educational programs that exist, the levels of success of each program, the challenges of each program, and the prevalence of these programs in our educational system.

**Bilingual Education**

The scholarly literature on bilingual education is intended to provide a better understanding of the historical context surrounding bilingual education. Chapter two first explained some of the laws and historical facts related to bilingual education. This provided a better understanding of bilingual educational programs and current program structures. Bilingual education has been around for many years with some of the laws addressing specific needs of ELL students and citing requirements of school districts. This overview was intended to ensure a better understanding of the challenges facing many educators and educational institutions when implementing bilingual educational programs.

Secondly, the literature review provided a brief overview of scholarship related to language acquisition. Language acquisition is at the crux of the debate in bilingual education and subsequent bilingual educational programs. It offered a better understanding as to how the usage of one’s native language relates to second language acquisition. This is an important concept to understand in order to gain a better understanding of how different bilingual educational programs can help ELL students. Furthermore, I discussed the influence of a student’s culture/acculturation on language acquisition and bilingual education.
Finally, there is an overview of the major bilingual educational programs that exist in our educational system today. There are over 10-different types of bilingual educational programs throughout the United States with slight variations of these programs depending upon the state and school district (Thomas & Collier, 2002). I specifically focused on immersion bilingual programs, sheltered English instructional programs, ESL pull-out bilingual programs, transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, and dual language/two way immersion programs. I discussed the research related to each of the aforementioned types of bilingual educational programs, detailing some of their strengths and weaknesses. It should also be noted that in Illinois the state requires a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) for schools with less than 20 students of the same native language. However the TPI programs can follow the same types of programs indicated previously and as such they will not be discussed separately.

**Methodology**

For this study I used qualitative interviews to gain a better understanding of the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs. This study consisted of 8 interviews of school principals in northern Illinois school districts. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative interviews allow a researcher to gain a better understanding of the problem and responses to the research questions. The qualitative interviews provided general understandings of the experiences of school principals with their respective bilingual educational programs. Furthermore, these interviews provided further insight into the challenges school principals face in implementation of their bilingual educational programs as well as factors they take into consideration when making decisions about their bilingual educational programs.

**Participants**
This study used a reputational approach to recruit principals for this research study. I obtained a list of possible school principal participants from metropolitan Chicago superintendents as well as the Illinois Resource Center (IRC). The IRC is a non-profit agency that focuses specifically on linguistically and culturally diverse student populations. More specifically, it provides assistance and support to school principals who have ELL students. As such the IRC had knowledge of school principals who have bilingual educational programs in their schools. They received specific research criteria to identify potential school principals for this study. One of the criteria was that the school principal had to be familiar with and have a bilingual educational program in his/her respective school. Other criteria were awareness of other bilingual educational programs as well as the ability of the principal to identify their ELL student population. Once I obtained potential principal candidates I provided them with information regarding this study and invited them to participate in this study.

Limitations of this study

All studies have limitations and delimitations and this study is no different. The primary limitation of this study was the process employed to gather my data. This study only utilized interviews to gather data. This was then a qualitative study based on principals’ perceptions and self-reports. While qualitative research interviews were used as a primary form of gaining understandings on specific phenomena, for this study the method only provided some understanding and insight into the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs. It did not provide objective data as to the effectiveness of the principal’s selected bilingual educational program.

Statement of Significance
According to the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (2014) there are now more ELL students in our public educational system than there have ever been. There are ELL students across every state in the United States with more concentrated clusters in metropolitan areas including the Chicago area. School principals are responsible to ensure that ELL students are academically successful. This is of particular importance given the high accountability measures of NCLB for schools and school districts. Principals now more than ever need to ensure that all of their students are academically successful and historically ELL students were not. Thus, it is essential that principals have an understanding of the different types of bilingual educational programs that exist and the experiences of principals with said programs. The results of this study will hopefully provide school principals or district leaders with a better understanding of the experiences and the challenges/successes school principals face with bilingual educational programs.

School leaders and administrators face the mounting challenge of implementing programs to increase language proficiency as a result of the NCLB requirements that all students must be academically successful regardless of the students’ challenges and needs. Particularly, school principals encounter this arduous task on a daily basis as they attempt to ensure that all of their students are academically successful. In 2014, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) required that 100% of all students in a school or district meet the state of Illinois grade level expectations. For the first time many schools and school districts were faced with the possibility of not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) and many due to their ELL subgroup. As a result, both I and several of my colleagues were approached and asked to revisit our instructional bilingual programs to more adequately improve the language proficiency of our ELL students. However, there was very little if any, direction given to us as to what factors should be taken into
consideration when working with ELL students and subsequently their bilingual instructional program. As such, we, educational leaders, just as many educators throughout the United States, have to evaluate our instructional programs and determine what, if any, changes would increase the language proficiency of our ELL students. This is why it is important to know the types of ELL programs that are available as well as the challenges facing educators, central office administrators and school principals when working with bilingual educational programs to meet the need of ELL students.

This study helps to fill the void that currently exists in the literature on the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs. Most of the research has focused on the successes of specific programs, but not on the experiences of school leaders with those programs. School principals must make informed decisions as the consequences of not adequately implementing or adopting an effective bilingual instructional program can be detrimental to a school’s ability to make adequate yearly progress, to meet state & federal mandates and more importantly, to efforts to help students to be academically successful and subsequently the overall experiences of principals with the bilingual program. Furthermore, the findings of this study may assist policy makers in understanding the challenges that school principals face with bilingual educational programs as well as their experiences. This in turn may give them a better understanding of the impact of bilingual educational programs for students and school leaders.
Chapter II

Literature Review

In this chapter I provide an overview of the relevant research on English Language Learners (ELL) as well as the various types of instructional programs and approaches that have been used by educators when working with ELL students. This is important in order to gain a better understanding of the programs available to school principals. As noted earlier ELL students are also referred to in the literature as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and the term is synonymous with ELL.

English Language Learners are important for many educators as their number has grown substantially within public schools throughout the United States over the past several years. While the statistical data have varied about the large number of ELL students in the United States, one thing is certain and that is the number is substantial and it continues to grow. Recent estimations by Hussar, Planty, Snyder, Bianco, Fox, Frohlich, Kemp, and Drake (2010) noted that between 1979 and 2008 the number of school aged children who were designated as ELL students increased from 3.8 million to 10.9 million. This means that they account for 21 percent of the total student population in the United States. These authors further found that of the 10.9 million students, 2.7 million students spoke English with difficulty. Seventy-five percent of ELL students were native Spanish speaking students; of the remaining ELL student population, their data showed that 12 percent (311,000) students were Asian/Pacific Islander languages, 10 percent (279,000) spoke Indo-European languages and the remaining 3 percent (87,000) spoke another language. Their data also found that every state in the United States identified having ELL students. This means that educators throughout the country have ELL students and subsequently must develop plans and programs to effectively instruct ELL students.
Bilingual Education History

According to Montano, Ulanoff, Quintanar-Sarellana, and Aoki (2005) Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was intended to address the needs of ELL students and it was the first real recognition by the federal government of ELL students’ needs; however this law did not recommend any specific programs or requirements for schools with ELL students (Petrzela, 2010). It did, however, provide grants for educational agencies to develop and meet the needs of ELL students. It was not until the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968 when the nation first made a commitment to specifically address the needs of ELL students in its public schools (Petrzela, 2010). The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 recognized the growing number of ELL students in the public education system and required schools to address their linguistic needs. However, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 also did not require bilingual instruction or the use of a students' native language for instruction (Crawford, 2004).

In 1974 an amendment was made to BEA, which required local authorities receiving federal funding to follow a transitional bilingual education model (England, 2009). This meant that districts had to begin to use the native language of the ELL students in a separate instructional setting while they learned English. However, the amendment did not require school districts to implement any specific bilingual program of instruction and it did not provide any specific guidelines as to what bilingual education should look like or how it could or should be implemented by school districts.

Also in 1974, a court case, Lau v. Nichols, looked at the BEA and found that it did not adequately address the needs of all bilingual students. More specifically, in this case a public school system in San Francisco provided educational support for Spanish speaking students but not Chinese speaking students. The suit was brought to the United States Supreme Court and
they found that the school district was in direct violation of Title VII. Title VII requires a district to address language deficiencies. Unfortunately the case and the subsequent Supreme Court decision also did not provide any guidance as to what districts were required to do or how to address the language deficiencies of students (England, 2009).

The 1981 case of Castaneda v. Pickard was a suit against a school district in Texas alleging that the school district’s procedures and policies were discriminatory (England, 2009). The 1981 Castaneda v. Pickard case led to courts requiring school districts to design instructional programs that were based upon sound educational theories to produce positive academic results to eliminate achievement gaps between bilingual and English speaking students (Montano, Ulanoff, Quintanar-Sarellana, & Aoki, 2005). This case also neglected to provide specific guidelines as to what the instruction should look like or to specifically identify what constituted an appropriate educational theory, thus leaving school districts across the nation to implement bilingual programs based upon what they determined were sound educational theories. Again, this continued to lead to variability in bilingual programming (England, 2009).

It was not until 1994 when Congress extended the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 that academic standards, assistance to Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, the development of bilingual students, and multicultural understanding were added to the statute. In 2002 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was introduced and in essence it repealed the Bilingual Education Act (Crawford, 2004). Federal competitive grants for LEP programs were replaced by formula grants that were not administered by states. Under NCLB there are absolutely no references to bilingual education, although the law does require that all students and subgroups, including ELL students, meet or exceed academic standards at specific levels. In 2014 the academic level expected of all students to meet or exceed academic standards in Illinois was 100%.
So has there been any research on the impact of NCLB on bilingual education? The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) (2009) for the U.S. Department of Education’s International Research and Studies Program conducted research using a survey of principals, ELL teachers, and other educators throughout the United States. They found that educators reported that their bilingual instructional programs had been negatively affected by NCLB. The survey respondents suggested that as a result of NCLB’s emphasis and focus on mathematics and reading, instructional resources had been drawn away from their ELL programs because they were not explicitly included in the law’s accountability measures.

Menken and Solorza (2014) referred to NCLB as *No Child Left Bilingual*. Their research study focused primarily on the accountability measures of NCLB and their impact on New York City public schools. They found that NCLB results in restrictive language policies that have led to the decline of bilingual programs in New York City for the past decade. They further found that schools in New York City purposely eliminated bilingual educational programs in favor of English-only programs as a result of NCLBs high accountability measures. In the span of eight years (2002-2010) there was a significant drop of 17% in the number of bilingual educational programs while at the same time there was an increase of 17% of programs with a heavier emphasis on English-only instruction (Menken & Solorza, 2014).

Thus, although NCLB was supposed to raise the bar for all students, it has actually created more difficulties for school districts and ELL students throughout the United States by drawing resources away from these students and putting punitive measures in place for districts that do not meet the NCLB standards. In some cities as noted by Menken & Solorza (2014) there has even been a decline in the implementation of bilingual educational programs.

**Understanding Language Acquisition for ELL students**
In order to gain a better understanding of ELL students, we must first understand how students acquire language and develop proficiency. An ELL student’s language proficiency typically falls into two forms of proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummings, 1989). Cummings (1989) noted that many ELL students learn a sufficient amount of English to engage in some form of social communication in a short period of time, 2-3 years; however, that they struggle with academic language that he found typically takes double the amount of time, 5-7, years to acquire. In other words BICS is the social/conversational language used by students for simple communication. ELL students typically utilize this social language as they develop English proficiency. Cummings (1989) refers to students’ native language (acquired first) as L1 and English or the second language as L2. Thus, although students may appear to be becoming proficient in English (L2 is referred to in the literature as an ELL students non-native language) they may only be making these gains on their BICS language not on their CALP. This subsequently causes ELL students to struggle academically as academic language is very different from social language. So determining a student’s language proficiency by simply using a social language assessment poses a problem as the outcome would not be an accurate assessment of the student’s academic abilities nor their actual academic language proficiency.

At times, ELL students may be identified as having learning disabilities, since on the surface they appear to be language proficient but the reality is that their proficiency is merely social language and thus they may struggle academically. As a result of this possibility new rules have been implemented under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that now require educators to rule out language as a possibility for the student’s academic difficulties. This came about because ELL students were being qualified for special education services when in reality
they were simply adapting to a new language and new curriculum (McCardle, Mele-McCarthy, & Leos, 2005).

In an effort to address some of the language proficiency issues and to make language attainment clearer for educators, the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) (2007) consortium developed English language proficiency standards for ELL students. There are currently 22 states that now make up the WIDA consortium including the state of Illinois. WIDA has developed five English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards used to determine language proficiency and they are:

- ELL students communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting. (Social and instructional language)
- English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.
- English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.
- English language learners communicate ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.
- English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.

WIDA (2007) has also developed what they have identified as CAN DO descriptors for the different types of English language proficiency for all grades from pre-kindergarten through high school. They developed five different types of levels of proficiency: Level 1: Entering, Level 2: Beginning, Level 3: Developing, Level 4: Expanding and Level 5: Bridging. The CAN DO descriptors provide descriptions as to what a student is capable of understanding in each of
the different types of levels in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. WIDA also indicates that in order for a student to move up in the levels to gain the highest language proficiency of bridging that instructional and linguistic support must be provided. Bridging means that the child is bridging his L1 (native language) and L2 (English non-native language) languages. In other words, in a public educational system, we must establish bilingual programs that provide adequate and appropriate language support.

**Understanding Bilingual Education**

In order to understand the different bilingual programs we must first identify the types of bilingual educational programs that exist with regards to language acquisition. As noted earlier, here, I will specifically focus on immersion bilingual programs, sheltered English instructional programs, ESL pullout bilingual programs, transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, and dual language/two way immersion programs.

All of the above programs can be identified as falling into one of three types of programs with regards to language acquisition and their emphasis on using a student's native language. Hornberger (1991) identified three types of bilingual programs with regards to language acquisition -- the transitional bilingual education model, the maintenance model, and the enrichment model. He identified the transitional bilingual program of instruction as the model that puts emphasize on the secondary language (L2), cultural assimilation, and social incorporation. The maintenance model he identifies as being the model that puts emphasis on the student’s native language (L1), strengthens the student’s cultural identity, and affirms the student’s sense of rights. Finally, he states that the enrichment model of bilingual instruction includes programs that promote the native language, cultural pluralism, and social autonomy.
Researchers have noted that using a student’s native language in formal instruction has many positive outcomes; however, each program utilizes native language in a different manner (Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1998; Krashen, 1996). Below are the most commonly used forms of bilingual education programs throughout the United States, according to a recent report by Education Week (2009). I will describe some of these programs in greater detail when discussing the bilingual programs most prevalent in Illinois. These different models vary depending on the state and in terms of understanding by school administrators and educators about how to work with ELL students. The number in parenthesis indicates the number of states with the identified program:

- Content-based ESL (43)
- Pull-out ESL (42)
- Sheltered English Instruction (39)
- Structured English Instruction (32)
- Dual Language (31)
- Transitional bilingual (28)
- Two-way immersion (23)
- Specifically designed academic instruction in English (18)
- Heritage language (16)
- Developmental bilingual (15)

In the state of Illinois, the school code requires that school districts provide one of the two following types of educational programs for all K-12 LEP students; Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program and/or a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) program. The TBE program must be offered by a school district whenever there are more than 20 LEP students of
the same native language enrolled in one school. The TPI program is provided whenever there are fewer than 20 LEP students of the same native language enrolled in one school. In Illinois, the Illinois Resource Center (IRC) has identified the most dominant programs in Illinois for bilingual instruction as the Full immersion bilingual programs, sheltered English instruction (SEI), ESL pull-out bilingual programs, transitional bilingual educational programs, and dual language/two-way immersion bilingual programs. Each of these programs is available and utilized by districts throughout Illinois and the United States.

**Cultural Impact**

Culture also plays an important role in an ELL students' ability to become academically successful with their language acquisition (Burdwich-Will & Gomez, 2006; Collier, 1987). We will now look at the influence of culture and acculturation on ELL students. Collier (1987) specifically studied the impact of acculturation on linguistically and culturally diverse students. Her study consisted of 95 Hispanic students identified as ELL students. She found that there was a significant relationship with the language attainment of students and the proficiency of both languages to the acculturation of the students and their subsequent academic success. In other words the more language proficiency the students obtained in both languages the more likely they were to acculturate to the United States and experience academic success in school. She also found that the longer ELL students were enrolled in bilingual programs the more likely they were to be successful academically. Her research also found that if students did not acculturate or gain language proficiency that they were more likely to be considered at-risk and referred to special education.

The term acculturation refers to the processes that result in population-level changes that are due to contact with other cultures (Berry & Kim, 1988). More so, acculturation is also the
extent to which immigrants maintain their original native culture and language. Assimilation conversely, is the extent to which immigrants adopt the culture of the host country; English-only initiatives are a type of assimilation (Berry & Kim, 1988). Psychological acculturation refers to the process where individuals change, both by being influenced by contact with another culture and by being participants in the general acculturative changes underway in their own culture (Graves, 1967). Some immigrants, however, make an easier and/or more complete transition (psychological acculturation) than others. Berry and Kim (1988) noted that there are many different psychological characteristics that people may bring to the acculturation process. They noticed that there might be other factors that have an influence on the acculturation process, one of these being public education. This is important to understand, because as was noted earlier; many of our ELL students are immigrants or children of immigrants.

There have been many studies done on the immigrant population. Much of the research done on this population has focused on acculturation and its influence on everyday life. For example, acculturation has become an important variable because of its contribution toward understanding and evaluating mental health status’, cognitive and personality development, and the educational functioning of individuals (Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991). Valencia, Handerson, and Rankin (1985) have found that acculturation is a variable that can help predict intelligence in immigrant populations; their study focused specifically on the Hispanic population. They also found that the level of acculturation has a direct influence on academic achievement. Furthermore, the level of acculturation has been identified as a significant variable in the study of some social, medical, and health related problems, including, alcoholism, cigarette smoking, and drug abuse (Marin & VanOss-Marin, 1991). Acculturation has also been used to explain different parental beliefs about children. Gutierrez, Sameroff, and Karrer (1988)
tested the different concepts of child development about children in Mexican-American parents. They found that acculturation is an important and contributing variable to the way mothers explain the developmental process of their children. So how does this relate to bilingual education and language acquisition?

Malarz (1998) asserts that in many respects second language acquisition or bilingual education parallels the process of acculturation. She noted that there are five stages to acculturation, and that these stages have a direct impact on an ELL student’s language acquisition. She noted that if a student’s new culture is almost inaccessible that their frustration will be constant and as such language acquisition would be very difficult to master (stage 1). She then goes on to say that if a student’s new culture is functionally understood that language acquisition begins to make communicative sense to a student (stage 2). If the culture is adaptable and blending of cultures takes place, then a student is able to build literacy in their native language (L1) and subsequently literacy begins to develop in the second language (L2), stage 3. In stage 4 of acculturation the student’s life becomes more bicultural and language proficiency begins in both languages. Finally, in stage 5 of acculturation, the student becomes comfortable with the second culture but still values his or her own culture and subsequently language acquisition in the second language becomes equally dominant and proficient.

Thus, acculturation has been shown to be an important factor in the language acquisition of students. In public education this suggests that students should be instructed in their native language (L1) while receiving exposure to the second language (L2). However, this is not happening due to the many changes necessitated by NCLB. Many schools have gone away from providing native language support and are only providing English instruction, which creates cognitive dissonance and thus does not allow a student to adequately acculturate which in turn
may have a negative impact on language acquisition (Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991). This will inevitably lead to academic struggles as well as social struggles (acculturation) for ELL students. It is then of the utmost importance that educators take into account native language instruction and the acculturation process.

Hamers and Blanc (1998) noted that the relationship between bilingual education/language acquisition and cultural identity is reciprocal, in other words bilingualism or the ability to acquire a second language influences the development of culture, which subsequently influences the development of second language acquisition. According to Ovado, Collier and Combs (2003) bilingual programs, if the native language (L1) is valued and supported, can be significant in the development of a positive self-identity for students and also provides students with a sense of empowerment which will lead to positive cultural experience. However, since the inception of NCLB focusing on a student's culture and subsequent language acquisition has become a much more daunting task given the emphasis on English assessments and accountability leading to the loss of native language support and cultural support in many schools (Burdwich-Will & Gomez, 2006; Collier, 1987). We will now look at the different types of bilingual programs and their use of native language as well as their emphasis (or lack thereof) of a student’s culture.

**Immersion Bilingual Programs**

Immersion programs of instruction, also known as English immersion, provide 90-100 percent of instruction in the L2 language and not in the student’s L1 language. In this model, the students receive the majority of their instruction in English-only. This type of program is frequently referred to as the “sink” or “swim” model of bilingual education. The students will either be successful or “swim” or they will struggle and “sink.” There currently exist many
proponents of this model as they feel that this bilingual model will lead ELL students to learn English more rapidly than in any other forms of bilingual programs. The research on English immersion is very clear in that it does not improve bilingual education for ELL students in that it emphasizes English instruction only with little to no native language support for ELL students. Mitchell (2005) goes on to say that English-only programs in schools are predestined to fail. She goes on to say that English immersion models assume that students will somehow “magically” create avenues for successful acquisition of English while at the same time maintaining grade-level achievement, she further states that this is simply not possible and subsequently English-only or immersion programs do not work for ELL students.

Johnson (2010) stated that recent legislation continues to lead a movement away from bilingual education in pursuit of the English-only pedagogical approaches or immersion models for bilingual instruction. He went on to say that throughout the history of the United States, federal language policy development has lead to the promotion of monolingual educational instruction in attempting to eradicate multilingual education (Johnson, 2010). This in essence means that students throughout the United States have gradually lost native language (L1) support.

As was mentioned earlier, NCLB as a policy has led to many changes in bilingual educational programs. Gallagher (2007) has argued that the current high-stakes testing such as NCLB mandates for educational reform is wrong and that it has led to unintended consequences. These unintended consequences include watered-down curriculum, alienation amongst teachers, student apathy and disengagement, public mistrust, emphasis on raising test scores even at the expense of meaningful learning, and kids being pushed out at key testing moments. Furthermore, in 2002 the Bilingual Education Act was changed into the English Language
Acquisition (ELA) Act as a part of NCLB. ELA helped change the focus and funding in favor of programs emphasizing English (Mitchell, 2005). Mitchell (2005) noted that while ELA did not explicitly stipulate that English must be taught to ELL students it did indirectly change the manner in which districts taught ELL students. This has been the case for districts across the nation as more and more districts have moved to implement English immersion models (Gallagher, 2007). Some educators throughout the country feel that ELL students must acquire English quickly to be able to participate in high-stakes testing brought upon by NCLB since the tests/assessments are all administered in English.

In 1998, California voters unanimously approved the initiative called *English for the Children*, or, Proposition 227 (Gandara & Baca, 2008). The legislation was authored by a businessman, Ron Unz, and an elementary school teacher, Gloria Matta Tuchman. The actual preamble for Proposition 227 stated the following: *The public Schools of California currently do a poor job of educating immigrant children, wasting financial resources on costly experimental language programs whose failure over the past two decades is demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children.* In essence, Proposition 227 mandated a full English immersion model of bilingual education for ELL students. This meant that ELL students would receive only English instruction with absolutely no native language support. The plan was designed to implement an English-only ideology and to do away with the use of any other languages as a means of instruction in public schools throughout California. It also provided a provision that was not widely publicized that allowed parents to sue teachers and school administrators if they were to utilize any other languages while providing instruction (Montano, Ulanoff, Quintanar-Sarellana, & Aoki, 2005).
California’s Proposition 227 approach to bilingual education has not had a positive impact on bilingual students with most students struggling more than ever before, both academically and socially, and still not acquiring the English language any faster than in a traditional TBE program (Montano, Ulanoff, Quintanar-Sarellana, & Aoki, 2005). Many opponents of Proposition 227 believe that the proposition has failed to appropriately integrate students from different backgrounds and who speak a different language, that it has failed to improve the overall quality of education for minoritized students, and that it will have negative long-term effects on students. In 2007, almost 10-years after Proposition 227 became law, nearly three times as many sixth grade ELL students scored below their monolingual counterparts with only 20% of the ELL sixth grade students having met the state expectations (Gandara & Baca, 2008). This compares to 29% of sixth grade students having met the expectations prior to Proposition 227 (Gandara & Baca, 2008).

California’s Proposition 227 was more of a political decision by state legislators than it was an educational reform movement. This law was passed around the same time as there were heated conversations about immigration. Although Proposition 227 is still a law in California, it has undergone some drastic changes and California has begun to implement more traditional bilingual educational programs (Montano, Ulanoff, Quintanar-Sarellana, & Aoki, 2005).

Another immersion model of instruction that has impacted ELL students is Massachusetts Question 2 Mandate (Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008). Before 2002, Massachusetts public school systems had implemented traditional bilingual programs, most notably Transitional Bilingual Educational (TBE) programs. In 2002, just four years after proposition 227 in California, state policy makers, educational leaders, and businessmen raised significant concerns regarding the academic achievement levels of ELL students. Furthermore, they were concerned
with the amount of time it took students to acquire English. Families were also concerned that their children were not making academic progress. So in the winter of 2002, Massachusetts approved a new law referred to as Question 2, which legally mandated an explicit move away from TBE programs to what they referred to as Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) as the main form of instructional practice for ELL students. In essence, Question 2 created an English-only policy for public schools in Massachusetts for all ELL students (Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008).

Smith, Coggins, and Cardoso (2008) also conducted research to determine if ELL students had, in fact, made academic gains since the implementation of Question 2 and SEI for all ELL students. They found that five years after the implementation of the Question 2 legislation ELL students were still not performing commensurate with their non-ELL counterparts. Specifically, they found that the achievement levels of ELL students in Massachusetts were consistently lower than native English speaking students on all academic measures. They concluded that Question 2 had failed to adequately serve the needs of their ELL student populations. Furthermore, they found that Question 2 provided ambiguity in terms of the type of instruction that should take place and as a result, the law was implemented differently in various districts. This factor made it difficult to determine why some Massachusetts school districts showed some minor gains while others showed an even lower achievement level for ELL students than before Question 2.

Researchers have shown that ELL students who are given the opportunity to develop and maintain their respective home languages in school will actually outperform their peers who are enrolled in English-only academic programs (Baker, 2011; Krashen & McField, 2005; Menken & Solorza, 2014). They assert that if students do not receive home language support in their
respective schools that over time these students will begin to show a decline in their academic performance and success in school (Baker, 2011; Cummins, 2000; Menken & Solorza, 2014).

**Sheltered English Instruction**

SEI was first introduced as a means of teaching English to non-native English speakers (Clark, 2009). Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) is also a form of an immersion program with the exception that there may be some minimal L1 (native language) support provided either in a pullout model or a co-taught model by a certified bilingual teacher and there is some additional English language instruction or support. This is currently the third most widely used type of program in the United States. In this program L2 (secondary language/English) is the primary language of instruction with minimal L1 support that in many instances may only be provided by visual supports such as vocabulary supports, graphic organizers, and simplified language objectives. However, these visuals may not be in a students L1 language and may only be in the L2 language. Thus, this provides very little or no L1 support to ELL students. This model, SEI, has been growing in popularity due to changes in state laws such as in Arizona, California, and Massachusetts. This is the case because of the NCLB requirement and the basic premise of SEI that students must learn English as soon as possible since there is little to no native language support for ELL students.

However, SEI has had many different definitions, applications, and instructional approaches (Clark, 2009). Some SEI programs provide minimal L1 support while other so-called SEI programs provide no L1 support. These variances in the program have caused many SEI programs to be ineffective and have actually caused ELL students to fall further behind academically. More recent research has suggested that in order to have an effective SEI program the following components have to be in place (Clark, 2009):
• Significant amounts of the school day are dedicated to explicit instruction around L2 (second language) and subsequently the students must be grouped for this instruction according to their specific level of English proficiency.

• The English language is the primary content of SEI instruction.

• Teachers and students should be expected to read, write, and speak in English.

• Teachers should utilize instructional methodologies that treat English as a foreign language.

• Students must be taught discrete English grammar skills.

• Rigorous time lines must be created for students to exit from the program.

The problem with these recommendations is that none of them highlight the importance of focusing on the student’s native language (L1) but rather claim that the student’s L1 may actually hinder English (L2) acquisition. Some researchers have argued that this approach, as with all immersion programs, is experimental, culturally insensitive, damages students’ self-esteem, and some have argued that it may even be illegal (Adams, 2005; Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra, & Jimenez, 2005). Burdick-Will and Gomez (2006) also found that immersion models (full immersion, ESL, & SEI) promote assimilation and not multiculturalism. Thus, these models do not take into account the students’ culture or socially lived experiences.

Politics: The influence on Immersion programs

Immersion bilingual programs have been greatly influenced by a myriad of political factors that have increased their popularity. Edleman (1988) stated that American politics have become detached from their democratic foundations. She further found that these educational policies directly reflect the politics of the times and as such illustrate, at any particular time and place, the groups that have more power to influence the state and the subsequent allocations of
values. Smith (2004) also found that educational policies serve the special interests of the few. He further stated that these policies create further segregation and “hide behind a mask of common sense and the common good.” (p. 37).

Policies and American politics have definitely had an influence on bilingual educational programs throughout the United States (Johnson, 2010). There have been numerous changes made to bilingual educational programs due to politics and public sentiment. This has typically taken the form of advocating for English-only education (Garcia & Baca, 2008). In 1915, Theodore Roosevelt stated, “Any man who comes here must adopt the native tongue of our people. It would be a crime to perpetuate differences in language in this country” (Mitchell, 2005). This sentiment is definitely evident in California’s Proposition 227 and Massachusetts Question 2 legislation in that they mandated English-only education for ELL students.

Johnson (2010) argues that current language policies of English-only initiatives are too restrictive and, as such, threaten bilingual education. He believes that these policies will eventually eliminate bilingual education and propagate English-only instructional approaches with ELL students. He went on to say that public policies such as NCLB have reshaped bilingual education by implementing testing requirements that encourage educators to focus exclusively on English with ELL students. He posits that NCLB has, in a sense, restricted and necessitated changes to bilingual education.

According to Garcia and Bass (2007), immigration is at the core of much of the public policy debate on bilingual education. This is due to the fact that immigrants have a tremendous impact on our American culture. According to these researchers, language and immigrant influence are the primary political concerns as they relate to America’s attitudes towards illegal immigrants. Furthermore, they found that there are many that feel that public tax money should
not be used to teach immigrants in their own native language. Their research found that there has been an increase of anti-immigrant and English-only sentiments in public education throughout the United States. Garcia and Bass (2007) have argued that the issue of language policy, public education, and immigration efforts are reciprocal, as one has a direct correlation with the other.

California shows this progression of politics to public education with its numerous propositions. In 1986, Proposition 63 made English the official language of California, and then in 1994, Proposition 187 temporarily stopped public benefits received by illegal immigrants (this was later overturned by the state’s Supreme Court). In 1997, Proposition 209 officially ended affirmative action, and in 1998, Proposition 227 ended native language supports in public schools emphasizing English-only programs.

California and Massachusetts are not alone in their efforts to implement English-only policies in public education and more specifically, for English Language Learners. Barker and Giles (2002) found that although English-only legislation at the national level typically fails, there have been numerous attempts via bills and legislation to implement English-only bilingual education. Crawford (2004) noted that there were then 23 states that had declared English as the official language of their state. According to Barker and Giles (2002), English-only initiatives are typically concerns shared by largely white, middle-class individuals to perpetuate their position relative to other ethnic groups. According to Garcia and Bass (2007), people with lower social and economic status are less likely to agree with increased levels of immigration, and thus, would support public policy that does not favor immigrants and their children. This is because typically, low-wage/low-skill workers sometimes compete with immigrants for jobs in our economy. Conversely, Garcia and Bass (2007) also found that the higher educated individuals
with higher incomes and higher status jobs are more likely to have positive attitudes toward immigrants.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has also been viewed by many as a way of perpetuating a white political agenda given its numerous negative impacts on marginalized schools and school districts. According to Leonardo (2007), NCLB is an “act of whiteness” and perpetuates “whiteness as a system of privilege” (p. 261). He asserts that NCLB should actually be an acronym for “No Caucasian Left Behind” (p. 267). NCLB, according to Leonardo (2007), strengthens and solidifies whiteness. Specifically, he found that many of the educators and public educational systems being punished by the sanctions of NCLB are being impacted by an unspoken bias towards whiteness. This is demonstrated by the fact that many of the affected schools and districts have higher numbers of minoritized groups of students (students of color and students from families/backgrounds whose culture and language is different from their white peers). He declared that NCLB was “the educational cognate of the Patriot Act” and thus it was intended to put emphasis on nationhood and Americanism (p. 268). Other researchers have stated that educational reform movements such as English-only initiatives are not trying to close the “achievement gap” but rather that they become an “achievement trap” trying to integrate communities of color into our ‘mainstream’ society (Olivos & Quintana de Valladolid, 2005, p. 286).

Others have also found that NCLB has, in essence, targeted the following four minoritized subgroups in public education: students with disabilities, minority students, students from low socioeconomic homes, and ELL students. They argue that NCLB was supposed to eliminate the color lines that currently exist, but rather than eliminating them, it has actually simply changed the lines (Freeman, 2005). In other words, it has simply put the focus on other
students, such as ELL students, and has made their academic experience more difficult. Leonardo (2007) goes on to say that NCLB does not address the numerous external variables that impact children of color or other marginalized groups such as family situations, labor market discrimination, and community conditions. While NCLB acknowledges that there is a disparity between the achievement of students of color and white students, it does not address the problems that create these differences. It actually further exacerbates the problem by implementing punitive measures on schools that are not making adequate yearly progress. Finally, Kohn (2004) indicated that NCLB is a ‘clever’ gambit that has in essence forced educators and families to either be against public schools or face mediocrity. He affirms that NCLB was intended to make public schools seem as they are all failing, and thus, necessitate parents to want private or charter school for their children, as they would simply be in a mediocre school if they remain in public schools.

In terms of bilingual education, NCLB has had a negative impact on the educational experiences of ELL students by leading many public school officials into implementing immersion programs to further increase English language proficiency (Gallagher, 2007), but negate the importance of the students home language. NCLB only recognizes formal standardized assessments given to all students, and makes no linguistic modifications for ELL students. Thus, all students must take their state accountability assessments in English and their assessment results have a direct impact on a school with regards to their level of achievement. This has put the emphasis on English-only instruction, which has minimized the amount of instruction taking place in the child’s native language. While there are other forms of assessment for ELL students such as the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) test, it only assesses proficiency in English and as such, has no bearing on
making adequate year progress. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) began using the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment to gauge a student’s academic proficiency during the 2015 academic year, and it too was administered in English, even to ELL students.

**ESL Pullout Programs**

Another program model that exists in Illinois and throughout the country is English as a Second Language (ESL) pull-out instructional programs. These are instructional programs in which ELL students receive 90-100 percent of their academic instruction in English through academic pull-out support by a certified ESL teacher or bilingual teacher. In this type of program, the child’s primary teacher is a non-ELL certified teacher, however, support is provided by an ELL teacher - typically in another classroom or setting. In this program, students are primarily receiving L2 support with very little L1 support and in some instances no L1 support at all (Harper, de Jong, & Platt, 2008). This, in essence, is another form of an immersion model; however, there is very little L1 support in this model, as opposed to no L1 support in a full immersion bilingual program of instruction. This type of program, similar to full immersion programs, has proven to be unsuccessful, especially since students spend the majority of their time in school listening to others who similarly do not speak fluent English. Thomas and Collier (2002) concluded in a national study that ESL pull-out programs were the least successful programs for ELL students. They found that in early grade levels (K-2) students performed commensurate with students in other types of bilingual programs, but this immediately changed in intermediate grades in which students still receiving ESL pull-out support actually showed a higher rate of academic decline when compared to students in other bilingual programs. The
English that they were learning seemed to be confined to conversational English and not to academic fluency.

**Transitional Bilingual Educational Programs**

Transitional Bilingual Educational (TBE) programs are leveled programs in which the initial instruction that is provided varies in terms of the L1 (native language) and L2 (secondary language) language allocations. Initially, between 10-50 percent of the instruction is provided in the child’s L1 with the remaining percentage of instruction provided in the secondary language L2. Academic instruction in a TBE model is provided by an ESL certified teacher or a bilingual teacher. This type of program is also often referred to as a self-contained TBE bilingual program, as the students are with other bilingual students for the entire day, with perhaps some instruction provided by other non-ELL certified teachers such as an art, music, or physical education teacher. This is currently the most common type of bilingual educational program used throughout the United States (Hornberger, 1991; Genessee, 1999). August and Hakuta (1997) also found that as many as fifty percent of all ELL students are in some form of transitional bilingual educational type of program. It should be noted that there are two forms of TBE programs, an early-exit TBE program and late-exit TBE program (Ramirez, 1992). In an early-exit TBE program, the student is exited at a rapid pace to instruction in English, however, there is still initial instruction in L1. A late-exit TBE program is a program in which the transition is more gradual, and, in many instances, can take years before the student’s instruction moves entirely to English.

In both types of TBE programs, students are first allowed to build a foundation in their native language (L1) by providing their literacy instruction in the students’ L1 language as well as most of the content areas (math, science, and social studies) of instruction (Saunders, 1999).
Depending upon the school and school district, once the students have acquired a certain level of academic proficiency in L1 along with some oral listening and comprehension skills in English, they make the transition to English. Thus, from that point forward, the students begin to receive their literacy instruction, as well as core academic content areas in all English instruction. This transition is different for every student and can happen at any grade level as it is individualized. In essence, you can have a student who makes the transition in one year, while others that take several years to make this transition to all English instruction.

Many opponents of TBE believe that TBE is not an adequate means of providing instruction to students as it is arbitrary and students gain different levels of proficiency at different times (Rossell & Baker, 1996). Rossell and Baker (1996) concluded that TBE does not provide a sufficient amount of early and intensive exposure to English. They based their information by comparing students in TBE programs to students in immersion programs and found that overall, students in an immersion program achieved academic success at a faster rate than students in a TBE program, albeit, both programs were still considered unsuccessful. Many educators throughout the United States also believe that TBE programs do not provide a sufficient amount of exposure to L2 and as a result, believe that ELL students do not achieve as well academically as they potentially could (Saunders, 1999). Villarreal (1999) also found that transitional bilingual education programs are often segregated and anemic. She stated that these programs have historically operated in isolation, have lacked public and administrative support, and have typically had poor instructional practices. Thus, school principals must be aware of these findings when considering a TBE program for their school.

Additional concerns related to TBE have also been identified by other researchers. The first has to do with the transition itself; if the transition happens too abruptly, the achievement of
ELL students will actually remain stagnant or may actually decrease. Ramirez (1992) found that students in TBE programs who were prematurely transitioned into English programs had a much slower rate of academic growth in English literacy and mathematics when compared with students who were gradually transitioned and continued to receive some instruction in their L1. Secondly, researchers have found that even in gradual TBE programs there is an inevitable, but short-lived, academic decline in ELL students when they first make the transition to English. This has been seen as a negative of TBE programs, but it is to be expected and should not be a major cause for concern (Saunders, 1999). Finally, Gersten and Woodward (1994) found that most teachers who teach in a TBE program are uncertain as to what the appropriate instructional methods of instruction should be when working with ELL students. They further found that teachers who teach in a TBE program are typically the less experienced teachers and indicated that this may account for some of the lower academic levels of ELL students. These are all important factors that educational leaders and administrators must take into account when determining which type of bilingual program they will implement.

Villarreal (1999) provided a checklist for implementing a successful TBE program and addressed most of the concerns noted above in the literature. Some of the pertinent factors of the checklist include:

1. Create an environment conducive to learning by valuing and celebrating linguistically and culturally diverse students. Ensure that resources are available for both students and teachers.

2. Have determined leadership by ensuring equity and excellence for all students. This includes maintaining high expectations for all students.
Have dedicated and knowledgeable staff who are aware of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Teachers must receive ongoing training and professional development.

3. Partner with the community and families to foster relationships and encourage their involvement with their child’s academic success.

4. Align programs and curriculums for ELL students to have a clear understanding of the varying levels of language proficiency.

5. Use a students’ native language to support acquisition of the second language (pg. 40-41).

The above are just a few of the suggestions made by the researcher to make a TBE program successful for ELL students, however all of these recommendations can be applied to any of the ELL programs referenced in this literature review.

**Dual Language/Two Way Immersion Programs**

Dual language/Dual immersion program/Two Way immersion Programs are programs in which a student receives instruction in both L1 and L2. These models of instruction vary from school to school. However, there are two primary or most common dual language programs: one such program is the 90/10 model and the second is the 50/50, or bi-literacy, model. In a 90/10 model, 90% of the initial instruction is provided in the students’ native language and 10% in their second language and the percentages change every year so that eventually it is a 50/50 model in which both languages are used equally, typically by 4th grade (Thomas & Collier, 2002). A biliteracy model (50/50) indicates that students spend fifty percent of their day in both languages L1 and L2. Thus, half of their literacy instruction is provided in English, and half in their native language. This designation may be daily or weekly. They may receive literacy
instruction in English one day or week, and then have literacy instruction in L1 for the following day or week.

Dual language programs have grown substantially in popularity throughout the United States. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (2009) there are now 199 school districts with dual language programs in the United States with a total of 346 schools implementing dual language programs. Out of the 346 schools, 320 of them provide Spanish/English dual language programs (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2009). Furthermore, researchers in Texas have found that there has been an increase of 461% in the use of dual language programs over the span of only 4-years in the state Texas (Alecio-Lara, Galloway, Irby, Rodriguez, & Gomez, 2004). Their research showed that there was not only an increase in dual language programs in Texas, but in many other parts of the United States as well. In 2001, the House and Senate of Texas unanimously passed legislation that strongly supports the development of more dual language programs for students (Thomas & Collier, 2002). The researchers, however, did not review any relevant academic data to determine the effectiveness of dual language programs. They found that most districts followed a model similar to the one described previously in this paper, beginning with a 90/10 model.

There is a tremendous amount of research that supports the usage of dual language programs as the most effective programs for ELL students (Thomas & Collier, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Thomas & Collier, 2003; Quintanar-Sarellana, 2004; Ray, 2008). So is this really the case? Do ELL students in dual language programs perform well academically, especially when compared to students in non-dual language classrooms? Research conducted by Ray (2008) found that a dual language program for English Language Learners (ELL) students raises academic achievement. Furthermore, academic achievement of students enrolled in dual
language programs is consistently higher than students in their control group who were not in a dual language program (Thomas & Collier, 1998). They found that this was true for students from low socio-economic status, African-American students, and also for language minority students. Finally, Quintanar-Sarellana (2004) also found that students in a dual language program are positively impacted as a result of being in the dual language program. Thus, research supports the use of dual language programs for bilingual education.

Thomas and Collier (2002) conducted one of the most extensive research studies on dual language programs and the academic achievement of students within a dual language program. The primary purpose of their research was to determine the long-term academic achievement of students classified as language minority students in varying bilingual educational programs. The researchers gathered data from 1985 to 2001. They focused on five school districts from three different states and reviewed 210,054 student records. They reviewed student achievement data, type of instructional program (90/10, 50/50, ESL, or bilingual refusals), and the students’ native language.

Based upon their research, they found that 90/10 and 50/50 dual language programs were the only programs that helped students reach the 50th percentile in terms of academic achievement across subjects and in both their native and second language. Furthermore, they found that these students persistently showed a higher level of academic achievement at the end of their schooling and had the fewest students drop out of school. One of their other major findings was that students taught in a dual language program outperformed monolingual students in formalized assessments across all subjects, but this was only the case after the students received a minimum of four years of dual language instruction. One of the major strengths of this study was the large sample size utilized to analyze the instructional programs. One of the
weaknesses of this study was that there were different assessments utilized to interpret academic success and these assessments varied from district to district and state to state. So it is difficult to determine the results overall accurately as some assessments may be more difficult than others; nevertheless, within each state, students’ results were compared to determine academic success. Furthermore, it was unclear as to whether or not minority language students took different assessments than their monolingual counterparts. Despite these inconsistencies, the research conducted by Thomas and Collier (2002) was the most extensive research done on dual language programs. The research was cited by several other researchers and serves as a critical lens for evaluating dual language programs.

Another study was conducted at Ourtown (pseudonym), (real school name and district were not disclosed) with 550 students from kindergarten thru 4th grade and examined the effectiveness of dual language programs (DeJesus, 2008). The school targeted had 98 percent of its students on free or reduced lunch programs and had a large minoritized student population. The dual language program at this school was a 50/50 model. DeJesus (2008) utilized state assessment data to determine academic achievement and proficiency. She found that 47 percent of students in non-dual language programs met proficiency on the state standards, while only 28 percent of students in a traditional TBE program were able to achieve proficiency. However, students in the dual language program were able to obtain 80 percent proficiency on the same assessment. This was a 33 percent higher level of achievement than non-dual language monolingual students. Her results were consistent with that of other researchers (Thomas & Collier, 2002; Quintanar-Sarellana; 2004; Ray, 2008). This led me to the question of whether any other research studies of dual language programs existed in Illinois.
Senesac (2002) conducted a qualitative research study in a school in Chicago, Illinois to determine if dual language programs adequately met the needs of both language minority and language majority students. The specific purpose of the study was to determine if students in a dual language program were receiving adequate instruction and subsequently performing well on assessments. Her research was based upon a 10-year case study that took place between the years of 1991-2001, in the Inter-American Magnet School in Chicago’s Wrigleyville neighborhood. The case study involved observations of language use, classroom instruction, cultural focus, and the parent/community involvement.

Senesac (2002) analysis for academic achievement was based upon school report card data provided by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) that documents the level of proficiency of students on the state standards. Based upon her analysis of these data, as well as her qualitative research, she found that a dual language program did adequately meet the needs of all students. Furthermore, she found that students in the dual language program attained higher levels of achievement when compared to their non-dual language peers. She further discovered that these higher levels of academic achievement were evident in reading, writing, math, science and social studies, despite the students having received only half of their instruction in English for both the native Spanish and the native English speakers. In other words, the equal exposure to both languages for both native English and native Spanish speakers led to higher academic achievement levels for both the native Spanish speakers and the native English speakers.

However, one of the limitations of this study was the fact that during that time, students within the dual language program that were classified as native language Spanish bilingual students took a different assessment than their native English speaking counterparts. Although both tests assess a student’s level of proficiency on the state’s standards, the assessments themselves were
different. However, the researcher also used the results of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills that was given to both dual language students and non-dual language students and those results were consistent with the overall findings that dual language students attained high levels of academic achievement.

TBE and dual language programs both encourage multiculturalism and respect a student’s native language. These are both important as in many instances ELL students are immigrant students, and as such, are beginning to learn what is socially and culturally appropriate while at the same time attempting to learn the language of their new country (Burdick-Will & Gomez, 2006). School administrators must take into account a student’s culture and lived experiences in order to adequately meet the needs of the student. The dual language program, according to the research, appears to be the bilingual program that most adequately addresses the whole student. In addition, students in a dual language program are able to acquire both academic and conversational language, unlike students in an English-only program where they may appear to be proficient in English socially, but may not have mastery of English academically (Ray, 2008).

**Conclusion**

Educational leaders and school administrators already have the complex task of ensuring that all of their students are academically successful and that their instructional needs are met. This has been compounded by the high accountability measures that NCLB has created for public schools. At the same time, public schools throughout the United States, including those in Illinois, are also presented with new challenges including the continuous increase of ELL students, an increase in students from poverty, and other challenging student characteristics.
Many schools, districts, and states have attempted to adequately meet the needs of ELL students by using a variety of different educational programs and methodologies.

While much has been documented about the growth of ELL students in states such as Texas and California, little has been documented in the Midwest states such as Illinois. According to Karanthanos (2009) many Midwest states have seen their ELL student populations double, and in some instances, triple within the past several years. As a principal in Illinois, I have experienced an influx of ELL students as well, and as such, have experienced many of the challenges that come along with educating ELL students. Karanthanos (2009) goes on to say that these states face even bigger challenges, given the relative inexperience of educators in these Midwest states in working with ELL students. She found that ELL students in the Midwest are typically placed into a language service instructional program such as SEI or ESL in their schools in which most of their time is actually spent with native English speakers and, subsequently, they have no support in their native language.

No Child Left Behind has necessitated many changes in the way educators throughout the United States work with students including ELL students. Unfortunately, many educators have moved away from appropriate bilingual programs for ELL students in favor of immersion programs in order for their students to acquire English to prepare them for state standardized exams. However, what they fail to see is that while the students may have acquired English, it is likely that this English acquisition is only social language and not academic language as described by Cummings (1989). Furthermore, they fail to see the benefits of utilizing a child’s native language to develop a secondary language, which has been shown to be very successful with ELL students (Johnson, 2010).

**Impact of High Stakes Testing on Bilingual Education**
Gallagher (2007) argues that current high-stakes testing for educational reform is wrong. He asserts that high-stakes testing has led to unintended consequences such as watered-down curriculum, alienation amongst teachers, student apathy and disengagement, public mistrust, emphasis on raising test scores even at the expense of meaningful learning, or kids being pushed out at key testing moments. This has become very evident in Illinois with the elimination of the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE). This test was originally designed for bilingual students keeping in mind their learning needs and language acquisition processes. It provided bilingual students with a more level playing field with regard to standardized assessments. However, the state of Illinois eliminated the IMAGE assessment tool and required all bilingual students instead to take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). Currently, this trend continues as all students will now have to also take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment. The PARCC has increased the academic rigor for all students and will continue to increase the level of accountability for principals throughout the state of Illinois and across the nation. Thus, as a result of these changes, many educators feel that ELL students must acquire English sooner than they currently acquire the language, however, this review of literature has shown that we cannot implement an ineffective program or curriculum and expect positive results. Many more educators, policies and states have already pursued full immersion programs as a way of accomplishing the goal of English proficiency. This however can be very ineffective. A perfect example of this is California’s Proposition 227 that became a law in 1998 and was discussed earlier in this chapter.

There have been many critics of bilingual education throughout the years and these critics often cite the fact that ELL students still have a high dropout rate, score below their non-ELL counterparts, and have not gained English language proficiency. However, they fail to
understand the importance of native language and appropriate acculturation in the development of literacy skills in the attainment of the English language and of the impact it has on cognition (Cummins, 1981; Olivos & Quintana de Valladolid, 2005). It is then imperative that school principals are aware of the right bilingual educational program for their students to ensure not only academic success but also social and life success.

This review of literature has provided an overview of the most common bilingual educational programs available for ELL students. Strengths and weaknesses of the programs were noted and will help principals have a general understanding of the programs available for ELL students. The review of literature reinforces the need to provide native language support to ELL students while they learn a second language. The research also supports that dual language programs have the greatest impact on ELL students and their ability to acquire both language and academics. More specifically, the literature highlights the necessity of having the right program for one’s ELL students, especially given the high accountability measures of NCLB. However, there is very little, if any, scholarly research principals experiences with their respective bilingual educational programs. This research will help in filling the scholarly research gap that exists on the principals’ experiences with bilingual educational programs.
Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs for their ELL students and the factors they took into consideration as well as the successes and/or challenges they faced with their bilingual educational programs. Bilingual educational programs are instructional programs designed specifically for ELL students in an effort to help them become both academically successful and linguistically proficient in English. In this chapter, I will include an overview of the methodology, my research questions, my personal positioning, participant selection, data collection and trustworthiness, data analysis, ethical considerations, study limitations and study significance. These provide important information as to the processes involved in completing this research study.

Methodology Overview

This study used a qualitative research design approach to gather, analyze, and interpret the data. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry that allows a researcher to make an interpretation of what is seen, heard, and understood. In this study, interviews were utilized to gain a better understanding of the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs. According to Creswell (2009) interviews are an effective way of asking questions and recording the answers to explore a particular topic or subject. In a qualitative study the researcher must identify purposefully selected individuals for their study in order to better understand the problem and their research questions (Creswell, 2009). In this study I was interested in interviewing school principals who had bilingual educational programs in their schools, and as such, I interviewed school principals who met this
Interviewing principals was the best method to determine the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs for their ELL students.

Creswell (2009) suggests the use of an interview protocol to ensure consistency when interviewing participants for a study. A protocol should include the following components: a heading, instructions for the interviewer to follow, the questions and sub questions, additional probing questions, spaces in between the questions for recording the responses and a thank you statement to acknowledge the time the interviewee spent during the interview process. Interviews can be conducted either by making handwritten notes, audiotaping, and/or videotaping. I used these suggestions for my study; more specifically, I audio taped four principals for my interviews as well as took handwritten notes. The audio recordings were transcribed to ensure accuracy of the information obtained from the interviews. It should be noted that there were some principals that did not want to be audio recorded for this study. Four of the school principals did not want to be audio recorded for this study. None of the junior high/middle school principals and the principal at Kennedy Elementary School were audio recorded. The transcriptions as well as the audio recordings were kept in a secure and locked location. An explanation was not requested nor given by the principals as to why they did not want to be audio recorded. This may have an impact on the accuracy of my data. It is my assumption that given the sensitive nature of bilingual education and the high accountability measures related to bilingual education that these principals simply did not feel comfortable sharing information while being audio recorded. There will be additional information regarding this in the primary findings section of my paper with regards to principal autonomy and bilingual education requirements.

All of the principal participants were contacted by phone to set up the interviews. The principals were given the option to meet at their respective schools or offsite in a location of their
choosing. All of the principals’ interviews were conducted in the principals’ schools in their offices. There were no interruptions of any kind during the interviews with any of the principals. Many of the principals did not have students in attendance on the day of the interviews as the students were on Spring break. All of the principals chose to meet early in the morning during the workweek except for one principal, the principal at Kennedy Elementary School, whom I met with on a Saturday morning at his school.

Research Questions

In order to understand the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs for their ELL students the following research questions were developed:

1. What factors do school principals take into consideration when making decisions about bilingual educational programs at their schools?
2. What challenges do school principal’s face in the implementation of their selected bilingual education program?
3. What changes/adaptations have been made and why as a result of their bilingual educational programs?

Personal Position

As a former bilingual student and as a current principal of ELL students, I have a personal interest in this topic. As a student I have vivid memories of my school and bilingual teachers, as well as my frustrations as a student. My personal experiences with bilingual education have impacted both my personal and professional life. As a result of my personal and professional experiences, I strive to ensure that I provide the most effective and appropriate instruction to all of my students and in particular, to my ELL students. I have been exposed to a multitude of bilingual programs throughout the years. Each program was different and each
program presented different challenges. I have not seen much consistency across districts or schools with regard to bilingual programs for ELL students. It is this variance in bilingual programs that sparked my interest in the experiences of school principals and their respective bilingual educational programs for their ELL students. The state of Illinois mandates that school districts implement a TBE bilingual program if their ELL student population has over 20 ELL students that speak the same native language, but it does not stipulate which type of program they must implement. As a result, this perpetuates a variety of different bilingual education programs in schools and districts across the state.

As was previously stated, I was particularly interested in gaining a better understanding of the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs. I examined the different programs principals had in their respective schools, and subsequently, I hoped to be able to describe their experiences with their specific bilingual educational programs. As I conducted my interviews, I tried to be aware of my own biases towards a specific type of bilingual programs and issues, given that I am a school principal with bilingual programs in my building. It was imperative that the participants did not feel threatened or coerced into speaking specifically about one program over another. Thus, the fact that I am also a school principal may have made the participants more comfortable in sharing their experiences with bilingual educational programs. However, this may have also made them more uncomfortable with sharing their experiences with me as they may have felt that I would be critical of their experiences or their programs. Furthermore, being a Latino and former bilingual student myself the principals may have felt uncomfortable sharing their true feelings and/or experiences with me.

It should also be noted that this study did not focus on the success of the bilingual programs in the principal’s respective schools but rather the principals’ experiences and
perceived successes of their bilingual educational programs. However, it was important to hear, from the principal’s perspective, what successes they feel their programs have had in their respective schools.

**Participant Selection**

In keeping with the purpose of this study I was particularly interested in selecting principals who had experience with ELL students and had bilingual programs in their schools. Principals were selected based upon a review of identified districts with large ELL student populations as recognized by both the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Resource Center (IRC). The IRC works with many school districts by providing a variety of courses and professional developments to districts serving ELL student populations. I also solicited recommendations from local area superintendents. The superintendents based their recommendation on their knowledge of principals who had bilingual programs in their schools. The review of districts via ISBE/IRC as well as the superintendent recommendations assisted me in successfully identifying school leaders for this study. Once the school leaders were identified, they were contacted by telephone to provide them with specific information outlining the purpose of the study as well as the methodology and interview questions to be used for this study. The principals were all from two school districts in Northern Illinois and districts with large populations of ELL students; all participants were leaders of their respective school at either the elementary level (Kindergarten thru 5th grade) or the middle school/junior high school level (6th thru 8th grade). There were no high school principals that expressed an interest in participating in this study. In all, there were eight participants who agreed to participate.

As noted, there were a total of eight research participants for this study. There were three middle school/junior high principals and five elementary school principals. All of the research
participants were principals of schools with bilingual educational programs, although the programs varied by school. Additionally, all of the schools had a high Hispanic student population and the Hispanic student population was the highest demographic student population in their respective schools. I will describe each of the schools in greater detail; however, I wanted to provide a general understanding of all of the schools and what they had in common. All of the bilingual programs in the schools were primarily directed towards Spanish speaking students; although there were some schools with students who spoke other languages, the vast majority of their students were Spanish speaking.

Once the principals expressed an interest, I provided them with more specific information regarding the next steps for participation in this study, which included an initial screening interview. This initial screening interview took place by telephone in which I asked the screening questions listed below. If the school leader met the criterion based upon the screening questions, I then requested to schedule a more formal interview in which he/she was asked the interview questions, which are listed as appendix A. Prior to conducting the interviews, informed consent was obtained from the study participants. Below are the screening questions that were asked of the participants:

1. What kind of bilingual program exists in your school?
2. When was the program implemented? Were you involved in the selection or implementation of this program?
3. Were there any other bilingual programs that were considered?
4. How large is the ELL student population in your school?

The above questions were crucial in that they provided me with a means of selecting appropriate study participants for this study. The initial questions provided contextual data as to whether or
not the principal had a bilingual program at their school as well as the type of program in their school. The second question provided further information as to the involvement of the principal in the programs creation, development or implementation as well as historical information about the program. The third question provided additional information regarding whether or not other programs were considered for their respective ELL student populations while the fourth and final screening question provided school demographic information. The questions ascertained whether or not the principals had bilingual programs in their schools and the types of bilingual programs they had in their schools.

**Data Collection**

As previously described earlier I utilized interviews as the primary form of data collection for the purposes of this study. Creswell (2009) states interviews can provide a wealth of information and data that will be useful in gaining a better understanding of the topic being studied. Thus, the data collection for this study utilized a screening interview to determine the involvement of the school principals with bilingual education and one formal interview. All of the formal principal interviews were structured (Appendix A) and recorded-if consent was given. It should be noted that as the need arose, additional clarifying questions were asked of the study participants to gain a better understanding of their thoughts, experiences, and program implementation.

Once the data were gathered, they were coded to look for specific themes. Coding, according to Creswell (2009), is the process of organizing the material obtained by the research into segments of specific text to provide meaning to the information gathered. For this study, I utilized the data obtained from the formal interviews conducted. Creswell (2009) further suggests that codes be developed only on the basis of emerging information. That is, the codes
will be prevalent based upon the information/responses of the participants. One cannot have a preset notion of what the information obtained is going to produce while coding data from interviews.

**Data Analysis**

According to Creswell (2009) the data that emerge from a qualitative research study are in the forms of narrative or descriptive data. The data gained from this type of research are typically reported in words, primarily the participant’s words, or in some form of visual representation as opposed to numbers. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) stated that in order to analyze and interpret the data of a qualitative research study, one must develop coding strategies to mechanically sort and begin to analyze the data. For my study, the findings took the shape of themes and patterns based upon the coding of the data. Some of the codes or themes were types of bilingual programs prevalent in the schools, as well as the level of involvement of the principals in the creation, development, and implementation of the bilingual programs. There was also additional demographic information shared regarding the schools from this study. The data from the formal interviews were used to identify the emerging themes to support the purpose of this study. A demographic chart has also been created to display data from the schools such as the bilingual programs, student populations, academic achievement of ELL students and principal information. These charts are included in chapter 4.

**Ethical Considerations**

While I have obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for my methodology, I needed to be continuously aware of the ethics involved when conducting research and reporting the finding of this study. Creswell (2009) states that ethical practices involve much more than simply following a set of rules provided by organizations. Ethical issues may arise at different
times throughout a research study, and interviewing is one area identified by Creswell (2009) in which ethics comes into play when working with research participants.

The information gathered from this study was kept confidential at all times. To gain the trust of the participants, they were made aware that all of their information would remain anonymous, confidential, and secured. This was especially important because the information shared with me by the principals’ contained sensitive information regarding their district, colleagues, teachers, or programs within their buildings. I provided the participants with an executive summary of the completed study and a copy of the completed dissertation for their reference upon request so that they could share the research with whomever they wished. All of the participants but one indicated that they would like a copy of the completed dissertation.

**Significance of Research**

School principals are the leaders of their respective schools and often face a myriad of different challenges and obstacles in ensuring that their students are academically successful. This includes the selection of curriculum and instructional programs that adequately meet the needs of their students. This is critically important for principals of schools who have large ELL student populations given the age of accountability that they now face with NCLB. The focus on accountability and subgroups may impact principals’ experiences with bilingual educational programs. It is then absolutely essential that we understand the experiences of principals with bilingual educational programs.

This study addresses the lack of research on the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs. There is very little, if any, research that examines the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs. This is of particular importance given the ever-growing population of ELL students and their subsequent impact on a
schools ability to meet the accountability measures set by NCLB. Additionally, the findings from this study may help to suggest changes in school policies or procedures as to how principals work with bilingual educational programs for their ELL student populations.
Chapter IV

Addressing Bilingual Students Needs

Principals continue to have the challenging task of meeting the needs of all of their students and due to a significant number of accountability measures by both the state of Illinois and the federal government, this task has become even more difficult. Principals are required to use a variety of resources to meet the needs of their students. As was indicated earlier in this study, many principals have seen growing populations of ELL students in their schools and Illinois is a state that has seen an influx in ELL student populations (US Department of Education, 2014). Thus, it is important to determine how principals address the needs of bilingual students. I will describe the eight schools that were participated in this research study, using pseudonyms for all of the schools to maintain confidentiality.

Overview of the Schools

It should be noted that the data utilized below with regards to the schools in this research are the data at the time the interviews took place between March 2012 and May 2012 and there may have been slight demographic or administrative changes at the schools since the time of the interviews. A summary of all of the schools’ demographic information is attached as Appendix B of this paper, and a brief summary of the demographics is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. School demographic and programmatic data. This table provides key demographic data regarding the schools that participated in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>ELL program</th>
<th>Demographic student population data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>• TBE – self-contained</td>
<td>• 500 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Ms. Ryan</td>
<td>• 8 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 75% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th year as principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 46% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>• Modified TBE program</td>
<td>• 720 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Ms. Ruiz</td>
<td>• 11 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 66% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd year as principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 45% ELL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 1 (cont.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>ESL pullout</th>
<th>2 ELL teachers</th>
<th>370 students</th>
<th>76% Hispanic</th>
<th>48% ELL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Jefferson Principal: Mr. Rolan</td>
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<td>18th year as principal</td>
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<td>Roosevelt Principal: Ms. Ross</td>
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<td>8th year as principal</td>
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<td>Kennedy Principal: Mr. Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th year as principal</td>
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<td>Truman Junior High School Principal: Mr.</td>
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<td>Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th year as principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reagan Middle School Principal: Mr. Franks</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th year as principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eisenhower Junior High School Principal: Mr.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th year as principal</td>
<td>TBE self-contained</td>
<td>6 ELL teachers</td>
<td>1,100 students</td>
<td>93% Hispanic</td>
<td>52% ELL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lincoln Elementary School**

The first elementary school, Lincoln Elementary School, is located in the far southwest suburbs of Chicago in a large suburban city with a considerable minoritized student demographic population. The school has students from pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. Ms. Ryan was in her 4th year as principal at Lincoln Elementary School at the time of the interview for this study. The school has a student population of approximately 500 students with 375 of these students being identified as Hispanic students, 70 students being African American, and approximately 410 of these students are considered coming from low-income socioeconomic backgrounds.
There are 230 students in this school classified as ELL students under the state of Illinois classification guidelines.

Currently, Lincoln Elementary School has a traditional self-contained bilingual education program, with the programs looking slightly different depending upon the grade levels. The principal at the school indicated that the students receive more intense support at the lower grade levels, with the ELL students clustered together in the early grade levels with one ELL teacher. However, she did indicate that as the students moved into higher grade levels, she was beginning to use more traditional ESL pullout services for students, thus the ELL students in upper grades were no longer in a self-contained program. She did confide that they were only beginning to work with an ESL pullout model. All of the ELL students at Lincoln Elementary School are Spanish-speaking students--there are no other identified ELL students at Lincoln that speak a different language.

The school currently has a teacher-student ratio of 25-1 with 25 total classrooms and a teaching staff of 40 teachers. The teaching staff is composed primarily of white teachers with only 10 staff members being of minority descent, 3 African American teachers and 7 Hispanic teachers. Of these teachers there are 8 certified ESL teachers to serve the needs of all 230 identified ELL students at Lincoln. The principal indicated that the experience of her teachers varied dramatically from some right out of college (first teaching experience) to some with over 30 years of experience.

The school currently uses a variety of assessment tools to determine student progress for all students plus one assessment in particular to determine ELL student academic progress. The school currently uses Discovery Education Assessment (DEA), which is an on-line assessment tool that measures both mathematics and literacy achievement and the assessment is given to all
students, ELL and non-ELL students. DEA is an English-only assessment thus there are some ELL students who are taking this assessment in their non-native language. In addition to this assessment, the school also uses Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en Lectura (IDEL) to progress monitor their ELL students in their native language of Spanish for students at the primary grades (Kindergarten through 3rd grade) and they use the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for their ELL students in 4th and 5th grades.

**Washington Elementary School**

Washington Elementary School is also located in a far southwest suburb of Chicago in a large suburban city with a large minoritized student population. The school also has students from pre-kindergarten thru 5th grade. At the time of the interview, the principal, Ms. Ruiz, was in her 3rd year as the principal, having previously served as the assistant principal in the same building for 2 years. The school has a student population of approximately 720 students, with 475 of these students being identified as Hispanic students and 86 students being African American. Additionally, this school has 590 students that are identified as having coming from a low-income background. There are 325 students at Washington that are identified as ELL students under the state of Illinois classification guidelines.

Washington Elementary School has what Ms. Ruiz referred to as a modified TBE bilingual program of instruction. More specifically, she indicated that the students receive instruction in a self-contained bilingual classroom with a certified bilingual teacher, however the amount of English they are exposed to varies by grade level. At the kindergarten level these students receive their primary academic instruction in their native language. When the students enter 1st grade they receive instruction in their native language 90% of the time with English 10% of the time and the levels increase by 10% in English every subsequent year. By the time
the students are in 5th grade, they receive English instruction 50% of the time as well as Spanish instruction 50% of the time. She went on to indicate that there are no firm time constraints with regards to the language allocations, and that the teachers have some level of autonomy as to how and when they use the native language as opposed to English for their instruction. She also indicated that she has trained all of her teachers on the SIOP model (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol), which is a type of sheltered instructional model specifically designed for ELL students. She added that bilingual programming at Washington Elementary School was initially developed 7-years ago by the previous administration and that she has made several revisions to the bilingual programming since she became the principal to more adequately meet the needs of her students.

At Washington Elementary School all of the 325 students identified as ELL students are Spanish-speaking students. The principal went on to indicate that some grade levels have more than one self-contained bilingual classroom and that she places the students into specific classrooms based upon their specific score on the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-Stage (ACCESS) for English Language Learners assessment. Thus, students that fall within a certain range on ACCESS will be placed in classrooms with students that fell within the same range on ACCESS. She elaborated that this allows the teacher to provide more specific academic instruction to students with a similar level of English proficiency.

Washington Elementary School currently has an average teacher-student ratio of 27-1, with a total of 30 classrooms and a teaching staff of 50 teachers. She indicated that she has 11 certified ELL teachers that specifically work with the 325 identified ELL students, although she did indicate that many of her teachers do have ESL certification to meet the needs of their student population. Unlike Lincoln Elementary School, Ms. Ruiz indicated that their teaching
staff was very diverse and multicultural. She did not provide specific information as to the makeup of her staff other than saying it was multicultural. Furthermore, the experience of her teachers, similarly to Lincoln, also varied dramatically.

The school currently also uses a variety of assessment tools to determine their ELL students’ academic and language proficiency. As indicated earlier the school uses ACCESS as one of the primary ways to place students in their respective classrooms. Furthermore, the school also uses the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) screener to determine language proficiency of its students and their subsequent placement if the student does not have ACCESS scores. This school also utilizes the DEA assessment to measure a student’s academic level of proficiency in mathematics and literacy which similar to Lincoln is given to both ELL and non-ELL students. The principal did not identify other assessment tools utilized.

**Jefferson Elementary School**

Jefferson Elementary School is located just outside of the Chicago boundaries, directly across the street from the Chicago city limits, and it is located in a small suburb with a large minoritized student population. The school has students from kindergarten through 4th grade only. Students attending pre-kindergarten attend a different school. Mr. Rolan has spent a significant part of his career at Jefferson Elementary School; he was a teacher first at Jefferson and Mr. Rolan was in his 18th year as principal at the time of the interview. The school has a student population of approximately 370 students, with 281 of these students being identified as Hispanic students and 15 students being identified as African American. There are currently 316 students identified as coming from a low-income background, and there are also 178 students identified as ELL students at Jefferson.
Jefferson Elementary School has an ESL-pull out bilingual program of instruction. The level of support the students receive while being pulled for ESL services depends upon their level of English proficiency. According to the principal, the majority of his ELL students have some level of English understanding even if at the basic level. In other words, if the students have minimal English, they receive pullout services for a longer period of time throughout the day. If a student has more English proficiency, he/she will be pulled out for a significantly smaller amount of time to work with the ESL teacher. He did go on to say that many of the ELL students “deficiencies” are based upon their lack of literacy skills in either their native language or the English language. He indicated that the bilingual program currently at place in his building has been in place for over 25-years, however he indicated that many years ago the population shifted from Polish speaking students to Spanish speaking students.

The school has an average student-teacher ratio of 23:1 with a total of 16 classrooms and a teaching staff of 22 teachers. According to the principal, the majority of his staff is white, with one African American teacher and two Hispanic bilingual teachers. There are only two certified ESL teachers to meet the needs of the 178 ELL students in the building. This gives each ESL teacher a case load of almost 90 students each, however, according to the principal, many of his ELL students have some English skills and he feels that many of their needs are able to be met by the classroom teacher.

Jefferson school also uses a variety of assessments to determine English achievement by its students as well as academic proficiency. The school, similar to Washington, also uses the WIDA screener to gage a student’s level of English proficiency, which they then use to determine the amount of ESL services the student receives. Furthermore, the school also utilizes Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to determine a student’s level of academic proficiency in
mathematics and reading. Similar to the DEA assessment used at Washington and Lincoln, the MAP assessment is also an on-line assessment tool that gives an immediate score of the student’s academic proficiency. Similar to the DEA assessment, the MAP assessment is also administered to ELL and non-ELL students and it, too, is an English-only assessment.

**Roosevelt Elementary School**

Roosevelt Elementary School is in the same district as Jefferson Elementary School and it also just outside of the Chicago city limits. The school serves students from pre-kindergarten through 4th grade. Roosevelt is a much larger school than Jefferson school. Ms. Ross has been the principal at Roosevelt Elementary School for 8 years, and prior to being the principal at Roosevelt, she was the assistant principal at Roosevelt. Roosevelt Elementary School has approximately 570 students. At Roosevelt, there are 524 students identified as Hispanic, six students identified as African American, and 530 of its students are identified as students coming from low-income backgrounds. It also has 359 students identified as ELL students.

Roosevelt Elementary School has an ESL pullout model of instruction for many of its ELL students, however, this also the only school in this research study that has a dual language bilingual program. Students that are not in the dual language classroom receive their ESL services by a certified ESL teacher who pulls the students out of their classrooms to provide them with their ESL bilingual needs. Similar to Jefferson, the services provided to the students depend upon their level of current English proficiency. Students at the lower grade levels receive, on average, more minutes of ESL pullout services than students at the upper grade levels.

Students in the dual language program receive their bilingual services directly in their classroom by their regular classroom teacher who is also a certified bilingual teacher. Students in
the dual language program on average are identified as native English speakers and native Spanish speakers, with the instruction taught in what the principal called a 90-10 model. The students receive 90% of their instruction in their native language and 10% in their secondary language. Spanish speakers receive 90% of their instruction in Spanish, while the remaining 10% is taught in English; the reverse is also true of native English speakers. The principal indicated that the goal of their dual language program is to foster bilingualism. Enrollment into the dual language program is contingent upon the parents completing an application for enrollment into the dual language program at Roosevelt Elementary School. Discussion of the principals’ decision to implement a dual language program at her school appears in a later section of this chapter.

The average class size at Roosevelt Elementary School is 24 students, with the dual language classrooms having a slightly higher-class size average of 26 students. There are a total of 19 classrooms at Roosevelt Elementary School with 26 teachers at Roosevelt. There are 6 ELL teachers at Roosevelt Elementary School. Ms. Ross indicated that she has a diverse teaching staff at her school, with several minority teachers who reflect her student population. All of her teaching staff in the dual language program are Hispanic and native Spanish speakers as well.

Roosevelt Elementary School uses a variety of assessments to obtain academic proficiency levels as well as language proficiency levels. They currently also use the WIDA screener for language proficiency, the ACCESS assessment which is given once a year, and the MAP assessment similar to Jefferson school. However, Roosevelt school also uses two other assessment tools for its students. They also utilize the STAR reading assessment, which is an adaptive reading assessment that is administered electronically, and is available in both English and Spanish. They also use Aimsweb as a universal screener and to progress monitor their
students to support Response to Intervention (RTI). Ms. Ross stated that she liked to have multiple data points to track her students’ progress.

**Kennedy Elementary School**

Kennedy Elementary School is the largest school in this study and it is located in the same school district as Lincoln Elementary School and Washington Elementary School. The school serves students from kindergarten through 5th grade. Kennedy Elementary School is the district’s largest elementary school, and it also has the largest Hispanic population in the district, as well as in this study. Mr. Johnson was entering his 2nd to last year as the principal at Kennedy Elementary School where he had served as the principal for 9 years. He previously served as a principal in another elementary school in the same district. Kennedy Elementary School has approximately 1,100 students; 1,023 of these students are identified as Hispanic students, 44 students identified as African American, and 946 students are identified as students coming from low-income backgrounds. It also has 572 students identified as ELL students.

Kennedy Elementary School has two types of bilingual educational programs for ELL students. One program was identified by the principal as a traditional self-contained bilingual program, while the other program he described as a bilingual push-in model of ELL support. Students in the self-contained bilingual program he described as his “newcomers,” in other words, students who have very little to no English language proficiency. These students are in a classroom with similar students and receive the majority of their instruction in Spanish with some English instruction during their language arts block. Students that receive push-in support are students who have some English proficiency, placed in regular education classrooms, and a certified ESL teacher pushes into the classroom to work specifically with these students. He went on to explain that the ESL push-in teachers have their own caseload and are responsible for
providing the appropriate services to the students, while the TBE self-contained teacher constitutes the ELL students’ case manager of sorts and they are responsible for those students. It should also be noted that the principal indicated that, at one point, they did implement a dual language program, but that it is no longer in place due to lack of resources and parental interest in the program due to their homogenous student population.

The average class size at Kennedy Elementary School is 30 students per classroom, however he did indicate that this varies slightly by grade level and that the self-contained bilingual classrooms, on average, have a slightly lower average class size. There are a total of 37 classrooms at Kennedy Elementary School with 55 teachers to service the educational needs of the 1,100 students at Kennedy. Mr. Johnson noted that there are 16 certified ELL teachers at Kennedy Elementary School. He indicated that he has a relatively diverse teaching staff with approximately 35% of his teaching staff being Hispanic. He did indicate that he also has a lot of yearly turnover of staff, causing him to hire multiple teachers every year. He attributed this to the fact that he has a very large building and is subject to more turnovers in staff.

Kennedy Elementary School uses several assessment tools to progress monitor their students. They utilize DEA data for both reading and math to determine grade level proficiency and academic growth. Similar to other schools in this study, they, too, utilize the WIDA screener for language proficiency, as well as the ACCESS assessment. He also indicated that they use both ISAT data and ACCESS data when placing students into their classrooms and to determine their progress. The principal did not identify any other forms of assessments utilized in his building.

*Truman Junior High School*
Truman Junior High School is located in a southwest suburb of Chicago in a large suburban school district. Truman Junior High School serves students from 6th thru 8th grade. There are approximately 780 students at Truman. There are 343 students identified as Hispanic students, 296 students identified as African American students, and 577 students identified as students coming from a low-income household. Mr. Jackson, the principal, explained that this has been a very big demographic shift as the school used to have a predominantly African American student population. There are 101 students identified as ELL students at Truman, and there are two ELL certified teachers to meet their needs. However, Mr. Jackson indicated that there are many more students who would qualify for ELL services, but that the parents refuse bilingual services. Mr. Jackson has been the principal at Truman for the past 9-years and also has extensive experience as a principal in a different school district.

Truman Junior High School has an ESL pullout bilingual program of instruction. The certified ESL teachers each have a caseload of students who they are required to see on a regular basis. The principal went on to explain that while the ESL teachers may be the case managers that ELL students are everyone’s responsibility and that there is no clear distinction between an ELL student or any other students in his school. He indicated that ELL students receive the same level of academic instruction as all the other students in his school. He did explain that seven years ago, the school was completely restructured under the NCLB guidelines and that this was around the same time that there was a shift in the student population. The majority of his staff has under ten years of experience at Truman. He feels that the restructuring process at Truman helped to change the manner in which the staff viewed the students at Truman, given that many of them were then new and had no preconceived notions of the students or school.
Truman Junior High, according to Mr. Jackson, uses a variety of assessments to keep track of their students’ academic progress. The primary assessment tool used by Truman is the DEA assessment, which they administer in both reading and math. In addition to this assessment, the principal indicated that they use frequent unit assessments and common assessments to ensure that all students, including ELL students, are making academic progress. Truman also administers and uses the ACCESS data to keep track of their ELL students’ language proficiency. There were no other specific assessment tools mentioned by Mr. Jackson utilized at Truman.

Reagan Middle School

Reagan Middle School is located in a small suburban school district, directly outside of the Chicago city limits. Reagan is the only middle school in the entire district and as such receives all students from the elementary schools. It serves students from 6th thru 8th grade. The district has a large Hispanic student population and Reagan Middle School is a direct reflection of the district and suburb. Reagan Middle School has a student population of 520 students, with 416 of its students identified as Hispanic students, 26 African American students, and 437 students identified as students coming from low-income backgrounds. There are currently 62 ELL students identified at Reagan Elementary School and only one ELL certified teacher; however, the principal did note that there are four other teachers with ELL certification, but they don’t directly provide the ELL support. According to Mr. Franks, the principal, the number of identified ELL students may not necessarily be completely reflective of the number of students with limited English proficiency. He went on to say that they have many parents who refuse bilingual services for their children and subsequently, those students do not receive any ELL
support, but must take the ACCESS state assessment. Mr. Franks was in his 20th year as the principal at the time of the interview.

Reagan Middle School has two bilingual programs of instruction, a traditional ESL pullout model and an ESL push-in model. The type of support the student receives is contingent upon their language proficiency. Students who receive pullout ESL support are students with a lower level of language proficiency and students who receive ESL push-in support are students who have a higher level of language proficiency. Mr. Franks indicated that all core academic instruction is done in English. This includes students who receive ESL pullout. These students are pulled out during a block of time the school refers to as an academic intervention block and thus their ELL students are not missing any new academic instruction, but rather receiving support by their ESL teacher for their ESL needs.

Reagan Elementary School is in their second year of administering the MAP assessment in both reading and math. Previously, the school did not have any other form of standardized assessment for all students in both reading and math. However, Mr. Franks did indicate that they also use several common assessments that were created by the curriculum department and administered to all students. These assessments were administered monthly and the results were reviewed by the teachers, the curriculum department, and by administration. ELL students as well as non-ELL students took the same monthly common assessments created by the curriculum department. He indicated that the results were helpful for guiding teachers and their instruction for both ELL and non-ELL students. The school does not administer any other assessments to its students, and has no language proficiency assessments other than the ACCESS.

_Eisenhower Junior High School_
Eisenhower Junior High School is located in the same district as Truman Junior High School. Eisenhower Junior High School has historically been the school with the largest ELL student population in the district. Eisenhower has a student population of 870 students, with 653 students identified as Hispanic students, 136 students identified as African American students, and 774 of its 870 students are identified as low-income students. The school has 157 students identified as ELL students, which, from what the principal explained, is a relatively low number for the school as they have traditionally had over 200 ELL students. In the past, the school was identified as the ELL junior high school, so any students who qualified for ELL services were bussed to Eisenhower. He went on to say that this changed since there were students that would come across town and were spending close to an hour on the bus. Thus, every junior high school in the district now has some form of ELL program in their building. Mr. James was in his 4th year as principal of Eisenhower, and previously served as an assistant principal in another school within the same school district.

Eisenhower has a self-contained TBE bilingual program of instruction. The students that are identified as ELL students attend classes with other ELL students in all content area subjects (math, language arts, social studies, etc…), however they do attend non-ELL classes when they go to art, gym, music and other exploratory courses. The teachers that teach in the self-contained classrooms teach multiple grade levels and also teach more than one subject in order to ensure that all of the students’ academic needs are met. There are two ELL certified teachers per grade level, for a total of six ELL teachers at Eisenhower Junior High School. Mr. James did go on to say that once they receive updated ACCESS student results, they begin to mainstream students into core content non-ELL classes depending upon their proficiency level on ACCESS. If a student obtains a certain level on two identified areas of ACCESS, they are entirely exited from
all ELL classrooms and no longer considered ELL students. All of the ELL students at Eisenhower are Spanish-speaking students.

Eisenhower also uses the DEA assessment to progress monitor their students in reading and math. In addition, the principal indicated that they use the WIDA screener as they do have some students that arrive to their school for the first time from another country, typically from Mexico or Central America countries where Spanish is the native language. Furthermore, he went on to say that aside from the standard unit or chapter assessments from the students textbooks that they also use common formative assessments that are subject specific to monitor a student’s academic progress. He did indicate that his district, and, subsequently his school, does not have any other method of monitoring a student’s level of language proficiency other than the ACCESS and that all of their district assessments are administered in English. This holds true for their ELL students who may not have any English language proficiency and, as such, he does not feel that it is necessarily an accurate measure of a student’s academic progress.

Classification of ELL students in Illinois

All of the principals indicated that they identify students for ELL services based upon the Home Language Survey (HLS) (Appendix C), as well as how a student performs on the ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State). All of the schools are required to follow the guidelines dictated by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for the classification of ELL students, as well as the exiting of ELL students. ISBE recently changed the cut scores for students who qualify for ELL services. ISBE indicated that this was done to better align measurements of academic achievement with English language acquisition.
As of January 1, 2014, ISBE changed the cut scores for students defined as ELL students. Students with a score of 4.2 in reading, 4.2 in writing, and an overall score of 5.0 are no longer considered ELL students and can be exited from receiving ELL services. During the period of January 2010-December 31, 2013, the cut scores were 4.2 in literacy (reading and writing combined) and an overall score of 4.8 and students were exited. Prior to January 2010, a student only needed a score of 4.0 in the overall category and they were exited from receiving ELL services. The changes in the cut scores at that time may have resulted in more students receiving ELL services for longer periods of time since the cut scores have made it more difficult to prove language proficiency.

As previously indicated, all of the principals utilize ACCESS data in some way to identify and subsequently place their students for ELL services. All principals indicated that they use the ACCESS data to place the students in varying levels of bilingual classrooms or for the amount of bilingual services they receive. This process, however, appeared to vary from building to building. The process employed in each school was unclear with regards to how specifically they used the data to determine the appropriate placement of their students into their respective bilingual programs and/or for their bilingual services.

It should also be noted that while a student may qualify for ELL services, they might not necessarily receive bilingual services. More specifically, the parents of any students who qualify for bilingual services may refuse bilingual services for whatever reason they see fit and do not need to provide the schools with an explanation. This poses another layer of complexity for schools and subsequently, principals. Every principal in this study did indicate that they have multiple students in their schools that are eligible for bilingual services, but whose parents refused bilingual services. These students must still take the ACCESS assessment every year and
their scores are reported back to the school. All principals indicated that, historically, these students’ scores are worse than students who receive ELL services, and that they struggle academically as well.

**Primary Findings**

There were several major findings that emerged from the analysis of the school principal interviews and the review of relevant school information with regards to principals’ experiences with bilingual educational programs. These major findings are as follows: 1) principal autonomy, 2) challenges, and 3) deficit thinking. In addition there were sub-findings that further identify the issue being addressed. This was further substantiated by the fact within the same district for schools in this study there were different bilingual educational programs noted by the principals. In addition the principals in this study all noted challenges they faced with regards to their bilingual educational programs, thus this too emerged as a major finding of this study with regards to principal experiences. Principals also discussed their experiences with regards to the ELL students’ achievement, their perceived bilingual educational programs success, and their ideas on the future of their bilingual educational programs.

**Principal Autonomy: “This is my school and I make the decisions for the programs at my school”**

The first finding describes the freedom that principals across the school districts had for structuring and implementing programs for their ELL students. This finding is significant in light of the fact that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) requires that school districts provide one of the two following types of educational programs for all K-12 ELL students; Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program and/or a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) program. The TBE program must be offered by a school district whenever there are more than 20 LEP
students of the same native language enrolled in one school. The TPI program is provided whenever there are fewer than 20 LEP students of the same native language enrolled in one school. All of the schools in this study had more than 20 ELL students in their respective buildings and as such should be implementing a TBE program of instruction. More specific information on the bilingual educational programs that are in place in the schools was provided in table 1 in this chapter and it is also listed as Appendix B in this paper. As was described earlier there a variety of different programs across the schools that participated in this study. The programs themselves, even if they were identified as the same program also varied in their implementation as noted earlier in this chapter.

The principals’ autonomy for their respective bilingual educational programs was evident through the way they described decision making and the programs in general. The quote used for this finding was provided by Mr. Jackson, Truman Jr. High principal, which was his response when he was asked if they, principals, had any level of autonomy with regards to their bilingual educational programs and he responded with “This is my school and I make the decisions for the programs at my school.” He went on to clarify and stated, “The district provides some direction but ultimately I have the final say so”. This sentiment was shared by the principal at Lincoln, Ms. Ryan, who is in the same district as Truman Jr. High, when she noted the following “The district tries to be consistent across the entire district so we should all be the same but the reality is that there are many differences in our programs.” When asked why these differences existed, she indicated that the district does not micromanage the principals and as such the implementation in the programs varies. Other principals within this same district, Mr. James and Ms. Ruiz all described similar experiences with the bilingual educational programs at their schools and an awareness of the variances in the bilingual educational programs within their own district.
Interestingly only one principal from this district, Mr. Johnson, from Kennedy Elementary School, indicated that there was no level of flexibility in the district mandate, however he acknowledged that there were different programs within the district for their ELL students.

The notion of autonomy was also indicated by Mr. Rolan, Jefferson principal, who expressed a similar stance as Mr. Jackson, “There is some district support however the principals have a lot of say.” Furthermore the principal at Roosevelt, Ms. Ross, said the following “The district provides some direction, but ultimately, the principals in our district have the final say as to what we implement for all of our students, including ELL students.” The majority of principals used their autonomy to not follow state requirements. One principal, Ms. Ross, recognized this freedom to implement educational programs that were not mandated and developed her own understanding of the most effective bilingual program, dual language. Ms. Ross did state that she had to meet with both the central office staff, as well as with the Board of Education, when she decided she wanted to implement a dual language program in her school. She indicated that she pursued a dual language program because of her own research and understanding of the program, and its potential positive impact on student achievement. This aspect will be discussed in greater detail in another portion of this paper. This example illustrates the autonomy that principals experienced to pursue different programs for their ELL students. While Ms. Ross did have to meet with higher level administrators this was due largely to the change in personnel that dual language programs require thus it was not directly linked to the effect on learning that the programmatic choice of dual language may have.

The middle school/junior high principals in this study (Reagan, Eisenhower and Truman), also indicated having tremendous autonomy. The principal at Reagan indicated that he has the final say in approaches to bilingual education, but that he consulted with the district before
making the final programmatic decisions. The principal at Eisenhower indicated that the district works collaboratively with him, however he noted that final decisions were his to make. One sentiment that was clear in speaking with the principals was that they felt the autonomy was necessary for them to look after their students. This was clear through another quote by the principal at Truman, Mr. Jackson, who again had the most poignant response stating, “I don’t care what the district says or what the other schools are doing for their students, I am going to do what is necessary to make my kids successful.”

It was very apparent based upon all of the principals’ responses in the interviews, that there is a lot of room for change and flexibility in each of the school districts. Specifically, each principal had the autonomy to make the changes they deemed necessary to their bilingual programs of instruction. It was beyond the scope of this study to examine the school district perspectives on bilingual program implementation but what is clear is that the principals felt they had the right to make these types of changes without any oversight from the district administration. What is evident from this study is that although schools in each district had written guidelines to follow to supplement the ISBE requirements, that there is still a high level of autonomy within and across districts for implementation of bilingual educational programs. The table below illustrates the variances in the bilingual educational programs for each school district. The first five schools are in the same school district (District A), Table 2, and the final three schools are also within the same district (District B), Table 3.

Table 2. This table shows the demographic data for the schools in District A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District A</th>
<th>Bilingual Program</th>
<th>Number of ELL students</th>
<th>Native Language (L1)</th>
<th>Years of program</th>
<th>Years of Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>TBE self-contained</td>
<td>230 students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Washington</th>
<th>Modified TBE self-contained</th>
<th>325 students</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>7 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>TBE self-contained and ESL push-in</td>
<td>572 students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truman Jr. High</td>
<td>ESL pull-out</td>
<td>101 students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower Jr. High</td>
<td>TBE self-contained</td>
<td>157 students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Over 20-years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. This table shows the demographic data for the schools in District B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District B</th>
<th>Bilingual Program</th>
<th>Number of ELL students</th>
<th>Native Language (L1)</th>
<th>Years of program</th>
<th>Years of Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>ESL pull-out</td>
<td>178 students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Over 25-years</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt</td>
<td>Dual Language (DL) and ESL pull-out</td>
<td>359 students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>DL 1-year ESL over 10-years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan MS</td>
<td>ESL push-in and pull-out</td>
<td>62 students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table above we can see that in district A each school had the above minimum number of students identified as ELL students, this means that according to the ISBE requirements each school should have had a TBE or dual language program. Three of the schools had programs they identified as TBE programs, one school had an ESL program and the other had what the principal identified as a modified TBE program. All of the schools serve students from the same language group as well, Spanish and Spanish speaking students, and these students have been a part of District A for a very long time as noted by the principals. This shows that bilingual education is not new to these districts nor are the state requirements.
The table also shows that in district B all of the schools also had the above minimum number of students identified as ELL students and as such should have implemented a TBE program. However, none of the schools in district B identified having a TBE program. All of the schools noted having an ESL type of program either pull-out or push-in. Roosevelt elementary school had implemented a dual language program, however they were only in their first year of implementation and prior to that had only strictly had an ESL program. ELL students that are not in the dual language program still receive ESL support. My analysis shows that administrator’s freedom to make sense of their own bilingual programs has contributed to this variation within the school district.

**Challenges of ELL Students and Bilingual Educational Programs**

A second primary finding of this study was the principals’ identification of the challenges to addressing the needs of their ELL students and how this impacted the bilingual programs. These findings refer to the on-going challenges faced by principals with their respective bilingual programs. I will highlight the specific areas identified by principals as challenges that influence the academic success of ELL students and their impact on bilingual educational programs.

*Lincoln Elementary School*

Ms. Ryan identified several challenges and concerns in her school with regards to her ELL students and the bilingual program. She indicated that her ELL students were able to make AYP in mathematics, but not in reading. She went on to say that part of the challenge of why her ELL students did not make AYP was due to their inability to develop the English language in time for the state assessments. The assessment itself is in English, and many of the students have not yet acquired sufficient English to perform well on the assessment. In addition, she indicated the level of parent participation in her building could be better and specifically with regards to
the parents of her ELL students. She went on to say, “We have to provide student incentives to have good parent participation at conferences.” Furthermore, she stated “The parents struggle to support their ELL students at home, they try to support but can’t or don’t know how to.”

*Washington Elementary School*

Ms. Ruiz, the principal, identified numerous challenges and concerns at her school. The first challenge was having an adequate level of resources and materials to support her ELL students, but more specifically, instructional materials geared towards the effective instruction of ELL students. She went on to say that the focus on test scores from both the district and state level creates an unnecessary level of stress and focus that might actually hinder the appropriate language development of her ELL students. She went on to say, “There is a lot of pressure from the district for scores, however they need to look at student growth as well.” She stated she is familiar with research on ELL students and that often times she feels that the focus from the district and state to increase language proficiency goes contrary to the research on effective language development strategies for ELL students that she is familiar with. She went on to say “There is a disconnect from assessments to the practical every day use of progress the teachers see.” More specifically, she indicated that she feels that normed assessments do not adequately capture the learning progress that ELL students have made, although they may not have made specific state required benchmarks. Finally, she feels that there currently is no program at her school that effectively addresses the needs of students who are both ELL and IEP students. In her experience she has found that more often than not these students receive their IEP services and their ELL needs are never met or addressed. This, she stated, was due to time constraints, lack of resources and the legal requirements of the students with IEPs.
Jefferson Elementary School

Mr. Rolan, principal, also identified numerous challenges and concerns. He indicated that there continued to be a lack of parental development and parental support by the parents of ELL students. He stated, “Kids don’t know their sight words or basic facts, that’s because parents aren’t as involved as they should be especially about their children’s academics.” He did go on to clarify saying that the parents do not become involved with the academic development of their children usually due to work obligations, time commitments or simply don’t know how they can help their children. Furthermore, he indicated that he feels that there are not a sufficient amount of early interventions for ELL students at his school or throughout their district. He believes that early intervention support, which he identified as linguistic support, would have a positive impact on student achievement. The final challenge identified at Jefferson Elementary School is that the ELL students are not making AYP. He stated that all of these are challenges to staying the course with his bilingual educational program.

Roosevelt Elementary School

The principal at Roosevelt Elementary School, Ms. Ross, indicated that one of the challenges she faces is meeting the needs of students who technically qualify as ELL students, but whose parents refused bilingual services. “Our parents think the students need to learn English to be successful and so they refuse bilingual services.” She went on to say that these students do not do well academically and continue to struggle without support. She further elaborated to say that building native language support (L1) has become increasingly difficult due to the continued focus on English proficiency regardless of the students native language. Thus, making it difficult to meet the needs of her ELL students in a regular education setting without any ELL support. Another challenge she identified was that of her staff, specifically, she
said that at times her teachers blame the parents and existing bilingual structures on why students are not making progress, rather than being reflective and raising their expectations of their students. Lastly, she too identified parental involvement as a major concern in her school. She stated that she and her staff have tried numerous ways of involving parents in their child’s academic development, but that it continues to be a major concern and obstacle in her school.

_Kennedy Elementary School_

Mr. Johnson, who is also the principal of the largest school in this study and the school with the largest ELL student population, interestingly was the principal who identified the fewest challenges and concerns in his school. He prefaced this discussion by stating that he is ultimately responsible for the achievement of his students, and as such, makes no excuses for their lack of proficiency in both language and academics. He did go on to say that the only challenge or concern facing his bilingual program and subsequently, his bilingual students, is the continued emphasis on students acquiring the English language. He stated, “The focus is on students learning English as quickly as possible and this is a major challenge for us given our large population. Also, students may seem proficient in English from a social perspective but academic language is very different.” He went on to emphasize that this is a major concern because his students may acquire social language well before they acquire academic language, He indicated that he feels that academic language is much more difficult to acquire and master. He did not identify or remark on any other challenges or concerns regarding his bilingual educational programs or his ELL students.

_Truman Junior High School, Reagan Middle School and Eisenhower Junior High School_

The principal at Truman Junior High School did not identify any concerns or challenges, simply stating that he doesn’t feel there are any challenges they cannot overcome and thus did
not want to identify any. He did go on to indicate that he has great parental involvement from his Latino community and subsequently, his ELL families. Specifically stating, “My Latino families are a more intact family unit and are much more involved than the other families in my school.”

The principal at Reagan Elementary School only identified one concern and that was very low parental involvement in his school. He went on to say, “I think the parents are intimidated by our type of educational system, which from what I hear is very different from the systems in their home countries.” He went on to say that many of his families, in particular those of ELL students, trust the educators with their children and that this blind trust may be to the success or detriment of their children. Along these same lines, he also stated that the parents are simply unwilling or unable to help their children at home with schoolwork, and that this is especially true of the parents of ELL students, since the parents themselves, in his experience, do not speak English either.

The principal at Eisenhower Junior High School, Mr. James, identified more concerns and challenges than the principals at both Truman and Reagan. First, he indicated that parental involvement is a major concern and challenge in his school. “Parents do not know how to support their children at school or simply do not get involved.” Secondly, he stated that he feels that students are left in bilingual education for a very long period of time, often times for greater than five to six years with still very little to no English by the time they reach his school. He indicated that he believed this was due to the fact that the elementary schools do not have the right bilingual educational programs in place to meet the needs of their ELL students. He then went on to say “We have inferior resources for ELL students not only at our school but in our district.” He elaborated that in general there are few resources available our ELL students and in particular resources in their native language. Another major challenge or concern that he noted
was that at times he feels that his teachers simply have lower expectations of students in the bilingual program and that these teachers do not feel that bilingual students are capable of achieving at high levels. Finally, he stated that he has done research on dual language programs and is very interested in implementing one, but that he feels he may not have the support or resources to make this a reality.

All of the principals in both district A and district B identified the following concerns and/or challenges that they face with implementing bilingual educational programs at their schools: the academic achievement of their ELL students is lower than their non-ELL counterparts, low parental involvement, lack of appropriate ELL resources, and the emphasis of English language development in a timely manner. These will be elaborated upon further in the recommendations discussion. I will elaborate more specifically on the academic achievement of the ELL students in this study since it was identified as a major challenge and concern by all of the principals.

**ELL student achievement**

The intent of this study was not to study bilingual program success, however, I wanted to note that this was a recurring theme after interviewing the principals. More specifically, they all talked about the lower level of student achievement by their respective ELL student populations. All of the principals identified AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) as one measure of whether or not their respective students were making academic progress. All of the schools in this study indicated that according to the state benchmarks on ISAT, their ELL student populations were not making AYP in the area of reading. The principals indicated that the assessment is in English, and many of their students simply don’t perform well due to the fact that they are assessed in a language they are not yet proficient in and as such, feel that the assessment is not a
true indication of their academic performance. The principals at Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and the secondary principals all indicated that they have seen incremental improvements in both reading and math on ISAT. The only school that made AYP was Lincoln Elementary School in the area of mathematics. The principal at Kennedy stated that he feels strongly that if the assessment were given in the students’ native language that they would perform significantly better.

It should also be noted that a student’s score might actually reflect on the school in more than one subgroup. For example, if a child is a low-income ELL Hispanic student their scores will actually reflect multiple times. It would reflect in the low-income subgroup, the ELL subgroup (LEP as identified by the state), and the Hispanic subgroup. Their scores are also reflected in the “all” category of the state assessment reports and in some cases a student may also have an IEP and their scores would be reflected in yet another category. This is important to note for the schools in this study since these students’ assessment results are based on an assessment that was not in their native language, their scores impacted their school multiple times, and, unfortunately, their results are more often showing little to no academic improvement.

Table 4. ELL student and non-ELL student school student achievement data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>% of Students Meeting State Standards in Reading</th>
<th>% of Students Meeting State Standards in Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Lincoln     | 2012 non-ELL students: 52%  
2012 ELL students: 31%  
2013 non-ELL students: 47%  
2013 ELL students: 26%  
2014 non-ELL students: 35%  
2014 ELL students: 12% | 2012 non-ELL students: 80%  
2012 ELL students: 73%  
2013 non-ELL students: 52%  
2013 ELL students: 29%  
2014 non-ELL students: 57%  
2014 ELL students: 21% |
| Washington  | 2012 non-ELL students: 69%  
2012 ELL students: 33%  
2013 non-ELL students: 46%  
2013 ELL students: 16% | 2012 non-ELL students: 85%  
2012 ELL students: 75%  
2013 non-ELL students: 47%  
2013 ELL students: 19.3% |
The table above, Table 4, shows the academic achievement of ELL students in this study compared to non-ELL students in their respective schools. More specifically the data show that ELL students are consistently being outperformed on the state benchmark assessments by their
non-ELL counterparts in their respective schools. Thus, it is this achievement gap that provides a significant challenge to principals as they clearly identified. The principals were, however, able to identify some successes they feel they have had with their ELL students.

**ELL student and program success**

Although all of the schools indicated that they have had limited success on the ISAT and making AYP in their respective schools, they were still able to identify some success by their ELL students in other areas. I will focus on each of the schools individually highlighting the successes identified by the schools principals.

*Lincoln Elementary School*

Ms. Ryan indicated that while they did not make AYP in reading, they were able to make AYP in mathematics and that her ELL student population was actually the only subgroup that did make AYP. In addition to this success, she indicated that her school was able to exit many students on ACCESS score performance. Many of her previously identified ELL students were able to obtain the language proficiency necessary to exit their ELL status. Furthermore, she stated that as a result of having many ELL students, it has forced her bilingual teachers to become experts in their subject area of expertise as well. Finally, she stated that parental support for her students both academically and behaviorally is steadily increasing.

*Washington Elementary School*

Washington Elementary School ELL students did not make AYP in either reading or math, however, according to Ms. Ruiz, they did show some small incremental gains from the previous academic year. Also, she indicated that they are not performing as well as their non-ELL counterparts, but that they continue to make gains. She too identified progress on the ACCESS by her ELL students, stating that they continue to show increases in proficiency. She
went on to say that her students also integrate well with the rest of her general education student population. In addition, she stated that she feels another success of her bilingual program is not directly related to student achievement, but that she feels it does have an impact and that is the culture of her school. More specifically, she stated that the overall culture of her school has improved due to their increased focus on ELL students.

**Jefferson Elementary School**

Mr. Rolan cited multiple successes at his school related to his bilingual program. On average, his ELL students are on-grade level by the time they leave his school at the end of 4th grade. This, according to the principal, includes his ELL students. He also stated that his ELL students over the years steadily increase their English proficiency. Another success he pointed out was that as a result of having the number of ELL students they have in their bilingual program, they have focused a great deal of their energy and efforts in literacy and that literacy instruction has improved dramatically. He stated although his ELL students did decrease on the last ISAT tests, so did all his students and that the ELL students showed the same amount of decrease.

**Roosevelt Elementary School**

The principal at Roosevelt, Ms. Ross, indicated that her ELL students, on average, have not performed well according to the state standards, but that they have shown improvements at her school. She went on to say that this was one of the primary reasons she began to look into dual language programs because the research on dual language programs was very promising and she knew the program would yield better academic results for her students. She was able to highlight some successes of her dual language program, as well as her ESL pull-out programs. She identified that she has seen a quicker transition of students exiting the bilingual program.
based upon ACCESS. She went on to say that they had had a larger number of students exit the ELL program during the past academic year than in previous years. She feels that her school being able to implement a dual language program in and of itself is a success. She stated that many of her staff members were reluctant about implementing the dual language program because they were simply uninformed, or simply did not want to change. However, she provided them with research that highlighted the benefits, and subsequently the district as well, as her school leadership team supported the idea and they moved forward. She stated that this is a huge success for her students and the ELL students.

**Kennedy Elementary School**

Mr. Johnson quickly identified multiple levels of success at his school. He stated that while his ELL students are not making AYP, they are performing at the highest level they have ever performed in both reading and math. He related that they also exit a high number of students from ELL classification as required by ACCESS year after year. He also stated that another success at Kennedy is the fact that they progress monitor students on a weekly basis in literacy to obtain information on their ELL students’ progress. He stated that this information is immediate and it allows the teachers to instruct appropriately. He shared that another major accomplishment and success is that all of his students are treated fairly, regardless of their classifications. Finally, he identified that although parental involvement is not as high as he would like it to be, they have seen a slight increase in their involvement.

**Truman Junior High School**

The principal at Truman Junior High, Mr. Jackson, identified four successes he feels his bilingual program has experienced during his tenure at Truman. His ELL students are having the highest levels of success on their local and state assessments, even though they are not making
AYP. He also stated that previously, many of his ELL students would be suspended or expelled from school due to behaviors that he associated with a lack of academic rigor and understanding, but that they now have the fewest suspensions and expulsions ever, not only for ELL students, but non-ELL students as well. He again noted that he has had an increase in parent participation with his Hispanic student population. Finally, he stated that his students are more respectful than ever due to the overall culture and climate of his school.

Reagan Middle School

At Reagan, the principal noted that a major success of his school and bilingual program is the trust that the parents and community have as a whole of his school. He noted that the school has strong roots in the community, with multiple generations having gone through Reagan Middle School. He stated that they made very nice gains on the state assessments. Although they did not make AYP, they did make gains in both reading and math. He further explained that the academic gains are a result of a successful implementation of intervention programs for all students, including his ELL students that address the academic needs of his students. He also identified the utilization of technology as a success for his ELL students.

Eisenhower Junior High School

Similar to all of the other principals, Mr. James also identified the performance of his students on the ACCESS as a success in his school. Specifically, he stated that they have exited many students from being identified as ELL students, which he attributed to his bilingual teachers’ continued efforts in addressing the needs of his students in their classroom. He went on to say that his ELL students are performing relatively well in mathematics compared to their performance in previous academic years. He noted that the participation of the parents of students in bilingual programs has increased slightly over the years and he indicated that this was
a success as they can support both the school and the students. Finally, he shared that the ELL students in his school are well behaved and require little to no behavioral interventions.

Overall, there was a lot of consistency across all of the schools, with many of them citing incremental improvements on the state assessments in one area or another. They all cited improvements on their student’s language proficiency on ACCESS and their subsequent classification. The increased proficiency on ACCESS again only indicates proficiency in language attainment and not academic achievement. Thus, although all of the principals indicated their students’ performance on ACCESS had increased; it is not correlated to their predicted performance on ISATs or the future PARCC state assessments.

**Deficit Thinking & Teacher Perceptions**

Another area that was addressed by each school principal was their perceptions as well as their teachers’ perceptions of ELL students. The presence of deficit thinking was another primary finding of this study that emerged from the analysis of the data. Specifically, the principals and teachers have a deficit view of their ELL student populations. On a number of occasions principals noted that in their respective buildings ELL students are treated as “second-class citizens”. In other words, the ELL students are treated differently in their buildings from the other students who are not ELL students. This may be due to their cultural backgrounds or language difference. The teachers, and in some instances, principals, have lower expectations of ELL students. This deficit thinking subsequently has a negative impact on the experiences of ELL students. Shields, Bishop, and Mazawi (2004) noted that deficit thinking is prevalent in schools across the world. They assert that differences are treated as deficits and place the responsibility of a child’s success on their lived experiences or other outside factors rather than focusing on the educational system as a whole. Oakes (1995) suggests that deficit thinking
involves assumptions that children and families that are of color and low-income are limited by their cultural situations, as well as individual deficits that schools cannot alter. Teachers believe that the fault of a student’s lack of academic success does not lie within the school when there is deficit thinking. We will now look at the individual schools and the perceptions of both the teachers and principals with regards to their ELL students and the deficit thinking that is present.

*Lincoln Elementary School*

Ms. Ryan indicated that overall she felt that the teachers’ perceptions of ELL students at her building were very supportive. Specifically, she said that they provide a tremendous amount of support in literacy to ensure that they are successful. She did go on to say that she feels the teachers’ perceptions vary depending upon their roles in her school. For example, she stated that the teachers in the bilingual program at her school have a more positive perception of her ELL students than teachers who do not work with ELL students, or who are strictly general education teachers. She indicated that this might be due to a lack of complete understanding by her general education teachers of how to actually service the needs of ELL students or an understanding of their lived or cultural experiences.

*Washington Elementary School*

At Washington Elementary School, Ms. Ruiz indicated that the Hispanic teachers as well as bilingual teachers at her school understand ELL students and “just get it” in terms of working with ELL students. She went on to say that most of the other teachers in her school actually have a negative view of their Latino ELL students at Washington. “Most of the other teachers have a negative view of our ELL students and try to identify them for special education.” Furthermore, she stated that many of these teachers do not know how to work with ELL students and subsequently have a negative perception of ELL students. She went of to say that these teachers
might simply not want to work with ELL students and subsequently want them in other classrooms. She further explained that she has had conversations with these teachers regarding their work with ELL students and that they frequently blame external variables for ELL students lack of academic success rather than being reflective about their own role.

*Jefferson Elementary School*

At Jefferson Elementary School, Mr. Rolan indicated that in his building most of the teachers have positive perceptions of their ELL students. He did admit that at times the teachers do have negative perceptions of the ELL students due to the lack of parental support and/or parental involvement for them from home. He stated that he has tried to make many changes at his building to change these perceptions, but that nothing has really helped to change his teachers’ perceptions. He also stated that he and his staff have tried to get all parents more actively involved in his school and, in particular, the parents of ELL students. He did go on to say, “It’s not fair to blame the school for everything, the parents should have some responsibility as well.”

*Roosevelt Elementary School*

Ms. Ross indicated that since they have implemented the dual language program, the perceptions of teachers with regards to ELL students have improved dramatically. She indicated that she does not feel that there are any negative perceptions amongst her teachers at her school with regards to ELL students or any other students. In addition, she indicated that perhaps their perceptions are impacted by the fact that most of her teachers have only ever worked with ELL students and this has had a positive impact on their perceptions. She went on to say that she has also spent a lot of time on professional development to help her teachers get a better understanding of ELL students, as well as strategies on how to work with ELL students. In her
perception, this has translated into teachers having a more positive attitude towards the ELL students.

*Kennedy Elementary School*

Kennedy Elementary School, as mentioned earlier, is the largest school in this study, as well as the school with the largest ELL student population. I was interested in the principal’s thoughts on teachers’ perceptions at his school. He indicated that the teachers feel that their ELL students are often at a disadvantage, both at school and in the community, because of their cultural background, as well as the fact that many of them come from poverty. This in turn, he feels, makes his teachers very empathetic towards the ELL students in his building, which makes the teachers want to work harder on ensuring the students are successful. He did say that at times his teachers do have a negative perspective or general frustrations towards their ELL students. “My teachers at times treat some of our students like second class citizens.” This, he indicated, was due to the fact that as a school they cannot always provide specialized services to students, such as finding a bilingual speech pathologist or bilingual social worker and they become frustrated with their ELL students. According to Mr. Johnson, it is difficult for his staff and school to adequately meet the needs of their students. Finally, he concluded by stating that he works hard with his staff and community to ensure that his students are not treated like “second-class citizens.”

*Truman Junior High School, Reagan Middle School and Eisenhower Junior High School*

The principals at both Truman and Reagan indicated that at their schools there are no negative perceptions towards ELL students. The principal at Truman simply stated that at his school he does not tolerate negative attitudes and that if a teacher does display negative attitudes/perceptions that he will simply fire them, as it is unacceptable. This led me to believe
that there were, at some point, some negative perceptions at his school given his response of firing teachers with negative perceptions. The principal at Reagan stated that at his school there have never been negative perceptions towards students in the bilingual program or out of the bilingual program. The principal at Eisenhower Junior High School had a much different point of view of his school with regards to teacher perceptions.

At Eisenhower Junior High School, the principal feels that the teachers, on average, have lower academic expectations of ELL students when compared to non-ELL students. He went on to say that he feels many teachers view these students as remedial students who require some level of additional interventions to become successful. He feels strongly that teachers should view students in their bilingual program as students receiving enrichment services since they are able to speak a language other than English. He stated that he has a completely different view of ELL students and their struggles, due to the fact that he was an ELL student as a child himself and that this experience gave him a unique perspective on ELL students. He did not go into detail as to what he does to address his teachers’ perspectives regarding his ELL students.

The teachers’ and in some instances, the principals’ perceptions of their ELL students demonstrated numerous examples of deficit thinking. Many of the principals noted that their teachers, at times, feel that their ELL students are at a disadvantage at school due to factors beyond their control. Furthermore, several of the principals also noted that many of the general education teachers have a negative view of ELL students and are treated like “second-class” citizens. In the minds of some teachers, it is the student’s fault that they are not being successful and the school is not responsible. This belief of blaming the victim has been found to have a negative impact on the academic success of minority and ELL students (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).
So it is important that principals are aware of deficit thinking and address this in their respective schools in order for their ELL students to have academic success.

**Future of Bilingual Programs**

One of the subfindings of this study was the future of the existing bilingual programs in the schools that took part in this study. Specifically, I was interested in the principals experiences with their existing bilingual programs and/or their decision for changing their bilingual programs if they saw the need to do so in the future. All of the principals in this study were asked the question regarding their plans for the future of their existing bilingual program and whether or not they were going to be changing their existing programs. Similar to the other themes, I will discuss each school individually and I will then provide a summary of all of the responses.

*Lincoln Elementary School*

Ms. Ryan indicated that at the moment there were no immediate plans to change their existing bilingual programs. However, she did state that she has been very interested in exploring the option of implementing a dual language program. She went on to indicate that she has done research on her own regarding the dual language program and has found the research to be very promising and feels that it may suit the needs of her school. She expanded further saying that she has already discussed this with her building leadership team. She stated that once she makes the final decision, it would be a collaborative one with her teachers and a decision based upon her research and knowledge of her students.

*Washington Elementary School*

Ms. Ruiz stated that she has plans to change her bilingual programming in the immediate future. Specifically, she stated that initially she would like to hire a teacher who is dual certified in both special education and ESL to meet the needs of students who are both ELL students and
special education students. She went on to say, “I would like to look at the possibility of implementing dual language in my school based upon research I have conducted.” She explained that she had conducted research regarding dual language and the benefits it can offer students. She indicated that she had already reached out to another principal in another school/district who is currently running a dual language program. She went on to say that she feels the district would support her in this decision. She indicated that it was her own research on effective bilingual programs that led her to wanting to implement a dual language program. Thus, she intends to implement a dual language program for the next academic year if she is able to gather the necessary resources, personnel and district support for the implementation of dual language.

*Jefferson Elementary School*

Mr. Rolan similarly indicated that he would like to look at the possibility of implementing a dual language program at his school. He indicated that the principal at Roosevelt has talked about the benefits of her dual language program and he is looking into the possibility of implementing it himself. He did say that he wanted to wait and see what successes and challenges Roosevelt Elementary School experiences with their implementation before he makes a final decision. He stated that he is constantly reviewing or revising all of his educational programs to meet the needs of his students. He did joke saying, “Perhaps it is time for a change since our bilingual program has been in existence since the 1970s.”

*Roosevelt Elementary School*

Ms. Ross stated that her primary goal was to continue to implement the dual language program as it rolls up to other grade levels yearly through 4th grade. She stated that there were a lot of personnel changes that had to occur to accommodate the dual language classrooms and program. She went on to explain that she was very interested in a dual language program after
attending the annual statewide bilingual conference and hearing research on the dual language program. She stated that she attended multiple workshops/conferences and visited other schools before making the final decision. She stated further that she met frequently with her staff and school improvement team to inform them of the research she found, as well as the visits she conducted, and more importantly, how the program would benefit her ELL students. She stated that she has to continually meet with staff to educate them on dual language and to address their concerns.

Kennedy Elementary School

Mr. Johnson indicated that he had no plans to change his bilingual programs directly. He expanded to say that while he is not going to change his bilingual program directly, it would be impacted by another initiative that he felt would have a positive impact on his ELL students and his bilingual program. He indicated that he was going to be implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in his school the following academic year. He has done research on PLCs, and he feels they will have an overall positive impact on his school and the experiences of his students and staff.

Truman Junior High School, Reagan Middle School and Eisenhower Junior High School

At the secondary level, none of the schools in this study identified any planned changes directly related to their bilingual programs or students for the near future. The principal at Truman Junior High School simply said that he has no plans whatsoever to make any changes at his school that would impact his current programming for either ELL or non-ELL students. The principal at Reagan Middle School stated that he does not have any plans to make changes to his existing bilingual programs. However, he did state that eventually he would have to make a change as some students at the elementary schools are in a dual language classroom and as those
students move up into his middle school he would have to implement Spanish instruction for his ELL students once they reach the middle school. He went on to say that those changes are still a few years away though. At Eisenhower Junior High School, the principal stated that they do not have any immediate plans for changes at his school, but that if the elementary schools decide to implement dual language programs he, too, will have to modify his bilingual programming. He did share that as a school they were going to be working on aligning their curriculum to the new Common Core standards that would impact all students, including his ELL students.

A factor that may influence the types of bilingual programs in the schools and subsequently the principals’ experiences is their overall understanding and knowledge of bilingual education. While the intent of this study was not to determine the overall knowledge and understanding of principals there were some interesting comments made by the principals in this study. Ms. Ross stated that, “One principal doesn’t recognize the need for bilingual programs.” Mr. Rolan indicated that he is interested in finding out more about dual language programs based upon the fact that Ms. Ross, who is in the same district, has implemented dual language in her school. Ms. Ryan, Ms. Ruiz, Mr. Rolan, and Mr. James all indicated that they were interested in exploring the possibility of implementing a dual language program.

**Conclusion**

In this study, I interviewed eight different principals regarding their bilingual programs and the details of their bilingual programs. I was particularly interested in experiences of the school principals with their respective bilingual educational programs in their respective schools. I discovered that there was a tremendous amount of variance in the types of bilingual programs present at the schools, as well as the manner in which principals and teachers worked with ELL students. This was even the case with schools within the same school district. The principals in
this study all communicated that they focus time, materials and resources on their bilingual programs and ELL students, but the manner in which this is actually accomplished varied school by school.

There did not appear to be a consistent process or procedure in place in terms of the bilingual educational programs in their schools. While they all indicated that the district provided some level of guidance with regards to program expectations, it was evident that there was a tremendous amount of principal autonomy, not only in the type of program implemented in the schools, but also in the manner in which the principals implemented their respective bilingual programs at their schools. It can be summarized that there were four primary bilingual programs evident in the eight schools that participated in this study:

- **TBE Self-Contained** was identified and discussed. Students are clustered together for the majority of their instruction and language is taught in their native language with English support. This looked slightly different grade level to grade level and also different at the three schools that identified having a TBE program.

- **ESL pullout** was another type of bilingual program evident in the schools in this study. In this program, the students were placed in regular education classrooms and received their services from an ESL teacher and were taken out of their respective classrooms to receive these services. The manner in which these services are provided at the individual schools also varied.

- **ESL push-in** was another program noted by two schools in this study. In this program, the principals indicated that the students are in general education classrooms and the ESL teacher pushes into the classroom to provide the necessary support to the ELL students.
• The last program noted in this study was a dual language program, which was only present at one school. In this program, the students receive instruction in both languages by one teacher. Thus, one day their instruction in a specific subject may be in Spanish, while the next day the instruction in that same subject may be taught in English. The goal of this program as noted by the principal is for the students to be fluent in both English and Spanish. It should be noted that the principal at Kennedy communicated that they had had a dual language program at some point as well, but had to eliminate the program due to a lack of resources, materials, and support.

All of the principals noted the importance of having appropriate instruction and support for their ELL students, but the manner in which they accomplished this important task varied across all of the schools and even within the districts. All of the principals noted that a challenge continues to exist on the level of academic success experienced by their ELL students, with almost all of the principals noting that their ELL students are not meeting state or federal academic expectations. While they did note that their students are making some academic progress as noted by ACCESS and other local measures, all principals indicated that the ELL students continue to perform at a lower rate than their non-ELL counterparts. It was very apparent that the principals continue to be concerned regarding the academic progress of their ELL student populations.

The principals at the elementary level expressed some level of interest in pursuing, or at least exploring, the possibility of a new bilingual program at their respective schools. In three of the schools, Lincoln, Washington, and Jefferson, the principals were interested in the possibility of implementing a dual language program at their schools. The principals at Lincoln and Washington had already either conducted research on their own or with a team of teachers to
explore dual language as a possibility. The principal at Jefferson, Mr. Rolan, indicated that he became interested in dual language because it is currently in place at Roosevelt Elementary School that is in the same district as Jefferson. He, however, did not state that there were any immediate plans to implement a dual language program. The principal at Roosevelt, Ms. Ross, wanted to continue to focus on implementing the dual language program at her school and add it to other grade levels. The principal at Kennedy indicated that he had no immediate plans of changing the bilingual program or structure at his school. The principals at Truman Junior High School, Reagan Middle School, and Eisenhower all stated that they did not have any immediate plans to make changes at their schools. However, the principals at Reagan and Eisenhower did note that changes will be necessary in the future, as the elementary schools begin to discuss or implement dual language programs. These students would have instruction in two languages - something that neither school currently offers.

There were several primary findings that emerged from the analysis of the school principal interviews and the review of relevant school information with regards to principals’ experiences with bilingual educational programs. These major findings fell into three categories: 1) principal autonomy, 2) challenges, and 3) deficit thinking. In addition there were sub-findings that further identify the issue being addressed.

As noted, the principals have a tremendous amount of flexibility with their programs despite having clear state ISBE requirements as well as district written guidelines. The presence of principal autonomy is a significant finding because research has shown the benefits of bilingual education for learning both English and academic content (Thomas and Collier, 2002; Gandara, 2010), thus it helps to explain the variability across programs and an understanding of what factors support bilingual program implementation. In addition the principals all noted on-
going challenges when working with their ELL students including low student achievement, low parental involvement and increased pressure to provide English instruction. Finally, the principals noted that there exist negative perceptions or views of deficit thinking towards their respective ELL student populations.
Chapter V

Choosing Bilingual Programs

I was classified as an ELL student through third grade and, as such, I have a particular interest in the success of ELL students. As a school principal, I am particularly interested in the role of school principals with their bilingual educational programs as their decisions and leadership impact thousands of ELL students. More specifically for this study, I wanted to understand the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs for their ELL students. Thomas and Collier (2002) found that students have varying experiences of success depending upon the bilingual program that ELL students experience in schools. As leaders of their respective schools, principals play an important role in the success of all of their students including ELL students. My research focused specifically on the factors that principals take into consideration when making decisions about bilingual programs, the challenges they faced in the implementation and what if any changes/adaptations had to be made to their bilingual educational programs. All of the principals in this study had ELL student populations, with some principals having significantly larger ELL student populations. Thus, I set out to gain a better understanding as to the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs as well as the challenges they face and/or factors they utilize when making decisions about their bilingual educational programs.

Overview of the Study

The intent of this study was to explore the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs in their respective schools. In the state of Illinois, ELL students are identified by conducting a home language screener and then by assessing them utilizing the ACCESS assessment and their subsequent cut scores. This is important to note because
principals may still have students whose native language is not English, but whose scores may not be low enough to qualify them as ELL students. Thus, the students that qualify for ELL services are students with significant language deficiencies in English. Therefore, a principal’s task is extremely important in addressing the needs of their students and in particular the needs of their ELL students. Thus, understanding their experiences with bilingual educational programs can provide guidance to other school and district level administrators.

After identifying the schools for this study, I identified the following questions in helping me to gain a better understanding of the school experiences with their bilingual educational programs for their ELL students:

1. What factors do school principals take into consideration when making decisions about bilingual educational programs at their schools?

2. What challenges do school principals face in the implementation of their selected bilingual education program?

3. What changes/adaptations have been made and why as a result of their bilingual educational programs?

This study found three primary findings with regards to principals experiences. The bilingual programs present at the schools that took part in this study varied greatly in their structure and implementation. The intent of this study was not to determine the effectiveness of the bilingual programs, but it was important to note the successes of those programs as perceived by the school principals. As noted earlier the experiences of students in schools is impacted by the school principals in their respective schools. Thus, the students at these schools have varying experiences as a result of the varying programs present at the schools. In this study, the principals believed that they had a good understanding of their ELL students. They also stated
that they realize that there is a necessity for students to become English proficient in the face of mounting accountability measures, both by their respective districts and the federal mandates of NCLB.

In chapter two, we looked at the overall statistics of ELL students currently in the US educational system; some estimations regarding the number of ELL students were as high as 10 million students, so it is evident that the ELL student population in our public school systems is significant (Hussar, Planty, Snyder, Bianco, Fox, Frohlich, Kemp, & Drake, 2010). Hussar et al. (2010) also found that the majority of the students identified as ELL students were Spanish speaking ELL students. This study was consistent with these findings in that every school in this study also had predominantly ELL Spanish speaking students. In almost all schools, with the exception of one, there were no additional ELL students in their respective schools that spoke a language other than Spanish. In all, there were over 2,000 ELL students present in the eight schools that took part in this study.

In another section of chapter two, we examined the history of bilingual education in the United States. The first attempt in addressing the needs of ELL students in the United States took place in 1965, but it was not until 1968 that the Bilingual Education Act was enacted to specifically focus on the linguistic needs of ELL students (Petrzela, 2010). However, the Bilingual Education Act did not require school districts to use a student’s native language for academic instruction (Crawford, 2004). There were also numerous cases before courts that led to more meaningful change for the instruction and subsequent work with ELL students. However, in 2002, NCLB had a dramatic negative impact on the focus and work of school districts in the United States due to the new accountability measures and focus on rapid English language development for ELL students (Crawford, 2004; Leonardo, 2007).
In the remaining section of chapter two, the focus was on the language acquisition of students as well as the different bilingual programs most prevalent for bilingual students. The research showed that the impact of a students’ native language (L1) plays an important role on their ability to obtain the secondary language (L2). More specifically, the research showed that utilizing a students’ L1 has positive outcomes in being able to acquire progress both academically and linguistically (Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1998; Krashen, 1996). There are over ten different bilingual program models throughout the United States and each program has its own unique characteristics in terms of how it utilizes or does not utilize a student’s native language.

In chapter three, I provided an overview of the methodology employed in this study including my own personal standpoint, the ethical considerations of this study, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis information of this study. The focus of this study was to examine the experiences of principals with their ELL students and bilingual educational programs. In order to find the participants/principals for this study, I utilized a purposeful sampling technique in identifying relevant principals for this study. I contacted the Illinois Resource Center, a reputable organization that does work in the state of Illinois on bilingual education and has worked with many principals with their ELL bilingual program implementations, as well as through communicating with educational professionals (primarily superintendents) in identifying the research participants. I gathered all of my information by conducting interviews with eight different principals of five elementary schools and three secondary (6-8 grade) schools.

In chapter four, I presented my findings, including detailed information regarding the schools in this study. This information included data regarding the principal’s experiences in the
schools, the type of bilingual programs, and demographic information. The remaining portions of this chapter were spent on the primary findings that emerged from my analysis of the information obtained from the interviews as it pertained to the principals’ experiences with bilingual educational programs. There were three primary findings that emerged from this analysis: there was a great deal of principal autonomy, numerous challenges were identified by school principals particularly focused on an achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students, and the pervasiveness of deficit thinking. There were additional subfindings that were also noted from the principals experiences such as a lack of ELL student achievement, increasing ELL student and program success, and the future of their bilingual educational programs. All of the principals in this study had relatively large ELL student populations. The ELL student populations ranged from 62-572 students in their respective schools. As previously indicated, I was particularly interested in gaining a better understanding of the experiences of school principals with their bilingual educational programs. I will discuss the primary findings in greater detail in the following section. The findings are followed by recommendations that principals can utilize to address the needs of their ELL student populations and their bilingual educational programs.

**Primary Findings of the Study**

There were several major findings that emerged from the analysis of the school principal interviews and the review of relevant school information with regards to principals’ experiences with bilingual educational programs. These major findings were in three categories: 1) principal autonomy, 2) challenges, and 3) deficit thinking. I will highlight the major findings in the following sections.

**Principal Autonomy**
It was evident that the principals had a tremendous amount of autonomy related to their bilingual educational programs. This finding is significant given that the principals are provided with district level guidelines and in the state of Illinois there are actual requirements as to the types of program that must be implemented. Thus, the finding that principals not only identified some level of flexibility but were also not implementing their district or state requirements is significant. This autonomy may be due to the lack of oversight for the implementation of bilingual educational programs at both the district and state level. This lack of oversight suggests, in part, that bilingual programs may have relatively low priority at these levels; nevertheless, the lack of accountability may result in the implementation of lower quality programs, and consequently negatively affects ELL student outcomes. This shows the need for greater accountability and oversight at both the district and state level for the implementation of bilingual educational programs.

**Challenges**

Another finding of this study had to do with the challenges principals face in the implementation of bilingual programs. The principals in this study all noted several challenges during the interviews related to their ELL student populations and the bilingual programs. Some of the challenges noted by the principals were logistical in nature and others a more societal problem. Many researchers have found that Latino students in the United States are at-risk of underachieving at school and more prone to dropping out of school. This fact becomes exacerbated for ELL students (Freeman, 2005; Tienda, 2009). Thomas and Collier (2002) also noted that there are multiple factors that impact bilingual education in the United States including politics, cultural differences, and language differences. The principals in this study noted many variables in the challenges that they face with their ELL student populations as well.
The main challenges that the principals noted in this study with regards to working with ELL students and their bilingual programs were the gap between the academic success of their ELL students and their other students, negative teacher perceptions of ELL students, and a perceived lack of parental involvement, to name just a few.

**Deficit Thinking**

The final finding of this study was what the principals identified as negative perceptions of their teachers towards their ELL student populations. Some of the principals noted that some of their teachers believe and/or treat their ELL students as “second-class citizens” and have different expectations or standards for their ELL student population. More specifically, the principals indicated that teachers have lower expectations of ELL student populations. Blaming lack of success on ELL students and their family backgrounds constitutes deficit thinking that is another major challenge to principals in this study, and perhaps many other principals, with their regards to their ELL student populations (Oakes, 1995; Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2004; Valencia, 1997).

The elimination of deficit thinking can occur by principals engaging in crucial conversations with their staff and assisting them with changing the perceptions that currently exist in their schools. Shields (2009) states that critical, deliberate dialogue is the most effective way to begin to eliminate deficit thinking. This deliberate dialogue will be necessary for principals in eliminating deficit thinking in their own schools. Deliberate dialogue, as noted by Shields and Edwards (2005), will allow the teachers and the principals with a different way of viewing their ELL student populations, by giving them a clearer understanding of the capacities and abilities of their ELL students.

**Academic Success**
In this study all of the principals identified some level of academic success with regards to their own ELL student populations. However, most of the data they cited had to do with comparing their ELL student data and gains from one year to the following academic year. All of the principals indicated that their ELL students were not making AYP in reading, or the expected growth identified by the state of Illinois. Additionally, only in one of the schools, Lincoln Elementary School, were ELL students meeting AYP in mathematics. The principals were all aware of the necessity to improve upon their ELL students’ academic achievement, but they were not entirely sure how they would go about doing so. This was easily the challenge identified most readily by the principals in this study. In particular, deficiencies in the areas of literacy and language development have hindered their ELL student populations ability to make AYP in reading. It is important for principals to address literacy and language development in order to address the academic challenges facing their students.

Calderon, Slavin and Sanchez (2011) noted that a key indicator for the success of ELL students in schools is their literacy development. Specifically, they indicated that increasing vocabulary knowledge and literacy development was a key for ELL students to experience school success. They went on to say that this leads to academic success for all students not just ELL students. They further suggest that vocabulary instruction for ELL students must be long term, comprehensive and taught in all subject areas before, during, and after reading. They indicated that ELL students benefit when teachers provide rich and varied language experiences. They stated that in schools or programs where English is the primary language of instruction, it is critical for teachers to show respect for the student’s primary language and home culture. They indicated that this can be done by encouraging students to use their native language with language peers by utilizing cooperative learning strategies.
DeNicolo (2010) found that having students actively involved in literature discussion in both L1 and L2 promotes the relationship between language use and learning. She went on to say that literacy discussion groups benefit both ELL students and monolingual students. Specifically, she noted that the process of engaging in literacy discussion groups with Spanish speaking students gave monolingual students the opportunity to understand how difficult it is for bilingual students to be restricted to only using English. She further found that literature discussion groups have the potential of allowing students to further develop their biliteracy. She also stated that literature discussion groups cut across the language domains for reading, speaking, writing and listening and provides opportunities for students to use and build upon their language and literacy skills. The students must be afforded the opportunity to have some native language support in the schools. This can be a major challenge for principals if their current bilingual programs do not allow for native language support.

In another study by DeNicolo (2014), she examined the role of the morning message portion of literacy instruction in an elementary school and its role on literacy development on linguistically diverse students. She noted that using morning message even in an all-English classroom supports English language development for emergent bilingual students and even English speaking only students. In her observations of an elementary school teacher, she noted that the morning message became an important part of her day to reaffirm interest in the students' thoughts and model the building of knowledge they have acquired in their own homes and communities to produce new understanding and develop English language skills. She found that by embedding feedback into literacy events such as the morning message, supports the acquisition of learning strategies, language development, and engagement in literacy events.
It is important for principals when selecting or implementing bilingual programs for their schools to ensure that they provide special attention to language and literacy development. Principals should work to ensure that literacy instruction for their ELL students have vocabulary rich classrooms. They should also work on ensuring that their bilingual programs have active literacy discussion as it benefits all students (DeNicolo, 2010). An emphasize on the relevance on the morning message component of literacy instruction has also shown benefits for ELL students and their ability to develop language and, as such, principals should take this into account with regards to their bilingual programs.

**Parental Involvement**

The principals in this study noted that parental involvement is a challenge at their schools as they have found that the parents of ELL students are not as involved as they feel they should be. Research says that parental involvement is an important element for all students in schools. A study conducted by Anstrom & Silcox (1997) for the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs found that in order for bilingual programs to be successful, schools and school leaders must involve parents of bilingual students as partners in their children’s education. It is imperative that schools and school principals work on building strong home-school communications and relationships. This is especially true of parents of ELL students who may not speak the language and may not be aware of upcoming events or other relevant information.

Principals and schools should work on communicating important information in multiple languages if necessary to engage parents in the educational development of their children, but communication must be a two-way street, involving considerable listening on the part of the school as well. Schools and principals should also look at developing strong Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) as another means of engaging parents and involving them in school. Ramos
(2007) found that parental involvement positively improves a student’s academic progress, as well as the overall culture of a school. Stufft & Brogadir (2011) also noted that a key characteristic of effective ELL bilingual programs was the level of parental involvement. They went on to note that educators should not take a parent’s lack of participation for lack of interest or support for their children and that principals must work on developing meaningful relationships with the parent community. This is important because research shows that there are many reasons for lack of parental involvement; moreover, most of these reasons suggest parents are highly supportive of education. They go on to say that in many instances the ELL students serve as a “go-between” for home and school and principals should work on enhancing this relationship.

Stufft & Brogadir (2011) note that there are various ways in which schools can engage parents to improve the overall success of ELL students. They suggest that principals need to ensure that any communication to parents such as important letters must go home in the native languages of their ELL students. They advise that schools should develop and implement workshops to engage parents in the school of their children so that they understand how they can support their children’s academic success. Thus, it is essential that principals continue to work on fostering strong relationships with parents. Building a strong parent-school relationship benefits all students and as noted by researchers - this is especially true of ELL students (Ramos, 2007; Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Bilingual parents are often marginalized due to their differences from other parents and/or their inability to communicate in English with the schools, so it is crucial that principals reach out to the parents of their ELL student populations.

There are many challenges noted by the principals that impact a principal’s ability to implement a bilingual program. The legislative changes and focus of NCLB on English language
development and its accountability measures are prevalent in the minds of the principals and have in some ways taken the focus away from allowing ELL students to develop their language skills in an appropriate developmental manner (Gandara & Baca, 2008; Johnson, 2009). England (2009) noted that another problem with bilingual education and subsequent challenge in the United States is the lack of true consistency in the application of bilingual education and the failure to implement and develop a pedagogically sound policy for bilingual education. This was a concern noted by the principals in that there do not exist in their districts true guidelines, policies, or procedures with bilingual education. There are best practices guidelines available for literacy and mathematics instruction from a pedagogical perspective, but the same is not true with regards to bilingual instruction.

**Successful Bilingual Implementation**

This research also looked at the factors related to the successful implementation of bilingual programs in the principal’s respective schools. Hunt (2011) noted principals are ultimately responsible for the success of the educational programs in their building. This success, however, is dependent upon other factors as well, such as the principal’s ability to foster collaborative leadership in their schools. Principals in this study via their school improvement teams or school leadership teams mentioned this concept. The successes noted during this study were:

- Increase in the number of certified and qualified bilingual teachers
- Improving cultural awareness amongst the staff
- Setting high expectations for ELL students
- Improving English language development
- Leadership development of bilingual teachers
• Students all treated equally
• Focus on student achievement
• Focus on improving parent participation

Thus, the research participants were able to identify some successes they have had with regard to supporting their bilingual programs. Many challenges do exist and are facing the principals with regards to their ELL students and their bilingual programs. I will note some recommendations in a later section that highlight some of the successes noted by the research participants.

**Lack of Anticipated Change**

The participants of this study highlighted many challenges to their bilingual programs and their work with ELL students. In addition to this, they all noted that their students were not performing as well as their non-ELL students, as determined by both local and state assessments. Yet, there were no imminent plans at any of the schools to change their existing bilingual programs. Some of the principals noted that they were discussing or researching other plans (primarily dual language), however, none of the participants in this study indicated that their ELL students were having the intended academic program outcomes. In fact, the data they shared were consistent that the ELL students in their respective schools continue to struggle academically, at least as measured by their performance on standardized tests. Many of the principals did state that their ELL students were making progress on ACCESS with regard to their language proficiency, however, in almost all instances, the students were not making AYP as measured by ISAT assessments. Researchers have found that ELL students continue to struggle academically across the United States (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Gandara & Baca, 2008; Johnson, 2010).
As a result at the elementary level, all but one of the principals did indicate that they were looking into the possibility of a dual language program. They were all, with the exception of Roosevelt, in the beginning stages of these discussions with their staff and/or districts. One can infer that the impetus for these changes is in direct relation to the outcomes of their current programs. This was the reason why the principal at Roosevelt Elementary School did decide to implement a dual language program because her previous, TBE program was not having the intended outcomes for her ELL students.

Discussion

The level of accountability at the federal and state level for all students, including ELL students, does not appear to be going away any time soon, especially with the impending administration of the PARCC assessment and the implementation of Common Core Standards throughout the United States. Principals and teachers alike are the educators feeling these changes firsthand as they work with students on a daily basis. With the growing number of ELL students throughout the United States, many principals and teachers are now also working with ELL students.

In this study, I aimed to understand the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs for their ELL students and the factors they took into consideration as well as the successes and/or challenges they faced with their bilingual educational programs. There were primary findings that emerged with regards to the experiences of school principals with bilingual educational programs in their schools including the level of autonomy principals identified having, challenges they experience with their ELL students and bilingual educational programs and the deficit thinking that was prevalent in their schools. I will build upon these in my recommendations for school leaders to provide their bilingual students with appropriate
access to sound bilingual educational programs. However, before I discuss my recommendations, I want to discuss the benefits of being bilingual.

**Advantages of Being Bilingual**

The first and most obvious advantage of being bilingual is the ability to be able to communicate in two different languages. Some estimates suggest that more than half of the world’s populations are bilingual (Baker, 2007). Lauchlan (2014) noted multiple cognitive and linguistic advantages for bilingualism, while the intent of this study is not to support bilingualism it is important to note:

- Bilingual children are able to better understand and attend to important information and ignore misleading cues or have better cognitive control than their monolingual counterparts (Lauchlan, 2014).

- Bilingual children are more advanced on average in arithmetic and mathematical skills when compared to other subgroups (Lauchlan, 2014).

- Bilingual children are on average better on problem solving tasks and are more creative in their thinking and approaches, (Lauchlan, 2014).

The above are just some of the advantages noted in some of the research regarding bilingual children (Bialystok & Codd, 1997; Lauchlan, 2014). When you work from this frame of reference regarding the benefits of being bilingual, the importance of working with ELL students becomes more relevant. Building bilingualism starts by providing native language support.

**Native Language Development**

While the focus and accountability measures continue to put the focus on English language acquisition, it is important to note the importance of the student’s native language (L1). Researchers have posited that there are many positive outcomes for students when there is a
focus on L1 and not only on L2 language development (Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1998; Krashen, 1996). According to Gandara (2010) programs that develop a student’s native language, while also teaching English and academic content, will provide ELL students substantial benefits. This is part of the reason why research on dual language is so prevalent and favorable because there is a focus on both L1 and L2 language development and not simply a focus on acquiring English in a timely manner (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Principals should work with their staff to ensure that a student’s native language is not viewed as a detriment to their success in school. School principals should work with their staff to highlight the importance of utilizing a students L1 as a means of improving their academic success and improving their L2 as well.

**Eliminate Deficit Thinking**

Another concern noted in this study was that of teacher perceptions. More specifically, the belief that ELL students could not achieve at the same levels as non-ELL students. As noted earlier, one principal went as far as to state that at times he had seen his ELL students treated as “second-class citizens.” In order for a bilingual program to be successful, there must be a positive learning environment. Hunt (2011) argued that a positive learning environment for instructional programs is a critical factor to the longevity of a program, as well as the program’s ability to meet the needs of its students. In Senge’s (1990) work on learning organizations he noted that a true learning organization is one that continually expands its ability and capacity for the future. Thus, teachers and principals must be adaptive to its student populations and not attempt to adapt students to a school’s environment.

Research conducted by Garcia-Nevarez, Stafford and Arias (2005) found that bilingual teachers perceptions were more supportive of ELL students based upon their training and
certification than were teachers with traditional certification. Additional studies have also found
that teachers with positive attitudes towards a student’s culture and their native language are
crucial to the success of student academic outcomes (Nieto, 2000; Lucas & Villegas, 2010).
Other researchers have noted that teachers’ personal attitudes and beliefs towards students drive
their professional practice (Valencia, 1997; Guerra & Nelson, 2009). Thus, it is imperative that
teachers and principals to address their own attitudes and beliefs.

Principals of ELL students must work on addressing the deficit thinking that may be
prevalent in their schools. This can only happen by engaging in conversations with their teachers
and changing the perceptions that exist in their schools. Shields (2009) states that critical,
deliberate dialogue is the most effective way to begin to eliminate deficit thinking. Shields and
Edwards (2005) further elaborate that deliberate dialogue allows people, in this case it would
apply to principals and teachers, to gain a better understanding of someone who may be
different. In other words, by engaging in deliberate dialogue with their teachers, principals can
begin to eliminate deficit thinking.

According to Guerra and Nelson (2009) educators must address the underlying beliefs in
their schools and districts in order to significantly improve the learning outcomes of culturally,
linguistically, and economically diverse students. They declared that the reason school
improvement efforts continue to fail is due to the fact that they typically only address behaviors
and not underlying beliefs of educators. More specifically, they noted that if educators do not
address underlying deficit beliefs, no high quality or research-based professional development or
training will change practices in the classrooms. Guerra and Nelson (2009) recommend the
following for school leaders to eliminate deficit thinking. I will only highlight their overarching
recommendations.
- School leaders should conduct a personal inventory to help identify their own cultural knowledge as well as their ability to identify any of their own underlying beliefs.

- School leaders should raise the issue with their staff, in other words school leaders must engage in dialogue with their staff members regarding the underlying beliefs in their schools.

- School leaders should assess the readiness of their teachers to change their underlying beliefs and become more culturally responsive.

- School leaders should increase the cultural knowledge of their teachers.

So it is imperative that school principals begin to engage in deliberate dialogue with their teachers and staff in order to address the deficit thinking in their respective schools to ensure that ELL students experience academic success. This begins by building collaborative relationships with teachers and empowering them to believe in their students and their abilities to be successful. Furthermore, school principals can help teachers to gain a better understanding of their students by engaging in deliberate dialogue. Researchers have shown that when teachers overcome deficit thinking student achievement increases (Bishop, Berryman, & Richardson, 2002). Additional research shows that the single most important factor in the academic achievement of minoritized students is the explicit rejection of deficit thinking by school based-administrators namely principals (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 1999).

**Resources and Materials**

The principal at Kennedy Elementary School indicated that he had implemented a dual language program, but that the program did not last due to a lack of resources and materials. This was echoed throughout this study by the principals noting that they had difficulty finding
appropriate instructional materials and resources. This includes resources and materials to adequately assess ELL students. Schools and school districts must work on ensuring that their bilingual programs and bilingual teachers have the necessary resources and materials to be successful. In too many cases, the bilingual department and subsequently, ELL students, are the last ones to receive the necessary materials and resources to be successful (Griego-Jones, 1995). One of the challenges is finding materials that are in the students’ native language when providing L1 support and instruction. As one principal put it, “Your teachers can’t teach what they don’t have.” Thus, while finding appropriate instructional resources and materials for students can be a challenge, it is of extreme importance that schools and school districts give due diligence in providing their bilingual teachers with the necessary tools and resources to address the needs of their ELL students.

**District Support and Accountability**

This study found that school principals have a high level of autonomy in terms of the bilingual educational programs in their schools. One of the principals in this study decided to implement a dual language program based upon her own research and professional development. School districts should be supportive of their principals and their endeavors as they seek ways to improve the learning environment for their students, but they should also ensure that their basic guidelines are respected and implemented. Districts should also work on developing general guidelines and structures as to what they expect not only for their ELL students, but for their non-ELL students as well. In this study, schools within the same district had different processes, procedures and bilingual programs. While I am not encouraging districts to take away a principal’s authority to make changes to their schools and programs, it is important that all students within a given district have the same resources, materials and positive educational
experiences. At Roosevelt Elementary School, the ELL students have the opportunity to enroll in a dual language classroom, while the students at Jefferson Elementary School, in the same district, do not have that opportunity. It is safe to assume that the students in the dual language program will have a different experience than those not in a dual language program. The research on dual language programs is very promising for ELL students and non-ELL students, thus this opportunity should be given to all students. This can only happen if the districts provide guidelines/structures and subsequently hold principals accountable for those guidelines and structures. As noted in this study the principals described a tremendous amount of autonomy with regards to their bilingual program implementation.

Another area noted in which districts could provide support for teachers is in the area of professional development. As noted earlier, in order for principals to eliminate deficit thinking, they must make their teachers more culturally knowledgeable of their ELL student populations. This can be accomplished by having well-developed and purposeful professional development (Gandara, 2009; Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Reigle (2007) also found that a key factor to the academic success of ELL students is the preparedness and cultural knowledge of the teachers who teach ELL students. So, when the school has a large ELL population, it is of the utmost importance that districts and principals provide meaningful professional development for their teaching staff not only for ELL students, but also for all students.

Additionally, school districts must ensure that their district guidelines are being implemented with fidelity. In other words if the guidelines are structured around best practices for ELL students they must put systems in place to ensure that principals are not autonomous and implement what has been outlined for their respective programs. This is of particular importance
given that many of the guidelines are put into place to meet the state of Illinois program requirements for ELL students.

**Dual Language**

As noted in the literature review portion of this paper, there is a large body of research in support of dual language programs. There was also a level of interest by principals in this study with regards to implementing, or at least further researching, dual language programs in their schools. A dual language program should seriously be considered by principals looking to implement a program of instruction that would address the needs of their ELL students. In order to implement an effective dual language program, Lindholm-Leary (2012) suggests the following: 1) the dual language program must have a vision and goals related to bilingualism with language instruction embedded within the curriculum, 2) opportunities in both a structured and unstructured setting must be given to oral language production and development, 3) develop and implement language policy in the classroom for specific content areas, 4) group students to increase student interactions and language practice within the classroom and 5) provide professional development around dual language and language acquisition strategies. These recommendations, along with the other recommendations noted in this paper, would also help a principal to implement a dual language program.

**National Education Association (NEA)**

The NEA provides public school systems with a list of strategies and guidelines worth noting for schools to consider to effectively address the needs of ELL students and they are: 1) Implement a research-based process for the effective teaching of ELLs, 2) design curriculum and lesson plans based on pedagogical principles, practices and high standards, 3) use strategic methods to develop grade-level materials and resources that are comprehensible for ELL
students, 4) provide training on theory, culture, diversity, social status and the policies of language acquisitions, 5) provide funding and technical assistance for services geared towards ELL students, 6) advocate for educators who work with ELL students and 7) provide resources that will help educators learn more about effective, differentiated teaching strategies specifically addressing ELL students. These are structural recommendations for educational leaders. They do provide further recommendations for teachers with regards to ELL students (National Education Association, 2015).

**Recommendations**

We have discussed a variety of factors, challenges and strategies that impact ELL student populations. These factors, challenges and strategies have a direct impact on the work of teachers, school principals, and school districts throughout the United States. It is vital that school principals and school districts have a clear understanding of their ELL student populations and the factors that impact ELL students and subsequently the experiences of principals with these programs. Additionally, school principals and school districts must be aware of the different bilingual programs that exist for their respective ELL student populations. Below are specific recommendations for school principals and school districts based upon the research and findings of this study:

**Recommendations for Principals**

- Focus on providing native language (L1) support to ELL students.
- Focus on building language and literacy development.
- Eliminate deficit thinking from your schools.
- Increase parental involvement.
• Implement a research based bilingual program of instruction (research on dual language has shown it to be the most effective bilingual program).

Recommendations for School Districts

• Provide schools with the necessary funding and resources to provide the needed materials for their bilingual programs.
• Provide quality professional development on effective ELL instructional strategies, cultural diversity awareness, and language acquisition.
• Work with school principals and school leaders to eliminate deficit thinking.
• Build strong community partnerships with parents, community leaders and businesses to foster a strong community of learners.

The above recommendations will assist principals and school districts in ensuring that they are adequately addressing the needs of their ELL student populations.

For Further Consideration and Study

This study has taught me many things regarding the challenges faced by principals in working with ELL students, as well as the successes experienced by principals. As a principal myself, it has given me a better understanding of what I need to do to ensure that I adequately meet the needs of my ELL students on a regular basis. Understanding the manner in which students acquire language is an integral part of understanding bilingual education. Schools and school districts should continue to develop ways to educate their staff about effective bilingual strategies and structures to meet the needs of their ELL students. In addition, understanding the challenges facing educational leaders is also important; particularly as this may lead to further discussion about how to address the challenges faced by schools and school districts.

Conclusion
This study found that there were three primary findings with regards to principals experiences with bilingual educational programs. However, the most important finding in this study was that principals, at least those in this study, had autonomy to make changes as they see fit to their educational programs including those for ELL students. These changes may or may not be beneficial to their ELL students. There were also many challenges identified by the principals of this study and these challenges must be addressed in order for ELL students to have both academic and linguistic success.

It is my hope that this study will start dialogue regarding the importance of bilingual educational programming and impact of principals as well as the challenges they face with their programs. As noted in the very beginning of this paper, just two years ago there were over 4 million ELL students in the United States; it is predicted that by 2030, or just 15-years from now, ELL students will constitute 40% of the student population in the United States (Thomas & Collier, 2002). It is essential for educators across the United States to develop procedures and rules necessary to meet the needs of the continuously growing ELL student population. As a former ELL student myself, if not for the support of my teachers and family I would not be writing this paper today. The potential of our ELL students is limitless, and we must ensure that we provide them with every resource possible to allow them to reach their potential. Thus, instead of viewing our ELL students and the challenges they face as obstacles, perhaps we need to look at their ability to obtain and master two languages as an advantage and gift. Researchers have noted many benefits of being bilingual and mastering two languages. School principals should focus on the strengths and potential of their ELL students instead of the challenges and obstacles they face.
References


Appendix A

Interview Questions for School Principals

1. Could you tell me about your school, including teacher and student demographics?
2. Can you describe the types of educational programs that exist in your school?
3. Can you describe the types of bilingual educational programs that exist in your school and district?
4. How do you identify students who qualify for ELL services?
5. How are the academic needs of ELL students addressed at your school?
6. Do different schools in your district implement different bilingual educational programs?
7. Why did you decide to implement the type of bilingual program that you did at your school?
8. What factors or procedures did you take into consideration when making your decision?
9. How long has the bilingual program been in place?
10. What were some of the challenges or concerns that you had regarding the program you selected?
11. In terms of academic achievement, how well do ELL students in your bilingual program perform?
12. What are some of the successes you have experienced with your bilingual program?
13. Are there any plans to review or revise your bilingual programs? If so why?
## Appendix B: School Demographic Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>ELL program</th>
<th>Demographic student population data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>• TBE – self-contained</td>
<td>• 500 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Ms. Ryan</td>
<td>• 8 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 75% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} year as</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 14% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 82% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 46% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>• Modified TBE program</td>
<td>• 720 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Ms. Ruiz</td>
<td>• 11 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 66% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} year as</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 12% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 82% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 45% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>• ESL pullout</td>
<td>• 370 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Mr. Rolan</td>
<td>• 2 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 76% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18\textsuperscript{th} year as</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 4% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 85% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 48% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt</td>
<td>• Dual language</td>
<td>• 570 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Ms. Ross</td>
<td>• ESL pullout</td>
<td>• 92% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8\textsuperscript{th} year as</td>
<td>• 6 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 1% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 93% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 63% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>• TBE self-contained</td>
<td>• 1,100 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Mr. Johnson</td>
<td>• ESL push-in</td>
<td>• 93% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9\textsuperscript{th} year as</td>
<td>• 16 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 4% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 86% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 52% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truman Junior High School</td>
<td>• ESL pullout</td>
<td>• 780 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Mr. Jackson</td>
<td>• 2 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 44% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9\textsuperscript{th} year as</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 38% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 74% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 13% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reagan Middle School</td>
<td>• ESL pullout</td>
<td>• 520 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Mr. Franks</td>
<td>• ESL push-in</td>
<td>• 80% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20\textsuperscript{th} year as</td>
<td>• 1 ELL teacher</td>
<td>• 5% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 84% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 12% ELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhower Junior High School</td>
<td>• TBE- self-contained</td>
<td>• 870 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Mr. James</td>
<td>• 6 ELL teachers</td>
<td>• 75% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} year as</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 89% Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 18% ELL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Home Language Survey

- Registration cards must include at least the question: What is the primary language spoken in the home?

- If a response is any language other than English, a survey must go home to the parents.

- Please use the attached home language survey. If you choose a different home language survey format it must still contain the questions in the attached home language survey.

- If the survey comes back indicating that a student may be Limited English Proficient (LEP), they must be tested with an English language proficiency test within 30 days of registration or within 2 weeks of entry into the school (if during the academic school year).

- If the student tests less than proficient on the English language proficiency test, then a letter must go home to the parents indicating that their child was identified as needing specific English language services. The parent must be given the opportunity to waive the services or accept the English language/bilingual services.

- If the parent does not waive the limited English proficiency (LEP) services for their child, then the student must be placed in a program of “high quality language instruction”.

- Once a student tests proficient on the English language proficiency test (ACCESS), they will be exited from the LEP program and monitored for an additional 2 years.

- Those students, whose parents waive the services, may not be considered as “LEP” for state and Federal funding purposes. However these students must still take the ACCESS assessment.

Home Language Survey

Name of Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Date of entry into school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthdate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Our school needs to know the language spoken and heard at the home of every child. This information is necessary to provide the best instruction for all students in the school. Please answer the following questions and return with your child to his/her teacher. Thank you for your help.
1. What language is spoken in the home?

2. What was the first language learned by the child?

3. What language do you most often use to speak to your child?

4. What language does the child use most often in the home?

5. What language does the child use most often with friends outside the home?

6. What country was your child born?

7. When did your child first enter school in the USA? In what state?

8. Is the student attending the school as a foreign exchange student?

9. Has the student ever been in a bilingual educational or an English as a Second Language program in a school in the U.S.?

10. Did the student exit the program? Exit Date: ________________

_________________________  _____________________
Parent/Guardian Signature   Date

Encuesta del Idioma Hablado en Casa

Nombre del Estudiante    Apellido  Primer Nombre  Segundo Nombre

Fecha de Ingreso a la escuela    Fecha de Nacimiento
Sexo:  M / F

Escuela    Grado

Nuestra escuela necesita saber acerca del idioma hablado y oído en casa de cada niño. Esta información es necesaria para proveer la mejor enseñanza a todos los estudiantes en la escuela. Por favor responda las siguientes preguntas y devuelva el formulario con su niño a la profesora. Gracias por su ayuda.

11. Qué idioma se habla en casa?
12. ¿Cuál fue el primer idioma aprendido por el niño?

13. ¿Qué idioma usa usted con más frecuencia para hablarle a su hijo?

14. ¿Qué idioma usa con más frecuencia su hijo para comunicarse en casa?

15. ¿Qué idioma usa su hijo con más frecuencia para comunicarse con amigos fuera de casa?

16. ¿En qué país nació su hijo?

17. ¿Cuándo ingresó su hijo por primera vez a una escuela en los Estados Unidos? En qué estado del país?

18. ¿Está el estudiante asistiendo a la escuela como estudiante de intercambio?

19. ¿Ha estado el estudiante alguna vez en un programa educativo bilingüe o de Inglés como Segundo Idioma en una escuela en los Estados Unidos?

20. ¿Terminó el estudiante con este programa? Fecha de Término:_______

________________________________________________________________________
Firma del Padre/Tutor Fecha
Definition of Terms

1. Language One (L1) refers to a student’s native or primary language. This is typically the language that is spoken most often by the student both in and out of school.

2. Language Two (L2) refers to the student’s second language or any language that the student is beginning to acquire.

3. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is the term often utilized to reference a student who is not proficient in the English language.

4. English Language Learner (ELL) is a term that is also often utilized to reference a student who is not proficient in the English language. Some of the research uses the term LEP while other research uses ELL; they are in essence the same.

5. Bilingual education is the term that is utilized when referencing programs that provide language support to students in their native language to some degree. The bilingual educational programs themselves vary in how the support is actually provided to the students.

6. NCLB is the abbreviation of No Child Left Behind. NCLB was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and it is known as Public Law 107-110 and it was enacted in 2001. NCLB increased the level of accountability for states, districts and schools for student achievement. It also increased the expectations for how many students would meet academic benchmarks.

7. ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) for ELL students is an English language proficiency assessment given to students from kindergarten through 12th grade. It was developed by the WIDA.
8. World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) is consortium composed of 36 states including Illinois. The WIDA consortium was established in 2003 by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, The Center for Applied Linguistics.

9. Minoritized students/groups refers to students from families/backgrounds whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds are different from that of their Caucasian peers and/or students from low socio-economic status who are treated in a different manner from their Caucasian peers.