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Elementary and Middle School Administrators' Decisions about Professional Development for Bilingual Educators

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MS, Cardinal Stritch University, 2006

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

K–8 school administrators are expected to provide professional development (PD) to bilingual teachers that will enhance instructional practices. PD is an important factor that may lead to student academic achievement. However, it was unclear in what ways K–8 administrators provided PD for bilingual teachers to enhance instructional practices for Latino English-language learners (ELL). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how K–8 administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. The conceptual framework for the current study was Schön's theory of reflective practice. The guiding questions asked how K–8 school administrators perceived their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused PD and what reflective practices K–8 ELL administrators used to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL instructional strategies for bilingual teachers. Data were collected using semistructured interviews from a purposeful sample of six K–8 school administrators. Open and pattern coding were used to analyze the data to identify patterns and themes. Findings suggest that school leaders must purposefully address PD requirements for bilingual teachers by applying reflecting procedures for (a) best practices, (b) leadership practices, and (c) cultural responsiveness. It is recommended that district administrators encourage principals to use reflective practices when choosing PD for bilingual teachers. Findings from this study may inspire positive social change by providing ways K–8 administrators may improve the PD decision-making processes used to support bilingual teachers who ultimately influence the academic achievement of ELL students.

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Dedication

To my husband, Michael, who provided me with the encouragement to excel in life. Thank you for allowing me to fulfill my dreams.

To my daughter, Rebeca, who taught me the meaning of life. Thank you for always been there for me.

To my grandson, Jorge, who provided me with mental breaks during each one of my transitions for this study.

To all the educators, especially to bilingual teachers, who are always formulating new meaning to English language learners.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Effective professional development (PD) for school administrators is a critical issue, especially when working with Latino, non-English-speaking students (Kulkarni, 2015). PD is a strategic method used by kindergarten through eighth grade (K–8) school administrators and educators to acquire innovative instructional practices to support student academic achievement. Much research on PD for K–8 school administrators and teachers had been focused on the academic needs of students who were proficient in the English language (Babinski et al., 2018; Bailey & Carroll, 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016, 2017). The academic success of students with limited proficiency in English is contingent on the preparedness of instructional leaders (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018a, 2018b). The demands in literacy and mathematics mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 led to the need for the current study.

Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2015) indicated a steady deterioration in reading proficiency scores for over 20 years from 1992 to 2015. When comparing the scores of 12th-grade English-language learners (ELLs) and 12th-grade non-ELLs, only 25% of Latino students scored at or above grade-level proficiency. Despite innovative programs and changes in the state and federal educational requirements, ELLs are still performing below their non-ELL counterparts (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2015). Such a trend is an indication that studies need to take place to evaluate the current practices that may lead to an improvement in the academic achievement of ELLs.

The current study explored K–8 school administrators' perceptions of PD to evaluate instructional practices. More specifically, the current study was used to gain an understanding of the administrators' perceptions of PD for bilingual educators. The results of this study may provide K–8 school administrators and ELL instructors an opportunity to enhance PD to address the gaps in academic learning between ELL and non-ELL students. Evaluating such perceptions may also lead school leaders and instructional leaders to improve their collaboration practices (Gore et al., 2017; Owen, 2015). Implications of the current study may include increasing K–8 school administrators' attentiveness to enhance academic content (Desimone & Pak, 2017), which could lead to increased success for students in their education and future careers.

The central office curriculum administrators of one of the two target Midwestern school districts provided PD to K–8 school administrators, teachers, and support staff. Although PD training from 2016 to 2017 was provided to faculty, there was no emphasis on or special training for bilingual education. The curriculum administrator for the bilingual PD indicated there was a general disconnection between monolingual (i.e., English-only) staff and bilingual (i.e., English and Spanish) staff. Just as classroom teachers know the instructional needs of their students, K–8 school administrators must be cognizant of students' instructional needs in comprehending the specific PD required for teachers (Fisher et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2015; Wu & Kraemer, 2017). According to Preston and Barnes (2017), K–8 school administrators need to understand the needs of their staff, which consequently may influence the delivery of the curriculum and the outcomes for ELL students.

Throughout the 2016–2017 school year, there were PD opportunities for staff members to attend; however, the majority of the training occurred in the areas of mathematics, science, and technology. The current PD available to K–8 school administrators and teachers did not emphasize pedagogical issues that affect ELLs. Classroom instructors need to have skills and techniques to teach second-language learners who do not have a solid first-language foundation and may not understand some academic concepts. For example, because the alphabet is similar in English and Spanish, many letters represent a phonetic challenge for Spanish-speaking ELLs (Baecher et al., 2016; Thomason et al., 2017). The current research study was designed to explore how K–8 school administrators perceive the need for PD practices related to ELLs and instructional leaders.

In this chapter, I provide a background of the importance of PD for K–8 school administrators and bilingual classroom teachers. I articulate a statement of the research problem and purpose, the research questions, and the nature of the study, and I define unique terms used in this study. Additionally, I provide clarification of assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations of the study, as well as delineate the significance of the study.

Background

Even though the Latino population is the fastest growing non-English speaking population in the United States (López et al., 2018; Mitchell, 2015; Thomason et al., 2017), the academic needs of ELL students are not met consistently (Lanesskog et al., 2015; Rodríguez et al., 2016). For instance, the examples used in the curriculum do not

always match the background learning experiences of individuals from the Latino culture. The lack of attention to the needs of this population may be a result of poor awareness of the need for K–8 school administrators and district leaders to emphasize PD for teachers that includes bilingual instruction. Franco-Fuenmayor et al. (2015) discussed the need for research-based instructional practices that would result in the academic success of ELL students. McGee et al. (2015) indicated a link between school leadership and student learning. K–8 school administrators may benefit from understanding the diverse ELL population to facilitate PD that could ultimately influence ELL academic performance (Navarro et al., 2016).

Because of the increasing ELL population, school districts around the United States are struggling with the poor academic achievement of this group of students (Menken & Solorza, 2015). In 17 New York schools where administrators eliminated bilingual programs as a measure to improve the overall academic program (Menken & Solorza, 2015), the K–8 school administrators had no specific knowledge of bilingual education. The researchers emphasized the importance of identifying PD that may assist teachers in enhancing their skills to improve the academic achievement of ELLs. Increasing the preparation for K–8 school administrators and classroom teachers can begin by examining the PD practices (Main & Pendergast, 2017). Instead of finding constructive solutions to this problem, school districts and local state legislature practices often resort to eliminating bilingual programs (Menken & Solorza, 2015).

The study of K–8 school administrators and PD is not a unique topic for researchers (Schaaf et al., 2015). However, researchers have not considered the topic of

K–8 school leaders and PD for bilingual educators. K–8 school administrators are challenged with many responsibilities, such as student services, discipline, the safety of all stakeholders, schedules, budgets, and curriculum planning (Grissom et al., 2015). The lack of PD for K–8 school administrators, despite the ELL population growth in U.S. public schools, guides the necessity to further investigate the topic of PD for K–8 school administrators and bilingual teachers working with Latino students.

Furthermore, the current challenges for K–8 school administrators evoke the need to enhance educational practices through PD (Stevenson et al., 2016). Jacobs et al. (2018) stated that, although changes are needed for the academic advancement of the students, teachers may be hesitant to implement new programs. Regardless of teacher resistance, the risk of not implementing new programs may lead to the continuance of poor academic achievement for ELLs (Dew & Teague, 2015). K–8 school administrators oversee the school curriculum and need to implement programs to enhance the academic achievement of ELLs.

The problem of the lack of preparation for K–8 school administrators and classroom teachers continues to grow as the number of ELLs continues to increase (Horn, 2015). Many Latino students are enrolled in schools where there is no ELL academic support by school staff (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018a, 2018b). During 2015, the Latino birthrate in the United States increased to surpass the number of immigrants in the southern part of the country (Flores, 2017; Menken & Solorza, 2015). Although there is an emphasis on a demographic shift based on what some have called “the New Latino South” (Straubhaar & Portes, 2017, p. 267), there is also a deficiency in instructional

practices to serve ELLs (Straubhaar & Portes, 2017). In Arizona, one of the states with a large Spanish-speaking population, school district administrators reiterated that all instruction must be presented in English (Brooks, 2015). Brooks (2015) noted that language acceptance varied throughout the United States depending on the location. For example, in California, the Japanese language is acceptable and in New York, the Spanish language is acceptable (Brooks, 2015).

K–8 school administrators may try to adjust collective resources to meet all students' academic needs. For example, ELLs with lower literacy skills may be placed in content-area classrooms that may or may not have any additional English language instruction (Burstein et al., 2015). In addition, many classroom teachers may use their current teaching experiences to assist ELLs rather than obtaining training from outside their existing epistemology (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). The lack of bilingual teacher training may result in ELLs not performing well in all academic areas.

K–8 school principals play a crucial role in the professional progress of teachers, which influences student outcomes (Brown & Militello, 2016). PD remains the most common preparation for educational instructional matters (Brown & Militello, 2016). PD frequently emphasizes how classroom teachers may change instructional practices to support student learning (Brown & Militello, 2016). Blaik Hourani and Stringer (2015) indicated that factors such as school location, socioeconomic status, and school demographics play a role in how K–8 school leaders may consider the implementation of PD for teachers. Factors such as socioeconomic status and school demographics may be an indication of a gap in practice as it relates to ELLs, considering the preparation needed

to provide all students with adequate educational experiences that meet their academic skills (Blaik Hourani & Stringer, 2015). There seem to be underused, misused, or unused PD opportunities available for K–8 school administrators and classroom teachers on systematic strategies that may support ELLs.

Although K–8 school administrators are influenced by student learning regarding PD (Carpenter, 2015; Gray et al., 2016; Tam, 2016), researchers have found that K–8 schoolteachers who work and plan cooperatively lack sufficient PD that supports ELLs (Farmer et al., 2015). Russell (2018) reflected on teaching practices and observed that the concepts presented in practicum classrooms did not readily translate into practice. To improve practice, it may be beneficial to understand the type of PD that school districts are requiring at a local level to improve the academic achievement of all students, especially ELLs.

Problem Statement

Administrators play a critical role in the academic achievement and management of schools. K–8 school administrators determine the kind of PD needed for K–8 grade classroom teachers (Brown & Militello, 2016). Lynch et al. (2016) indicated that there was a lack of PD provided by K–8 school administrators to bilingual teachers. Additionally, Lynch et al. noted that K–8 school administrators and teachers are challenged by the continuous growth in numbers of diverse non-English-speaking students. Baecher et al. (2016) emphasized the lack of instructional preparation of school leaders promoting instructional practices directed to the ELL student population. The problem is that it is unclear in what ways administrators provide PD for teachers to

enhance instructional practices for ELLs (Harman et al., 2016; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). Appropriate PD may lead to increased use of effective methods to prepare classroom instructional leaders. Seeking to understand how administrators can positively influence ELL student learning in a local setting may provide an opportunity to identify strategies that can be implemented elsewhere.

A review of the extant literature yielded few studies on the perceptions of K–8 school administrators who provide PD to classroom teachers who instruct ELLs. The academic gap in reading and mathematics is wide between ELLs and non-ELLs (Polat et al., 2016), with ELLs falling behind. Attenuating the academic gap requires the provision of necessary instructional tools for teaching ELLs (Spees et al., 2016). If school leaders identify and provide adequate training to teachers that will increase the development of bilingual-biliteracy skills, they may decrease the academic gap between ELLs and their non-ELL counterparts (Polat et al., 2016; Spees et al., 2016). Classroom teachers may be challenged in districts to provide instructional strategies to students with limited English proficiency if they have not received adequate second-language training (Bailey & Carroll, 2015). Richards-Tutor et al. (2016) stated that classroom teachers working with second-language learners should receive PD that includes instructional practices designed to meet new academic standards (Kamil, 2016; Xu & Cepa, 2018).

Sirisookslip et al. (2015) studied how leadership styles affect teacher effectiveness and found that school administrators need to make professional connections with their teachers. Positive relationships among school leaders and teachers are essential to identify the needs of both the learners and the instructional leaders (Sirisookslip et al.,

2015). School administrators are considered agents of change with the capability to influence instructional strategies and practices (Pina et al., 2015). School leaders have the influence to offer teachers preparedness from PD to increase student academic achievement (Pina et al., 2015).

Meeting the academic needs of K–8 ELLs may assist Latino learners in performing at or above grade-level proficiency, which ultimately may lead students to continue their academic success by attending higher education institutions (Mora, 2015). A gap in practice exists in regard to the academic preparation of classroom teachers (Bastian & Henry, 2015). According to Jacobs et al. (2018), teachers may resist the preliminary implementation of PD required by the district. However, the preparation of school leaders may result in academic success for students (Sebastian et al., 2017). The literature on PD covers procedures for effective PD programs, justifications for PD, and descriptions of various topics of PD (Potolea & Toma, 2015). However, the area lacking PD is the component that guides K–8 school leaders to understand ELLs and implement appropriate academic lessons to meet their needs (Potolea & Toma, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. There was a need for a greater understanding of the process by which administrators selected ELL-focused PD, specifically in the areas of reading and language arts. Understanding how K–8 school administrators provide ELL-focused PD may lead to improved academic achievement for

ELLs while improving the preparedness of instructors to serve ELL students as the ELL student population continues to grow.

Addressing this topic of K–8 school administrators' perspectives of PD decision making in two Midwestern school districts may bring awareness to the districts regarding the academic performance of ELLs and help improve student interest in learning (Wray et al., 2016). Despite the continuous PD associated with literacy instructional practices, little research existed that investigated the phenomenon of K–8 school administrators' perceptions of adequate PD for bilingual teachers (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). Providing teachers with suitable PD for assisting ELLs may improve ideas and decision making, as well as the overall teaching and learning experiences for both the instructional leaders and the students (Balyer et al., 2017).

Research Questions

K–8 school administrators and teachers are faced with challenges to increase the academic achievement level of ELL students. One of those challenges is the establishment of adequate PD for bilingual teachers. In this study, I focused on K–8 administrators' experience of restructuring efforts intended to address these issues. Consequently, considering such challenges, I addressed the following research questions:

1. How do K–8 school administrators perceive their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused professional development for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts?

2. What reflective practices do K–8 ELL administrators use to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The conceptual framework for this study was Schön's (1983) theory of reflective practice (TRP). This framework of school leadership was suitable for the current study of the perceptions of K–8 school leaders in determining appropriate PD for teachers to enhance instructional practices for ELLs (Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). There is a lack of understanding of the suitable PD for second-language programs to support K–8 school leaders working with the ELL population (Padron & Waxman, 2016). Schön's TRP contends that individuals build knowledge through reflection on professional experiences. The current qualitative study investigated the perceptions of how K–8 school administrators determined PD for ELL teachers.

Using Schön's (1987) TRP paradigm may allow schools to consider PD for teachers of ELL students. The TRP consists of dialogue centered on reflection on instructional practices and student learning (Carpenter, 2015; Gray et al., 2016; Tam, 2016). Administrators who participated in the current study were asked to reflect on their processes for ELL-relevant PD choices. Schön's TRP model is comprised of eight main concepts, which were incorporated into interview questions: (a) self-awareness, (b) practice-based learning, (c) knowledge in-action, (d) integration of theory and practice, (e) problem setting, (f) problem solving, (g) an element of surprise/improvisation, and (h) reflection in-action. Learners gain knowledge through exposure to information (Hébert,

2015). The TRP suggests that reflection leads to the understanding that should be used to improve educational processes (e.g., PD decision making). Using the main concepts of the TRP, the current study effectively identified the ways (e.g., reflective practices) by which administrators choose PD for ELL-specific instruction. By obtaining an understanding of the decision processes used to identify PD for ELL instruction, the current study elucidated administrators' perceptions of their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused PD. Additionally, data obtained from the current study could clarify the strategies by which they identify appropriate PD for ELL instruction. By applying understanding from Schön's TRP, I explored how K–8 school administrators perceived their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused PD and how strategies may improve the instructional practices of ELL teachers.

Preparing teachers of ELLs by providing relevant PD to the specific population of students can increase the level of student expectations, such as understanding language pedagogy and language acquisition (Jiménez et al., 2015). The changes needed to make PD appropriate for the academic needs of ELLs are extensive (Jiménez et al., 2015). Just as the technological revolution led to a shift in professional learning to accommodate societal needs, the growth of the ELL population necessitates a comparable response to societal changes, requiring changes to educational teaching and learning practices (Jiménez et al., 2015; Stevenson et al., 2015). In Chapter 2, I provide a more in-depth explanation of Schön's TRP as well as a detailed background of the meaning of reflective practices from the lenses of professionals in the field of education. The TRP delineates the issues that K–8 school administrators must address regularly regarding adequate PD

and the responses to issues in best practices and training for teachers. Thus, Schön's TRP may be used as a means for school leaders to begin conversations with bilingual teachers concerning what type of PD needs to take place to improve student academic achievement (Kinsella, 2006).

Nature of the Study

The current research used qualitative data to determine how six K–8 school administrators perceived PD for ELL teachers to facilitate student academic achievement (see also Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015). The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD within two Midwestern school districts. This study employed a basic qualitative approach, which was most appropriate for the study topic and to answer the research questions. A qualitative approach allowed me to explore the experiences and perceptions of administrators without imposing preset parameters inherent in quantitative studies. In addition, this basic qualitative research may be specific to multiple audiences. Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated that basic research is guided toward scholars if the goal is to broaden the academic conversation or directed to practitioners who want to improve a specific program. Descriptive qualitative studies are well suited to obtaining and communicating answers to research questions regarding participants' experiences and perceptions about events, experiences, and ideas (Atkinson & Delamont, 2010). Whereas phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography are each guided by specific assumptions, a basic qualitative study is not limited by a single qualitative methodology

design and permits the researcher to design approaches that appropriately address a phenomenon (Kahlke, 2014).

I used a basic qualitative methodological approach to interview six K–8 ELL administrators, using open-ended questions, to elicit an understanding of the ways they provided PD to facilitate instructional preparedness for teachers that instruct ELLs. The basic qualitative design provides sufficient depth of understanding that can be elicited by single interviews of a small sample of participants, as opposed to multiple interviews per each individual focused on a more thorough understanding of the lived experiences of individuals that would require a phenomenological design (Alase, 2017). A sample of six interviews with administrators provided sufficient qualitative data by which to identify themes that were shared across participants. For the current study, *school administrators* referred to principals and assistant principals in a K–8 public school setting. The basic qualitative study contributed to addressing the academic gap among ELL students and non-ELL students by exploring how K–8 school administrators identified ELL-focused PD within two Midwestern school districts.

The sample selected for the study included six K–8 school administrators with 1 or more years of experience and work in a school with a dual language program. I used one-on-one semistructured interviews to explore administration perceptions of how K–8 school administrators determined PD for ELL teachers to facilitate student academic achievement (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2015) by focusing on the current school strategies used in serving ELLs. An in-depth interview approach best suited the current research problem because the problem required exploration (i.e., qualitative methodology) rather

than measurement (i.e., quantitative methodology). Furthermore, an in-depth interview approach allowed a depth of inquiry that provided sufficient answers to the research questions. Data collected from the interviews with these six K–8 school administrators provided relevant information regarding school administrators' PD perceptions. I emailed a screening questionnaire to administrators and assistant administrators within the school districts to volunteer in the current study after obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). I audio recorded each interview and transcribed it to ensure the accuracy of the responses of the participants to the interview questions. I then thematically analyzed the data using open and pattern coding. I summarized major findings and how the research questions were answered, guided by the theoretical propositions of the study.

Definitions

The following terms and definitions were incorporated throughout the current study. The terminology is commonly used within bilingual educational settings.

Common Core State Standards are goals for each subject area for skills needed to prepare students for lifelong learning. The academic emphasis for the current study involved the language arts (Geer, 2018).

English-language learner (ELL) is a person whose primary language is not English and who is limited in reading, speaking, writing, or understanding English (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). For the current study, Latino/Hispanic students were the target population referred to as ELLs.

Professional learning community (PLC) is a model that includes a group of educators who work together to achieve common goals, to establish a curriculum guided by the local and state standards, to develop common formative assessments, to evaluate student assessment data, and to assist as the central organization structure of the school (Prenger et al., 2019). Professional educators in PLCs are dedicated to working together to improve practice through shared values and creating a safe place conducive to learning (Sindberg, 2016).

School administrator is a professional who is responsible for a school building and its operations, such as student learning, and has the ability to hire personnel or make purchases that relate to the operation of a school building (New Jersey Department of Education, 2017). For the current study, I referenced K–8 school administrators and school principals interchangeably.

Assumptions

The current study was based on several assumptions. Assumptions provided trustworthiness to the study and explained participants' insights for each response (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). First, I assumed that all participants would answer honestly because participation was strictly voluntary and confidential. It was important to assume that participants' answers were honest to be able to trust the usefulness of the data. Because the honesty of participants' responses could not be verified, the study relied on the assumption that participants were being forthright.

The second assumption was the willingness of K–8 school administrators to pursue PD beyond the two Midwestern school districts that required PD. The assumption

was that K–8 school administrators were motivated to travel outside the current research districts for conferences and workshops, including, but not limited to, those held by the National Associated for Bilingual Educators or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. If the assumption was not met concerning participants' willingness to seek non-required PD, information that supported alternative or specialized PD may not benefit those participants.

The third assumption was that the K–8 school administrators applied the knowledge received from workshops, training, and PD to their current position to improve the academic achievement of students. If the new knowledge was not applied, the potential benefits of the study's findings were unlikely to come to fruition. These assumptions of the study were important to keep in mind to understand the participants' point of view and their responses and how the demographic of the school districts affected the outcome of educational practices.

Scope and Delimitations

The current study was confined to K–8 school administrators in a Midwestern state. The study was limited to school administrators working in a K–8 grade setting. The study did not include Grades 9–12 because the dual language program at the research districts currently only served students in Grades K–8. The scope of the qualitative research study identified precisely what the researcher intended to do (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The current research study included interviews with six K–8 school leaders who worked in the school districts that might provide useful information on leadership perceptions of PD to increase the academic performance of ELLs. The scope of this study

included school leaders' perceptions of adequate PD for bilingual teachers working with the ELL population. The current research study was not being used to cover regular education or special education teachers due to factors such as second-language acquisition that pertained only to teachers working in a bilingual classroom setting. Lastly, the current research study only included participants from two Midwestern school districts because the study was intended to address a gap in the research about practice concerning how K–8 school leaders perceived PD for bilingual educators at a local site.

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher to establish the study's scope and boundaries (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The delimitations of the current study involved the language of the participants' population and their experiences. The participants for the study included six K–8 school administrators from two Midwestern school districts, which may determine a general region in the United States rather than a larger regional scale. The current research study participants were delimited to K–8 school leaders from two Midwestern school districts. The sample for the study was six K–8 participating school principals/assistant principals in two Midwestern school districts. Although the current study was limited to two Midwestern school districts, transferability across other parts of the United States may be possible because the ELL population is in continuous growth nationwide (Mitchell, 2015). However, transferability may be limited to similar student populations and the ELL program of school districts. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to other geographic areas. Limited transferability may be due to the type of curriculum available in the school districts with the ELL population. It is imperative to understand that each school district with a similar student population may

have a different curriculum within the same state or region. One common delimitation of a purposeful sample is a small sample size. To prepare for this limitation, the interview protocol was developed so that it explored the depth of the topic rather than the breadth of the problem. In the current study, the K–8 school administrators had dissimilar educational backgrounds and supervised a variety of grade levels and instructional programs.

Limitations

A qualitative method, according to Ravitch and Carl (2016), denotes the ways researchers can support their findings related to participants' experiences. Although a qualitative approach was appropriate for this study, there were methodological limitations to qualitative research methods. A limitation in qualitative research was the extreme challenge for other researchers to repeat qualitative studies. This limitation was important because the results of the study were bound to one interpretation, making it problematic to confirm or deny the outcomes of the original study. For instance, in the field of education, one of the challenges of repeating qualitative studies is that different elements of the original study cannot be repeated (Atieno, 2009).

Qualitative research is based on data collected from the participants, and careful preparation of the interview questions may assist in avoiding biases (Babbie, 2017). Babbie (2017) indicated that, to avoid personal bias, the researcher needs to first be aware of personal values and preferences and adhere to data collection techniques. Researchers and participants each bring their own biases to the study. Researchers have the potential to influence the data that are collected or the way that the data are analyzed because

participants are likely to try to provide the correct answers (i.e., presentation bias) that they think the researcher wants if the questions show a researcher bias toward a certain type of answer. Babbie stated that biases may be avoided in two ways: cultivating a deliberate awareness and adhering to established techniques for data collection and analysis. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that, in qualitative studies, the researchers should make deliberate methodological choices to avoid biases. When conducting interviews, the researchers must avoid biases, which may decrease the quality and validity of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As an ELL instructor, I minimized my bias to collect and interpret data appropriately and fairly. For example, I am of Puerto Rican heritage and currently work as a bilingual educator. I realized the importance of mitigating the influence of my biases to interpret the results objectively.

This qualitative study has the potential to create awareness regarding the growth of PD for K–8 school administrators and classroom teachers servicing bilingual-biliterate students in two Midwestern school districts. In the current study, I sought to address a gap in research about practice concerning the ways in which K–8 school administrators provide PD for bilingual teachers. K–8 school administrators have the ability to provide PD to enhance best instructional practices for ELL teachers (Sirisookslip et al., 2015). The results of the current research built upon ELL instructional literature by identifying and enhancing factors that support instructional practices for bilingual programs that had implications for application beginning in the local setting. Potential improvement of ELL instructional programs could result in cultural awareness by providing appropriate PD selected by K–8 school administrators for bilingual teachers to improve academic success

and opportunities for ELLs. Therefore, the preparation among K–8 school administrators and the collaboration with bilingual instructors may support best practices for ELLs (Baecher et al., 2016).

Findings from this research may be useful to any K–8 organization serving ELLs. Professional learning that provides opportunities for principals to enhance their skills of evaluation of the current PD for bilingual teachers is essential within a system of support (Baecher et al., 2016). Effective instruction for ELLs is an important measurement of instructional capability (Baecher et al., 2016). The study has implications to promote cultural awareness by having K–8 school administrators reflect on providing PD that addresses and promotes the academic achievement of ELLs.

Ethical guidelines, as defined by Cavan (1977), are "a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others" (p. 810). Cavan further stated that "ethical decisions are built on ethical principles" (p. 811). I also protected the participants' privacy. Babbie (2017) indicated that, in a qualitative study, confidentiality is an important portion of the research. In Chapter 3, I describe all ethical procedures used to increase the trustworthiness of this study.

Summary

The focus of the current qualitative study is connected to the perceptions of K–8 school administrators in determining suitable PD for bilingual teachers with the optimism of increasing the academic achievement for ELLs. The preparation of K–8 school leaders regarding best instructional practices encourages critical conversations to promote a positive educational culture for ELLs. Researchers have acknowledged the need for PD;

however, little research exists on the preparation for K–8 school administrators serving ELLs.

In this chapter, I introduced the problem of K–8 school leaders' perceptions on PD for bilingual teachers and provided an overview of the conceptual framework that is based on Schön's TRP. The topic of this study is significant because there is a lack of research examining the factors that influence K–8 school leaders' insights for determining adequate PD for bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs. It is also possible that there is a difference in K–8 school leaders' perceptions on this topic; this study may help close the gap in practice related to this area of research. In Chapter 2, I provide an in-depth review of the literature and the conceptual framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this basic qualitative study, I explored K–8 school administrators' perceptions of PD for bilingual teachers. The problem addressed by the current study was that it was unclear how administrators provided PD for bilingual teachers to enhance instructional practices for ELLs (Harman et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2016; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). Many administrators, often challenged by the growth of the ELL population, do not provide suitable PD to bilingual teachers (Lynch et al., 2016; Olvera & Olvera, 2015). If administrators provide bilingual teachers with effective instructional tools and PD to improve their bilingual-biliteracy instructional skills, the academic gap between ELL students and non-ELL students in reading and mathematics may be attenuated (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). Therefore, school leaders are expected by their school districts and state superintendent's office to close the academic achievement gap between ELL students and non-ELL students (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Cummins et al., 2015).

Researchers have noted that the extent of principals' responsibilities in meeting the academic achievement of ELLs is indeed a matter to consider (Valdez et al., 2016). The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. There is a need for a greater understanding of the process by which administrators selected ELL-focused PD, specifically in the areas of reading and language arts.

School administrators can influence instructional strategies and practices (Pina et al., 2015; Wright & da Costa, 2016) by providing PD that enhances student academic

achievement (Pina et al., 2015). The literature on PD covers procedures for effective PD programs, justifications for PD, and descriptions of various topics of PD (Potolea & Toma, 2015). However, PD is lacking in the area of guidance for school leaders to understand ELLs and develop appropriate academic lessons to meet their needs (Potolea & Toma, 2015). Correspondingly, there is a gap in the research about the practice of effectively and efficiently preparing school principals to work with and support the academic needs of ELLs (Gordon & Ronder, 2016; Mette et al., 2016).

Most of the literature review addressed PD for classroom teachers. For example, Li and Peters (2020) and Franco-Fuenmayor et al. (2015) indicated the need for bilingual teachers to stay current regarding new and innovated instructional strategies to improve the academic achievement of ELL students by participating in continuous PD. The PD opportunities for bilingual teachers are not limited to instructional practices. According to Lumbrears and Rupley (2019), bilingual teachers may obtain PD training in other areas, such as low socioeconomic status, to provide opportunities for ELLs. However, not much PD has included the need to prepare K–8 school administrators in working with ELLs (Reider & Wooleyhand, 2017; Sparks, 2019).

This study may address a gap in practice related to the role that K–8 school administrators engage in identifying PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. The literature review included school administrators' accountability for improving student academic achievement. Yet, a high volume of the literature on academic achievement focused on the general student population. Little focus was found specifically for ELLs, a population that continues to grow (Mitchell, 2015). Similarly, the

related gap in research about effectively and efficiently preparing school principals to work with and support the academic needs of ELLs needs to be addressed (Gordon & Ronder, 2016; Mette et al., 2016). The current study was intended to address the gap in practice and research by specifically focusing on how K–8 school leaders perceive PD for bilingual educators. The results of this study may bring awareness to school district serving ELLs to address the need for school administrators to prepare bilingual teachers by recognizing the needs of the diverse learner population.

Chapter 2 is a literature review of the conceptual framework and the main themes in extant literature related to administrators' provision of PD to bilingual teachers. I include a review of literature related to PD, K–8 school administrators, bilingual teachers, and ELLs that supported the need for the current study. In addition, I explore the literature on K–8 school administrators' leadership role in working with ELLs and cultural responsiveness leadership and teaching. Furthermore, in Chapter 2, I present literature on the preparation that K–8 school administrators and bilingual teachers have received in working with ELLs.

Literature Search Strategies

The literature review search strategies for the current research study included exploring research-based and theoretical sources from the Walden University Library to find current, germane, peer-reviewed scholarly literature. I collected full-text journal articles from peer-reviewed journals, seminal works, books, and Google Scholar. Databases used included EBSCO, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Education Research Complete, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, ProQuest

Multidisciplinary Database, and Sage Publications. Search terms, descriptors, and keywords used included various combinations of the following: *school leaders' perceptions*, *school principals' perceptions, bilingual teachers*, *bilingual education*, *pedagogy*, *English language learners*, *professional development*, *learning communities*, *teacher involvement in professional development*, *principal training*, *staff development*, and *culturally responsive leadership*.

In the literature, there was an abundance of research on PD and school leaders. However, insufficient research has addressed the perceptions of PD for bilingual teachers or teachers working with the ELL population. Additionally, there was a lack of literature that included the administrators' role and perceptions of PD and its effectiveness in preparing ELLs for 21st-century global strategies. The lack of sufficient research reinforced the need for further study on the topic. In addition, this study contributed to the existing literature in PD for K–8 school administrators working with bilingual teachers.

Conceptual Framework

With the increase in numbers of ELLs in the United States comes an increase in the academic needs of this population, necessitating the expansion of adequate PD for school administrators (Pereira & de Oliveira, 2015). The conceptual framework for the current study was Schön's (1983, 1987) TRP, which should provide a means by which to understand how administrators make PD decisions concerning ELL training for bilingual educators. In the following sections, I discuss reflective practices, describe the usefulness of TRP in education, and explain how the current study benefits from this framework.

Reflective Practices

Reflective practice, which is the primary phenomenon emphasized in TRP, involves evaluating learning, encouraging the implementation of theories and concepts into practice, and fostering continual thought and innovation (Gobena, 2017; Helyer, 2015; Hernández, 2017). The way school leaders reflect on PD for bilingual teachers can influence the academic success of the learner (Louie et al., 2019). Schön's (1983, 1987) TRP paradigm provided the conceptual framework for the current basic qualitative study. Reflective practice is not a new concept. In addition to the educational field, TRP has been used in noneducational fields, such as in healthcare (e.g., doctors, nurses, and social workers), businesses, and sports coaches (e.g., National Football League).

There are two types of reflection discussed in TRP: reflection in-action and reflection on-action (Schön, 1983). To gain a deeper understanding of how the selected school districts' K–8 school administrators perceive PD for bilingual educators and teachers working with the ELL population, it was essential to access the research that supported such practices. Reflection in-action occurs during the event or process (Calabrese, 2015; Schön, 1983). An instructional leader who is using reflection in-action will reflect on what he or she is doing at the moment. In contrast, reflection on-action involves reflection after the event or action has occurred. Reflection on-action involves reflecting on an experience or an action concerning positive outcomes and what could have been done in a different way (Schön, 1983).

TRP, in the field of education, refers to how professionals develop an awareness of their implicit knowledge base and learn from experiences. Reflection in-action is the

reflective form of knowing-in-action (Schön, 1983, 1987). In addition, TRP provides new learning opportunities and helps with decision making to resolve uncertainty. Schön (1983) asserted that "competent practitioners usually know more than they can say" (p. 8), meaning that educational leaders are not always able to connect their broad range of knowledge and understanding to leadership practices.

TRP may be applied in the educational field, specifically with ELLs, as a tool to enhance PD provided to school administrators (Van der Wildt et al., 2017). Schön (1983) described how the two types of reflection illustrate the classical, generally applicable difference between knowing how (to do something) and knowing what (needs to be done). Furthermore, TRP serves as a technique to produce both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation (Schön, 1983).

In addition to Schön, theorists such as Dewey (1997) studied reflective practices as a way of learning. One of the conclusions from Schön's and Dewey's studies is that reflection is the groundwork for active understanding (Travers et al., 2015). Schön (1987) stated that TRP was designed to provide educational leaders the opportunity to strengthen students' academic achievement and to accommodate the practice of the school community. Schön's (1983) TRP reflective dialogue is the way participants mirror their life experiences with expectations to gain increased knowledge of a situation. Schön developed TRP based on Dewey's work and connected reflection firmly to PD and professional practice. Schön (1983) argued that, by applying reflection, experts should create a specific understanding of a particular situation.

Dewey is believed to be the creator of reflection as it relates to personal knowledge. According to Dewey (1933), reflection is a methodical and functional procedure. In Dewey's words, it is an "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads" (p. 118). Subsequently, Dewey's early work in a variety of versions has been suggested to describe the elements of reflection within learning.

K–8 school leaders may incorporate reflective practices to understand instructional techniques that guide leadership procedures. School principals who develop continuous reflection may become leaders who acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses (Ersozlu, 2016). Daudelin (1996) stated the need for reflective thinking to bring significance from encounters to use the information for upcoming proceedings. Additionally, Daudelin indicated that a reflective leader can analyze how school members should promote efficiency and administrative culture. Daudelin defined *reflection* as a way to step back from experiences and think thoughtfully and relentlessly to influence future actions.

Similarly, Benamor and Guerroudj (2018) indicated that reflective evaluation consists of purposeful and complete analysis. The rationale of thinking is complex, full of uncertainty, and may result in challenging situations before a resolution evolves (Dimova & Kamarska, 2015). When K–8 school leaders reflect on the central part of the problem before resolving it, they may be able to identify and implement more strategic and effective ways to improve teachers' instructional practices.

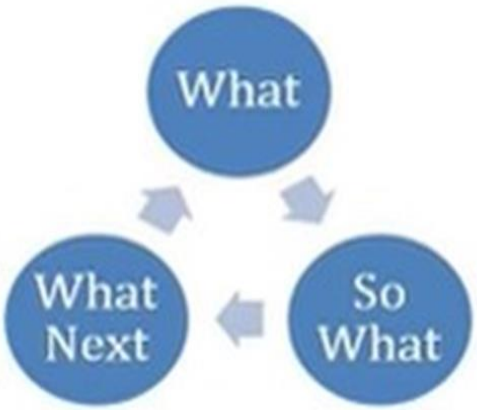
In other words, by utilizing reflective practices, K–8 school administrators may increase the effectiveness of leadership practices that may lead to the academic achievement of ELLs. These reflective practices allow K–8 school administrators to determine possible instructional changes that may result in improved academic achievement for students. Reflection "transforms the simple inference into a tested conclusion; the suggested conclusions into evidence" (Dewey, 1997, p. 74). Further research by Kolb and Fry (1975), Gibbs (1988), and Dressler et al. (2018) corroborated the TRP function and the role of school administrators in determining PD for educators.

Researchers identified reflective practices from the classroom teachers' point of view (Rossi & Thorsen, 2019). However, few researchers have emphasized reflective practices from the point of view of school leaders (Daniëls et al., 2019). The literature emphasizes the influence of student academic achievement. In addition, school principals have a substantial capacity for establishing a positive learning environment (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Yet, not enough attention is provided to reflective practices for school leaders (Daniëls et al., 2019).

Researchers and theorists such as Dewey (1933), Borton (1970), Kolb and Fry (1975), Schön (1983), Johns (1995), Brookfield (1998), and McCormick (2016) each emphasized the importance of reflection. For example, Borton presented reflection as a way in which to ask the practitioner the following: what, so what, and now what (see Figure 1). In addition, Figure 2 represents Kolb's (1984) reflective model guided by the concept of experiential learning and the transformation of information into knowledge.

Figure 1

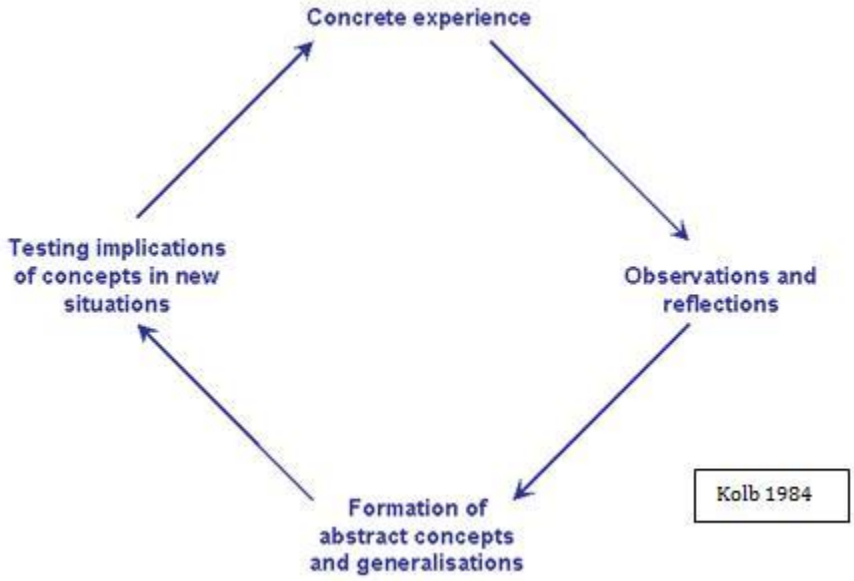
Borton's Reflective Model



Note. Adapted from *Reach, Touch, and Teach*, by T. Borton, 1970, McGraw-Hill.

Figure 2

Kolb's Reflective Model



Note. Adapted from *Experiential Learning*: *Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, by Kolb, 1984, Prentice-Hall.

TRP is a well-known theory in the medical field. Reflective practice has been recognized as an important self-care approach for nurses and doctors in palliative care (Mills et al., 2018). Moreover, Pang (2017) indicated that reflective practice is the foundation of PD. Therefore, the integration of TRP as a foundation of PD for school administrators may be beneficial for leadership practices (Glassburn et al., 2019). If leaders incorporate TRP into a regular routine of learning, such reflections may become part of higher-level thinking and better PD planning for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs.

One of the main reasons for selecting TRP to investigate how K–8 school administrators perceived the process of choosing PD for bilingual teachers was to emphasize conscientious decision making during the process. Another reason was that TRP is a robust framework that may support improved leadership practices which may result in improved ELL students' academic success. Theories that deal with child development, such as Piaget's cognitive development theory or Bandura's social learning theory, are not practical for a study exploring how administrators choose PD (Hanfstingl et al., 2019; Lotter et al., 2018). However, TRP provides a lens through which to understand the reflective process that enables leaders to choose appropriate PD for each need.

K–8 school administrators may recognize the importance of reflective practices as a tactical change for the academic achievement of ELLs. Diehl and Gordon (2016) revealed that participating in collaborative autobiographic writing involved reflection on one's present, past, and future and, when combined with reflective dialogue, provided

school leaders an increased ability to handle accountability pressures. According to Diehl and Gordon, reflecting on life experiences provided the opportunity to prepare for an improved outcome. TRP was an appropriate conceptual framework for the current study because the use of reflection is a necessity for school leaders to learn new instructional skills and strategies. Within the conceptual framework for TRP, self-efficacy is critical to ensuring the desire not only to learn, but also to apply the knowledge learned (Dimmock, 2016). Reflective practices used in PD choice may prepare K–8 school administrators to ensure that teachers are preparing the next generation of learners (Almuhammadi, 2017; McLeskey & Waldron, 2015).

The Usefulness of TRP in Education

Schön's (1983) TRP has been used extensively in studies of public school education and has consequently been shown to be related to academic achievement. Therefore, using TRP in this qualitative study may provide valuable evidence about how K–8 administrators determine PD for teachers and staff working with ELLs (Patton et al., 2015; Sprouse, 2016; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). The phenomenon for this qualitative study was guided by the Schön's TRP. Reflective practice involves an exercise that is constantly modified by reflection on past performance, such that insights gained by reflection are implemented to improve future practice (Schön, 1983). The concept of reflective practice facilitates the learner's understanding by restoring knowledge that may be taken for granted (Zhang, 2018). School and district leaders must understand that reflective practice is a constant process.

Reflective practice needs to be continuous and ongoing. According to Ersozlu (2016), school leaders who participate in reflective practice can share instructional practices, collaborate with other professional educators, and improve student academic achievement. In addition, TRP serves as a technique to produce both a new understanding of a phenomenon and a change in the situation (Schön, 1983). Reflection facilitates the ability of school leaders to challenge and recognize their current conceptions about the teaching and the learning process (Ghajargar & Wiberg, 2018; Iqbal, 2017; Mansfield et al., 2016).

Whereas TRP was principally studied by Schön, other scholars such as Borton (1970) described reflection as a method of constructing knowledge through experiences. Borton recognized that experience may determine future changes to improve a situation. Therefore, reflecting on a situation helps in the development of problem-solving skills. The responsibilities of school administrators have increased over the past decades (Backor & Gordon, 2015). To help meet the challenges that school administrators face, the United States was among the first to recognize school leaders who required advanced principalship training (Day et al., 2016). However, the degree of understanding concerning the various aspects of second-language acquisition among school administrators working with ELLs is not uniformly addressed in principal training and requires further research (Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Padron & Waxman, 2016). School principals represent the core of the educational success of students (Gurley et al., 2015; Louis et al., 2016). Therefore, school leaders reflecting on PD may enhance instructional

practices to support ELLs (Louie et al., 2019). Consequently, PD may provide practical methods to nurture the academic needs of ELLs.

The increase in responsibilities of school principals to meet requirements for local and state test scores has influenced the usage of reflective practice (Kuh, 2016). To fulfill federal and state graduation guidelines, school districts and school leaders have turned to numerous models and programs, many of which include the TRP. Kuh (2016) stated that the development of reflective practice has the potential to open classroom doors and nurture collective accountability among colleagues. In addition, the reflection practice between school leaders and classroom teachers provides opportunities to share views that may support the academic development and academic achievement for ELLs (Hersi et al., 2016).

In this basic qualitative research study, I focused on the TRP to determine how K–8 school administrators perceived PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. The basis of constructing knowledge may vary from one school administrator to another; however, the goal is to improve academic success for all students despite their racial, economic, or social background (DeMatthews, 2015). K–8 school administrators need to empower themselves through the abundant improvement of PD to embrace ELLs and their academic needs. Using Schön's TRP paradigm for this study provides a foundation by which K–8 school may determine PD for bilingual educators and staff working with ELLs.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The literature review for this basic qualitative study is presented in this section. I used extant literature pertinent to validate how school administration creates adequate and PD for bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs. The current study emphasized K–8 school leaders' preparation in working with ELLs. Consequently, understanding how K–8 school administrators view the importance of PD for bilingual teachers represented a critical fragment of this study. Furthermore, I provide a connection between TRP and PD. The purpose of this basic qualitative research was to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. The preparation of school administrators for working for ELLs is vital for the academic achievement of ELLs (Padron & Waxman, 2016). If K–8 school leaders expect to close the academic achievement gap between ELL students and non-ELL students, bilingual educators must be adequately trained. Findings from this study subsequently may improve the best teaching and learning practices and support in meeting high levels of academic proficiency for ELLs. Literature related to the key concepts relevant to the topic of study are reviewed, synthesized, and critiqued. I address PD for K–8 school administrators, the role of K–8 school administrators in the instruction of ELL students, and instructional roles for bilingual teachers.

Professional Development for K–8 School Administrators

Ongoing training for K–8 school administrators is important to enhance administrators' leadership skills. Extensive research studies related to K–8 school leaders

disclosed the significance of PD (Grootenboer et al., 2015; Labone & Long, 2016; Ng & Szeto, 2016). PD for K–8 school administrators may have strengths and weaknesses. For example, some of the strengths are the efficacy to be able to advance in the field of education and the ability to help students be successful (McGee et al., 2015). Besides, PD for school administrators provides effective instructional practices for educators (McGee et al., 2015). For suitable PD, it is imperative to incorporate all stakeholders (e.g., K–8 school leaders, teachers) to ensure understanding and inclusion of adequate instructional strategies.

The lack of preparation of K–8 school leaders to provide PD to bilingual teachers may result in ineffectiveness and turn into a weakness. Remarkably, researchers have indicated the lack of preparation of U.S. school leaders for working with bilingual programs and ELLs (Menken & Solorza, 2015). Menken and Solorza's findings are an indication that a gap in research about practice exist and subsequently aligns with this study that is pursuing how elementary and middle school administrators identify PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. The recognition that such gap is evident requires studies to be conducted to eliminate or decrease the gap in research about the selection of PD for bilingual teachers from school leaders.

Akiba and Liang (2016) reported that, although instructional leaders engaged in PD, it was difficult for leaders to determine the most effective type of professional learning activities. Thus, the preparation of school administrators to choose appropriate PD, among other duties, is an essential component for the success of all students, including ELLs (McGee et al., 2015). The effectiveness of school leadership for the

academic achievement of students is related to the success of both the teachers and ELL students (Huguet, 2017). Nevertheless, a factor to consider includes school administrators as learners as it relates to PD for bilingual teachers to understand and adequately serve the ELL population (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018a, 2018b), similar to the research of "teachers as learners" in Turner et al. (2006, p. 1), wherein the learning is done on behalf of and for the benefit of another party (e.g., ELL students).

K–8 school administrators need to understand that a critical part of their job is to provide PD development to all school staff members. Also, school leaders must understand that PD may have both positive and negative results (Mestry, 2017). Moreover, Chatchawaphun et al. (2016) stated that leadership is key for school success. According to Heystek (2016), many school administrators lack basic leadership and management training before and after their entry into the principalship. The lack of expertise as a school leader may lead to poor staff performance (Mestry, 2017). Effective leadership preparation and PD may improve instructional practices (Mestry, 2017). Klocko and Justis (2019) stated that poor academic achievement, among other indications, may suggest a lack of effective leadership practices. The participation of PD for practicing or aspiring principals may serve as a means to increase student academic achievement (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016). On the other hand, PD begins with effective leadership (O'Dwyer, & Atlı, 2015). However, according to Perry and Boylan (2018), finding PD facilitators in the field of education has become difficult. When considering reflective practices for K–8 school administrators, there is a lack of current literature addressing the topic of PD. The emphasis on reflective practices has been more common

for teachers than it is school leaders, and researchers emphasize reflective teaching as a way to improve student academic achievement (Gobena, 2017; Rolfe, 2002).

Researchers have recognized how school leadership can precisely influence student academic achievement. According to Leithwood et al. (2019), school leaders must work directly with the student populations to support their academic achievement. Moreover, school leaders need to provide teachers with instructional support through PD to enhance the academic achievement of students (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016). It is critical to understanding that, for school principals to be able to support the academic needs of ELLs, PD development must be in place (Huguet, 2017). Day et al. (2016) noted that school leaders who develop integrity can have a greater influence on their school staff. Therefore, the preparation of the K–8 school leaders may positively foster the ability to create academic improvements for ELLs.

The evidence that school leaders have a significant influence on the academic achievement of students may need to be studied further. Concerning promoting the academic progress of ELLs, it is the duty of educators (i.e., administrators and teachers) to become the voice for the students (Haneda & Alexander, 2015). School leaders must understand the needs of ELLs and advocate for addressing their academic needs (Revens et al., 2018). K–8 school principals may be able to meet the academic needs of ELLs by reflecting on the instructional practices, the current curriculum, and the PD available to bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs.

Preparation for K–8 school administrators may fluctuate from state to state and college to college. The curricula on administrative leadership consist of courses on

leadership, management, human resources, legal issues, and the like to the exclusion of courses related directly to curriculum and instruction (California State University San Bernadino, 2017; San José State University, 2017). To prepare school administrators to be effective instructional leaders for ELLs, it is imperative to address the academic learning needs of ELLs (Whitenack, 2015; Young et al., 2017). However, Prothero (2015) reported that PD for school administrators is often sidestepped for teacher training. Adequate PD for principals is critical, especially in the area of bilingual education, to improve the academic achievement of ELLs.

Although bilingual education has been practiced in the United States since the mid-1960s (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015), each state determines how bilingual education is implemented in kindergarten to Grade 12 public schools (Brooks, 2015; Flores & Garcia, 2017). For instance, school administrators in New York are not required to receive any preparation to educate ELLs to obtain state certification (Hallman & Meineke, 2016; Menken & Solorza, 2015). New York City is one of the most multilingual cities in the world. However, with the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that required school districts to account for student academic growth through standardized testing, the New York City Public School District began eliminating bilingual programs (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015; Menken & Solorza, 2015).

As a result, rather than learning how to prepare bilingual teachers, school administrators removed bilingual education programs (Menken & Solorza, 2015). Although school principals essentially support bilingual education, Johnson and Johnson (2015) and Menken and Solorza (2015) found that few educators receive the preparation

and training required to serve the ELL populations. Correspondingly, Hallinger and Bridges (2017) indicated that school leaders lack the necessary preparation to support both teacher and learner attitudes, motivation, and engagement for academic learning. There is a need for PD and school administrators to be aware of the PD needs within the academic specializations of teachers (Robinson-Cimpian et al., 2016; Welp et al., 2018).

Indeed, school administrators have agreed that PD on the topic of bilingual education is significant for improving the academic achievement of ELLs (Robinson-Cimpian et al., 2016). The emphasis on the importance of identifying PD that may assist K–8 school leaders in the enhancement of skills to increase academic achievement for ELLs is a critical matter. The persistent achievement gap between ELL students and non-ELL students remains a challenge facing many schools in the United States (Claro et al., 2016; Polat et al., 2016). Although researchers have observed, through effective leadership practices, the reduction of the achievement gaps in the areas of reading and math, the problem remains (Robinson-Cimpian et al., 2016). According to Leithwood et al. (2019), leadership practices influence student academic achievement. Perhaps, through leadership, administrators can address the achievement gap between ELL students and non-ELL students.

Academic standards were designed to serve as best practices in the field of education (Stair et al., 2017; Swars & Chestnutt, 2016). School leaders are required to understand and guide leadership practices applying academic standards guidelines (McFarland et al., 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), standards guidelines vary from state to

state. In addition, the responsibilities of school principals have increased from the general procedures of everyday encounters with staff, student discipline, and student learning to the complex rules of the school, district, and state requirements including, but not limited to the Common Core State Standards, teacher state standards, and higher demands for student accountability. School administrators know the importance of the preparation of instructional leaders to meet the academic skills of bilingual students (Akello & Timmerman, 2018; Durand et al., 2016; Pérez Cañado, 2016; Whitenack, 2015). However, the existing curriculum on administrative leadership consists of courses on leadership, management, human resources, legal issues, and the like to the exclusion of training related directly to curriculum and instruction (California State University San Bernadino, 2017; Carroll, 2016; San José State University, 2017; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2015). Revising academic standards at the local district level may provide K–8 school administrators with ways to manage adequate PD related to the needs of all students and contributing to the academic growth of ELLs.

Components of Professional Development for K–8 School Administrators

Professional learning is an important aspect of effective administrator practices. Effective and efficient PD helps to improve the academic progress of students (Kalkan, 2016; Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015). According to Lee (2018) and Ross et al. (2015), there are a variety of ways that PD can be offered on or off campus: training, seminars, workshops, conferences, university courses, and professional learning communities (PLC). School administrators may provide a systematic process to ensure that ELLs are demonstrating academic progress (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). Hitt and Tucker (2016)

suggested the implementation of systematic processes that provide opportunities for administrators, teachers, and staff to learn from quality PD, which may provide K–8 school leaders the necessary tools in creating a more effective learning environment for ELLs.

In addition to the school management roles, school administrators need to ensure the adequate delivery of instructional practices, including classroom instruction of bilingual teachers (Hopkinson, 2017). Joseph and Evans (2018), Hopkinson (2017), and Martínez-Álvarez et al. (2017) suggested that the preparation of bilingual teachers is a foundational element to embrace language and culture. Joseph and Evans also proposed that teacher education programs should prepare teachers to have the necessary understating of how to nourish the academic success for all students. The effective preparation of bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs is a critical component of school leadership (Ascenzi-Moreno et al., 2016). School leaders must safeguard the academic achievement of all students. PD for bilingual educators is an indispensable contributor to the academic success of ELLs (Babinski et al., 2018). Researchers continue to promote the idea of providing PD to bilingual teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). School administrators may provide PD for bilingual educators by incorporating a school strategic plan that specifies the academic needs of ELLs (Ford & Ihrke, 2019; Fusarelli et al., 2018). In addition to creating an innovative PD plan, school administrators must monitor the effectiveness of bilingual teachers' instruction (Huber & Conway, 2015; Pecheone & Chung, 2006).

As districts continue to address student academic achievement, K–8 school leaders must make PD a top priority. When instructional leaders are provided with effective and resourceful professional learning experiences, school leaders ensure the delivery of practical teaching methods (Trust et al., 2018). One of the elements of effective learning and teaching includes communicating clear expectations of success to bilingual teachers (Cahyani et al., 2018; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Effective communication underpins the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that school principals must have to influence student outcomes directly and indirectly, as identified in the best evidence synthesis on leadership (Hitt & Tucker, 2016).

In addition to effective communication, school principals need to use student academic data to plan and evaluate teachers' professional learning to reflect and self-evaluate (Gerzon, 2015). PD should be a process rather than a one-time interaction (Suwaed & Rahouma, 2015). Harwell (2003) explained that, for over 20 years, student academic achievement has experienced marginal improvement. It is essential to understand that, with every education innovation, the teacher continues to be the primary instructional leader responsible for the academic success of students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Therefore, the use of TRP may serve as a best practice for school leaders.

Effective practices must also allow time to reevaluate such practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Harbour et al., 2015). Serdyukov (2017) indicated that, when educators try to innovate education, students may frequently be left out of the equation. The PD practices of K–8 school administrators are critical to making a positive influence for bilingual teachers. Bilingual teachers can acquire ways to conduct instructional

research-based practices to maintain ELLs' motivation for learning (personal communication, curriculum director, August 14, 2018). The preparation of school leaders and instructional leaders may indeed provide an educational focus for ELLs (Baecher et al., 2016). School and district administrators need to be prepared for the overwhelming increase in challenging responsibilities that may influence the academic achievement of ELLs (Cummins et al., 2015; Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). It is crucial for school leaders to prepare all students to be future and career ready (Hayes et al., 2015; Marques, 2015). Consequently, policy makers, administrators, teachers, and researchers must concentrate on finding various resources to improve student achievement (Harbour et al., 2015). ELLs depend on school leaders to focus on the betterment of bilingual educational efforts (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Umansky et al., 2015). As K–8 school leaders, it is also necessary to understand leadership roles in working with ELLs.

School Administrators' Leadership Role in ELL Instruction

The increasing global emphasis on improved teaching and learning in general, and accountability for student success in particular, has reinforced the instructional leadership role of principals worldwide (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Ham & Kim, 2015). Authors' findings from empirical studies suggested the presence of an indirect influence of leadership on educational outcomes that occurs primarily through teachers (Goddard et al., 2015; Ham & Kim, 2015; Wang & Degol, 2016). However, researchers indicated that school principals are considered an influential part of student achievement preceding classroom teachers' influence (Prothero, 2015). Leadership in education often stands in the spotlight, generally because of increasing responsibilities for school principals and the

accountability-driven setting in which they work (Bastian & Henry, 2015; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Lynch et al., 2016). The school leaders' effective role is essential to the overall success of the school community (Baecher et al., 2016).

School Administrators' Leadership Role in Teacher Empowerment

Current literature indicates the connection between classroom teachers and student academic achievement (Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Although this finding may be true, considerable evidence validating the leader's role in school efficiency is pivotal in terms of empowering teachers to improve student achievement (Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Researchers continue to study the role of school administrators as a way to determine the strengths of leadership practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Sun et al. (2016) studied the use of student data and the significance of reflecting on instructional practices and identified the relationship of effective and ineffective teaching practices, monitoring, and adjusting instructional strategies to improve instruction.

Nevertheless, school leaders face the 21st-century educational challenges to educate all students (Anagün, 2018) that are augmented with the increase in numbers of ELLs (Andersen & Moynihan, 2016). Despite the findings of researchers indicating a link between school principals and student academic achievement as well as classroom teachers and student academic achievement, ELLs continue to fall behind (Gándara, 2015; Sutton et al., 2018). School principals must be cognizant of the responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating school plans related to PD to all school staff (Li & Peters, 2020). By evaluating current leadership practices through the lenses of reflective practices, school principals may have a better understanding of the academic needs of

ELLs. Evaluating such leadership practices may result in overall improved academic achievement for ELL students.

School Administrators' Leadership Role in Addressing Student Academic Needs

Furthermore, school leaders play a key role in transforming school communities by addressing the academic needs of the students. School leaders influence student academic outcomes (Berson & Oreg, 2016; Pina et al., 2015; Price, 2015). School administrators' abilities to provide PD to bilingual teachers reflect the academic needs of the students. Correspondingly, Heijden et al. (2015) and Masullo (2017) focused on how school leaders are agents of change by understanding the importance of providing PD to enhance instructional practices. Masullo (2017) emphasized the high level of influence that school administrators offer to teachers and the preparedness from PD that influences students to improve academically.

Pogodzinski (2015) and Sirisookslip et al. (2015) studied how administrative leadership practices influence teacher effectiveness. Pogodzinski concluded that, to help ensure the instructional needs of novice teachers, school principals need to attend to the overall conditions within the schools. Eventually, meeting the needs of novice teachers may influence the level of support novices to receive through formal mentoring. Similarly, Sirisookslip et al. determined that supportive leadership had the strongest association with teacher effectiveness because administrators supported and encouraged them to continue with further training. According to Battersby and Verdi (2015) and Mehdinezhad and Mansouri (2016), school administrators must make professional connections with their teachers. A positive relationship among school leaders and

teachers is essential to identify the needs of both the learners as well as the instructional leaders (Zepke, 2018).

School Administrators' Leadership Role in Creating Relationships

An important role of K–8 school administrators includes creating respectful relationships to support academic success for all students. Building strong positive relationships with teachers and staff can benefit all stakeholders and is an important administrative leadership role (Dou et al., 2017). A benefit of positive relationships is teacher retention (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Dou et al., 2017). The lack of teacher retention may be an influential factor on student academic achievement (Dou et al., 2017; Fackler & Malmberg, 2016; Kraft et al., 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Through collective leadership and support for teachers and instructional practices, principals may influence teachers to continue at their current schools (Urick, 2016). When teachers feel a sense of school community and feel appreciated by school administrators, teacher self-efficacy improves (Kraft et al., 2016). Similarly, when school leaders are ineffective instructional leaders, the school climate declines, resulting in the poor performance of both teachers and students (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Kraft et al., 2016). Likewise, bilingual teachers are expected to build positive relationships with the students. By building positive relationships, teachers can communicate better with parents. According to Kraft et al. (2016), building positive relationships with the students may increase motivation for learning and improve academic achievement.

School Administrators' Leadership Role in Evaluating Teacher Performance

A significant role of an administrator for teachers including bilingual educators is to evaluate teacher performances according to specific standards (Allen & Penuel, 2015). Perhaps one of the best guides for school principals is the school administrators' standards (Collins et al., 2019). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015) and Young and Lewis (2015) noted that the standards symbolize a research-and practice-based understanding of the relationship between educational leadership and student learning. The standards are a model by which professional expectations are communicated. Consequently, the standards reinforce the importance of cultivating the leadership capacity of other staff members. Part of the role of school leaders is to ensure that teachers are subsequently utilizing and connecting the teacher standards in the classroom (Morita-Mullaney, 2017; Rymes et al., 2016). School leaders play a critical part in the effective development and exercise of leadership schoolwide as they work to develop evidence of instructional standards for all teachers (Fullan et al., 2015).

School Administrators' Leadership Role in Providing Appropriate PD

Teachers require continuing PD and depend on administrators to provide career development (Hamilton Broad, 2016). School administrators represent supportive sources who can efficiently and effectively provide innovative teaching practices to stimulate human brainpower and understanding (Aquino-Sterling & Rodríguez-Valls, 2016). Subsequently, there is a crucial need for K–8 school administrators to elevate the level of teachers' efficiency during PD because teachers are the core of the educational process.

Accordingly, the significance of the principal's role becomes pertinent because the total capability, experience, and efficiency depend on school leaders to assist teachers in their classroom instruction and achieve improved student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2015, 2017). In addition to school leaders attending PD opportunities within the school districts, school principals may provide teachers with networking opportunities (Trust et al., 2018).

School Administrators' Leadership Role in Inspiring Mission and Vision

Inspiring the mission and vision of the school is a critical role of the administrator and is especially important in communicating with the bilingual teacher. School administrators may ultimately conduct professional conversations about PD (Terosky & Reitano, 2016; Yoon et al., 2017). Considering TRP as a PD practice may provide K–8 school leaders with meaningful aspects for professional growth. The mission of the school and the district indicates the primary purpose of the school. Although the mission statement varies from school to school and district to district, the fundamental purpose is academic success for all students. Understanding how K–8 school administrators perceive PD for bilingual teachers may help determine best practices for improving the overall academic achievement of ELLs.

School Administrators' Leadership Role in Addressing Cultural Responsiveness

School administrators need to be equipped for the overwhelmed upsurge of challenging responsibilities. One of the challenges school administrators may face is the lack of preparation for meeting the needs of all students, including, but not limited to, ELLs (Padron & Waxman, 2016). ELLs depend on K–8 school leaders and instructional leaders to focus on the betterment of education efforts. To support students in

increasingly diverse groups, scholars and practitioners are more invested in exploratory instructional strategies on how teachers and principals of similar backgrounds may be able to recognize the achievement gaps of specific students (Hernandez et al., 2015).

Learning about the Latino school culture may provide constructive understandings of the academic development of ELLs. New understanding for ELLs that may serve as a guide to help ELLs be academically successful in school. Understanding the culture of the students may provide a way in closing gaps and ensuring language and academic improvement for ELLs. Culturally responsive leadership and teaching may include building positive relationships with the learners. Relationship building plays a significant part in the lives of young children. For example, the relationships young people have with teachers and adults in general often influences their decisions to remain in school, graduate from high school, and attend college or make other career plans (Dickson et al., 2016). The ultimate goal is to expand the learning opportunities for the ELLs that may have a positive influence on life choices and trajectories.

Culturally Responsive Leadership

Effective K–8 school leaders must be capable of promoting and sustaining an environment that attracts, maintains, and promotes PD for instructional classroom leaders. Culturally responsive leadership allows instructional leaders to provide a wide range of classroom experiences to guarantee equality in instructional practices (Andersen & Moynihan, 2016; Garcia & Chun, 2016). Culturally responsive leadership is important, but that alone cannot resolve all challenges in the school setting (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018a, 2018b; Khalifa et al., 2016). The awareness and understanding of

diversity within the school system may need to be strengthened to improve the academic achievement of ELLs. Aronson and Laughter (2016) and Khalifa et al. (2016) suggested that school administrators must have a comparable mandate concerning the entire school culture and environment. By understanding diversity, K–8 school leaders can create school environments that address each student population.

Principals who are culturally responsive exhibit leadership that motivates and builds a united environment and provides PD to improve student academic outcomes. For school administrators to build a strong foundation for ELLs, there must be a positive level of comfort and respect among all stakeholders (Khajavy et al., 2018). When the entire school community has developed an enriched teaching and learning climate, the academic needs of the students may be met (Berkowitz et al., 2017). Moreover, the improvement of classroom instruction practices and the improvement of teaching practices may lead to improved student academic achievement (Murphy et al., 2019). PD may be provided in various forms, such as college courses, workshops, and training (Holzberg et al., 2018).

Training helps bilingual teachers gain knowledge and skills that mirror student achievement (McGee et al., 2015). Current school and classroom practices may need to be evaluated to ensure that culturally diverse students continue to have access to adequate public school education (Kraft et al., 2016). School leaders are in the front line to safeguard suitable instructional practices that will truly assist ELLs effectively to advance not only academically, but also socially (Berkowitz et al., 2017). Through the

incorporation of a strong foundation to enhance the academic achievement of ELLs, learning increases.

Despite the substantial percentage of culturally diverse students enrolled in U.S. public schools, the curriculum used in schools continues to underrepresent the non-English-speaking student population (Mette et al., 2016). Educational preparation has optimized public education system achievement by cultivating local ownership and setting high standards for literacy achievement for all students (Crooks et al., 2015; Gallagher et al., 2016). The collaboration of all stakeholders in commitment to improving leadership and teaching practices may assist with the academic achievement of ELL students. K–8 school leaders should advocate for ELLs by ensuring a culturally well-rounded curriculum program at local schools.

School principals are responsible for providing cultural diversity within the schools. To attain cultural awareness, principals should encourage bilingual teachers to integrate cultural teaching in bilingual classrooms (Angelova & Zhao, 2016; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). The classroom environment is guided by instructional leaders who safeguard the promotion of a positive and compliant setting for all learners. Providing the necessary, supportive classroom conditions may lead to achieving significant gains in teaching and learning (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Gallagher et al., 2016). Such acceptance embraces the advancement of language skills.

K–8 school leaders must develop a systematic understanding of what cultural responsiveness entitles. Culturally responsive leadership permits the proper operation of school environments by fostering instructional diversity. Gordon and Ronder (2016)

agreed that the perception of culturally responsive leadership is not in any way an innovative topic; however, many school administrators lack the capability to foster cultural responsiveness. By understanding diversity, school leaders may provide educational experiences needed for a multicultural society school population to create an inclusive instructional environment (Gordon & Ronder, 2016). The determination of school leaders to gain cultural responsiveness awareness and provide staff with suitable PD may help to create a conducive learning environment.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Similar to K–8 school administrators, teachers need to understand and apply the concept of cultural responsiveness. Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive practice as using cultural awareness, previous experiences, points of reference, and cultural expressions to make learning more relevant and equitable for ethnically diverse children. Culturally responsive practice has been hypothesized in various ways by researchers. Civitillo et al. (2019) generalized that culturally responsive practice embraces the cultural experiences and knowledge of students. Acknowledging, supporting, and utilizing students' cultures can provide teachers the opportunity to connect with ELLs (Civitillo et al., 2019). Researchers have also learned that by incorporating culturally responsive practice as an instructional approach for learning, students positively benefit in all academic content areas (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Researchers' findings from quantitative and longitudinal studies support the benefits of culturally responsive practice for ELLs and other minority groups (Dee & Penner, 2017).

The development of culturally responsive practice, in an effort to improve student academic achievement, is becoming a nationwide movement. The practice of studying culturally responsive teaching can be found in countries such as Africa, Asia, and Europe (Acquah & Commins, 2015). The learner population in schools is progressively becoming more diverse, which, in turn, means that teaching practices must expand to meet the academic needs of all students (Powell et al., 2016). As researchers continue to study new transformative teaching strategies, it is necessary to comprehend that the main objective is the academic success of every individual student regardless of cultural, social, or economic background. As for any instructional strategy, providing adequate PD may provide best practice strategies that may increase students' academic achievement.

Powell et al. (2016) developed and authorized a classroom protocol (Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol) that is used to collect the efforts of different scholars advocating culturally responsive practice. Other researchers are working cooperatively in the effort to promote culturally responsive practice through the revolutionized Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol practices (Powell et al., 2016). School leaders may provide bilingual teachers the opportunity to include the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol during instructional practices. The Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol offers teachers a tool for evaluating curriculum instructional practices and learning environments to promote culturally responsive classrooms and instructional practices (Powell et al., 2016).

In incorporating the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol into the classroom, the teacher must demonstrate an ethic of care (e.g., bonding, relationship

building, and equitability). This first step toward reaching a culturally responsive classroom includes general effective practices. The teacher must refer to students by name, convey interest in students' personal lives and experiences, and promote a safe teaching and learning environment (Powell et al., 2016). Although some of these practices are not necessarily new to teachers, it is imperative to provide PD that incorporates the repetition of such practices. Similarly, Saldaña (2016) and Reyes et al. (2016) noted the positive effect on student academic achievement when positive relationships were built between teachers and students. Building relationships with ELLs warrants promoting empathy, sympathy, and cultural appreciation (Hildenbrand & Schultz, 2015; Medina et al., 2015).

In addition to building positive relationships with students, culturally responsive teaching practices include communicating high expectations for all learners (Khattab, 2015; Rubie-Davies et al., 2015). In addressing the needs of ELLs, bilingual teachers may need to invest instructional time to establish high standards and provide students with detailed information on how to reach those standards. Furthermore, bilingual teachers need to create a learning classroom atmosphere that stimulates respect among a diverse student population (Sullivan et al., 2015). One of the most effective pieces for the academic success of all students involves the reflection time for instructional leaders. When bilingual teachers come together to reflect on teaching and learning strategies, the process opens access to a prolific conversation in teaching practices (Sullivan et al., 2015).

The shared vision of strategic planning for culturally responsive practice may provide bilingual teachers, administrators, and staff working with ELLs the opportunity to be successful. Culturally responsive practice and the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol create a community of learners, which can transform classroom practices (Acquah & Commins, 2015; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; López, 2017). By working together, K–8 school leaders and instructional leaders can improve the academic skills of ELL students and meet state and district standards.

The Instructional Role of Bilingual Teachers

PD that supports the academic achievement of ELLs must be incorporated for teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Franco-Fuenmayor et al. (2015) and Master et al. (2016) investigated the importance of having teachers select PD to enhance their knowledge of working with ELLs. The authors explained that research-based knowledge and instructional skills that address the needs of ELLs should be taught during preservice teacher training. In addition to having a research-based curriculum, bilingual teachers may also benefit from reflecting on their teaching strategies. When teachers understand the teaching objectives of the curriculum, they can implement reflective processes to better obtain the teaching goals (Acquah & Commins, 2015).

Bilingual teachers are expected to follow district curriculum guides and the state common core standards to meet students' academic achievement needs. In addition, bilingual teachers also need to understand the multilingual and multicultural backgrounds of ELLs. Bailey and Carroll (2015) and Nieto (2017) acknowledged the role of bilingual teachers in working with ELLs to provide a sense of academic balance, while at the same

time applying teaching initiatives and changes required to facilitate and support improvements in curricula. To determine if bilingual teachers were equipped to improve student academic outcomes, Bailey and Carroll completed an extensive analysis of various forms of assessment for students with diverse developmental needs and ELLs. It is necessary to recognize the linguistic abilities of the ELL according to the student's English language level. The authors' findings revealed the underachievement of ELLs using certain assessment strategies and recommended future research to determine ways to improve academic tools for evaluating ELLs. Consideration of the assessment of students with diverse learning needs is of paramount importance as the nation moves toward the development and implementation of a new generation of assessments.

Jiménez et al. (2015) and Vangrieken et al. (2017) discussed the administration's prioritization of teachers working with ELLs. Jiménez et al. reported the common belief that administrators should provide opportunities for teachers of ELLs to gain specific knowledge through formal study and a range of communication abilities with native speakers of other languages. The findings provided a thoughtful synthesis of the linguistic needs of ELLs. Distinctively, van Ginkel et al. (2016) and Kayi-Aydar (2015) indicated that the participant teachers in their studies had positional identities in relation to ELLs. These variances between teachers indicated how the students' life experiences affect the teachers' knowledge and projected identities of ELLs. Kayi-Aydar and de Oliveira (2016) concluded that the ultimate role for teachers is the ability to make connections with ELLs.

Making a meaningful connection with students leads to a collective effort to aid second-language development and academic achievement (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Subsequently, more extensive exposure for ELLs to the newly acquired second language should improve their acquisition of the newly acquired language, ultimately promoting success in the classrooms (Méndez et al., 2015; Wu & Kraemer, 2017). Making connections with the learners in the 21st century transfers into ensuring that the learner feels confident and is able to learn in a safe, caring, and accepting environment. Building knowledge using prior knowledge is a strategy used to increase the academic success of students (Sidney & Alibali, 2015). However, researchers emphasized that many ELLs may have limited background knowledge. It is critical for bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs to understand the importance of earning the students' confidence to construct effective efforts to transform ELL learning into active learning. This teaching practice includes engaging the students in the lessons.

The knowledge of native language development and second-language acquisition is an important and necessary skill for instructional leaders. Baker et al. (2016) and Prehn et al. (2018) studied the transition between the native language and the second language. The understanding of language is a key factor for the current research as an indication of recognizing how instructional leaders view PD for bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs. One of the key findings from Prehn et al. was the fidelity of implementation of the program lessons from two different classroom settings. The implementation of teachers' instructional practices service ELLs as an integral part of the academic success of the students. Similarly, Master et al. (2016) and Richards-Tutor et al. (2015) noted that

phonemic awareness and reading comprehension were significant skills that must be taught to ELLs by competent teachers using instructional fidelity to research-based reading programs. The fidelity of curriculum implementation may be in part what bilingual teachers need to promote effective and consistent implementation for the educational academic success of ELLs.

As bilingual teachers' roles and responsibilities continue to increase and change, teachers need PD to enact instructional practices that build capacity in their classrooms to improve teaching and learning. Accountability for the academic success of ELLs rests directly on bilingual educators (Gleeson & Davison, 2016; Polat et al., 2016). Furthermore, Richards-Tutor et al. (2015) and Gore et al. (2017) studied the importance of the development of professional learning communities to enhance students' academic achievement. PD creates and enhances professional communities among educators. Efforts to prepare teachers with the necessary language skills to assist ELLs are imperative to developing a community of professional learners.

Preparation for Bilingual Teachers

Effective preparation for bilingual teachers is essential to support the academic achievement of ELLs. Flores and Rosa (2015), Johannessen et al. (2016), and Howell et al. (2016) addressed the need for bilingual teachers' preparation and PD in U.S. public schools. The conversations evoking the lack of groundwork of bilingual teachers began by recognizing the significance of ideological factors in education. Such conversations are related to the various challenges bilingual teachers face in the 21st-century era with an increase in numbers of ELLs in classrooms throughout the United States (Bowman-

Perrott et al., 2016; Peker, 2015). Cultural and social principles for bilingual teachers instructing ELLs must be addressed.

Teachers need to prepare themselves with a variety of competencies to educate students who are potential future leaders of the community. Taylor et al. (2019) stated that, because the ELL population continues to grow throughout the nation, the need for bilingual education and English as a second language teacher preparation is associated with teacher preparation activities in colleges and schools of education across the country. Similarly, Villegas et al. (2018) and Wang and Woolf (2015) stated that bilingual teacher preparation standards signify a rich and extensive scope of professional knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions. The results of the research showed that the dimension of instructional skill has the greatest influence on teacher development, including attitudes and behaviors, personality traits, and knowledge required to teach elementary-aged children (Moghtadaie & Taji, 2018). Furthermore, Anyanwu (2015) and Patton et al. (2015) indicated that teachers should be given the freedom to be flexible and self-directed to choose PD that will assist them to learn best practices to instruct ELLs.

Despite the type of PD provided to teachers, the main goal is to meet the objectives of specific content area subjects (i.e., reading, mathematics, science) as well as content standards. Shaffer and Thomas-Brown (2015) and Granger et al. (2018) indicated that the probability for educators to transfer academic skills to the classroom setting is minimal. However, employing a co-teaching professional development model may assist in bilingual teacher collaboration. The co-teaching professional development model is similar to the PLC model. The co-teaching professional development model consists of a

team of teachers who meet at the end of the day to debrief and establish each person's viewpoints and probable modifications that may be considered essential to personalize the lesson learned for each student. The co-teaching professional development model may consist of teams of teachers from the same grade level, teams of teachers from the same subject area, or teams of teachers who work with ELLs. The most significant element of the co-teaching professional development model involves team meetings scheduled regularly to plan and modify instructional practices as necessary, which closely resembles a PLC, and provide a means to meet the individual educational subject-matter goals of all students.

Evidence from research confirmed that, in the field of education, an influential component in regulating the curriculum is known as instructional practices (Gort, 2019; Ifat & Eyal, 2017; Zakirova, 2016). Teacher reflective practices are guidelines influencing teachers' instructional practices (Farrell, 2016; Hébert, 2015; Jasper, 2003). The instructional skills and techniques that teachers acquire ultimately increase students' learning and knowledge (Hébert, 2015; Li & Peters, 2020; Maxwell, 2016). Schön's (1983) TRP emphasized the submission in which educators become conscious of their implicit knowledge from reflecting on experiences. Reflective practice is not a continuous procedure or experience; reflection in-action may emerge in response to unexpected moments, typically moments when the response of a student generates a question about tacit practices and their underlying assumptions (Peeters & Robinson, 2015). In the classroom setting, this is known as a teachable moment. This opportunity

presents an occasion for reframing a learning experience for a student that may lead to a new practice that can be tested in-action.

Educators, particularly those working with ELLs, may benefit from practicing reflective practices. Camburn and Han (2017) and Stenberg et al. (2016) distinguished between cognitive and behavioral dimensions of reflective practice. Each operationalization of the construct contains items emanating from the behavioral and cognitive dimensions of reflective practice. Findings from the studies of Camburn and Han (2017) and Gregory et al. (2016) revealed that classroom teachers randomly assigned to reflect on their daily instructional practices had significantly higher levels of positive classroom climate, teacher sensitivity, and behavior management than teachers who did not use reflection. The benefits of embedded learning opportunities for teachers are not limited to classroom settings in the United States. For instance, Australian teachers improved their knowledge and teaching practices through participation in PLCs (Camburn & Han, 2017). Meaningful reflective practices may lead to the development of exemplary instructional practices.

Understanding the Academic Needs of ELLs

K–8 school administrators are the fundamental resources in providing or having available PD that will help the academic achievement of ELLs. School leaders play a key role in transforming school communities by addressing the academic needs of students (Khalifa et al., 2016; Pina et al., 2015). K–8 school leaders can influence students' academic outcomes. Masullo (2017) and Vähäsantanen (2015) focused on how school leaders are agents of change. Masullo indicated that a high level of academic influence

school administrators offers to teachers and the preparedness from PD that influences students. Although this research was based on the general student population, it identified in-depth instructional strategies that may also benefit ELLs.

In addition to building ELLs' confidence through the acquisition of language, researchers found that using engaging artistic activities may also result in academic progress (Ingraham & Nuttall, 2016). Art integration for ELLs can be delivered in relevant media such as dance, art, music, and drama. Exploiting art for ELLs not only improved language acquisition but also promoted culture acceptance and preservation (Wellman & Bey, 2015). In addition, the visual arts can provide ELLs with productive platforms for emerging the confidence and life skills needed to familiarize themselves both in and out of school (Freeman, 2017; Wellman & Bey, 2015). Moreover, the promotion of culture needs to acknowledge and accommodate the students' cultural heritage. Providing academic and linguistic support to ELLs that includes cultural arts may improve their overall English language proficiency (Vaughn et al., 2017).

Taking into consideration the educational laws and the demands of the educational system, policy makers may deviate from the academic role and the educational importance of the school leaders within districts and schools (Derrington & Campbell, 2018). The educational arena has changed drastically. Traditionally, school administrators used to focus the majority of their attention on school discipline, hiring of personnel (i.e., teachers), the budget, addressing parents' concerns, and other school-related businesses (DiMartino & Jessen, 2016; Tyre & Feuerborn, 2017). In the

transformation educational arena of the 21st century, school administrators have more professional demands.

Despite the academic efforts to help ELLs meet the academic standards, bilingual students continue to fall behind their non-bilingual peers (Burke et al., 2016). The researchers' findings indicated that emergent bilinguals with Spanish as a home language face additional and exceptional challenges compared to students with other home languages. School administrators may need to advocate for the development of better PD training to prepare ELLs to meet and strive in school (Beal & Rudolph, 2015). This is a clear indication that studies relevant to the academic improvement for ELLs are an area of continuous study.

Presently, school administrators, mainly working in urban schools, have increased responsibilities. School administrators evaluate teachers, deal with major disciplinary problems, provide PD to teachers that correspond to the demographics of the school/district, and ensure that students are meeting and exceeding their academic goals. In addition, insufficient focus is considered to prepare school administrators to work closely with specific student populations (Day et al., 2016). With diverse curricula demands, K–8 school leaders and classroom teachers find little available time to analyze the structure of the educational system. Educators, pressured to maintain educational standards on state reports, find it difficult to provide concentrated instructional time to meet and surpass the academic needs of all the students including the ELLs who are falling behind academically (Hallinger, 2018). Current regulations and assessment

policies are needed to ensure that all students, specifically ELLs, are provided with adequate, challenging, and rigorous instruction that will promote educational growth.

This basic qualitative research intended to examine the awareness of K–8 school administrators regarding the academic needs of ELLs. Markova (2017) indicated that, for many ELLs, preschool programs are the only path for acquiring and developing English-language skills prior to kindergarten. With increased English-language skills, students exhibit improved skills in other academic areas and continue to do so throughout their elementary school years (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Markova, 2017). Providing opportunities as early as possible may result in ELLs progressing educationally and experience confidence in their academic abilities.

Summary and Conclusions

I began Chapter 2 of this basic qualitative research with literature search strategies, the search terms used, and the explanation of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework for this current study was Schön's (1983) TRP. The literature emphasized the need for school administrators to provide PD for bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs. Themes presented from the literature included PD for school administrators and bilingual teachers' instructional roles. Researchers' findings emphasized the necessity for PD to improve the academic achievement of ELLs (Cummins et al., 2015; Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). During the literature process, I discovered that studies about school administrators and PD are primarily focusing on the needs of the general education population and not specifically about ELLs. Researchers emphasized the growth of the ELL population and the importance of

improving student academic achievement; however, the ELL population remains underrepresented (Gubbins et al., 2020).

The need for administrative awareness of PD needs and lack of sufficient preparation are indicative of the gap in practice related to the preparation of work with and support the academic needs of ELLs (Gordon & Ronder, 2016; Mette et al., 2016). The specific research gap tied to the gap in practice is the lack of research and understanding of how K–8 school leaders choose PD for bilingual educators. The problem addressed by this study was the lack of preparation of K–8 school administrators to provide PD for bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs. Despite educational reforms, ELLs continue to fall behind their non-ELL peers (Polat et al., 2016). The current basic qualitative research study may extend knowledge related to practice in the discipline and influence social change by examining K–8 school administrators' perceptions to plan highly PD for bilingual teachers working with ELLs. In addition, the findings of this study may lead to encouragement and academic support for other members of the school community working with ELLs including non-bilingual staff members.

In Chapter 3, I include information regarding the methodology of the study. I describe the research design and justify the study. I also provide information concerning the participant population, the management of the data, the type of instrumentation used, and the procedures about the validity and ethical safeguard of the participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. Research findings revealed that school administrators play an essential role in closing the achievement gap and increasing student academic achievement; however, it was not clear how K–8 school administrators determined specific PD for bilingual teachers (Litz & Scott, 2017; Quin et al., 2015). Understanding how school principals use TRP to determine PD for bilingual teachers may lead other school and district leaders to employ such successful practices to attain comparable outcomes in helping ELLs succeed academically. Moreover, the success of ELLs may also result in lifelong learning as they enter higher education institutions. The current study was designed to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practice to determine PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. Chapter 3 includes the research design and rationale for selecting the study, the role of the researcher, methodology, methods of data collection, and the data analysis process. I conclude the chapter by addressing matters of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The basic qualitative methodology selected for this research was an approach to investigate how K–8 school administrators perceived valuable PD to support the academic achievement of ELLs. According to Yin (2018), the research design is the map used by researchers to guide them systematically from research problem and research question to data collection and analysis. The methodology for this study was qualitative. I

chose a basic qualitative study design to explore and describe how K–8 school administrators envisioned PD that positively influences the instructional practices of ELL teachers. I considered a quantitative approach, which seeks to investigate the answers to the questions starting with "how many" or "how much" as a measurement method to determine inquiries of a problem (Rasinger, 2013). Burkholder et al. (2016) supported the use of qualitative studies when in-depth information is needed from participants, particularly through an interpretative lens of the researcher. I selected a qualitative approach because it permitted the exploration and examination of what K–8 school administrators may consider to be effective leadership practices that positively influence the selection of PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that qualitative interviewing provides a more in-depth narrative. Therefore, I conducted semistructured interviews for the study.

There are several designs available for qualitative methodology, such as basic, ethnographic, and phenomenological. A qualitative study suggests the study of real-life events that may use a selection of data sources such as direct observations, interviews, artifacts, documents, and other informants (Yin, 2009). An ethnographic design involves a researcher investigating a particular topic by becoming part of the field by observation utilizing immersion (Schwandt, 2015). For example, students who are studying to be teachers may take a course that requires fieldwork by embedding in a school setting to make observations about their experiences. Because of the need for a one-on-one interview with each participant in the current study, a phenomenological approach was considered for the current study. A phenomenological design offers an interview process,

wherein qualitative data are categorized and then analyzed to determine the relationship within each category (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The goal of a phenomenological design is to obtain comprehensive descriptions that interpret the fundamental nature of experiences (Moustakas, 1994). However, because a basic qualitative study offered to collect only qualitative data to respond to key questions for the current study, it was deemed appropriate for the current study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The decline in academic achievement of ELL students indicates the need for school administrators to provide PD for bilingual teachers. I applied the conceptual framework of Schön's (1987) TRP to explore K–8 school administrators' perceptions of PD for bilingual teachers within the current study. Qualitative researchers are interested in comprehending the way people perceive their experiences or situations to make meaning from experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the current study, I investigated the experiences of K–8 school administrators concerning PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. Findings from this research may be useful for other school districts and district administrators reach an understanding of the selection of PD for bilingual teachers.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that qualitative interviewing provides a more in-depth narrative. The compilation of qualitative data strengthens the experiences to view the world from different viewpoints. Basic or generic qualitative studies can stand alone as a researcher's articulated approach (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Merriam (2009) indicated that generic studies seek to understand how people interpret, construct, or make meaning from their world and their experiences. Bengtsson (2016) indicated that

qualitative research provides an interpretation of the human condition in various circumstances and perceived situations. According to Kahlke (2014), generic studies draw on one or more established methodologies to build a research design "from the ground up" (p. 13). Therefore, a basic qualitative study design was chosen for the current study. A basic qualitative study was appropriate to address the problem, which involved how school administrators provide PD for teachers to enhance instructional practices for ELLs (Harman et al., 2016; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). The research questions that guided this basic qualitative study are as follows:

1. How do K–8 school administrators perceive their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused professional development in two Midwestern school districts two Midwestern school districts?
2. What reflective practices do K–8 administrators use to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts?

The most significant characteristic of a qualitative study is the distinctiveness of the results (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research provides researchers with a comprehensive discipline range not limited to any specific theoretical standpoint (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative research is evolving (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this basic qualitative study, the unit of analysis included K–8 school principals and assistant principals from two small urban school districts in the Midwest with a dual language program. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that a qualitative study design is applicable when the researcher is asking "how" questions about a current phenomenon on which the

researcher has minimal or no control. Ravitch and Carl noted that qualitative studies allow the researcher to investigate the "what" of a phenomenon to better comprehend the problem rather than centering the attention on how the case is being studied.

Utilizing a qualitative study approach for this research, I conducted semistructured interviews. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), interviews tend to be structured, semistructured, or unstructured. Structured interviews are based on fixed-item questions (Weiss, 1994). Questionnaires are considered structured interviews because identical questions are asked (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Unstructured interviews offer the participants the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions. On the other hand, semistructured interviews offer the researcher the capability to ask each participant the same questions as an interview instrument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) and also allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions as a way to clarify a response. Using semistructured interviews, the researcher has a specific topic to inquire (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) that provides a researcher the opportunity to focus on that specific topic throughout the interview process.

Another component of qualitative methods is the way findings are stated. The findings for qualitative research are usually stated in a narrative format to describe the data and the interpretation of the results to serve as an approach to facilitate the reader in understanding the phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Subsequently, qualitative methodology was appropriate for studying K–8 school administrators' perceptions in a natural environment. In addition, a qualitative approach was selected based on its virtues; the selection of a particular qualitative approach is also dependent upon research

objectives. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that many qualitative researchers adhere to a "naturalistic approach often guided by a social construction approach" (p. 3). Qualitative research is used when the researcher wishes to take into consideration the experiences of all contributors to recognize what is commonly shared about their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Each participant has a story to tell according to personal and educational experiences and background knowledge. I chose qualitative research because it uses various methods, such as emerging questions and procedures, collecting data in the participant's natural setting, using inductive examinations that shift from precise units to broad themes, and interpreting the significance of the data.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to collect and analyze data attained from participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated that qualitative researchers conduct the interviews, analyze all the data, and collect data themselves. I conducted this basic qualitative research in two school districts with a large Latino population, which was estimated as 32% of the student population (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019) in one district and 51% Latino students in the other district (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). I was the primary instrument of the current study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My role as a researcher was as an interviewer asking semistructured open-ended questions to elicit responses. It was my responsibility to conduct this study ethically. I avoided bias throughout the entire period of the study. Ravitch and Carl stated that bias may be found in all research (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods) and,

because of the choices researchers make and the fundamental decisions in qualitative research, this predictively includes researcher bias. Closely monitoring my bias was crucial to achieving credibility. As the exclusive researcher for this basic qualitative study, I used procedures to separate personal biases (Creswell & Poth, 2017). An important step toward the avoidance of bias begins with the rephrasing of the interview questions. Babbie (2017) suggested cultivating and adhering to deliberate awareness and established techniques.

To maintain trustworthiness in this study, I used bracketing to diminish the possible negative influence of biases that may contaminate the data collection and findings of the study (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). Bracketing is a strategy used to understand another person's experiences by allowing the researcher to become mindful of personal opinions and reactions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) acknowledged that bracketing is a difficult task to do while trying to accomplish the anticipated goals. As a researcher, I needed to separate my own opinions from those of the participants in this study to support trustworthiness.

To help avoid bias, I developed and monitored the data collection as suggested by Ahern (1999). Ahern recommended bracketing as a means of displaying the credibility of the data collection and analytic processes. In addition, Ahern recommended reflective journaling as a way to continuously conduct a self-evaluation throughout data collection and data analysis. Reflexivity allowed me to recognize potential tensions in this study. I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the entire progression of the study starting from data collected during the interviews, data analysis, and findings. Following Ahern's

suggestions, I examined the data objectively to make certain bias was reduced throughout this study.

Avoiding bias completely is impossible. Bias, as defined by Babbie (2017), refers to any property of questions that may encourage respondents to answer in a particular way. Qualitative analysts prevent this drawback by executing several practices: by nurturing a purposeful perception of their own beliefs and by adhering to established techniques for data collection and analysis (Babbie, 2017). Butin (2010) recommended journaling as a way to reduce bias and obtain powerful data. Reflexive journaling is a process frequently employed in qualitative research (Yin, 2018). Therefore, I thought it would be beneficial to use reflective journaling as a method for analyzing the data. Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated that reflective journaling is unlike memos or note taking, which are written at chosen times. Reflective journaling is an ongoing process of reflection throughout the research study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used reflective journaling throughout the entire interview process to provide an in-depth narrative of the findings.

I had access to potential participants because I worked in one of the same participating districts. I believed colleagues would participate freely without compensation or incentive because of their interest in the study. I obtained permission from two districts to conduct this study: School District A and School District B. At the time of the study, I served as a dual language teacher for one of the two Midwestern school districts that was the emphasis of this research, so I was invested in the needs of the bilingual teachers and their ELL students.

Regarding my experience in PD, I have presented twice for the Wisconsin Association of Bilingual Education; one training involved Spanish grammar rules, and the other training addressed Latino stereotypes. I have also provided in-service PD for bilingual teachers and teachers of English as a second language on strategies for working with ELLs, including culturally responsive teaching that was done in my previous district. In my current district, I have worked with curriculum design for a new program of implementation. My experience in PD influenced my role as a researcher by allowing me to become more aware of and sensitive to the needs of ELLs. My experiences have provided me with the ability to view things from the point of view of ELLs and relate to their academic needs in order for them to become successful.

As a bilingual teacher in School District A, I had three school administrators who were my immediate supervisors. To avoid bias during the research process, I did not interview any of my immediate supervisors. I maintained ethical procedures by following the IRB recommendation of not interviewing any school administrators from the school at which I worked to avoid bias. Four of the participants worked in the same district (i.e., School District A), but not in my school, and the other two participants worked in a different district (i.e., School District B).

Because of my brief employment in the district, I had no influence over, nor was I involved in any hierarchical relationships with the potential participants. In addition to the interview guide that I used to examine the phenomenon and content in the study (Patton, 2002), I was the only instrument of data collection, deciding who the participants for the study must be to make a positive contribution to answering the research questions

of the current research study. As an employee working as a bilingual teacher, one conflict that I foresaw was that the participants might hesitate in answering particular questions about PD for bilingual education. Therefore, I established a positive and comfortable interviewing environment to reduce potential tensions. I formulated questions related to the noted observations and determined the best approach for finding answers to those questions that would explain the phenomenon.

Methodology

I chose a basic qualitative study. The following section includes the justification for the selection of participants for the study, instrumentation, the processes for the recruitment of participants, and concerns of trustworthiness. I provide a comprehensive explanation of each component of the methodology to reestablish the procedures and processes to better understand this basic qualitative study. The sample for this study included six K–8 school principals and assistant principals from two Midwestern school districts: School District A and School District B.

In this section, I discuss the methods of participant recruitment, the instrument, and data analysis for this study.

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling for this basic qualitative study. Purposeful sampling, as indicated by Ravitch and Carl (2016) and Moser and Korstjens (2018), means that participants are purposefully selected to take part in the research study for particular reasons, including the experiences of a specific phenomenon. In addition, purposive sampling involves the formation of a set of criteria that must be met to participate in the

study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The purposeful sampling strategy I used in this study is called homogenous sampling because the participants are identified by specific criteria (Patton, 2015). I recruited six K–8 grade school principals and assistant principals from two small urban school districts in the Midwest. The process for the selection of participants was based on specific criteria. Both school principals and assistant principals had to (a) have at least 1 year of administrative experience, (b) be administrators at a K–8 campus, (c) work in a school with a dual language program, and (d) work at low-achieving urban school. The participants received a $20.00 gift card for their time after the completion of each interview. The semistructured interviews took between 15 and 44 minutes to complete.

School District A served over 7,000 students in six elementary schools with limited class sizes, four intermediate schools, and one high school. There is a total of 30 K-12 administrators, of whom only 18 are in a K–8 school setting serving ELLs. School District B served over 21,000 students in 22 elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, six charter schools, four choice schools, one specialty school, and one Head Start development center. I invited 20 K–8 grade school principals and assistant principals to voluntarily participate in this study. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that there is no need for qualitative researchers to apologize for not interviewing hundreds of people. Qualitative research often relies on small sample sizes chosen by design (Burkholder et al., 2016). Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2017) stated that a small pool of participants should be suitable to study. Only school principals and assistant principals who met the criteria for this study were interviewed.

I sent an invitational email from my Walden University address to all school administrators who met the selection criteria. Attached to the email was a link to an initial screening questionnaire form that participants responded using Google form. I asked basic questions on the questionnaire to allow the participant to record their position (principal or assistant principal), years of experience, the school grade level, and if the school has a dual language program. The only requirement was that potential participants meet the criteria for this study. Only K–8 school administrators who met the screening questionnaire and responded agreeing to participate in the study were contacted to complete the interview process.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this basic qualitative study involved one-on-one semistructured open-ended interview questions (see Appendix). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), semistructured interviews are the most commonly used instrument in qualitative research. I developed the interview guide questions for the semistructured interview based on alignment to the peer-reviewed literature and the research questions of this study. Constructing the sequence of questions in a qualitative study has a direct influence on the outcome of the interview because each question provides the ability to develop a rich narrative with each participant (Patton, 2015). In addition, probing and follow-up questions emerged from initial interview questions. In such a case, I needed to ensure the value of each participant's time. I carefully reviewed the tips of Ravitch and Carl (2016) for developing interview instruments/protocols to safeguard the data collection. I developed the interview guide questions for the semistructured interview

based on current district PD practices for the dual language program. District personnel had shared a perception that many of the district PD available to bilingual teachers did not meet the academic instructional needs. Some school administrators lacked knowledge about the bilingual program and the program requirements (personal communication, October 10, 2018). To establish content validity, I contacted a district administrator and one school administrator, both from one of the participating districts, to review my current interview questions. Neither of these persons was a participant in this study. The district administrator suggested rewording some of the questions to ensure they were suitable for the efforts in strengthening the bilingual program. I revised the interview questions based on the district administrators' recommendations. Finally, I submitted the plan of all instrumentation to the doctoral committee members for feedback and adjusted the interview guide accordingly for final use in semistructured interview data collection.

To address the first research question, I explored how K–8 school administrators perceive their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused PD. Research Question 1 was answered by data responses to Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 14. To address the second research question, I explored the reflective practices used by K–8 ELL administrators to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers. Research Question 2 was answered by data responses to Interview Questions 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13. Qualitative interviewing assumes the beliefs of the participants are relevant and will provide perception about their beliefs (Patton, 2015). Semistructured interviews allow the interviewee to respond to a specific topic (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), open-ended

questions can allow the interviewee to respond in any way as well as elaborate responses and raising new concerns. I considered semistructured interviews for this basic qualitative study because it was the most consistent in data collection and the type of interview questions I was asking. I conducted semistructured open-ended interviews with six K–8 school administrators. Furthermore, open-ended questions permitted the interviewee to respond most comfortably.

In addition to the one-on-one semistructured open-ended questions, I made notes of any demonstrable body language. Butin (2010) stated that observing the participants' body language and asking follow-up questions contributed to obtaining the needed data. A way to avoid effect bias, according to Butin, was to meticulously structure the interview protocol. As an exclusive instrument to gather data for this study, my job was to be able to capture anecdotes that would help me construct valid data for the research study.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participants in this study included K–8 administrators from two Midwestern school districts with a minimum of 1 year of administrative experience in a school with a dual language program. To conduct an ethical research study, I obtained Walden University IRB approval. To obtain permission to collect data in the school districts I contacted the Executive Director of School Leadership and Equity for each Midwestern school district. I completed the districts' IRB form and I obtained permission to conduct the research study at the two Midwestern school districts. Next, I obtained Walden's IRB approval to conduct the study. No data were collected until I received IRB approval.

Procedures for Recruitment

I emailed prospective participants using my Walden email to assess their interest in participating in this study. The invitation email had a link to a screening questionnaire. Participating administrators indicated their years of experience, school grade level, and years worked in a school with a dual language program on the screening questionnaire. There was only one interview with each participant, and the interview lasted between 15 and 44 minutes to complete.

Procedures for Participation

After obtaining the university IRB approval, I sent invitational emails to all potential participants. The potential participant consented by responding to a questionnaire. I began the interview process as soon as I received the responses to the screening questionnaire from each K–8 administrator after letting me know of their interest to participate in the study. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a safety precaution for the participants and myself, I conducted all interviews virtually via video-conferencing platform (e.g., Google Meet). I used a mobile phone to record the audio from the meeting. In addition, I used an audio-recording program on the computer (e.g., Audacity) to record the audio as a redundancy measure. Before beginning the interview, I read the informed consent script, which informed the participants of their rights and responsibilities, in particular, the option to terminate the interview at any time. I assured the participants that any personal information would not be disclosed as stated in the consent form. I informed the participants that I would use subject numbering to avoid any identification of participants and their responses. Subject numbering helped me keep the

data from each interview organized and confidential. The recorded verbal consent of participants served as informed consent. I used word processing software to transcribe the interviews after each interview.

Procedures for Data Collection

The steps for data collection included the following procedures:

1. I conducted virtual semistructured interviews.
2. I thanked each participant for their participation at the close of the interview.
3. I transcribed the audio recording of each interview.
4. I analyzed the data.
5. I wrote the findings, the interpretation, and the recommendations from the study.

I recorded the interviews on my laptop and a mobile phone (two recorders) and transcribed them immediately after the interview. At the end of the interview, I thanked participants for their time and the information they provided for the research. I also notified each participant that I would be back in touch with them by email to send them the transcription of the interview to review and respond to me about whether the transcription accurately represented the views they shared. Member checking of the findings is a validation strategy and increases the trustworthiness of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Data Analysis Plan

Data collection and transcription begin immediately after acquiring information about any research study. Qualitative data analysis concludes rationally from the data

collected and compares the findings against other situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data analysis offers the researcher the opportunity to decipher the information obtained by the participants. The objective of this analysis plan was to bring together comprehensive and descriptive data from K–8 principals and assistant principals to answer the research questions. Brigitte (2018) outlined the three strategies for data collection: interviewing, observing, and analyzing data. The semistructured interviews were conducted using the interview protocol found in the Appendix. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted virtually using Google Meets with an audio recording application. As part of the reflective process to control bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), I took field notes during the interviews regarding potential follow-up questions.

The data to answer Research Question 1 were obtained from the responses to Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 13 (see Appendix). The data to answer Research Question 2 were obtained from the responses to Interview Questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 (see Appendix). My original plan was to use qualitative data analysis software as an organizational tool to determine common topics of discussion among participants' responses. However, because of the decreased number of participants in this study, I chose to use a spreadsheet program to manage the data and analysis process.

The next step after collecting data was to conduct content analysis to investigate and discover themes. I used content analysis (Bengtsson, 2016) to analyze the data collected in this study. First, I used a priori coding to analyze the data related to the

conceptual framework. Next, I used open coding and pattern coding to create categories that helped me observe emerging themes. The spreadsheet assisted me to observe emerging patterns and themes from the raw data collected during the semistructured interviews. The themes were used to respond to the research questions of this study. Finding the common themes helped me answer the research questions. I used a priori coding to analyze the data related to the conceptual framework. I used a spreadsheet as an organizational tool to determine common topics of discussion among participants' responses. The spreadsheet assisted me to observe emerging patterns and themes from the raw data collected during the semistructured interviews.

In summary, I recorded the participants' responses using a digital recording device (e.g., smartphone). I transcribed responses from both the audiotaped recording and handwritten notes that I wrote during the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Qualitative researchers conduct the interviews, evaluate all evidence, and assemble data themselves (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Coding, according to Babbie (2017), is the process of classifying or categorizing individual fragments of data. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), data analysis begins immediately when the data are being organized. Discrepant cases that do not fit into a particular pattern may occur in qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I searched the data for possible discrepant cases to see if they provided another viewpoint that was worthy of consideration in the findings of the study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is critical for researchers because it provides validity (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell; Patton, 2015; Ravitch &

Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) examined two types of validity: transactional validity and transformational validity. Transactional validity seeks to attain higher levels of exactness by examining the participants' responses. Transformational validity is the perception of social change. Qualitative research is an evolving process (Creswell & Poth, 2017), during which researchers may modify their study to investigate responses to the questions. The most important component of trustworthiness is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the validity of the study. To increase the trustworthiness of this study, I adhered to the standards of creditability, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

Credibility is the researcher's ability to consider all the difficulties that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained (Guba, 1981). For a study to be credible, researchers must present data in a transparent manner (Babbie, 2017). A transparent report permits the reader to evaluate the diligence of the research as well as the conscientiousness, understanding, and biases of the researcher (Babbie, 2017). To ensure credibility, I took all necessary precautions. I maintained a reflective journal (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) throughout the interview process, data compilation, and analysis phases of the study to reduce potential biases in interpreting the data. Additionally, the district administrator assigned to liaise with me on behalf of the district became a peer debriefer for this study. Peer debriefing increases the credibility of a study because it helps to ensure the emerging themes are derived from the data and are understandable to the debriefer (Hadi & Closs, 2016). Finally, after I had compiled findings for the study, I

conducted member checks with each participant to ensure their views were accurately represented by the findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Transferability

Transferability involves the limitation of interpretations in the study's findings to other circumstances or situations without losing meaning or the fundamental nature of participants' experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In essence, transferability implies that conclusions from the study may be generalized or transferred to another setting (Abdalla et al., 2018). Possible concerns that may affect transferability in this study could be the school administrators' expertise of bilingual education. In this study, I used member checking of the findings to increase transferability. Another strategy I used in this study to increase transferability was variation of participants. Integrating a variation of administrators serving in K–8 settings may provide usefulness in deciding if the structure and results of the study can be reassigned to other school with similar demographics.

Dependability

Dependability contributes to the trustworthiness of the study because it helps to position the findings of a study to be reliable and repeatable. Yin (2018) stated that dependability provides reliability between the analysis of the data collected and the trustworthiness of the data. Yin also asserted that dependability provides reliability of the data and is described as coherent and continuous over time. In this study, I used an audit trial to account for changes in the study and provide detailed information about the analysis process. An audit trail is a step-by-step process of showing interview data,

documenting an awareness of what has been done, and serves as a validity check for instrumentation (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to acknowledging researcher bias and guaranteeing that findings are not only impartial but also influenced by the participants' points of view and experiences as described during interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2017). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), confirmability is determined when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved. In this basic qualitative research, I used self-reflection (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) to increase confirmability of the findings of this study. I maintained a journal from the beginning of data collection until I analyzed the data. Self-reflection occurs before, during, and after data collection and consists of factual notes and answering reflexive data questions, which increases the validity of the research design (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I took journal notes to include how the data were collected and how the coding process was examined into emerging themes to determine the research outcomes. In addition, my journal notes helped me reflect on my observations and, therefore, assisted me in avoiding or minimizing my bias.

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016) bias exists in all research (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods). Ravitch and Carl discussed strategies to employ to attain validity or validity pressures. As an ethical researcher, an approach to avoid bias includes reflection. Although I had no influence over participants and was not involved in any hierarchical (i.e., power dynamics) relationships with participants, it was still plausible that I could be biased. I had access to participants because I was a dual

language teacher in one of the participating districts and knew the school administrators. Therefore, I used bracketing to aid in reducing potential researcher bias. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), bracketing is a process in which personal opinions and beliefs are distinguished to avoid biases. Furthermore, during bracketing, I became more conscious and objective during the data collection, analysis, and conclusion processes.

Ethical Procedures

An important aspect of conducting research is ensuring ethical practices. To protect the participants of this study, I adhered to the three ethical principles and guidelines of the Belmont Report: (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (Ross et al., 2018). Respect for persons refers to providing participants with informed consent explaining what the research entails. Beneficence refers to the researcher's obligation to protect the well-being of human participants which includes reducing risks of harm to the participant and increasing any potential benefits to the participant. Justice refers to the need for unbiased dissemination of the benefits of research on humans. Justice involves a fair selection of research participants based on the purposes and predicted results of the research (Ross et al., 2018). I provided each participant with an informed consent form for participants to understand the purpose of the study.

Ethical procedures are vital to studies that require human contributors (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2018). I had an unquestionable duty to conduct myself in an ethical manner for the credibility of this study and to the study participants. The rights of participants were protected by informed consent, confidentiality, and the masking of any identifying data that could disclose the participants' or the school

districts' identity (Burkholder et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2017). The following section describes the measures I took to obtain ethics approval.

Although there may not be a specific number of actions to ensure ethical procedures, there were four important steps I took as an ethical researcher for this study. I completed the Walden University IRB application before gathering any data. An IRB evaluates the ethical conformity of dissertation proposals to ensure safeguards are in place to protect individuals, organizations, and researchers (Burkholder et al., 2016). I received IRB approval prior to starting the data collection. The IRB approval number for this study is #02-24-21-0094717. I did not collect any data before obtaining IRB approval to conduct this study.

The third step, after obtaining IRB approval, was to begin contacting prospective participants through district email using my Walden University email. The email contained screening questions to determine participants met the criteria set for this study and to recruit potential participants. When I began the recruiting process, I shared the informed consent letter that explains the purpose of the study before the interview process. This step ensured all participants understood the purpose and the procedure of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I explained to the participants that the interview would be audio-recorded and emphasized that their decision to participate or not would have no bearing on any personal or professional relationship. I also indicated my role as a researcher to ensure confidentiality and explained, to the K–8 school administrators, their role as participants including participant distinctiveness. To ensure confidentiality, the school districts were referred to with pseudonyms, and participants were identified with

number codes. No identifying information was collected in physical or digital form because consent was verbal.

I understood that conducting a research study in the same school district that I am employed may have potential ethical challenges. I followed the guidelines for the recruitment of participants to minimize biased recruitment or any appearance of coercion. One challenge was ensuring the separation of the research process from my previous professional relationships with some participants under whom I had previously worked. I maintained the emphasis of the study by restating the importance of their honest response and contribution to this study. Also, I shared possible positive benefits that this study may have in the school district. Another potential ethical challenge was the social suitability of participants to respond in a particular manner. Babbie (2017) referred to reactivity when subjects are being studied, they may alter their actions. I emphasized to each participant the importance of providing honest responses to each interview question. I treated all participants ethically and professionally. I took extra protection to protect the confidentiality of the participants by using subject numbering during analysis. During data collection, I maintained memos, as suggested by Ravitch and Carl (2016), to captivate the genuine meaning of the data. I made sure that when I began conducting the interview, each participant felt comfortable and willing to voluntarily provide honest responses to the interview questions. It was important to establish a positive rapport with the participants.

Finally, to promote confidentiality, each participant was assured that all the information collected for the study would be kept in a locked file cabinet for 5 years at

my residence, as required by Walden policy. Digital data were stored on a password-protected computer and digital recordings will be secured on a flash drive. All interview notes were stored in a locked cabinet at my residence. I was the only one with access to the computer password and the key to the locked cabinet. After 5 years, all information collected for the current study would be destroyed as required by Walden University policy.

It is vital to anticipate and address ethical issues throughout all phases of the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This segment described the way I ensured a high level of ethics including acquiring approval from the school district, attaining Walden IRB approval, maintaining the confidentiality of participants, and safeguarding the integrity of relationships with the participants. I ensured ethical practices for this basic qualitative study by following the IRB policies at Walden University as well as those of the school district. The careful planning of each step enhanced the trustworthiness and ethical guidelines of this study.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I discussed the research methodology and design for this basic qualitative study. I included the research design and rationale for selecting the study, my role as the researcher, participant selection, instrumentation, methods of data collection, and the data analysis process. A basic qualitative study with semistructured open-ended interview questions guided the study. I focused on gaining an in-depth perception of six K–8 principals and assistant principals concerning their perceived selection of PD for bilingual teachers. After obtaining permission from the participating school district and

completing the protocol procedures for Walden University, I contacted potential participants using my Walden email account. I purposely selected participants based on the criteria of 1 year minimum of experience as a school administrator. The goal was to have 20 K–8 school administrators participate in this study; however, only six participants voluntarily responded to be part of this study. Ethical, trustworthiness, and confidentiality concerns were considered throughout the entire process, including initial participant contact, data collection, and data analysis of this research study.

Chapter 4 includes participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, and results. I describe in detail each aspect of the study by providing an explanation of the setting, each level of the data collection, the procedure of data analysis. I also present the results of this study relative to Schön's (1987) TRP and the peer-reviewed literature.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore how K–8 school administrators use reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts: School District A and School District B. I chose a basic qualitative approach to explore, examine, and describe how school administrators perceived the selection of PD for bilingual teachers. A qualitative study was the best research design to explore and examine the phenomenon. Using virtual, semistructured one-on-one interviews, I collected data from six school administrators in School Districts A and B.

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Schön's (1983) TRP. This basic research focused on the two types of reflection: reflection in-action and reflection on-action (Schön, 1983). Reflection in-action occurs during the experience or practice (Calabrese, 2015; Schön, 1983). Reflection on-action involves reflecting on an experience or practice to evaluate the outcomes and what could have been done in a different way for next time (Schön, 1983). The following research questions grounded this basic qualitative study:

1. How do K–8 school administrators perceive their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused professional development for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts?
2. What reflective practices do K–8 ELL administrators use to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts?

In Chapter 4, I begin with a description of the setting, Next, I discuss the specific methods that I used for collecting data, recording the virtual semistructured interviews, procedures for data analysis, results, and evidence of trustworthiness. Last, I conclude the chapter with a summary of the results.

Setting

With regard to the setting, it is important to emphasize that this study was concerned with K–8 school administrators employed by two Midwestern school districts, School District A and School District B, with high ELL populations. School District A had a total of 30 school administrators serving over 7,000 students in six elementary schools, four intermediate schools, and one high school. Six school administrators worked at the high school level, another six school administrators worked in schools that do not have a dual language program, and three other school administrators were the researcher's immediate supervisors. Consequently, these 15 administrators were not part of the study. Of the 15 remaining potential participants, four responded to my initial email and met the criteria of the study. School District B had a total of 40 school administrators serving over 21,000 students in 22 elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, six charter schools, four choice schools, one specialty school, and one Head Start development center. Only two school administrators from School District B met the criteria to participate in the study.

During the time of the study, an unexpected global health condition (i.e., COVID-19) emerged, which resulted in school closures across the state. Therefore, it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews, and, as a result, response rates might have

been reduced. All semistructured interviews were conducted virtually via Google Meets. All participants were principals and assistant principals who had at least 1 year of administrative experience. In addition to being unable to conduct face-to-face interviews because of the global pandemic, the low number of administrator participants for the study became an unexpected issue.

Demographics

Six school administrators from School Districts A and B participated in this study with the representation of elementary and intermediate grade levels. Five participants worked in elementary schools, and one participant worked in an intermediate school. All participants had 1 or more years of experience and worked in a school with a dual language program. Four participants worked in School District A: two school principals and two assistant principals. Two school principals from School District B participated in the study (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	School district	Position	School grade level	Administrative experience	Gender	Race
P1	A	P	Elementary	1 to 3 years	Male	Hispanic
P2	A	AP	Elementary	1 to 3 years	Female	White
P3	A	AP	Intermediate	6 or more years	Female	White
P4	B	P	Elementary	6 or more years	Female	White
P5	A	P	Elementary	6 or more years	Male	Hispanic
P6	B	P	Elementary	6 or more years	Female	White

Note. AP = Assistant principal; P = Principal.

Data Collection

This study was a basic qualitative study design conducted to analyze qualitative data resulting from one-on-one semistructured interviews with participants. I received

IRB approval from Walden University on February 24, 2021. After receiving IRB approval, I emailed the consent form with a brief introduction to potential participating school administrators from the two Midwestern school districts in the United States. I indicated in the introduction that, if they agreed to participate in this study, they needed to complete the screening questionnaire to ensure that each participant met the criteria for the study. As I received the responses for the screening questionnaire, I sent the participants an email to schedule each interview.

I conducted six semistructured virtual interviews with two assistant principals and four principals over a period of 65 days. I emailed the invitational email to potential participants. After 2 weeks from the initial invitation email, I noticed that there were no responses to the email. I discovered that the invitational email had incorrectly been identified as spam in the recipients' mailboxes, such that they did not see it. I sent the invitational email a second time, but few potential participants responded. The initial data collection plan was to interview a total of 20 school administrators.

After receiving minimal interest in the study over an extended amount of time, my committee and I discussed the difficulty in recruiting participants. Of seven school administrators who showed interest, one was a high school administrator and was not appropriate for a study on K–8 school administrators' decisions about PD for bilingual educators. Therefore, only six school administrators were interviewed. I used an alphanumeric coding system of P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 to identify each participant and maintain their information confidentially. I informed the participants that any personal information would be masked using the coding system. The interviews ranged in time

length from 15 to 44 minutes. Five of the six interviews ran over 30 minutes. However, one participant was very concise and did not offer elaboration when prompted, so I did not pressure her per ethical guidelines of research and Walden IRB policy.

As previously noted, scheduling was challenging with the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing restriction.. School administrators were busy with the demands of virtual meetings, virtual instruction, and other administrative challenges. Each interview took place virtually at a time that was convenient to each participant. Before conducting each interview, I reminded each participant that the interview was voluntary, and they did not have to answer any question that may cause them discomfort. I recorded each interview on my phone using an audio-recorder device to ensure that the data collection was not lost. After each interview, I transported the audio recordings to a password-protected home computer and manually transcribed each interview.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the process that qualitative researchers employ to make sense of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Data analysis constitutes different stages. I used the six steps established by Creswell and Poth (2017) for data analysis: (a) organizing and preparing data, (b) interpreting and reflecting on the complete meaning of the data, (c) conducting analysis founded on method, (d) generating a description of the individuals and identifying themes, (e) representing data, and (f) interpreting the larger significance of data.

During the first stage, I began organizing and preparing the data by transcribing each interview and entering the information into word-processing software. After

transcribing each interview, I emailed the document to each participant to make sure the transcription was precise and represented the intended responses of participants. All participants were provided an opportunity to review their responses and make any changes that they thought were essential to maintain their initial thoughts. There were no changes from any of the six participants. All data analyzed in this study represented the information provided by school administrators in their initial one-on-one semistructured virtual interview.

The second stage involved organizing and reflecting on the complete meaning of the data. I read each response carefully numerous times to become familiar with the interview responses. Creswell and Poth (2017) described this stage of analysis as becoming familiar with the data. I started highlighting words and phrases that related to the conceptual framework and the research questions.

The initial plan for data analysis for this basic qualitative study was to use qualitative software as an organizational tool to determine common topics from the responses of 20 potential participants within School Districts A and B. However, due to the global pandemic that affected the way school districts across the United States conducted instruction, I was able to conduct only six interviews; therefore, the qualitative software was not required. I conducted my data analysis manually using a spreadsheet.

After transcribing each interview, I used the spreadsheet to organize the data, which consisted of participant responses to the interview questions. I began with the responses of the six participants in a systematic method. On the spreadsheet, I labeled the first column with the participant number and entered a cell for each of the 15 interview

questions for all six participants. Understanding that leaving blank boxes in the spreadsheet can alter the data analysis, I wrote “no reflection” meaning that there was no response to some of the questions from two of the participants. For those instances, there were no data to analyze.

The next stage of data analysis involved coding the data. I applied the conceptual framework based on Schön’s (1983) TRP and looked for connections and assigned a priori codes based on this paradigm. The process of a priori coding involves reading data and looking for something specifically related to the conceptual framework (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The two a priori codes that aligned to the conceptual framework of Schön’s TRP were (a) reflecting in-action and (b) reflecting on-action. The data displayed in Table 2 illustrates sample data of how I determined the a priori codes based on the transcriptions from the interviews.

Table 2

Sample A Priori Coding for Participants

Participant	Interview raw data text excerpt	A priori code
P1	Opportunities of understanding different modalities of instruction, methods of instruction.	In-action
P2	Having a general understanding of the culture, understanding language development.	On-action
P3	Asking staff whether the PD was effective for them, what did they learn, how did they apply it, watching those skills and strategies when you observe them.	On-action
P4	Grow in the area bilingual education, understand the models and the current research, current strategies, and practices.	On-action
P5	More passionate about their students, better relationships with the parents.	In-action
P6	We look at the data, what is our problem, a practice that we need to address, develop a plan, and train staff.	On-action

Following the identification of a priori codes based on Schön's (1983) conceptual framework, I resumed breaking down the data to determine open coding to further evaluate the data inductively. Using an inductive coding process enables a researcher to stay as close to the data as possible (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I made conclusions from the spreadsheet by first analyzing the interviews and rephrasing each response and used the raw data to begin the examination. The spreadsheet also allowed me to generate filters that helped me identify comparable codes within the raw data. I created a pivot table to determine open codes. Table 3 exhibits samples of a priori codes to determine open codes.

Table 3

Sample Showing A Priori Codes to Open Coding

A priori code	Open codes
In-action	Instructional practices Cultural responsiveness Positive relationships Leadership experiences
On-action	Data driven Opportunities for collaboration Effectiveness of PD Language acquisition
No reflection	Hiring process Lack of experience Disconnect

The next stage in data analysis involved pattern coding and identifying themes. The process of pattern coding entails using the open code to observe relationships between the data and pattern codes. I created another pivot table of the pattern codes to generate categories. The pattern codes did not vary significantly when I labeled the subthemes, which then allowed me to observe emerging themes that addressed the research questions (Bengtsson, 2016). Table 4 displays examples of open coding to pattern coding and subthemes, which I used to develop the themes.

Table 4

Sample Showing Use of Open Codes to Pattern Codes and Categories to Themes

Open code	Pattern code and categories	Theme
Instructional practices Opportunities for collaboration	Best practices	1. School administrators are responsible for advancing instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction through collaborative opportunities.
Effectiveness of PD Data driven Hiring process	Leadership practices	2. School administrators are responsible for providing bilingual educators with professional development to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs.
Language acquisition	Cultural responsiveness	3. School administrators are responsible for establishing and maintaining a school culture to assist bilingual teachers in instructing second language acquisition and building positive relationships with ELLs.

Note. PD = Professional development. ELL = English language learner.

The final step of data analysis included interpreting the significance of data (Creswell & Poth, 2017). I reviewed the transcripts to ensure the emerging themes appropriately described the data. I examined the data for contradictions to the themes and did not find any discrepant data that conflicted with the themes. I reported the findings by using direct quotes from the interviews.

Results

I designed this basic qualitative study to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within School Districts A and B. Data collected in this study were grounded in Schön's (1983) TRP. Interview questions supported the research questions. The results of this study revealed themes that answered the two research questions addressing K–8 school administrators' perceptions of PD decision-making processes for bilingual educators. In analyzing the

data after completing the a priori coding, open coding, and pattern coding, three subthemes developed to answer Research Question 1: (a) best practices, (b) leadership practices, and (c) cultural responsiveness. For Research Question 2, regarding use of specific reflective practices, findings showed that participants did engage in some type of reflection when considering PD. In the following sections, I describe the themes that emerged from the data in response to the research questions of this study.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked the following: How do K–8 school administrators perceive their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused professional development for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts? The following three themes emerged to answer this question:

1. School administrators are responsible for advancing instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction through collaborative opportunities.
2. School administrators are responsible for providing bilingual educators with professional development to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs.
3. School administrators are responsible for establishing and maintaining a school culture to assist bilingual teachers in instructing second language acquisition and building positive relationships with ELLs.

Theme 1: Best Practices

Theme 1 indicated that school administrators are responsible for advancing instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction through

collaborative opportunities. Findings from this study revealed that participants understood their responsibilities in identifying best practices for bilingual teachers. The two supporting subthemes under the theme of best practices were (a) instructional practices and (b) opportunities for bilingual teachers' collaboration.

Instructional Practices. The first supporting subtheme was that school administrators need to promote instructional practices in bilingual classrooms. All six participants indicated the importance for bilingual teachers to understand the necessary strategies and skills to provide ELLs with the opportunity to develop academically. The instructional practices delineated various pieces of training these administrators believed to be important for bilingual teachers.

These opportunities as indicated by P1, P5, and P6 included training from the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, known as WIDA. P1 stated, "WIDA training is to facilitate learning of the students." P5 indicated, "I don't know why we are not tapping into things like WIDA. I think that the [state university] had developed, along with their consortium, many amazing strategies and programs." P5 found explicit training for lesson planning and instruction was needed and stated the following:

> The best training I had was in how to create lesson plans that focus on ELLs, and it was on EDI (Explicit Direct Instruction) . . . visiting other dual language school districts to learn about the program [helped me].

P6 commented about best practices:

> Every teacher at my school needs to be informed and updated on best practices in dual language and I am on a path of how we weave that into the other things that

> they need as well as a PBIS (positive behavior interventions and supports), along with trauma-sensitive training, and along with our new curriculum.

P4 indicated the following:

> As part of the mission and vision for our school district, we would do professional learning for our teachers based on the curriculum and practices. With a new curriculum, we wanted all teachers to understand all the components of bilingualism and biliteracy . . . We wanted to make sure that our teachers had understood how to use the materials both face-to-face and for virtual instruction to students.

Participants of this study emphasized the importance of identifying instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction. These practices included assistance with lesson planning preparation, training on classroom management skills, and support of curriculum guide instructional practices that reflect the academic needs of ELLs.

Opportunities for Bilingual Teachers' Collaboration. The second subtheme involved the need for school administrators to provide opportunities for bilingual teachers to collaborate during PD. P6 stated that "having bilingual school staff connect with other dual language schools to determine what can we do as a collective group to enhance dual language instruction" was important. P2 explained how collaboration during PLCs was implemented on their campus and indicated the following:

> Our ELL staff taught the other classroom teachers. When classroom teachers [non-bilingual teachers] wanted to better understand how they can help deliver

> lessons to help ELLs, bilingual teachers taught the classroom teachers by conducting their own PD. In addition, ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers will do the same during staff meetings.

Later, P2 added as part of collaboration: "The best PD that I have received was from EL (English language) teachers themselves, and it was around the topic of how to deliver a lesson with the visuals, the movements, the concrete, and the auditory." P3 stated in relation to PD collaboration, "There are opportunities provided to staff to learn new skills and strategies, help teachers be better teachers, workshops, book studies, seminars, webinars, never ending, continue to work and talk with colleagues and build those skills."

P6 added as part of the opportunities for PD collaboration and reflection:

> Cooperation enables building the skills that teachers have in order to best meet the needs of our students, high amount of collaboration among teachers, chance to reflect and receive feedback on the training, engage in the work, PD is part of a cycle.

P6 also shared, "Collaboration, planning, understanding different perspective of learning, listening and talking to them [helps] increase our relationship, making others feel comfortable, [leads to] collaborating outside PD, [and promotes] best instruction happening in English language learners' classrooms." P2 further suggested, "The manner in which a lesson is delivered can make a big difference in terms of how EL (English language) students pick up material [learn new instructional skills]."

Participants of this study emphasized the importance for bilingual teachers to have adequate preparation to work with ELLs. Some of the participants discussed the ability to build a collaborative community for bilingual teachers to learn from each other within the school district as well as for having opportunities to learn from other school districts with a dual language program. Experienced bilingual teachers can serve as a bridge to prepare other bilingual teachers to become advocates for ELLs. Collaboration among bilingual teachers can also include time for reflective practices as a procedure to enhance the academic achievement of all ELLs.

Theme 2: Leadership Practices

Theme 2 was that school administrators are responsible for providing bilingual educators with PD to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs. Findings from this study revealed that participants understood their responsibilities in identifying ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers. Participants of the study perceived PD as a fundamental part of the responsibilities of bilingual teachers. Participants of the study perceived that bilingual teachers required specific PD. Five subthemes emerged from the pattern coding related to school administrators' leadership practices and bilingual teachers' PD. The first subtheme indicated that administrators lack training and experience to proactively provide PD for bilingual teachers. Four other subthemes that emerged from the coding indicated that PD for bilingual teachers should (a) be data driven, (b) provide a specific connection to the curriculum, (c) offer effective training relevant to the bilingual teacher, and (d) be provided more frequently by school administrators instead of school district personnel.

Lack of Training and Experience. The first subtheme under the leadership practices theme involved the lack of experience school administrators perceived they had to facilitate practices that assisted bilingual teachers. P1 stated that no administrative training had been offered in regard to working with ELLs. P2 admitted little training geared toward ELLs, "But to prepare me for ELLs specifically, I can't say that I have had any specific training." P3 noted some experience interacting with ELLs, explaining, "As an administrator, I have encountered ELLs within the classroom, when I do observations." The findings of this study exposed the lacked training and experience school administrators had to provide PD and facilitate bilingual teachers on their school campus.

Need for Data-Driven PD. The second subtheme involved the perceived need for PD to be driven by data and the needs of the students and teachers at their schools. P6 indicated, "I'm extremely data-driven." P2 revealed the following:

> When we look at data, we did find out that Hispanic males to be lower in terms of reading growth and what we did as a school team, we did some problem solving about what that means and why that is.

P4 indicated the following:

> We look at students' data and see where some of the gaps in learning are. Then, we survey the teachers. I have a leadership group that comes together and then we look at the results and based on all those pieces, we determine where our time and effort should be spent for the following year.

Participants of this study understood the importance of analyzing student academic data to better serve the student population.

Need to Provide a Specific Connection to the Curriculum. The third subtheme involved a disconnection in the PD that bilingual teachers were offered. P3 explained, "A few years ago, the Spanish teachers of the dual language instruction program were asked to attend a phonics training and phonics is not part of teaching Spanish." P6 explained as follows:

> In the last 10 years, there has been a resurgence of the effort through the National Association of Bilingual Educators and other organizations such as that to really get some more updated information and see the importance of that training for bilingual and dual language educations really pertains to [the teachers].

Participants of the study agreed that PD needs to be related to the teacher's subject area of instruction.

Need to Offer Effective PD Relevant to the Bilingual Teacher. The fourth subtheme involved the ability to determine the effectiveness of PD provided to bilingual teachers. P1 indicated, "It has been very difficult in the various positions that I have been at to measure the effectiveness of PD." P1 explained about the continuous change of staff and the need to prepare new staff, "The staff that had been professionally developed 2 or 3 years ago are not always the staff that has been there after a good amount of time." P2 shared, "I can't speak to PD been effective." P1 added, "A lot of the PD gets dictated to us or what we offer is not always within our control . . . I think we are in a culture where we sink or swim in the professional development." Later, P1 concluded as follows:

> To be able to provide PD, it has to be tailored to the needs of that individual. PD, it's lacking in my current district, and it was evolving in my previous district. I would know if PD were effective based on the training that I have received. I have not received training at my current level.

P3 reflected as follows on PD:

> I think that the way that I believe PD is effective is by asking people [teachers] whether it was effective for them, what did they learned, how did they apply it, and then watching for those skills and strategies that were taught when you observe them.

P1 discussed identifying needs, suggesting the following:

> When it has been done right, we have asked; we give surveys to the staff to see what their needs are. We provide surveys and we have those conversations when we see the needs of that particular area, which is when it is more successful.

P2 remarked on how curriculum drives needs, reporting, "Curriculum review will help decide what teachers need and I think just by asking teachers themselves too." P4 indicated the importance of PD as follows:

> For their [students] education and professional learning, PD is so important for those teachers [teachers working with ELLs] because they are going to be the ones that are educating our students every day and we want the students to have the best strategies, the newest research, and help them become critical thinkers in the future. Also, we need to push those skills for teachers to model those for our students.

However, P4 noted some limitations to PD effectiveness, suggesting the following:

> We give teachers surveys, but it's not like you give a teacher a survey at the end [of the training] about how likely are you to use the strategy. Those questions and those are helpful, but we really have not done anything, I feel, that it says because of this professional and the students achieve X, Y or Z.

School administrators should offer effective PD for bilingual teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). However, P5 summed up this perception and exclaimed with a noted sense of despair that U. S. school systems have included bilingual classrooms for decades but determining the effectiveness of training for their teachers continues to remain an enigma.

Need for More Responsibility in Decisions Regarding PD for Bilingual Teachers. The fifth subtheme involved the perceived leadership experiences of school administrators with ELL students and bilingual teachers and the need for more responsibility (e.g., control) in making decisions on PD. P1 stated, "I have ELL experience at the kindergarten level through Grade 12. I have experience with different bilingual programs and dual language programs. We need to understand that those two programs are not the same." P2 explained how parent meetings have been used:

> My experience with ELLs has been conducting parent meetings with families. We set up parent meetings where we went to their homes and the purpose of it was just to ask two or three questions. Is there anything that the district can do? But as far as ELLs, I would say I interact with them just like I do with the other students.

In terms of responsibility, P5 responded, “I feel that it is my duty as an administrator to provide an amazing educational program.” P5 added that he has been in the classroom for over 11 years helped in the current leadership role. Participants recognized the importance of providing bilingual teachers with a rigorous curriculum to improve the academic achievement of ELLs.

In terms of identifying PD for bilingual teachers, participants disclosed that school district staff provided PD. P3 emphasized, “The district selects PD for the teachers.” In identifying PD for bilingual teachers. P1 shared, “I don’t think we look at the adults from the teachers and the administration level to design PD in a more purposeful way.” P1 added, “PD is the single most utilized opportunity we have, and I don’t think we utilize it very well.” Participants recognized that PD opportunities are directly affiliated with the school district.

School administrators perceived having little control over the content of the PD for bilingual teachers. P1 indicated the following:

> We always kind of get left behind or the administrators at the building level that a lot of the PD gets dictated to us or what we offer is not always within our control school district where I’m at now.

P3 commented about the selection of PD, “I generally do not select PD for the teachers here. A lot of it is the district. They decide what PD people should attend.” P5 had a similar response:

> The way that PD was selected was … There was district oversight over the program and so it was the district that chose who provided that instruction. What I chose for my school [had] to do more with the common core standards.

P4 added in relation to the amount of PD:

> A lot of times teachers are just spread so thin they do not want to do any more professional learning. They just want to focus on "let me just survive this week or let me just survive this year," especially in the current situation.

Findings disclosed that school administrators are accountable to hold bilingual staff responsible for improving the academic achievement of ELLs. In summary, participants of the study emphasized the need to prioritize the needs of the students and match their needs with human resources to meet the academic success of ELLs.

Theme 3: Cultural Responsiveness

Theme 3 was that school administrators are responsible for establishing and maintaining a school culture to assist bilingual teachers in instructing second language acquisition and building positive relationships with ELLs. School administrators indicated the need to hold bilingual teachers responsible for establishing a culturally responsive classroom by providing cultural experiences to enhance the academic achievement of ELLs. Two subthemes emerged to support cultural responsiveness: language acquisition and positive relationships. The participants in this study used terms such as *language development*, *home language*, *the language of the student* when responding to questions about administrative experience with ELLs, educational experience, and relationships with ELLs.

Language Acquisition. The first subtheme under the theme of cultural responsiveness was language acquisition. P1 emphasized how critical it is to maintain the language of instruction and be "inclusive and true to the language of instruction and bridge to the other language [English or Spanish] without spending a great amount of time in a language that you are not supposed to at any given time." P2 also noted language and diversity by stating, "It is understanding the culture . . . and then, I think, also understanding language development." P6 explained specific actions she had taken, reporting, "I obtained my Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages certificate to understand, as a leader, how kids [students] acquire a second language."

Positive Relationships. The second subtheme under the cultural responsiveness theme involved positive relationships. P2 emphasized empathy and effort in building relationships, describing, "Bilingual teachers really understand the struggle of what is like…and oftentimes goes out of their way to help and support ELLs. I think there is more empathy and understanding . . . but also having high expectations." P3 remarked on the familial, strong nature of some bonds between teachers and students by remarking, "I see some extremely strong relationships between the bilingual teachers and their students. The ELL students and their teachers as well as with their families." Also emphasizing the familial nature of the relationships, P4 responded, "I feel like it is almost a family. The building itself has a real sense of cultural community. I think that there is a strong relationship between the teacher and the students." P6 suggested the following, indicating that relationships are strengthened through effort in the academic process of teaching:

> I think when an ELL sees the engagement from their teacher, the teacher who is using strategies of trying to may include comprehensive input at every turn to make that student successful, the students recognize that right away, and their relationship increases as does the student achievement increases. I think that they [the students] need to feel that relationship. When teachers create a positive relationship in the classroom where it's safe to take risks. I think that is when I have seen the best instruction happening in the classroom for ELLs.

P5 explained her viewpoint that the cultural aspects should be taught in the home by stating, "I think the cultural component is the role of the parents' responsibility. My responsibility as an educator is to make sure that my students learn." When asked about experiences that prepare them to work with ELLs, P2 indicated, "For my previous job, I was a school counselor and I had to have a social-cultural foundations class and then I have been to a variety of training around the topic of equity." P4 stated, "Teachers that are going to school to be language teachers, there are no classes required to work with ELLs." P5 and P6 indicated that a bilingual certification was necessary in the state that they attended school in order to work with ELLs. P6, speaking from personal experience, explained as follows:

> Watching my husband take English as a second language classes as an adult learner. … It was amazing to see the difference between him being able to practice with someone or hear more at home . . . and begin to understand why we need to provide so much of that explicit instruction for students. I also shadowed

teachers with good strategies and a good understanding of what English learners need.

P3, however, had not experienced a bond with ELL students, reporting, "I cannot draw on any specific education that I have had in working with ELLs."

Interview responses indicated that school administrators understood the importance of bilingual teachers in building a relationship with ELLs. Participant comments suggested that providing a nurturing school culture helps ELLs feel a sense of acceptance and provides opportunities for academic growth. P5 indicated, "The cultural aspect for students is the responsibility of the parents; the expectations for providing an inclusive school environment are important to ensure the academic success for all students." School leaders, instructional leaders, and family members can work collectively to build strong relationships with all learners.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked the following: What reflective practices do K–8 ELL administrators use to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts? In analyzing the data that applied to the second research question, there was agreement about several aspects related to the need for reflection, though no clear theme emerged. There was very little response to questions about the reflective practices used by K–8 ELL administrators. Although four participants (P1, P4, P5, and P6) alluded to a need for reflection, only P6 made a direct statement about reflection. Comments diverged with respect to who should be reflective and what reflective practices might be used. For

instance, a comment by one participant suggested that teachers need to be reflective, whereas a comment by another participant emphasized reflection for administrators. Overall, participants reported that school administrators should (a) provide time during PD to survey teachers and request feedback on the PD experiences, (b) separate assessment data to closely analyze the academic achievement of ELLs, and (c) incorporate time for bilingual teachers to reflect on classroom observations as part of best instructional practices. Participants suggested that bilingual teachers must have opportunities to collaborate, analyze ELL assessment data, and offer input on the academic needs of ELLs. As indicated by P6, reflection is a valuable skill for bilingual teachers. P6 indicated the following:

> We are currently rating ourselves on the guiding principles for dual language and we are looking at how we are doing. Professional development is about building the skills that teachers have to best meet the needs of our students and it involves a high amount of collaboration among teachers and both receiving and being able the chance to reflect and receive feedback on the training.

The responses from the interviews suggested an opportunity for a systematic method for school administrator reflection on PD decision-making. Comments that implied reflective opportunities came from P1 and P6. P1 explained, “When a PD is done right, school administrators use surveys to seek their opinions,” but did not suggest how administrators might use gathered opinions, if at all, to guide their PD choices in response to teachers’ opinions or as a post-PD reflective practice for school administrators. P6 more pointedly indicated, “After a PD, there must be time for reflection and feedback.”

However, the interview responses did not reveal any concrete evidence showing what reflective practices K–8 school administrators used to build training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers within School Districts A and B.

Interview responses indicated that school administrators had mixed views of what structured reflective practice actually entailed. P5 and P6 were somewhat vague in their responses. P5 stated, "I always see it [reflective practices] as what do we need in terms of the [students]." P6 indicated, "I reflect a lot on our data." P4's statement seemed to imply some reflective practice could be involved in PD decision-making:

> We do a needs assessment at the end of every year and its multiple layers. We talk to the teachers, and we look at the students' data and see where some of the gaps are in learning. Then we survey the teachers and then there is a leadership team that comes together, and we look at the results.

Responses from interviews indicated that participants recognized that reflection is part of building knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers. However, very few comments implied the possibility of reflective practice, and the meaning of reflection seemed to vary considerably amongst those comments.

Discrepant Data

I analyzed the data and looked for disconfirming evidence, negative cases, discrepant data, or outliers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For the current qualitative study, it was important to note any discrepancy cases during the data analysis phase. Discrepant cases refer to data revealed that may not align or negates with the theories that sustain the

conceptual framework of a research study (Yin, 2018). In revising the data, I noticed that two participants did not respond to two questions. Nevertheless, after I examined the data, I concluded that there were no discrepant cases that contrasted with the emerging themes.

Results Summary

When I analyzed the data from the semistructured interviews to explore K–8 school administrators' perceptions of identifying ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts, I found that K–8 school administrators reported the importance of providing appropriate PD to bilingual teachers to enhance the academic achievement of ELLs. Three themes emerged that provided a guide in responding to Research Question 1 related to K–8 school administrators' perceptions of identifying ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers:

1. School administrators are responsible for advancing instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction through collaborative opportunities.
2. School administrators are responsible for providing bilingual educators with professional development to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs.
3. School administrators are responsible for establishing and maintaining a school culture to assist bilingual teachers in instructing second language acquisition and building positive relationships with ELLs.

In analyzing the participants' responses that were associated with Research Question 2 about the use of reflective practices, there did not appear to be clear evidence

that school administrators used the structured reflective practices established by Schön (1983) as a way to determine PD for bilingual teachers. However, school administrators from School District A and School District B understood the importance of analyzing assessment data to determine the academic needs for ELLs. Participant responses also indicated the need for school administrators to develop PD for bilingual teachers that would enhance their instructional practices and address the needs of ELLs.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is essential throughout the research process: data collection, analysis, and representation of the findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To increase the validity of this study, I adhered to the standards of creditability, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Ravitch & Carl). By employing such practices during this study, I was able to diminish bias and ensure trustworthiness.

Credibility

Credibility is the ability of the researcher to consider all the difficulties that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained (Guba, 1981). Credibility confirms that data are accurately collected, analyzed, and interpreted in a way that precisely characterizes the study and its findings (Yin, 2018). The credibility of the study was maintained by following the established practices and procedures. To acknowledge credibility for this study, I participated in peer review with district administrators to review the interview questions. I emailed participants the consent form indicating the process for recruitment. Each participant willing to participate in the study was directed to respond “I consent” to the email. Participants

were selected from the two Midwestern school districts I indicated in my IRB application. To ensure credibility for this study, I maintained a reflective journal to mitigate personal biases.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability involves the limitation of interpretations of the study's findings to other circumstances or situations without losing meaning or the fundamental nature of participants' experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In essence, transferability infers that conclusions from the study may be generalized or transferred to another setting (Abdalla et al., 2018). I conducted member checks with each participant to ensure their views were accurately represented by the findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Another strategy I used in this study to increase transferability involved the variety of participants. Integrating a variation of administrators serving in K–8 settings may provide usefulness in deciding if the structure and results of the study can be reassigned to other schools with similar demographics.

Dependability

Dependability contributes to the trustworthiness of the study because it helps to position the findings of a study to be consistent and repeatable. Yin (2018) stated that dependability provides reliability between the analysis of the data collected and the reliability of the data. The method for achieving dependability is through analysis of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this study, I used an audit trail for content analysis. An audit trail is a step-by-step procedure of displaying interview data, recording an understanding of what has been done, and checking the validity of the instrumentation

(Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As part of the audit trail, I presented the participants in this study with the transcription of the interview and provided the opportunity to validate the responses (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

To increase dependability, I maintained a reflexive journal to monitor each stage of the procedure for data collection and data analysis. Keeping track of any changes helped me provide a justification to support the changes. One of the main changes that I tracked was the consideration of using qualitative data analysis software to code my findings. However, because the sample of participants was small, I decided to conduct the content analysis manually. I instituted dependability by ensuring the data answered the research questions and supported the conceptual framework, Schön's (1983) TRP (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In addition, conducting the study in more than one school district and having the data reflect comparable findings helped to establish dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to acknowledging researcher bias and ensuring that findings are not only impartial but also influenced by the participants' points of view and experiences as described during interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2017). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), confirmability is determined when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved. In this basic qualitative research, I used reflexivity to increase the confirmability of the findings of this study. I maintained a journal from the beginning of data collection and throughout the content analysis as a self-reflective tool. Self-reflection transpires before, during, and after data collection and entails accurate notes and answering reflexive data questions, which enhances the validity of the research

design (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The journal notes included how the data were collected and how the coding process was examined into themes to determine the research results. Furthermore, the journal notes helped me reflect on my observations and, consequently, supported me in avoiding or minimizing my researcher bias.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented the results of the study based on the responses obtained from the research questions. I described how I analyzed the data to explain K–8 school administrators' perceptions on identifying ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. This chapter contained a synopsis of the setting for the study, including demographics for each participating school district, the process for data collection and content analysis, the coding process used to analyze the data, and recognizing the evolving themes. I provided evidence of trustworthiness through procedures that enhanced credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The data collected were analyzed to examine the responses to the two research questions. In response to the first research question about K–8 school administrators' perceptions of their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts, three themes emerged: (a) school administrators are responsible for advancing instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction through collaborative opportunities, (b) school administrators are responsible for providing bilingual educators with PD to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs, and (c) school administrators are responsible for establishing and maintaining a school culture to assist bilingual teachers in instructing second-language acquisition and

building positive relationships with ELLs. Participants indicated that school administrators must provide effective PD to bilingual teachers. Participants indicated that school administrators must provide opportunities for collaboration, including time for reflecting on educational experiences. Participants also recommended that school administrators should be given more responsibility by the school district for providing bilingual teachers with appropriate instructional practices to improve the academic achievement of ELLs.

In response to the second research question about specific reflective practices used by K–8 administrators to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL instructional strategies for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts, no clear theme emerged. The participants did not engage in the structured reflective practices outlined by Schön (1983). Participants did agree that school administrators need leadership experiences and preparation in working with ELLs. Participants acknowledged the importance for school administrators to have appropriate preparation in understanding dual language instruction and language acquisition. Participants suggested the significance for school administrators alongside with bilingual teachers to use reflective practices.

In Chapter 5, I discuss a summary of the findings, limitations, recommendations, implications of the study, and conclusions. I conclude Chapter 5 with a comprehensive discussion of contribution to social change and recommendations for practices.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

I conducted this basic qualitative study to explore how K–8 school administrators used reflective practices to identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. Six school administrators participated in this study: four principals and two assistant principals. I used semistructured virtual interviews to explore the K–8 school administrators' perceptions of identifying ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. The conceptual framework for this study involved Schön's (1983) TRP to explore how school administrators could produce an educational environment that meets the needs of Latino ELL students.

Schön's (1983) TRP focuses on the two types of reflection: reflection in-action and reflection on-action. Reflection in-action occurs during the experience or practice (Calabrese, 2015; Schön, 1983). Reflection on-action involves reflecting on an experience or practice to evaluate the outcomes and what could have been done in a different way for next time (Schön, 1983). By understanding and applying Schön's (1983) TRP, school administrators can facilitate or make available professional opportunities to bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs to increase English-language proficiency. The literature review for this study included a description of Schön's (1983) TRP. Two research questions were addressed:

1. How do K–8 school administrators perceive their responsibility in identifying ELL-focused professional development for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern school districts?

2. What reflective practices do K–8 ELL administrators use to build knowledge concerning PD training needed to enhance ELL-instructional strategies for bilingual teachers in two Midwestern urban school districts?

School administrators perceived three common influencing components in identifying professional development for bilingual teachers: (a) best practices, (b) leadership practices, and (c) cultural responsiveness. Best practices included instructional practices and opportunities for collaboration. School administrators indicated that relevant training helps bilingual teachers understand the academic needs of ELLs. The findings of the current study consisted of themes concerning leadership practices that included the need for data-driven PD, the acknowledgment of a disconnection associated with PD, the effectiveness of PD, and the importance of making decisions regarding PD for bilingual teachers. School administrators cited experiences concerning challenges of hiring, training, and maintaining bilingual teachers. Cultural responsiveness included language acquisition and positive relationships. School administrators indicated the importance of understanding language acquisition and developing positive relationships with students and parents.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study substantiate Schön's (1983) TRP as it relates to K–8 school administration reflection on PD for bilingual teachers to improve ELL's academic achievement. Schön's TRP outlined two types of reflection: reflection in-action and reflection on-action. Reflection in-action happens throughout the experience or practice (Schön, 1983). Identifying ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working

with ELLs is a vital part of the school administrators' responsibilities. Reflection on-action requires reflecting on an experience or practice to evaluate the results and what could have been done in a different manner for next time (Schön, 1983). The interpretation of the study findings was based on their connection to the conceptual framework and preceding research in this area as indicated in the literature review. The research questions were intended to enable me to investigate how K–8 school administrators identify PD for bilingual teachers by employing Schön's TRP. Participants were asked a sequence of questions pertaining to the definition of PD, the usefulness of PD, examples of PD, the academic success of students in relation to PD, the responsibility of school administrators in providing bilingual teachers with PD, challenges encountered in providing PD, and reflective practices used to determine the need for specific PD topics designed for bilingual teachers.

Research Question 1

The findings of this study established three themes that addressed the first research question: (a) best practices, (b) leadership practices, and (c) cultural responsiveness. In the following sections, I present and explain the three themes that emerged from this study.

Best Practices

School administrators are responsible for advancing instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction through collaborative opportunities. Theme 1 aligns with Baecher et al.'s (2016) indication that PD is an essential element in the preparation among K–8 school administrators, and collaboration with bilingual

instructors may support best practices for ELLs. Boberg and Bourgeois (2016) also emphasized that instructional support and collaboration through PD can lead to the improved academic achievement of ELLs.

The findings of this study revealed that school administrators recognized that PD for bilingual teachers is critical to meet the academic success of ELLs. P6 indicated that PD is part of a cycle. The first step in the cycle is for administrators to receive information. Then administrators take time to engage in the work and discuss how the bilingual staff may benefit from the PD. Next, school leaders set up a plan to implement the information provided during the PD and take time with other school leaders to reflect after each PD. The cycle aligns with Schön's (1983) TRP. The emphasis on PD aligns with Ascenzi-Moreno et al. (2016), who explained that school administrators must participate actively in the preparation of bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs.

According to the participants, PD is part of best practices; however, the training must be relevant to what the teacher is teaching. For example, two of the participants indicated that, many times, the PD plan for the district does not take into consideration the instructional needs of bilingual teachers. Subsequently, bilingual staff attend all-day training that has no relevance with what they are teaching. Although teachers are responsible for their PD, school principals are the leaders who provide opportunities to support the PD (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fatih, 2020). School administrators indicated the importance of conducting surveys to determine the areas of strengths and weaknesses of bilingual teachers. The surveys could help identify the types of PD needed

to better prepare bilingual teachers. Understanding and addressing the needs of ELL teachers' instructional practices may result in improving the academic achievement of ELLs. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) indicated that PD for teachers must be systematically addressed.

As indicated by the participants of this study, it is difficult to determine if a specific PD was effective for the students; however, school administrators can monitor the academic achievement of ELLs by employing opportunities for bilingual teacher collaboration. Participants in this study indicated that collaborating opportunities offer the ability for bilingual teachers to improve in their areas of expertise. School administrators indicated the need to provide bilingual teachers opportunities for collaboration with other bilingual teachers in the same school building, the school district, and even with bilingual teachers from neighboring school districts. This practice allows bilingual teachers to have related conversations about instructional practices that are relevant to the grade level and subject that bilingual teachers are instructing. Collaborating opportunities need to include understanding the different modalities of instruction as well as modalities of assessments for ELLs. The emphasis on collaboration aligns with the findings of Hitt and Tucker (2016), who explained that collaboration refers to the opportunities for all staff members, including leaders, to inspire growth in the capacity of quality PD.

In addition, participants indicated that PD is the single most utilized opportunity for professional growth. Nevertheless, most of the PD is mandated by district administrators. The findings of this research align with Murphy et al. (2019), who

indicated that school administrators need to prioritize PD based on the needs of the bilingual teachers. Similarly, participants stated that PD must be tailored to the needs of the students and the capacity of the teachers. In addition, PD needs to be consistent in every opportunity. Participants indicated that PD should help bilingual teachers grow in their area of need.

Schön's (1983) TRP includes reflecting on experiences to enhance the academic performance of ELLs. Effective school administrators use reflective practices to determine effective PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. Reflective practice is the process by which school administrators can determine the needs for PD based on bilingual teachers' instructional needs and the academic needs of ELLs.

Leadership Practices

School administrators are responsible for providing bilingual educators with PD to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs. Leithwood et al. (2019) found leadership practices to be an influence on students' academic achievement. McGee et al. (2015) and Huguet (2017) supported training as a method to help bilingual teachers gain knowledge and skills that reflect student achievement. In the current study, P1 and P2 indicated that PD is more scripted by district administrators than school administrators. P6 referred to reflection as a way to acquire feedback from teachers on trainings. Findings from this study show the lack of relevant professional opportunities may be an indication of the poor academic achievement of ELL students (Gray et al., 2016; Tam, 2016).

As a school leader, the school administrator is responsible for assessing and identifying ELL relevant PD for bilingual teachers. Findings from this study indicated

that school administrators need to provide opportunities for bilingual teachers to collaborate and obtain adequate PD to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs. According to the participants, school administrators are responsible for finding the best pedagogy for bilingual instruction to provide PD. For example, one participant addressed how veteran bilingual teachers provided training to novice bilingual teachers. This technique permits novice bilingual teachers to continue implementing collaboration practices.

Participants indicated that, many times, teachers attend PD provided by an outside agency, and it is hard to have opportunities for collaboration. The school administrator can create opportunities in the school for bilingual teachers as ways to provide PD to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs. The responses related to Theme 2 revealed that school administrators lack managerial preparation to proactively provide PD for bilingual teachers. Therefore, educational training for school administrators may result in the accessibility of providing instructional skills to bilingual teachers to improve classroom instruction to prepare ELLs (Li & Peters, 2020).

Cultural Responsiveness

School administrators are responsible for establishing and maintaining a school culture to assist bilingual teachers in instructing second language acquisition and building positive relationships with ELLs. All participants agreed about the importance for ELL teachers to build relationships with students and families to meet the academic needs of students. The literature indicated that school administrators should stress the significance of relationships among ELL teachers and ELL students to improve the academic

achievement of ELLs (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Berkowitz et al., 2017; Khalifa et al., 2016).

Participants in this study indicated that understanding language acquisition and building positive relationships is essential in the academic success of ELLs. In considering PD for dual language teachers, the component of the language of instruction must be considered by school administrators. With the emphasis on the increase of the Latino student population in public schools, Wu and Kraemer (2017) proposed the need for effective educators' growth in understanding of second language acquisition. Participants in this study noted the importance of maintaining the language of instruction as part of the second language development.

Research Question 2

The findings of this study indicated that, to effectively determine PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs, school administrators need to engage in consistent use of reflective practices. Extant research on reflective practices in education has focused on teachers (Farrell, 2016; Hébert, 2015). Yet, as indicated by Robinson-Cimpian et al. (2016), school administrators agreed that PD on bilingual education is necessary to improve the academic achievement of ELL students. Therefore, the need for school administrators to use reflective practices is critical for enhancing the approaches of bilingual teachers in preparing ELLs academically. The implication that school administrators need to use reflective practices when choosing PD for bilingual teachers of ELLs contributes valuable insight to the literature with regard to how PD is chosen and what could improve the decision-making.

This study supported Schön's (1983) TRP, the conceptual framework that guided the current study, by extending it to understand the process by which administrators select PD for ELL teachers. However, it is noteworthy that, despite being given ample opportunity for administrators to discuss reflection practices that they used or might consider using, there were few data suggesting that the reflective practices were being used in any substantive way. In addition to multiple interview questions providing tacit opportunities for administrators to explicate reflective practices, the stated purpose of the study during informed consent explicitly mentioned reflective practices, and an interview question was created to more overtly elicit actual reflective practices that administrators used during PD decision-making. The arguably small number of reflective practices noted by supervisors given the opportunity and encouragement to discuss reflection as part of their processes has no clear, homogenous reason. Perhaps, supervisors did not have intentional reflective practices or did not feel such practices were important. Still other administrators may have not understood the true nature of the interview questions, while others may not have responded directly due to anxiety or fear of embarrassment. Despite not knowing the rationale behind the omission of detailed discussion of reflective practices, the lack of discussion suggests the possibility that reflective practices were not being used to any great degree, if at all. Apart from further research to ask supervisors why more pointedly they did not mention or discuss it in greater depth, it seems reasonable that supervisors could benefit from information and training in using reflective practices, specifically with regard to choosing PD to support bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs.

By implementing the two types of reflection (i.e., reflection in-action and reflection on-action), school administrators can provide ELL teachers PD to support best instructional practices, opportunities for collaboration, leadership practices, recruit and maintain bilingual teachers, and cultural responsiveness. Furthermore, school administrators must use reflective practices to enhance their leadership proficiencies to better provide PD to ELL teachers and help support the academic progress of ELLs. The use of Schön's (1983) TRP could enhance the effectiveness of the process of choosing PD if administrators used reflective practices. School administrators' implementation of TRP to choose PD for school administrators which could potentially improve students' academic achievement (Glassburn et al., 2019). If school leaders incorporate TRP into a regular practice of learning, such reflections may become part of higher-level thinking, and better PD preparation for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs can become a foundation in determining PD for bilingual teachers as an influential factor to help ELLs in attaining academic success.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations to trustworthiness were noted in the current study. There were three methodological limitations of this basic qualitative study that affected the trustworthiness of the findings: (a) the small homogeneous sample, (b) the possibility for research bias, and (c) the challenge of recruiting the desired number of participants. The findings of this study may not be transferable (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) to school structures unless there is a comparable setting such as a dual language program that serves ELLs. The transferability of the findings was also limited because the study was conducted in

two school districts in a Midwestern state with a K–8 dual language program serving the Latino ELL population. The findings may not apply to high school administrators or administrators in different geographic areas, different ethnic contexts, or districts without a dual language program. In addition, Atieno (2009) indicated that, in the field of education, one of the challenges of repeating qualitative studies is that the unique aspects of the original study cannot be replicated. Atieno discussed the importance of this limitation because the results of the study were bound to one interpretation, making it problematic to confirm or deny the outcomes of the original study.

The second limitation to the trustworthiness of this qualitative study was personal bias. When conducting interviews, researchers must minimize biases that may diminish the quality and validity of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To mitigate biases in the research, I followed the guidelines of Strauss and Corbin (1994), including continually bracketing and asking the participants questions for clarification to make certain the data analysis solely reflected the participants' perceptions and not my personal views. To increase trustworthiness in this study, I used bracketing, which helped diminish the possible adverse influence of biases that may have otherwise contaminated the data collection (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). Bracketing also assisted me in understanding another person's experiences by permitting me to become conscious of personal judgments and outcomes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To minimize bias, I recorded and transcribed each interview.

To improve data trustworthiness, I also performed transcript checks of the results to ensure that participants' answers were accurately represented. Each participant

received a copy of the transcribed interview to ensure that the message provider was exactly what was said. Participants also had the opportunity to edit any of the transcribed interview. Although strategies were used to mitigate the potential limitation of personal bias to the trustworthiness of the findings, none of the participants responded back with changes, which could mean that each participant agreed with the initial transcription of the interview. However, a lack of member checking responses could be evidence of low engagement. Thus, credibility (Guba, 1981) was potentially limited in the current study.

A third limitation for this study involved the challenge of recruiting the desired number of participants the study. The original plan for this study was to recruit 20 school administrators from two Midwestern school districts; however, because of the current health conditions (i.e., COVID-19) and the change of schooling to conduct virtual classes, it was not possible to recruit the expected sample size. I used explicitly sampling to address this limitation. The participants were purposefully selected and met the criteria of having worked as a school administrator for more than 1 year at a K–8 campus and working in a school with a dual language program. Perhaps a larger number of participants may have provided new and different responses that could have led to more themes. In other words, without knowing the reason for lower-than-expected response rates, I cannot be certain that the sample represented the target population among the schools. Thus, there were potential limitations for transferability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) and credibility (Guba, 1981) in this study.

Recommendations

This basic qualitative study added to the research about practice regarding how K–8 school administrators identify ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers. There is insufficient research addressing the perceptions of PD for bilingual teachers or teachers working with the ELL population. Based on the smaller-than-expected sample size and engagement in this basic qualitative study, I recommend further research studies emphasizing strategies to obtain a larger sample and more engagement to determine how school leaders identify ELL-focused PD. The sample size and engagement by participants in the current study appeared to be stunted by challenges of recruiting participants during a pandemic. One way to address this limitation could be to alter the way data are collected in future studies. For example, instead of virtual, semistructured one-on-one interviews, future researchers may consider sending out a survey to capture the responses. Engagement may also be enhanced by member checking using initial findings instead of interview transcripts to motivate participants to respond by asking them for a smaller task. Future studies could benefit from more engagement during member checking to enhance the study's trustworthiness.

Louie et al. (2019) indicated that school principals are the most influential leaders on student academic achievement. Their study suggested that reproduction is necessary in a larger sample to greatly ascertain the importance for PD opportunities focused on supported ELLs. This study only had seven participants, similar to the current study where there were only six participants, which may also be an indication to determine why

school administrators lack the ability to participate in studies to support PD opportunities that will improve ELLs' academic achievement.

Additional studies may benefit from grounding in the work of Schön's (1983) TRP underlining the role of school administrators as supporters of ELLs. Schön's (1983, 1987) TRP worked well for this study because it provided participants with language and processes by which to reflect on their current PD practices concerning ELL training for bilingual educators. Participants of the study provided insightful information to help understand the selection of PD for bilingual teachers. Schön's (1983) TRP is a strategic tool for school leaders because it focuses on the practitioner's effort to solve a problem. Reflection on-action involves reflection after the event or action has occurred. Reflection on-action involves reflecting on an experience or an action concerning constructive outcomes and what could have been done in a different way (Schön, 1983). School administrators, including bilingual educators, must reflect after each PD to ensure the professional growth of each participant. The use of reflective practices among administrators in their duties may prove beneficial to identifying processes that lead to success. In areas of deficit and opportunity, through researching reflective practices among administrators, obstacles may be more readily identified and potentially solved.

Research at the K–8 grade level is needed on formal procedures to identify PD for bilingual teachers. None of the six participants had formalized procedures for identifying effective PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. Ascenzi-Moreno et al. (2016) indicated that continuous and effective training of bilingual teachers and staff working with ELLs is a crucial element of a school leader's responsibility. Flores and

Rosa (2015), Johannessen et al. (2016), and Howell et al. (2016) addressed the need to prepare bilingual teachers in U.S. public schools. More research is needed to replicate and build upon the findings of the current qualitative case study by addressing the preparation of bilingual teachers who work with ELLs. Using alternative recruiting methods to obtain larger, diverse samples could increase the transferability and credibility of the findings, potentially leading to additional themes. Furthermore, TRP should be used as one lens by which to understand the administrative processes of preparing bilingual teachers of ELL students. Indeed, TRP may have utility in researching other decision-making processes by administrators as well as teachers.

Implications

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how K–8 school administrators identified ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. From a methodological viewpoint, the current study indicated that qualitative research was useful for understanding the identification of PD for bilingual teachers of ELL, despite the small sample size obtained. Using Schön's (1983) TRP as a guide, findings in this study indicated that there was little reflective practice among administrators, suggesting that administrators may benefit from incorporating defined strategies of reflection to guide their ongoing processes of PD choices for bilingual teachers of ELL students.

Empirically, the current study addressed the gap in research about practice concerning school administrators practice in identifying PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. The findings support the research that school administrators

can benefit from developing PD that prepares bilingual teachers become instructional leaders of academic change. The findings of this research emphasize the importance for further research to determine resources for school leaders to continue the academic growth of ELLs via bilingual teachers' instructional preparation. Yet, practically, both administrators and teachers may benefit by using more reflective practices in their decision making.

The effective preparation for bilingual teachers throughout the development of effective PD can support the academic achievement of ELLs (Blaik Hourani et al., 2015). An implication of this study is that school administrators should rely on TRP to provide bilingual teachers with effective PD to enhance the academic achievement for ELLs and close the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs (Spees et al., 2016). A deeper implication of this study indicates that school administrators should receive PD to learn how to support the bilingual teachers in their school building. Culturally relevant practice can occur at K–8 grade levels if administrators focus the academic attention on a population of instructional leaders who are often overlooked when considering PD within the school. If administrators develop and maintain a school culture that supports bilingual education, bilingual teachers may be better prepared to provide ELLs with a long-lasting educational experience.

In addition, teachers require ongoing PD and depend on school administrators to furnish career development (Hamilton Broad, 2016). On a local level, this study may provide evidence to the participating districts about PD practices for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs. The evidence presented in this study may provide

school leaders some support in PD planning as a way to determine applicable training for bilingual teachers. This study has the potential to influence cultural awareness in dual language schools by informing school administrators about the need to prepare bilingual teachers and increase the academic achievement of ELLs. The findings of this study could provide school leaders information to encourage strategic PD for bilingual teachers concerning the academic needs of ELLs.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how K–8 school administrators identified ELL-focused PD for bilingual teachers within two Midwestern school districts. This study was guided by Schön's (1983) TRP and was designed to answer two research questions. TRP consists of dialogue centered on reflection on instructional practices and student learning. Data collected using virtual, semistructured one-on-one interviews helped me answer the two research questions.

Findings from this study support research suggesting that school leaders are responsible for the academic achievement of ELLs (Pina et al., 2015). Carpenter (2015), Gray et al. (2016), and Tam (2016) recognized that school leaders can provide effective PD to bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs by applying Schön's (1983) TRP. School administrators must work collaboratively with bilingual teachers to meet the academic needs of ELLs (Valdez et al., 2016). This study emphasized the importance of school administrators understanding bilingual pedagogy to address the academic needs of ELLs. Administrative training based on the findings of the current study could mitigate

administrators' lack of understanding regarding TRP approaches to enhance PD for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs.

K–8 school administrators play a crucial role in the professional progress of teachers, which influences student academic success (Brown & Militello, 2016). PD continues to be the most customary preparation for educational instructional topics (Brown & Militello, 2016). Furthermore, PD frequently highlights how classroom teachers may change instructional practices to support student learning (Brown & Militello, 2016). Recognizing school administrator capacity is essential to transforming leadership practices. School administrators require leadership training and skills to support effective instructional practices for bilingual teachers and teachers working with ELLs.

This study expands the understanding of Schön's (1987) TRP and offers a framework for K–8 school administrators' accountability in supporting bilingual teachers with the necessary instructional preparation to enhance the academic achievement of ELLs. Findings from this study revealed that school administrators are responsible for (a) advancing instructional practices that prepare bilingual teachers for classroom instruction through collaborative opportunities, (b) providing bilingual educators with PD to enhance classroom instruction for ELLs, and (c) establishing and maintaining a school culture to assist bilingual teachers in instructing second language acquisition and building positive relationships with ELLs. Findings from this study suggest that school leaders need to include reflective processes and techniques to purposefully address the academic needs of Latino ELLs. Positive relationships with students and their families alone do not create

academic success. Culturally relevant practices may assist school leaders in elevating leadership standards and addressing issues that ultimately affect the ELL student population. When administrators implement standardized practices to guide PD for bilingual teachers, ELL students are more likely to achieve positive outcomes and experience improved academic achievement.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore how K–8 school administrators use reflective practices to identify English language learner-focused professional development for bilingual teachers within the school district.

1. How do you define professional development? (RQ1)
2. In your opinion, what is the purpose of professional development for bilingual teachers? (RQ1)
    - Tell me more . . .
3. Describe how you select professional development for bilingual teachers. (RQ1, RQ2)
    - Give me examples . . .
4. Describe your experience concerning the usefulness of professional development for bilingual teachers. (RQ1, RQ2)
5. As a school administrator, have you facilitated any professional development for ELL teachers or teachers working with ELLs? (RQ1)
    - Tell me more . . .
6. Can you tell me one or two examples of how professional development for bilingual educators has enhanced English language learners?
    - Have there been individual stories or overall student scores that have reflected professional development implementation? (RQ1)
    - Tell me more . . .
7. How do you describe your responsibility as an administrator to provide bilingual teachers with effective professional development? (RQ1, RQ2)
    - Tell me more about . . .
8. Tell me about the challenges you've encountered when you provided specific PD for bilingual teachers to help ELLs. (RQ2)
9. Describe your administrative experience with English language learners. (RQ2)
    - Give me a specific example of a time when…

10. Tell me about any educational experience that prepared you to work with English language learners. (RQ2)
    - Tell me more . . .
11. Describe how professional development has influenced your relationships with bilingual teachers to increase the academic achievement of ELLs. (RQ2)
    - Tell me more
    - What have you noticed about relationships between bilingual teachers and ELL students?
12. How do you know that the current professional development practices are effective? (RQ2)
    - Tell me more about . . .
13. What reflective practices do you use to determine the need for specific professional development topics needed for bilingual teachers? (RQ1, RQ2)
    - Tell me more about . . .
    - Give me a specific example of a time when…
14. Explain how the qualities you described of effective and meaningful professional development address gaps or strengthen your professional practice? (RQ2)
    - Tell me more . . .
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?