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An Examination of School Culture and English Language Learner Achievement

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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2015

Abstract

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MEd, West Georgia College, 2002

BS, Georgia State University, 1984

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

English Language Learners (ELLs) do not achieve sufficiently on standardized tests, as required by federal law. Fourth grade ELLs at a suburban elementary school in the Southern United States experienced similar problems in the failure rate on the state standardized test. Still, this school outperformed several of the schools in the same area of the county. In this sequential, explanatory study, teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of ELLs in a Southern elementary school were examined. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory provided the theoretical framework to ground this study, as culture within a school could influence student achievement. At the study site, 26 elementary teachers voluntarily responded to the electronic School Culture Survey during the quantitative phase. Analysis of these surveys yielded means, produced factor scores, and identified discrepant areas. Two administrators, five 4th grade teachers, and four ELL teachers were invited and were interviewed to collect and analyze data in the qualitative phase. The thematic coding of the data identified *teacher collaboration*, *collaborative leadership* and *perceptions of school culture* as deficient in the school. The subsequent project, a position paper based on the findings, informed school leadership of the results and potential benefits a regional examination of school culture could provide. Improving school culture can allow teachers and administrators to better serve an underachieving student population; an improved culture could consequently contribute to positive social change for these ELLs.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Mrs. Emily M. Silas Blackshear, who was very instrumental in me achieving this goal. She valued education and taught me to work hard and always strive to do my best. Thank you mom for teaching me a work ethic and believing in me.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA) reported in 2010-2011 that English Language Learner (ELL) students made up 10 % of enrollment in public schools, an increase of more than 50% in the last decade (NCELA, 2013). The 2013 Nation's Report Card indicated that 39% of Georgia's fourth grade ELLs scored at the proficient level in mathematics; 31% scored at the basic level in reading. The reading achievement gap between fourth grade ELLs and non-ELLs was 38 points. While there is an increasing enrollment of ELLs, fourth grade ELLs continue to lag behind other students in reading and mathematics.

The 2009 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) indicated that 43% of fourth grade ELL students scored below basic on the fourth grade mathematics test. (Martiniello, 2009). Fry (2007) noted that ELL's lag considerably behind native English speakers on standardized tests and high school graduation rates. The increasing rate of ELL enrollment and lack of proficiency in mathematics and language arts for these students is a national concern for teachers, administrators and others who have a vested interest in student education.

The No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] of 2001, required that all students, including those with limited English proficiency, meet Georgia's proficient level of

achievement by 2013-2014. ELLs in a local school failed to meet Georgia's proficient level of achievement in 2010 and 2013. This project study examined the culture in a school where ELLs outperform the other schools in the cluster.

Definition of the Problem

ELLs are students whose proficiency in spoken and /or written English is not strong enough for them to be successful in an English-language classroom without extra support (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). 41% of the fourth grade ELLs attending school the Southern United States failed to meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics on the state Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Although this failure rate was disturbing, it is still lower than the surrounding, comparable schools. Upon further examination, it was determined that though this failure rate was disturbing, it is still lower than the surrounding, comparable schools. This dissonance needed further study

Literature studies (Batt 2008; Lee, Lee & Amaro, 2011; and Rong & Preissle, 2009) identified possible reasons for the fourth grade ELL lack of achievement. These reasons included the absence of professional development in teaching ELLs and not providing teachers with exposure to specific math literature for ELLs. A school culture without high expectations and lack of opportunities for teachers to plan and collaborate may also contribute to the low scores of ELLs (Batt, 2008; Lee, Lee & Amaro, 2011; and Rong & Preissle, 2009). Other reasons for the low test scores of ELLs included: not incorporating the use of ELLs native language in instruction or promoting family

involvement (Bray, 2007; Coleman & Goldberg, 2010; Gugliemi, 2012; and Reyes, 2008).

When administrators and faculty members developed the of the 2011-2013 Local School Plans for Improvement (LSPI), they identified the goals of improving mathematics and language arts for all students, including ELLs. In an effort to meet these goals, during the 2012-2014 school years, professional development was implemented to assist classroom teachers with strategies and best practices for ELLs. Administrators of the school incorporated a culture with high student expectations and family involvement. The teachers did not include the use of ELLs native language in the instruction of ELLs, nor did they offer exposure to mathematics and language arts literature specific to ELLs.

Many of the teachers were not knowledgeable about the ELLs culture, which has a direct influence on academic achievement, as noted by Bray (2007). Information on the culture of ELLs can provide teachers with specific strategies on how ELLs acquire math skills (Chang, 2008). While the school had incorporated many measures to increase ELL achievement, an examination of administrator and teacher perceptions of school culture had not been considered.

This project study contributed to the body of knowledge by providing data on teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of ELLs in one local school. Locally, this research provided strategies and data that might

help to increase both teacher and administrator effectiveness in improving academic achievement for ELL's.

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Rationale
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Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The 2011-2012 LSPI identified a goal of improving mathematics performance for ELLs. The 2012-2013 LSPI identified a goal of improving language arts performance for ELLs. Several school initiatives were implemented to target these students. One of the math initiatives the school implemented was a morning CRTC attack. This initiative focused on improving math skill by using targeted teacher instruction.

This initiative used resource teachers, paraprofessionals, computer labs, and media center computers daily to target fourth grade students with low classroom test scores. The CRCT attack consisted of three weeks of computer skills and one week of direct instruction. The direct instruction component had a teacher student ratio of one to five and allowed the teacher or paraprofessional to use a variety of strategies and techniques to implement instruction. Some of these strategies included the use of CRCT Coach Books, games and puzzles, and sample test items provided by The Georgia Department of Education website.

In an effort to meet the LSPI goals, the principal implemented an Extended Learning Time (ELT) tutorial that specifically targeted fourth and fifth grade ELLs. The ELT sessions were held three days a week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday mornings

before school. These were direct instruction sessions that focused on mathematics and language arts. The sessions had a student teacher ratio of one to eight.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the school also executed a Wednesday Special Intervention Program for kindergarten through fifth grade students. The focus of this direct instruction program was mathematics and language arts and had a teacher student ratio of one to five. Several of these initiatives were implemented to improve the achievement of ELLs.

Teachers used best practices when implementing the initiatives. The focus of these initiatives was math and language arts, areas where ELLs were having difficulty achieving academically. Although administrators attempted several initiatives that were directed towards improving ELL achievement, they did not consider perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of ELLs.

Despite interventions that focused on ELL students, there continued to be a discrepancy in standardized test scores between overall county scores and fourth grade ELLs in mathematics and language arts at the study site. An examination of administrator and teacher perceptions of culture in this school was needed to determine what cultural factors may be helping or hindering the achievement of ELLs in the school. The purpose of this study was to examine teacher and administrator perceptions about school culture and ELL achievement at the study site school where ELLs, though underperforming the

county, were still outperforming similar schools in their cluster on standardized tests. Study results could be replicated at the other cluster schools.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

An extensive search for empirical studies and non-empirical studies on teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the academic achievement of ELLs did not produce results. In 2010-2011, the NCELA reported that ELL students made up 10% of enrollment in public schools, an increase of more than 50% in the last decade (NCELA, 2013).

The NCELA operates under Title III of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act. NCELA supports the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA). The mission of OELA is to respond to Title III educational needs and implement NCLB as it applies to ELLs. OELA gathers, organizes, and shares research in an attempt to provide ELLs with valuable learning (NCELA, 2006).

The 2013 NAEP indicated that 43% of fourth grade ELL students were behind in math, and the reading achievement gap between fourth grade ELLs and non-ELLs was 38 points. ELL's lag considerably behind Native English speakers on standardized tests and high school graduation rates (Fry, 20007). The NAEP is administered to a sample of fourth, eighth and twelfth grade students who live in the United States. Test results are reported as average scores and percentages. The scores are also reported at selected

percentiles that reflect changes in the performance of basic, proficient, and advanced students. NAEP allows the comparison of states using a common standard.

The 2013 Nation's Report Card indicated that 39% of Georgia's fourth graders scored at the proficient level in mathematics; 31% scored at the basic level in reading. Nationally, 43% of fourth grade ELLs are not achieving in mathematics; 69% are not achieving in reading. This lack of achievement indicated a gap in best practices and how educators were serving these students.

Definitions

Advanced students should apply integrated procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding to complex and non-routine real-world problem solving in the five NAEP content areas (NAEP, 2013).

Basic: indicates partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills (NAEP, 2013).

Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) measures how well students acquire knowledge of the state curriculum in the areas of math, language arts, science and social studies (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

English Language Learners (ELLs) are students whose proficiency in spoken and /or written English in not strong enough for them to be successful in an English-language classroom without extra support (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Extended Learning Time (ELT) is a before school tutorial program that is offered to at risk students. The goal is to help students succeed academically.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) means persons who are unable to communicate effectively in English because their primary language is not English and they have not developed fluency in the English language (Fry, 2007).

Nation's Mathematics Report Card evaluates and reports on the educational progress of fourth, eighth and twelfth grade students (NAEP, 2013).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is an education reform that was designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools (NCLB 2001, 2002).

Proficient indicates solid academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter (NEAP, 2013).

School Culture consists of the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors which characterize a school, and creates a sense of community, family, and team membership (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006).

School Performance is an indicator of how well schools prepare students to succeed on state assessments and is measured by CRCT results (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

Significance

This study is significant because there is a need for more research to develop programs and projects that are focused on helping to raise achievement for ELLs. The results of this study contribute to the body of knowledge by providing data on teacher and administrator perceptions of organizational culture, and the impact these perceptions have on the achievement of ELLs in one local school. Locally, this research provided strategies and data that could help to improve both teacher and principal effectiveness in advancing the academic achievement of ELL's.

The results from this study could be instrumental in helping to advance the education of ELLs. Nationally, access to this research will be available to other schools, districts, parishes, etc. that have an influx of ELLs and will need data to create and implement programs to assist in the education of these students. The education of these students could result in better educated and better equipped students who have the necessary skills to make positive social, economic, and political contributions to society. The findings from this research could lead to possible project studies such as professional learning or the implementation of a new school initiative, which could help to improve achievement for ELLs.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What were the teachers' perceptions of school culture as measured by the School Culture Survey?

RQ2: How did fourth grade and ELL teachers perceive school culture and the way in which it impacted ELLs achievement?

RQ3: How did administrators perceive school culture and the way in which it impacted ELLs achievement?

School culture and climate are integral elements in a school's performance, and school performance is a direct result of the achievement of all students, including ELLs (Valentine, 2006). Additional qualitative and quantitative research is needed to provide new interventions that will help improve achievement for ELLs (Short and Fitzsimmons, 2007).

A qualitative middle school study conducted by Whiteside (2006) examined teacher and principal perceptions of organizational culture. Whiteside's (2006) study incorporated the concepts of leadership, organizational culture, curriculum and teaching, and professional development on the achievement of ELLs. Additional research was needed in the area of organizational culture and the academic achievement of ELLs that examined other theoretical or conceptual frameworks (Bray, 2007).

Bray (2007) and Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) suggested further research on organizational culture and ELL achievement. As a result, this study incorporated Lev Vygotsky's cultural–historical theory to study teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and ELLs achievement. This sequential, explanatory, mixed methods

study examined the culture in a school where ELLs outperformed similar cluster schools on standardized tests. My study was instrumental in adding to the body of knowledge in this area.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research was based on Lev Vygotsky's cultural–historical theory (Gredler, 2001). This theory includes biological factors and cultural-historical development. Examples of biological factors are physical growth, maturation and the development of the central nervous system. Cultural-historical development includes the creation and use of signs and symbols to help shape and control social existence, and is what separates animal and human behaviors. Cultural-historical development also has a major role in cognitive development (Gredler, 2001).

Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory describes the role of cultural signs and symbols in student learning. The meanings of these signs and symbols are derived from the culture in which they exist. Mastering the meanings of these signs and symbols is essential to cognition. According to Vygotsky, culture is a major catalyst in how a child develops and learns. Culture also influences how one learns to think (Gredler, 2001).

According to Vygotsky's theory, teacher and administrator's perceptions of school culture are derived from cultural signs and symbols of the organization. These perceptions may lead to the development of basic or complex thinking skills for students. The student learns these meanings from the adults' perception (Gredler, 2001). Vygotsky's theory was an appropriate framework to ground this examination of school

culture because Vygotsky noted that students learn from adult perceptions of cultural signs and symbols (Gredler, 2001). The literature review on organizational culture, language arts, and teacher and pre-teacher beliefs supported the use of Vygotsky's theory as the framework for this study. Teacher and administrator perceptions and interactions are influenced by cultural signs and symbols which ultimately are transferred to student learning. Students, including ELLs, learn from their interactions with teachers and administrators.

Literature Review of Current Research

The literature review involved the use of the Walden University Library to search for articles, dissertations and books related to school culture, school climate and the academic achievement of ELLs. Research databases included ERIC, Galileo, Proquest, and Psychology databases. Some common search terms used were: school culture, organizational culture, ELL achievement, ELL mathematics achievement, ELL literacy, best practices for ELLs, effective practices for ELLs, English Language Learners, English to Speakers of Other Languages, Limited English Proficient, and teacher and pre-teacher perceptions about ELLs. An extensive search for empirical studies on teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the mathematics achievement of English Language Learners did not produce any results.

National data were obtained from the United States Census Bureau website. Other internet searches included the National Center for Education Statistics which provided standardized testing data on ELLs. The Society for Research on Educational

Effectiveness was another internet search which provided data on original and effective research in education. I participated in several workshops during the 2012-13 year that focused on effective strategies and best practices for working with ELLs.

Because this project study examined the culture in a school where ELLs outperformed similar cluster schools on standardized tests, the literature review of current research is divided into four components: (1) organizational culture, (2) language arts, (3) mathematics, (4) teacher and pre-teacher beliefs about English Language Learners and (5) effective practices for English Language Learners.

Organizational Culture

Since 1980, more than 4,600 articles have reported on the issue of organizational culture (Hartnell, Ou, and Kinicki, 2011). The motivation behind much of this research is the belief that organizational culture is an important social characteristic that influences organizational, group, and individual behavior (Hartnell, Ou, and Kinicki, 2011). The concept of culture had its origin in anthropology and sociology where it was used as a reference to rituals and customs developed by society (Lunenberg, 2008). Several decades ago, researchers began to use culture to describe the norms, practices and espoused values of an organization (Schein, 2010).

The term organizational culture is used to describe the different patterns of life in groups and includes the values, attitudes, beliefs, rituals and customs of those in an organization or group (Owens, 1995). The culture of an organization is defined as being

composed of all the beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and symbols that are characteristic of an

organization and create certain social patterns of behavior within the organization

(Fullan, 2007). This includes the attitudes, norms, values, assumptions and shared

philosophies of the community members (Jewell 1998; & Lunenburg 2008). When these

assumptions are consistent with the school's mission, both the school and student

achievement will flourish. Likewise, if these assumptions are inconsistent with the

mission of the school, neither the school nor student achievement will flourish

(Valentine, 2006).

Schein (2010) defined the culture of a group as:

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its
> problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well
> enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the
> correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. (p.18)

According to Schein (2010), the concept of culture has four characteristics:

structural stability, integration, depth and breadth. Culture is shared by group members

and also defines the group, giving the group structural stability. The concept of a

culture's integration or patterning is the idea that the elements of a culture are joined

together to form the whole (Schein, 2010). Cultural depth includes the deep, unconscious

part of a group and as such, is often less visible and less tangible. The breadth of a culture

refers to all operations of the culture, including internal operations, primary tasks and a variety of environments.

Chatman and Jehn (1994) identified seven elements that are instrumental in shaping the culture of an organization. These seven elements include: (1) the way members create and develop new ideas; (2) the establishment of rules and procedures that provide a sense of stability; (3) the manner in which individuals interact between and among themselves; (4) a focus on achieving results; (5) a relaxed work environment; (6) attention to precision and getting things right; and (7) a collaborative approach to work.

Organizational culture has been suggested as the root metaphor of an organization (Steinhoff and Owens, 1989). The culture of an organization describes the essence of an organization and how it functions. This root metaphor serves as the basis for goal setting, making commitments and executing plans (Steinhoff and Owens, 1989).

Fullan (2007) defined school culture as the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates. School culture is defined by its history, values and beliefs, myths and stories, cultural norms, traditions and ceremonies of the organization (Steinhoff and Owens, 1989). Schools that are successful have common norms and values that support and strengthen the organization.

Successful schools focus on the type of teaching that supports student learning. The way that leaders establish the organizational culture of a school affects teachers, students, and parents. School leaders must search for ways to create a culture of high

expectations and support for all students and a set of norms around teacher growth that enable teachers to teach all students well (Lambert, L., Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, & Garder, 2003).

The appropriate culture is essential in improving teacher and school performance (Connolly & James, 2009; Fullan, 2007; and Stoll, 2009). Leaders must create structures, support and leadership to create a collaborative school culture that promotes student achievement (Rhoads, 2011). Researchers (Bray, 2007; Coleman & Goldberg, 2010; Gugliemi, 2012; and Reyes, 2008) reported that providing a school culture where a high expectation of ELLs is practiced is instrumental in helping these students grow and learn.

Language Arts

There are many studies on improving literacy and academic achievement for ELLs. The current research suggests using the positive emotions of ELLs and the use of literature that is culturally relevant to ELLs (Park, 2014; and Stewart, Araumo, Knezek & Revelle, 2015). Other studies to develop ELL literacy focus on teaching ELLs the components of literacy while shifting the process of learning a language from an individual endeavor to one that is socially interactive and engaging (Hakuta, Santos, & Fang, 2013). This type of language learning is a shift from individual learning to socially engaged processes. It shifts learning vocabulary from fluency and correctness to a developmental process focused on comprehension and communication (Hakuta et al., 2013).

Emotional scaffolding is a tool that improves the literacy of ELLs. Emotional scaffolding, as defined by Meyer and Turner (2007), is the use of reliable, temporary teacher actions that support students' positive emotional experiences and increase student achievement. It is guided in the constructivist belief that social interactions are important and the educational psychology theory that emotions have an impact on student learning (Park, 2014). Children can express their emotions in a variety of ways, including language, facial expressions, gestures, body language and eye contact.

When children express their emotions concerning within the classroom, teachers gain an understanding of their cognitive state (Parks, 2014). When teachers remain conscious of ELLs emotions during instruction, this can provide information about their learning (Parks, 2014). ELL teachers can use this information to help meet the language needs of these learners.

The use of emotional scaffolding can transform classrooms into positive learning experiences that allow ELLs to thrive emotionally and academically. Teachers who support ELLs through emotional scaffolding can help to provide a culture that increases academic achievement (Parks, 2014). For example, when teachers demonstrate positive emotions such as enthusiasm and humor, students are more motivated to learn.

ELLs possess cultural skills and knowledge, such as transnational communications skills, immigration stories, and translating (Stewart, Araumo, Knezek & Revelle, 2015). Teachers can access these skills and knowledge by using culturally relevant literature that reflects the students' lives. This sends a message to ELLs that their

experiences are valued and worthy of being a part of the learning within the classroom (Araulo, 2013).

Culturally relevant literature should include content that is familiar to ELLs, and considers their rich cultural experiences (Stewart et al., 2015). These cultural experiences can become a learning tool for all students, not just ELLs. This type of literature should be used with activities that engage the language domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

ELLs require effective literacy instruction in order to be successful in school (August, McCardle & Shanahan, 2014). Effective literacy instruction includes explicit teaching in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency in oral reading, and reading comprehension (August et al., 2014). Explicitly teaching phonological awareness and phonics to ELLs is shown to benefit these learners. In addition, when ELLs are increasingly exposed to English text, this helps them with word reading (August et al., 2014).

ELLs are a heterogeneous group with different language backgrounds and cultures. They have different levels of English proficiency and correspondence (August et al., 2014). It is important that teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to help them learn decoding. These strategies include grouping students according to instructional levels, frequent teacher modeling, and providing numerous opportunities for students to practice their language skills (August et al, 2014).

There are focused instructional routines that use the ELLs native language to teach English. Teachers can preview and review storybook reading in the ELLs native language, use bilingual glossaries and dictionaries to teach targeted vocabulary, and instruct students on transferring cognates from first language to a second language (August, et al, 2014). Teachers can also use the first language as an instructional base for learning English.

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) presents a shift in what students, especially ELLs, are expected to learn in language and language learning in content areas (Hakuta, Santos & Fang, 2013). These CCSS require much more student interaction and talking with peers. This is consistent with what second language educators believe. Second language educators believe it is important to provide a content and language rich learning environment that fosters meaningful interactions between peers and teachers. The knowledge gained from these interactions can help ELLs to acquire language and participate in learning content (Hakuta et al., 2013).

ELLs must be active participants in classroom activities and conversations so that they become members of the community. ELLs need a sufficient understanding of language to understand the content and thrive in classrooms (Valdez, 2012). Language is the way content is conveyed and is part of the content (Hakuta et al., 2013).

Teachers must be able to help ELLs pay attention to language and unpack it in content areas. When language practices and demands in content areas are explicit for teachers and students, teachers are able to support language development (Hakuta et al.,

2013). This helps ELLs develop their understanding of language and achieve their goals (Hakuta et al., 2013).

It is also important to create a school culture that is conducive to ELL achievement. McCollum and Yoder (2011) noted that school culture provides one of the strongest frameworks for student achievement, and is essential to establishing a learning environment that produces successful students. School culture is essential to establishing a learning environment that produces successful students.

Mathematics

ELL teachers should include ongoing student assessment and the use of ELLs native language to teach academic English and mathematics (Coleman & Goldberg, 2010; Gugliemi, 2012; and Reyes, 2008). ELLs need to have linguistically and culturally instructional supports in place to help them succeed in mathematics. These include the use of non-linguistic math materials to facilitate math language, and the incorporation of ELL culture and language in instruction (Coleman & Goldberg, 2010; Gugliemi, 2012; and Reyes, 2008).

ELL teachers should also use effective research based strategies when teaching math and language arts to these students (Lee, Lee & Amaro, 2011). When teachers focus on teaching content vocabulary, ELLs increase content knowledge and learning (Hansen, 2009). Academic achievement was greater when educators embraced and valued the culture, native language, and background of ELL students (Bray, 2007).

Teacher preparatory coursework should include critical exposure to literature regarding the mathematics and reading instruction of ELLs. Prospective teachers would also benefit from participating in experiences that focus on working with ELLs in the mathematics classroom (McLeman, 2012).When schools work together and use trajectories such as teacher collaboration, school and family partnerships, and instructional modifications for ELLs, student achievement can increase (Levine & Marcus, 2007).

Negative Teacher and Pre-Teacher Beliefs about English Language Learners

Numerous ELLs and their parents speak little or no English. Many teachers feel unprepared to work with ELLs and their parents because of this language barrier (Chen, Kyle & McIntyre, 2008; Lucas, Villegas & Gonzalez, 2008). Some teachers believe that ELLs do not perform well in school because they come from countries with inferior educational systems (Chen et al., 2008). De Jong & Harper (2005) & Schmidt (2000) noted that classroom teachers believed the real teaching and learning for ELLs occurred in the ELL teacher's classroom, not the regular classroom. They also objected to adapting their classroom instruction for ELLs and believed that ELLs should be responsible for adapting to American culture (Walker, Shafer & Iiams, 2004).

In contrast, research also revealed a teacher misconception that ELLs do not need a specific program to help them learn English and should be immersed in mainstream classes without any type of accommodations (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). However, some

teachers believed that ELLs did not want to learn English and therefore, programs to help them learn English were detrimental to the students (Papppamihiel, 2011; Schmidt, 2000; Walker, Shafer & Iiams, 2004). Although these teachers did not believe ELLs had a desire to learn English, they thought ELLs should be placed in full-time, self- contained ELL classes until they learned to speak English. They should be allowed to join regular classes when they learned to speak English (Schmidt, 2000; Walker, Shafer & Iiams, 2004).

Many teachers have not received professional development in working with ELLs. When provided with the opportunity to participate in professional training, many teachers were not interested (Walker, Shafer & Iiams, 2004). The NCES reported that 12.5% of teachers who work with ELLs have eight or more hours of training on how to work with these students (NCES, 2002).

Some teachers believed that ELLs should not be allowed to speak their first language because this hindered them from learning English. Embedded within this belief was the idea that ELLs pretended not to understand English so that they could receive special breaks (Schmidt, 2000). Various teachers ridiculed ELL's because they spoke with an accent. These teachers accused ELLs of cheating in their classrooms, and thought that both ELLs and their parents should learn English in an after school program instead of during regular school hours (Schmidt, 2000).

Certain ELL and mainstream teachers often viewed the parents as uncaring and not overly concerned about their child's education (Schmidt, 2000 & Orozco, 2008). These teachers believed that ELLs originated from dysfunctional homes with illiterate parents who failed to support their children (Pappamihiel, 2011 & Schmidt, 2000). This viewpoint may have stemmed from a lack of teacher knowledge concerning the educational involvement of parents who did not have high school educations (Baker, Kessler-Pklar, Pitorkowski & Parker, 1999).

Pre-service education students thought of ELLs as foreign students or immigrants who were not proficient in English. They also believed that ELLs were gang members. (Albrecht & Sehlaoui, 2008; Markos, 2012; Pappamihiel, 2011). These misconceptions and negative attitudes towards ELLs could affect how teachers deliver instruction and interact with these students (Pappamihiel, 2011).

Further noted by Pappamihiel (2011) is the belief that teaching ELLs was an extra burden on the pre-service teacher, and that Latino ELLs were inferior to the dominant English speaking culture. Pre-service students viewed the home life of ELLs as needing remediation and assimilation into the dominant culture (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Some pre-service teachers also believed that it was the responsibility of ELLs and their families to adapt to a new culture (Pappamihiel, 2011). Gross, Fitts, Goodson-E., & Clark (2010) found that pre-service teachers assumed ELLs would have limited English communication skills which would cause them to have problems communicating with

others. These teachers did not believe that being bilingual or having a native language other than English was a positive attribute (Gross et al., 2010).

Many deficit notions and negative attitudes towards ELLs could be attributed to racism and prejudice (Pang & Sablin, 2001; Walker, Shafer & Iiams, 2004). Teachers believed that ELLs should assimilate to American culture and teaching ELLs interfered with mainstream student learning. Other beliefs were that the diverse needs of ELLs made it unfeasible and unfair to mainstream students; and, that mainstream students were more important than ELLs. These negative attitudes revealed underlying racism and prejudice towards linguistically diverse students (Walker, Shafer & Iiams, 2004).

Positive Teacher Beliefs about English Language Learners

Some mainstream teachers believed that their schools provided a welcoming environment to ELLs and embraced their cultures and languages. These teachers also thought that ELLs brought much needed diversity to their schools. The positive attitudes of these teachers were attributed to their amount of education, training, and exposures to diverse cultural experiences (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Teachers who completed graduate school, lived or taught in other countries, and worked with a diverse ELL population, had positive attitudes about teaching ELLs (Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Teachers with a more positive attitude towards ELLs believed that using their first language did not hinder the academic performance of ELLs, and believed ELLs should be tested in their first language (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). These teachers were less likely

to believe that teaching ELLs required using more resources than non-ELLs (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). In addition, teachers took a mastery approach to learning and had a higher self-efficacy for teaching ELLs (Karabenick &Noda, 2004).

The mastery approach emphasizes constant learning and the continuous use of best practices in the classroom. This resulted in increasing achievement for ELLs. Teachers who welcomed and took advantage of the diversity that ELLs brought to their classroom planned collaboratively with ELL teachers to help students succeed. They believed that each student's success depended on individual motivation (Schmidt, 2000).

The concept of a culture's integration or patterning is the idea that the elements of a culture are joined together to form the whole (Schein, 2010). The whole includes society, communities and educational settings that have their own cultures. The right culture is essential in improving teacher and school performance (Connolly & James, 2009; Fullan 2007; and Stoll, 2009). Teacher and administrator beliefs and attitudes about culture define and shape how they teach and interact with students, including ELLs (Barth, 2002).

Teacher beliefs about ELLs and their families are influenced by the norms and values of society as well as educational settings where cultural interactions occur (Horencyzk & Tatar, 2002). These beliefs, attitudes, and influences are carried into the schools. Parent, teacher, and administrator beliefs and practices can impact and influence opportunities for students. When communities and society do not welcome ELLs, it is

likely that schools and teachers will not welcome them (Nieto, 1995). This determines if ELLs receive quality teaching that includes best practices.

Effective Practices for English Language Learners

Effective practices for ELLs include leadership, ongoing student assessment, explicit student academic goals, and the use of ELLs native language to teach academic English and mathematics (Coleman & Goldberg, 2010; Gugliemi, 2012; and Reyes, 2008). Providing ELLs with clarification and explanation in their native language helps them understand concepts and what is happening in the classroom.

It is important that school administrators have direct relationships with ELLs and their families. This relationship helps ensure that the needs of parents and students are considered when making classroom decisions and planning for instruction (Brooks, Adams, & Morita, 2010). When teachers develop intentional plans to promote family involvement, student achievement increases (Cheng, Kyle & McIntyre, 2008). Once educators embrace and value the culture, native language and background of low-income Hispanic ELL students, academic achievement will proliferate (Bray, 2007).

ELL educators need professional development in multicultural education and training in ELL methods to help improve student achievement for these learners (Batt, 2008; and Rong & Preissle 2009). It is imperative that educators are provided with professional development specifically targeted to teach ELLs. Some of these strategies include family involvement and changes in how teachers view ELLs, in addition to teacher practices regarding ELLs.

There are themes to the academic achievement of ELLs. These themes are communication gaps, cultural clashes, lack of teacher preparation in multiculturalism, language acquisition, and the shortage of ELL instructional strategies that support families (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010). Another recommendation to improve achievement is to create a trusting and supportive school culture with high expectations for all learners. This environment includes parent involvement, student engagement, and a shared vision and mission (Good et al., 2010 and Rong & Preissle, 2009).

The classroom environment should be conducive to learning and value the learning capacity of all students. Student differences and diversity should be validated and appreciated (Gibson, 2007, Seo & Hoover, 2009). ELLs can master content when teachers ensure that the right supports are available. The right supports include creating intentional communities of learners (all classroom students) that support ELLs and the integration of the resources that ELLs bring to the classroom (Brooks, et al., 2010 and Rance, 2008). When schools use trajectories such as teacher collaboration, school and family partnerships, and instructional modifications for ELLs, student achievement can increase (Levine & Marcus, 2007).

This project study examined the culture in a school where ELLs outperform similar cluster schools on standardized tests in mathematics and language arts. The literature review focused on school culture, language arts, mathematics, pre-teacher and teacher beliefs about ELLs, and effective practices for teaching ELLs. The literature

review discussed Lev Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory that was used to frame this project study. The review also incorporated some of the cultural and academic challenges ELLs and teachers encountered in various educational facilities. These challenges included math failure rates, language issues and lack of professional development opportunities for ELL teachers.

The review encompassed specific strategies, concepts and best practices that support the academic achievement of ELLs. Some of these strategies and practices were teacher professional development, the use of ELLs native language in the classroom, and the establishment of a school culture with high expectations for all learners. Additional strategies and practices included parent involvement, student engagement, and a shared vision and mission (Good et al., 2010 and Rong & Preissle, 2009).

Implications

This project study examined teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of ELLs in one cluster school. Research findings will result in a position paper that addressed teacher needs for collaboration and collaborative leadership. The position paper could be used to help improve the academic achievement of ELLs. Teacher perceptions of school culture could influence how they interact and educate the fourth grade ELLs at this suburban elementary school. Administrator perceptions of school culture could influence the school mission, and how they provide leadership to teachers and students.

Within one to two year assessment cycles of the project discussed in section three, ELL mathematics and reading scores on state assessments should be compared on the four cluster schools. This will provide a review of standardized scores to determine if implementation of the project has helped to improve achievement for ELLs at the study site. If the percentage of ELLs who did not meet the proficiency standard decreases at the study site, a recommendation to implement the project district wide should be made to the board of education. Based on my research, this could help to increase ELL achievement throughout the district.

Summary

Section one identified the local problem as the failure rate of fourth grade ELLs on standardized tests. The literature review discusses a research gap in the area of culture in a school where ELLs, while still struggling, outperformed the ELLs in similar cluster schools. The rationale discussed local and national evidence of the lack of achievement for ELLs. Possible implications for the project were discussed. The other elements in section one were the definition of special terms, research questions and the significance of the problem.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Creswell (2003) noted that there are two different types of mixed methods research: sequential and concurrent. Within the sequential and concurrent methods are different strategies that define or determine how the research will be conducted. The sequential mixed methods can use an explanatory, exploratory, or transformative strategy. This design includes both qualitative and quantitative research in which data collections are completed at different phases of the study. The concurrent mixed methods approach uses triangulation, nested, or transformative strategy to collect qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously (Creswell, 2003).

The mixed methods researcher collects and analyzes data, integrates these findings and makes inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2003). The collection and analysis of data, integration of findings and making of inferences are all done in a single study or program of study (Creswell, 2003). Collecting diverse types of data through surveys and interviews provided a better understanding of the research problems (Creswell, 2003). Hesse-Biber (2010) noted that the combination of larger, quantitative, numerical data with narratives, pictures and words from a smaller qualitative data would allow this research to be generalized for future studies.

The nature of this project study was a sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design because it attempted to explain how teachers and administrators perceived school

culture impacted the achievement of ELLs. This sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design used a combination of data that gave a more thorough understanding of the culture in the study site where ELLs perform better than demographically and culturally similar cluster schools on standardized tests. This research used a quantitative survey and follow-up interviews that provided a deeper understanding of the problem as determined by the survey results.

This project study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What were the teachers' perceptions of school culture as measured by the School Culture Survey?

RQ2: How did fourth grade and ELL teachers perceive the way in which school culture impacted ELLs achievement?

RQ3: How did administrators perceive the way in which school culture impacted ELLs achievement?

I used a quantitative survey and follow-up interviews to seek answers to the research questions. The sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design provided a thorough understanding of the culture in the study site where ELLs outperformed similar cluster schools on standardized tests. Hesse-Biber (2010) noted that the combination of larger, quantitative, numerical data with narratives, pictures and words from a smaller qualitative data would allow this research to be generalized for future studies.

Hesse-Biber (2010) noted that the qualitative data helped to provide meaning or understanding to quantitative results, and quantitative data helped to provide a larger

framework in which to place qualitative data. Creswell (2003) noted that the collection and analysis of data, integration of findings and making of inferences are all done in a single study or program of study.

Strategy for Data Collection

The sequential, explanatory, mixed methods strategy was used in this project study. This design included both qualitative and quantitative research in which data collections were completed at different phases of the study. I used an electronic quantitative survey in the first phase, followed by qualitative interviews to provide a deeper understanding of the problem. Results from the quantitative collection and analysis were used to help develop a cogent interview protocol for the second phase of the study.

Multiple Forms of Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative. Gruenert and Valentine's (1998) School Culture Survey (SCS) was used to collect data about critical cultural variables to determine teachers' perceptions of school culture. Cultural variables were based upon the collective perceptions of K-5 teachers employed at the study site.

Qualitative. Qualitative, face-to-face interviews with structured, open-ended, pre-determined questions were used to collect data on the views and opinions of the participants (Creswell, 2003). The interview protocol included a heading, instructions to the interviewer, key research questions derived from relevant literature and quantitative

results. I added probes to follow key questions and space to record interviewer comments and researchers' reflective notes (Creswell, 2003). As an employee at the study site, these protocols made it possible to avoid personal and professional bias.

Data was inductively interpreted for meaning, focusing specifically on themes and /or patterns of perceptions of organizational culture (Creswell, 2003). During data coding and processing, I disassociated names from survey responses to ensure anonymity of participants. Letters and numbers were used as stand-ins for individual names as a mean to protect identities.

Justification for Design and Approach

Collecting diverse types of data through surveys and interviews helped to provide a better understanding of the research problems. The sequential explanatory mixed methods design used a combination of data that provided me with a more thorough understanding of teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture at the study site. The SCS provided quantitative data on teacher perceptions of school culture in phase one. This data was analyzed to determine perceived areas of school culture that required deeper probing. I used the themes derived from this data to develop a cogent interview protocol for the qualitative, second phase of the study.

The combination of quantitative, numerical data with narratives, pictures and words from a smaller qualitative data allowed this research to be generalized for future studies (Hesse-Biber, 2010). This research design also provided researchers with a cross-

check of data that were obtained through research. The qualitative data helped to provide meaning or understanding to quantitative results, and quantitative data helped to provide a larger framework in which to place qualitative data (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Data Integration

Within this mixed methods project study, I applied the sequential explanatory strategy to the data collection and analyses processes. Quantitative results from phase one were used to provide a representative sample and information about the population at the study site. This data drove the interview protocol by pointing out discrepant areas that needed probing during the qualitative interview process for two administrators, four ELL teachers, and five fourth grade teachers in the second portion of the study. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed in phase two. Quantitative and qualitative data were interpreted and compared so that results, conclusions and recommendations could be made.

Data integration included comparing quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to increase generalizability and validity of the findings. Similarities amongst the quantitative and qualitative results were used to assess validity through triangulation of the results. Contradictions between quantitative and qualitative findings were examined to generate new research questions or insights into further research (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Setting and Sample

Population

The population for this project study was one, suburban, K-5, Title I elementary school located in the Southern United States. There were 1,106 students, 72 teachers and five administrators. The student ethnic demographics were: 61% Hispanic, 16 % African Americans, 8% Asian, 4% White, and 2 % Multi-racial. ELLs made up 41 % of the population. The school's free and reduced lunch population was 92 %.

The 2009-2010 CRCT data obtained on 84 fourth grade ELLs at the study site who failed to meet the proficiency standard on standardized tests prompted the need for this project. They were mentioned because their standardized language arts and mathematics data indicated a local school problem which initiated this study. These students did not take part in the surveys or interviews because their data had been collected. Participants for this project included 72, K-5 teachers and two administrators at the study site.

Sampling Method

Creswell (2003) noted two types of sampling, random and non-random, when selecting study participants. Random sampling provides an equal probability of the participants being selected. Non-random (convenience) sampling selects specific study participants. Purposive sampling (a type of non-random sampling), was used in this mixed-methods research.

Purposeful selection of the study participants helped me understand the problem and the research questions that should be asked (Creswell, 2003). The sample consisted of highly qualified teachers and administrators from the study site. NCLB (2001) defined a highly qualified teacher as one with full certification, a bachelor's degree, and demonstrated competence in subject knowledge and teaching.

Merriam & Associates (2002) reported that purposeful sampling would provide the most data on the participants' perspectives because these teachers and administrators had experience with ELLs. Purposeful selection of the participants for the interview provided a deeper understanding of the culture at the study site, a school where ELLs, while underperforming compared to county schools, still outperformed the demographically and culturally similar cluster schools.

Sample Size

Phase one (quantitative) of the study included a non-random sample of 72 elementary teachers at the study site. This sample was representative of the population and was also used to select participants for the qualitative portion of the study, as well as validate the survey instrument (Hesse-Biber, 2010). This sampling frame could also enable me to generalize the results to the larger population (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

A sample of two administrators, five fourth teachers and four ELL teachers from the study site were interviewed during the qualitative/ second phase of data collection. Administrators and teachers for the second phase of data collection were chosen because

they were employed at the study site and had experience working with fourth grade ELLs.

Eligibility Criteria for Study Participants

The criteria for selecting participants to include in phase one of the project study were: (a) K-5 teachers of ELLs that were employed by a county located in the Southern United States and**,** (b) teachers worked at the study site. Eligibility criteria for phase two included: (a) fourth grade classroom teachers that were employed at the study site, (b) ELL teachers employed at the study site, and (c) two administrators employed at the study site. Teachers were selected because they had experience teaching ELLs. Administrators were selected because they were school leaders and instrumental in establishing the school culture at the study site.

Characteristics of the Selected Sample

Data obtained from the Georgia Department of Education website indicated certain characteristics for the selected sample of teachers. Most teachers held a Master's Degree and were white females. Black females made up the next largest ethnic group. Hispanic educators were the third largest ethnic group. The survey population of teachers was made up of 47 Whites, 20 Blacks, four Hispanics, and one Asian. There were four male and 68 female teachers.

The school had 30 teachers who held a Master's degree, 25 held a Bachelor's degree, 16 held a Specialist degree and one held a Doctorate. The majority of teachers

had between one to ten years of experience. The mean level of experience was eleven years.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Description of Strategies for Qualitative Sequence</h2>

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

In order for me to gain access to participants, I had to complete the National Institutes of Health training course Protecting Human Research Participants. This provided me with information about the rights of research participants. I also had to complete Walden's IRB application prior to conducting my research. My research proposal was approved by Walden's IRB in June, 2015.

After IRB approval, I completed an Application to Conduct Local Research form for the study site. After reviewing the application, the principal agreed that I could conduct my research at the school. Once permission was received, participants were contacted via e-mail to inform them about the project study and the electronic survey. Participants (teachers and administrators) in the second phase of the project study were also contacted via e-mail to determine a convenient time to schedule the interviews. As a second measure, fourth grade and ELL teachers were contacted during their planning time to schedule the interviews.

Number and Anticipated Duration of Interviews

Five fourth grade teachers, four ELL teachers and two administrators at the study site were interviewed during a two week period. Teachers were interviewed because they

provided teaching and learning to fourth grade ELLs. Administrators were interviewed because they were qualified, experienced school leaders who were instrumental in establishing the school culture. I conducted the interviews at the study site before and after school. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. The duration of the interview process was two weeks.

Methods of Establishing a Researcher-Participant Relationship

I e-mailed the participants to schedule the interviews. Interviews were conducted before and after school at the study site.   Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated "in establishing an acceptable research role, you have to show who you are in ways that the interviewees accept and understand" (p.84). Participants were informed about my role as a graduate student on the informed consent form. I shared the research questions and purpose of the project study with participants prior to interviewing them.

My position as the ELL Grade Manager provided me with numerous opportunities to work with all of the participants. I delivered professional learning on best practices for ELLs, and conferenced with them individually and collectively to collaborate and discuss their ELLs. I also developed personal relationships with some of the participants. These interactions and personal relationships could have created researcher bias during data collection and interpretation and might have also encouraged participation.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation consisted of an electronic survey (teachers) and interviews (teacher and administrator). The surveys and interviews provided a cross check of data and helped with data analyses, conclusions and outcomes. Quantitative surveys provided data on teachers' perceptions of school culture. Qualitative data gave a deeper understanding of the cultural factors that could influence teacher and administrator perceptions of how school culture impacted ELL achievement. Data triangulation established credibility and validity to the research findings (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Member checks were done to ensure that data interpretation was valid. I e-mailed the interview transcripts to participants for them to review and give feedback on a draft summary of their responses. Peer reviews were also used to validate data results.

Role of the Researcher

I have been employed at the suburban elementary school for seven years as an ELL teacher. I also work as the Lead Teacher in the English Language Learner Department. I have worked for 22 years as a teacher in elementary and middle schools. My education and experience as an ELL teacher were conducive to certain biases, i.e., negative teacher perceptions about working with ELLs. While every effort was made to be objective, these biases might have influenced data collection, interpretation and analyses.

I participated in a national summit for ELLs conducted by the National Association of Educators (NEA). The summit addressed ways that teachers could

advocate for ELLs. The goal of the summit was to develop an online resource for educators that would help them advocate for ELLs and effectively teach them. My participation in the summit and work as an ESOL teacher were instrumental in me choosing my research topic I also participated in an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Case Study led by The Educational Testing Service. The purpose of the study was to determine a passing score on state assessments for ESOL teacher certification.

I am a member of the National Education Association and volunteered at the NEA General Assembly Conference held in a major Southern city during July, 2013. The NEA is made up of teachers, administrators and support personnel from the 50 states. It is the nation's largest educational organization and advocates on behalf of students enrolled in public schools.

My education, experience, and expertise as an ESOL teacher were instrumental in helping me get invited to work on a video pilot project for my school system. I worked with two classroom teachers and shared insight on effective strategies and techniques that could be used in the mainstream classroom with ELLs. Using computers, teachers were able to access the videos to obtain information on best practices for regular education students and ELLs in math, language arts, science and social studies.

Descriptions of Instrument for Quantitative Sequence

Name of Instrument and Data to be Collected

Permission to use Gruenert and Valentine's (1998) School Culture Survey (SCS) was granted in October, 2012 by Dr. Jerry Valentine. The survey was used without alterations. The SCS is a six factor, thirty-five item survey that was electronically mailed to 72, K-5 teachers in one local school. The survey provided data about teacher's perceptions of culture at the study site that were based on six factors. The six factors included : (a) collaborative leadership-measured the degree to which school leaders established, maintained and supported collaborative relationships, (b)teacher collaboration-measured the degree to which teachers engaged in constructive dialogue which furthered the school mission, (c) professional development- measured the degree to which teachers valued continuous personal and professional development, (d) collegial support-measured the degree to which teachers worked together effectively, (e) unity of purpose- measured the degree to which teachers worked towards the school mission, and (f) learning partnership-measured the degree to which teachers, parents and students worked together for the collective good of the student (Gruenert & Valentine 1998).

The SCS was e-mailed to 72, K-5 teachers at the study site from September to October, 2014 to determine teacher perceptions of school culture. The e-mail contained the consent form with an embedded link to my Survey Monkey account. When participants clicked on the link, the survey opened for them to complete. At the end of data collection, the survey yielded twenty-six responses, a 36% response rate.

I collected the survey results and entered them into the scoring sheet template for the SCS. The template calculated the mean for factors and items as they were entered in the template. The template also generated mean graphs for these items. These data were analyzed in phase one of the project study to determine perceived areas of school culture that required deeper probing. The themes derived from these data were used to develop a cogent interview protocol for the qualitative, second phase of the study.

Type of Instrument and Concepts Measured by Instrument

The SCS is a six factor, thirty-five item survey with a continuous scale. Items were ranked from one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree). The SCS measured six factors to determine a school's collaborative culture. The participants were asked to rank the thirty-five items based on their perceptions of the factors. The six factors were:

1. Collaborative leadership.

2. Teacher Collaboration.

3. Professional Development.

4. Collegial Support.

5. Unity of Purpose.

6. Learning Partnership (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998).

How Responses are Calculated and their Meaning

The following criteria were used to calculate responses and meanings:

1. Collaborative Leadership measured by survey items: 2,7,11,14,18,20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34.

2. Teacher Collaboration measured by survey items: 3, 8, 15, 23, 29, and 33.

3. Professional Development measured by survey items: 1, 9, 16, 24, 39.

4. Collegial Support measured by survey items: 4, 10, 17, 25.

5. Unity of Purpose measured by survey items: 5, 12, 19, 27, 31.

6. Learning Partnership measured by survey items: 6, 13, 21, 35

   (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998).

The SCS had a scoring template which calculated item and factor means, and provided mean graphs as data were entered into the spreadsheet.

Processes for Assessment and Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Gruenert (1998) established concurrent validity of the School Culture Survey (SCS) by administering the survey along with The School Climate Survey to 632 teachers in 27 schools located in Missouri. The School Climate Survey was an established instrument developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), (Gruenert, 1998). This instrument was developed to assist schools with school improvement, planning, budgeting, research and school accreditation reports (Keefe & Howard, 1997).

The four selected subscales (factors) from the School Climate Survey used to assess validity for the SCS were Teacher-Student Relations, Administration, Student Academic Orientation, and Instructional Management. The remaining six factors were not used because they did not sufficiently reflect cultural elements (Gruenert, 1998). All six SCS factors correlated significantly with the established School Climate Survey:

1. Collaborative Leadership correlated with Administration (r =.657) Instructional Management(r = .488) and Teacher/ Student Relations (r = .633).

2. Teacher Collaboration correlated with Student Academic Orientation(r = .483) and Teacher/Student Relations (r = .532).

3. Unity of Purpose correlated with Teacher/Student Relationships (r = .387), Instructional Management (r = .454), Student Academic Orientation (r = .485) and Teacher/Student Relationships (r = .387)**.**

4. Professional Development correlated with Student Academic Orientation (r = .475) and Teacher/Student Relations (r = .436).

5. Collegial Support correlated with Administration (r = .577) and Teacher/Student Relations (r = .506).

6. Learning Partnership correlated with Instructional Management (r = .439) and Student Academic Orientation (r = .416).

In summary, fifteen of the 24 correlations were significant at the .05 level. Seven were significant at the .01 level. Significant correlations were .300 or greater. These correlations supported the validity of the SCS (Gruenert, 1998).

Factor analysis was used to establish reliability, correlations and Cronbach's Alphas for the SCS. Each of the six factors of the SCS measured a distinctive dimension of school culture. Data analyzed through factor analysis determined commonalities among the survey items (Gruenert, 1998). The published Alpha's (Gruenert, 1998) are noted below:

Collaborative Leadership   .910

Teacher Collaboration   .834

Unity of Purpose   .821

Professional Development   .867

Collegial Support   .796

Learning Partnership   .658

Processes Needed to Complete Instrument by Participants

The following processes were used to ensure survey completion:

1. I e-mailed information about the project study to the participants at the study site. The consent form was attached to the e-mail.

2. The consent form contained a Survey Monkey link to the SCS and directions for completing the survey.

3. I sent a follow-up e-mail three days after the initial contact.

4. The link to the SCS and directions for completing the survey were included in the follow-up e-mail. Paper copies of the SCS and consent form were not needed because participants did not request them.

Where Raw Data will be Available

Raw data is stored on an external hard drive, laptop computer and flash drive. Paper copies of interview notes, survey responses, audio recordings and transcribed interviews are securely locked in a file cabinet. Paper copies will be destroyed after three years.

Data Analysis and Validation Procedures

Analysis Procedures

First Phase: Quantitative data (SCS) were electronically collected via Survey Monkey from the 72 respondents for one month. Survey results automatically flowed into the Analyze section of my Survey Monkey account. I reviewed the data as it were received. Mean scores, factor scores, and item and factor mean graphs from the SCS provided information about the study population's perceptions of school culture.

Factor scores are a measure of how teachers ranked the six factors of a collaborative school culture. Factor mean graph is a model that reflects the average factor scores. Item mean graph is a model that reflects the average teacher responses to each item. I analyzed the data to determine teacher perceptions of school culture. This analysis

drove the interview protocol for the second phase of the project by pointing out discrepant areas which required probing during the qualitative interview process.

Second Phase: Two administrators, four ELL teachers and five fourth grade teachers employed at the study site were interviewed in the second phase. Teachers and administrators were selected because they were employed at the study site. Teachers also had experience teaching ELLs. Administrators were school leaders and instrumental in establishing the school culture.

I anticipated that the interviews would last two weeks. However, the interviews lasted eight days. Themes derived from participant responses and specific participant statements were analyzed. Quantitative and qualitative data were interpreted and compared so that results, conclusions and recommendations could be made.

Analysis within the Quantitative Approach

Comparative data analysis of the ELLs standardized language arts and mathematics scores of the school district and four cluster schools revealed that ELLs at the study site (School B) performed better in relation to the other cluster schools. In addition, data analysis within the quantitative approach (SCS) consisted of me printing the mean scores, factor scores, and item and factor mean graphs. I analyzed the scores and graphs to determine teacher perceptions of school culture. Data analysis revealed that the factor of collaborative leadership required additional probing. The themes derived

from this data were used to develop a cogent interview protocol for the qualitative

approach.

Analysis within the Qualitative Approach

Data analysis within the qualitative second phase of the study consisted of the

following recommendations by Creswell, (2003):

1. Transcribe interviews to organize and prepare data for analysis.

2. Read through data to determine what participants said and take notes.

3. Use a coding process to begin analysis.

4. Describe findings of analysis.

5. Data interpretation.

Qualitative analysis included: a) open coding in which categories of information

were generated, b) axial coding- involved selecting one category and positioning it within

Lev Vygotsky' s Cultural-Historical Theory(Gredler, 2001), and c) selective coding-

determining the story from the interconnection of categories (Creswell, 2003).

Analysis between the Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Results from the quantitative data, specifically the SCS, was used to determine if

additional questions needed to be added to the original interview questions for the

qualitative phase of the project study. Qualitative data (interviews) provided a deeper

understanding of the quantitative results (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Both data sets helped to answer research questions. Quantitative and qualitative results were compared to determine similarities and contradictions between the data sets. Data integration included comparing data in an attempt to increase generalizability and validity of the findings. I interpreted the data for results and made conclusions and recommendations.

Validity and Trustworthiness of Quantitative Data and Qualitative Findings

Data triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data gave validity to the findings by providing a coherent justification for themes (Creswell, 2003). This included member checking and rich, detailed descriptions. Similar findings between the quantitative and qualitative results were used to assess validity through triangulation of the results. I examined contradictions between quantitative and qualitative findings to generate new research questions or insights into further research (Hesse-Biber, 2010). I used Cronbach's Alpha of .96 to establish reliability for quantitative data collected from the electronic surveys in this project study.

Procedures for Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The combination of surveys and interviews used different models to explore different aspects of how school culture impacted ELL achievement. Each method was independent, but had equal status (Fielding & Fielding, 2008). Creswell & Clark (2007) identified three strategies used to integrate data:(1) design and implement comparable

topics or questions for both methods;(2) transform data to make it easier to compare and; (3) use matrices to organize quantitative and qualitative data into one table.

Quantitative data were collected and analyzed first. Qualitative data was collected, analyzed and interpreted second. Data integration occurred third, after both data sets had been analyzed and interpreted.

Measures Taken for Protection of Participants' Rights

I informed the study participants that their privacy would be protected. The use of letters and numbers helped with anonymity. During data coding and processing, I disassociated names from survey responses to ensure anonymity of the participants. Participant names were replaced with letters and numbers to protect identities. A pseudonym was also used to protect the place of data collection. Collected data will be locked and stored in a file cabinet.

The informed consent was included in the SCS via e-mail. Participants were able to sign electronically. I answered any questions before and after the interviews. Study participants were informed that they would be protected from harm. IP addresses were not recorded. The alphabet P and numbers were used to protect participant identity. I will only share project study results with administrators.

 Rubin & Rubin (2005) suggested that the consent form include: (a) the participant's right to participate voluntarily and to withdraw from participation at any time, (b) the purpose of the project, (c) the procedures of the project, (d) the right to ask

questions, (e) the right to obtain a copy of the results, (f) the right to have their privacy

respected, (g) how the study would benefit the participants, (h) a place for the participant

and researcher to sign, and (i) a signature line to indicate that both parties agreed to the

provisions.

I sent an e-mail to the principal asking permission to conduct the interviews at the

study site. The e-mail identified the project study, length of time, potential impact and

outcomes for the project. I also included permission to provide access to participants

during a time that did not interfere with teaching and learning.

<div align="center">Data Analysis Results: Phase One: Quantitative Findings</div>

CRCT Mathematics and Language Arts Trends

In initial discussions regarding school culture and ELLs achievement, the intent

was to survey teachers in four, K-5 cluster schools to obtain data on teacher perceptions

of school culture and its impact on ELLs achievement in language arts and mathematics.

The school district, however, limited my data collection to the school where I work.

Subsequently, I collected survey and interview data at the study site (School B). Without

the ability to survey the cluster schools, it was impossible to compare teacher perceptions

of school culture and its impact on ELLs mathematics and language arts achievement at

the other cluster schools.

The four cluster schools have similar demographics and ELL populations, and

theoretically should have similar test scores. Therefore, I obtained data on the

percentages of fourth grade ELLs who did not meet the proficiency standard on standardized tests in language arts and mathematics for two years to make comparisons. Data were obtained for the four cluster schools and the school district as a whole. The comparisons are a reflection of how ELLs at the cluster schools and the school district performed on standardized mathematics and language arts assessments.

My study is based on the ELL failure rate on standardized test scores in mathematics and language arts at the study site. Two year trend data from the four cluster schools with similar demographics and ELL populations are discussed below. The school district data on standardized tests is also discussed. Tables 1 and 2 reflect this data.

Table 1

Percentage of Fourth Grade ELLs who DNM Proficiency Standard in Mathematics

School	2013-2014	2012-2013
A	17%	15.9%
B (study site)	18.3%	12.6%
C	22.2%	12.5%
D	18.8%	22.5%
District	15.2%	13%

Table 2

Percentage of Fourth Grade ELLs who DNM Proficiency Standard in Language Arts

School	2013-2014	2012-2013
A	11.4%	9.1%
B (study site)	13.6%	17.8%
C	11.4%	11.3%
D	19.0%	11.8%
District	11.9%	10.6%

Two year trend data from Table 3 for the four cluster schools indicates that the percentage of fourth grade ELLs who did not meet the performance standard on state standardized mathematics assessments ranged from 12.5 % to 22.2%. The range for ELLs who did not meet the performance standard at the School B (study site) from 2012-2014 was 12.6 % to 18.3%.

During the 2012-2013 school year, ELLs at the study site performed better than the district because 12.6 % of the students did not meet the state standard in mathematics when compared to the district (13%). School B (study site) and School C had the lowest percentages of ELLs who did not meet the mathematics standard, 12.6% and 12.5 % respectively. ELLs at School C outperformed ELLs at School B (study site) by .1%.

During the 2013-2014 school year, School A had the lowest percentage of ELLs (17%) who did not meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics. School B (study site) had the second lowest percentage of ELLs (18.3%) who failed to meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics. School D had the third lowest (18.8%) followed by School C (22.2%). ELLs at School B (study site) consistently ranked second when compared to ELLs at the other cluster schools. While unable to compare cultures of schools with higher and lower ELL mathematics scores, examining my school, which ranks second, is a good starting point for examining culture and its impact on ELL mathematics scores.

Two year trend data from Table 4 on the four cluster schools indicates that the percentage of fourth grade ELLs who did not meet the performance standard on state standardized language arts assessments ranged from 9.1 % to 19%. The range for ELLs who did not meet the performance standard at School B (study site) from 2012-2014 was 13.6 % to 17.8 %.

School A had the lowest percentage (9.1), followed by school C (11.3%) and school D (11.8%). School B (study site) had the highest percentage (17.8) of ELLs that did not meet the performance standard in language arts. Data from Table four indicates that district wide, 10.6 % of fourth grade ELLs did not meet the proficiency standard in language arts.

Throughout the 2012-2013 school year, School A had the lowest percentage of ELLs (9.1%) who did not meet the state proficiency standard in language arts. School C had the second lowest percentage of ELLs (11.3%) who failed to meet the state proficiency standard in language arts. School D had the third lowest (11.8%), followed by School B (17.8%). ELLs at School A performed better than the district (10.6%) in language arts on standardized assessments. ELLs at Schools B, C and D did not perform as well as the district on language arts assessments.

During the 2013-2014 school year, Schools A and C had the lowest percentages of ELLs who did not meet the language art standard, 11.4%. Because Schools A & C had the same percentage of ELLs who failed to meet the standard in language arts, School B, the study site, (13.6%) ranked second, followed by School D (19%).   ELLs at School A and C outperformed ELLs at School B (study site) by 2.2%.

 Within one to two years after implementation of the project discussed in section 3, ELL standardized mathematics and language arts scores at the study site should be compared. This will provide a more in-depth look at the culture of the study site. It will also allow a review of standardized scores to determine if implementation of the project has helped to improve achievement for ELLs. If the percentage of ELLs who did not meet the proficiency standard decreases, a recommendation to implement the project district wide should be made to the board of education. This may help to increase ELLs achievement on standardized tests throughout the district.

Theoretically, the four cluster schools embody a similar culture and a larger proportion of ELLs than other cluster schools within the same county. However, there is a difference in ELL math and language arts standardized scores between the cluster schools. Therefore, because of differences in test scores, I examined the school culture at my school, School B.

Gruenert and Valentine's School Culture Survey

This sequential explanatory mixed methods research study examined teacher and principal perceptions of school culture at the study site. Gruenert & Valentine's (1998) School Culture Survey, an established instrument, as well as teacher and principal interviews, were utilized to collect data. The SCS is a six factor, thirty-five item survey with a continuous scale. Items were ranked from one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree). The SCS measured six factors to determine the collaborative culture at the study site. The factors were collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, and professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support and learning partnership (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998).

In Phase One, Gruenert & Valentine's (1998) SCS was electronically mailed to 72, K-5 teachers at the study site to determine teacher's perceptions of school culture. There were six teachers who responded to the first request. I sent a reminder e-mail to the seventy-two teachers three days later. This resulted in an additional six responses to the survey.

Initially, I planned to collect data for seven days. However, due to the slow response rate, I extended data collection to one month. This time allowance resulted in fourteen additional responses. At the end of data collection, the survey yielded twenty-six complete responses; a 36 % response rate. Forty-six teachers did not respond to the survey.

Wave analysis was done in an effort to check for response bias. Response bias is the influence that non-respondents have on the survey estimates (Creswell, 2003). My completed survey response rate of 36% meant that 64% of the survey population did not respond. If the 64% had responded, this might have made a significant impact on the overall survey results.

I checked the responses weekly to determine if there was a change in the average responses (Creswell, 2003). Throughout the first three weeks six surveys were completed each week. There were eight more surveys completed during the fourth week. The response rate did increase by two participants during the last week of data collection, indicating there may be some bias in responses. Some participants might have decided to complete the survey at the end of data collection.

Data Screening & Cleaning. Once the data from Survey Monkey was downloaded, I entered the responses into the Excel spreadsheet provided with the School Culture Survey. The data were reviewed for reasonableness and data entry errors. This included numbers that were out of range and missing data (Thomas, 2004). Next, I

looked for patterns of responses to determine if respondents may have answered a question (s) without reading it/them. I scrutinized each survey to make sure every question had a numbered response and that no question was skipped. My review of the data did not find any responses which needed to be discarded.

Survey Response Rate. In phase one, I e-mailed the School Culture Survey 72, K-5 teachers employed at the study site. There were twenty-six teachers who completed the survey, which indicated a 36 % response rate. The twenty- six individual survey responses were printed and coded for data entry into the spreadsheet that was provided with the survey. The coded responses were: Strongly Agree-1; Agree-2; Neither Disagree nor Disagree-3; Disagree-4; Strongly Disagree-5.

After coding, survey data for the twenty-six participants was entered into the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was programmed to automatically calculate mean scores, factor scores, and item and factor mean graphs as the data were entered. Survey reliability was established by using SPSS 21.0 to determine Cronbach's Alpha.

I analyzed the spreadsheet data to determine if there were further areas that needed probing during phase two of data collection. Question twenty-six (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998) teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques, had the lowest mean score of 2.85, or 57%. This question was included under the collaborative leadership factor. Since question twenty-six had the lowest mean score,

further probing in the area of collaborative leadership was included in phase two
(qualitative interviews).

Descriptive Statistics Research Question 1. What were the teachers' perceptions of
school culture as measured by the School Culture Survey?

School Culture Survey Factors
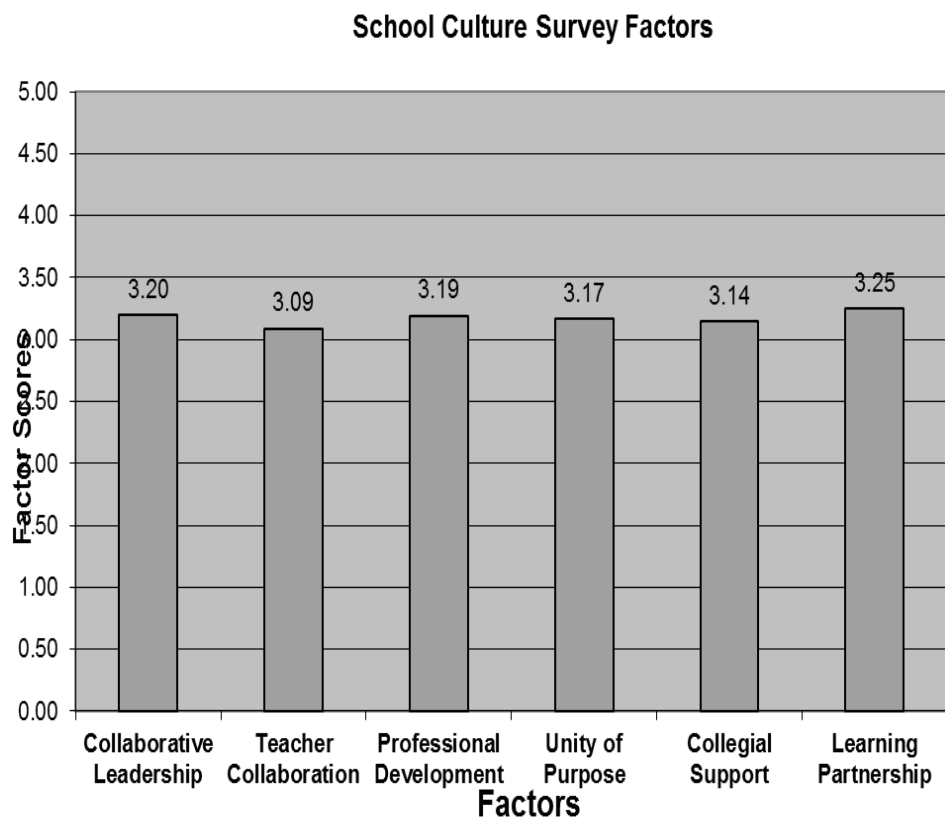
Figure 1: School Culture Survey Factors

The six factor scores in Figure 1 were ranked from highest to lowest:

1. Learning Partnership- 3.25.

2. Collaborative Leadership-3.20.

3. Professional Development -3.19.

 4. Unity of Purpose -3.17.

5. Collegial Support -3.14

6. Teacher Collaboration-3.09

Learning partnership (Grunert and Valentine, 1998) which measured the degree that teachers, parents, and students worked together for the common good of the student, had the highest factor score of 3.25 or 65%. This indicated that teachers, parents, and students at the school communicated often and shared expectations about student learning. In general, students accepted responsibility for their learning, and parents were able to trust teachers in educating their children. Good, Masewicz & Vogel (2010) and Rong & Preissle (2009) noted that creating a trusting and supportive school culture with high expectations for all learners is necessary to improve student achievement.

Collaborative leadership (Gruenert and Valentine,1998) which measured the degree to which school leaders establish, maintain, and support collaborative relationships with and among school staff, had the second highest factor score of 3.20 or 64%. This suggested that leaders of the school encouraged teachers to share ideas and practices, as well as valued teacher ideas and professional judgment in educating

students. Rhoads (2011) noted that leaders must create structures, support, and leadership to create a collaborative school culture that promotes student achievement.

Professional development (Gruenert and Valentine, 1998) which measured the degree to which teacher's valued continuous personal development and school-wide improvement, had the third highest factor score of 3.19 or 64%. Teachers at this school sought ideas from organizations, seminars and other professional sources to remain knowledgeable about current instructional practices that influenced or impacted student achievement (Gruenert &Valentine, 1998).

Unity of purpose (Gruenert and Valentine, 1998) had the fourth highest factor score of 3.17 or 63%. This was a measure of how teachers worked towards supporting the school mission. Teachers understood and supported the school mission. They performed their duties to make sure that students learned the academic knowledge and skills that were a part of the school mission. When teacher actions and assumptions are consistent with the organization's mission, both the organization and student achievement will flourish (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998).

Collegial support (Gruenert and Valentine, 1998) which measured the degree to which teachers worked together effectively, had the fifth highest factor score of 3.14 or 63%. The teachers were able to work together whenever there was a need or problem. Teacher collaboration (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998) measured how much teachers participated in constructive dialogue that advanced the school's vision. Teacher

collaboration had the sixth highest factor score of 3.09 or 62%. This indicated that teachers at this school planned together and discussed teaching practices.

The ranking of the SCS Factor Scores did not indicate a large discrepancy between the factors. All of the factors had a mean score of 3 or 75%, signifying that most of the teacher beliefs about school culture at this school were in agreement with the factors needed to have a collaborative school culture. Ideally, the factor scores should have a mean of 5, therefore teachers believed that there was a need to improve the school's culture.
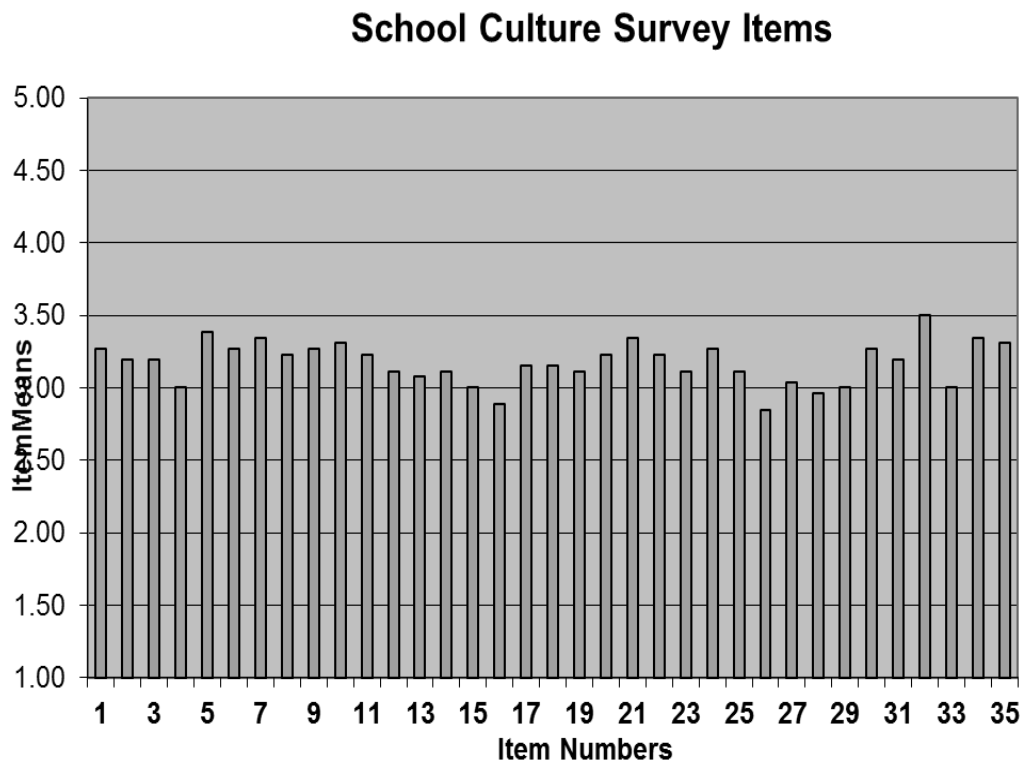
Figure 2: School Culture Survey Item Means

The School Culture Survey item means in Figure 2 were ranked according to the five highest and five lowest mean scores. The five highest rated survey items with mean values in parentheses were:

1. Question 32 (3.50): Administrators protect instruction and planning time. This measured collaborative leadership.

2. Question 5 (3.38): Teachers support the mission of the school. This measured unity of purpose.

3. Question 34 (3.35): Teachers are encouraged to share ideas. This measured collaborative leadership.

4. Question 7 (3.35): Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers. This measured collaborative leadership.

5. Question 35 (3.35): Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments. This measured learning partnership.

Collaborative leadership was the factor with the highest mean score (3.50). It was also the factor that appeared three times in the above ranking, suggesting that teachers believed that the administrators established, maintained and supported collaborative relationships with and among school staff. Chatman and Jehn (1994) identified a collaborative approach to work as one of seven elements that are instrumental in shaping the culture or an organization.

The five lowest rated survey items with mean values in parentheses were:

1. Question 26 (2.85): Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques. This measured collaborative leadership.

2. Question 16 (2.88): Professional development is valued by the facility. This measured professional development.

3. Question 28 (2.96): Leaders support risk- taking and innovation in teaching. This measured collaborative leadership.

4. Question 29 (3.00): Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects. This measured teacher collaboration.

5. Question 33 (3.00): Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed. This measured teacher collaboration.

Collaborative leadership was the factor with the lowest mean score (2.85) and was also identified two times in ranking the lowest rated survey items. Likewise, teacher collaboration was identified two times in the ranking. The data indicated that teachers perceived there was a need for more collaboration between leaders and teachers, as well as teacher and teachers.

Collaborative leadership was also the factor with both the highest (3.50) and lowest mean score (2.85). The highest rankings were in the areas of teachers supporting the school mission and sharing ideas. Leaders trusting the professional judgment of teachers and protecting instruction and planning times were also ranked high.

Collaborative leadership received the lowest ranking in the areas of teachers working together to develop and evaluate programs, teachers being rewarded for taking risks and being innovative in their teaching, teachers openly voicing and discussing disagreements, and teachers valuing professional development.

Teachers at the school perceived they were not able to openly discuss disagreements and were not rewarded for innovation and risk taking behaviors. While teachers did share ideas and support the school mission, they did not work together to develop and evaluate programs; nor did they value professional development. It was noted that school administrators trusted the professional judgment of teachers. However, despite the fact that school leaders trusted the professional judgment of teachers, teachers believed that administrators did not allow them to develop and evaluate programs or openly voice and discuss disagreements.

Professional development was the second lowest rated survey item (2.88). This suggested that teachers did not value professional development. Although teachers believed that administrators trusted their professional judgment, teachers did not value personal professional development.

Survey reliability was established by using SPSS 21.0 to determine Cronbach's Alpha. The results from the SCS showed very good internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha of .96. The Cronbach Alpha of .96 greatly exceeded the accepted

minimum standard of .70. The instrument consistently measured the twenty-six teacher perceptions of school culture at the local school.

Conclusion

Analysis of the SCS data in phase one disclosed that teachers perceive there is a need for more collaboration between administrators and teachers, as well as between teachers. Collaborative leadership is ranked as the highest and lowest survey item, and has the highest factor mean score; and is probed further during interviews in the second phase of data collection. I submitted a change in procedures form to IRB and was granted permission to add questions to my original interview that probed collaborative leadership.

While some teachers perceive there is a need for more collaborative leadership from the administrators, other teachers believe there is not a need. This information is used to help guide the second phase of the study in which teachers and administrators are interviewed to answer the second and third research questions. The survey results also indicate that further probing is needed in the area of collaborative leadership. Data results from the interviews are discussed in the following section.

Implications

There were some limitations to the survey, including a response rate of 36%. Although this response rate is fairly low, it is acceptable and normal. The fact that I had to limit my data collection to the study site may have negatively impacted the survey

response rate. The higher the survey response rate, the less likely there is error from non-response bias. A higher response rate increases the ability to generalize findings (Draugalis & Plaza, 2009). This is another study limitation because my results are not generalizable to larger populations.

Another consideration would be the effect that non respondents had on the survey results. Non respondents could have not responded to the survey or chosen not to participate based on the research topic. Non response bias could lead to inaccurate conclusions if responses from non-respondents change the results (Draugalis & Plaza, 2009). This may impact my survey results and question the survey validity. The combination of data from surveys and interviews may help to offset nonresponse bias.

Phase Two: Qualitative Findings

Qualitative face-to-face interviews with nine structured, open-ended pre-determined questions were used to collect data on the views and opinions of the participants. Two administrators, four ELL teachers and five fourth grade teachers employed at the study site were interviewed in the second phase. Teachers and administrators were selected because they were employed at the study site. Teachers also had experience teaching ELLs. Administrators were school leaders and instrumental in establishing the school culture.

I contacted a total of 18 people via e-mail; 11 consented to the interview. The e-mail contained information about the project study and asked the participants to schedule

a convenient time for the interviews. I also included information about my role as a researcher and teacher. If participants agreed to be interviewed, they replied to the e-mail with the words "I consent".

The interviews took place before and after school at the study site. The teachers and administrators agreed to be interviewed if the location could be changed to the school instead of the local library. Each interview lasted approximately 25 minutes. Prior to interviewing the participants, I reminded them that their responses would be confidential and pseudonyms or numbers would be used to protect their identity.

The participants were also given a replica of the questions. Some of the participants wanted to know if their responses would identify them and if there were right or wrong responses to the questions. I reassured them that their responses would be identified with a letter and number, not a name. I also informed them that there were no right or wrong answers, only their perceptions.

The eleven interviews were digitally voice recorded, transcribed and coded. This process took approximately one month. The interview process via recording took eight days. The remainder of time was spent transcribing and coding the interviews. After the interviews were transcribed, I summarized the responses and e-mailed them to the participants for member checking (Appendix M).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analyses within the qualitative second phase of the study consisted of the following recommendations by Creswell (2003):

1. Transcribe interviews to organize and prepare data for analysis.

2. Read through data to determine what participants said and take notes.

3. Use a coding process to begin analysis.

4. Describe findings of analysis.

5. Data interpretation.

Hatch (2002) noted that data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to communicate to others what has been learned, and includes organizing and asking questions of the data that will allow the researcher to identify themes, patterns and relationships. Qualitative research is characterized by processing information inductively; thinking moves from general to specific (Hatch, 2002).

Inductive processing began with me transcribing the interviews to organize and prepare them for data analysis. Although I interviewed three groups of participants (administrators, fourth grade teachers, and ELL teachers), the transcripts were numbered sequentially instead of within groups. Each participant was assigned a letter and number (P1-11) to disassociate the names from responses. I read through the interviews several times to determine what the participants said and took notes.

In keeping with grounded theory, I started with individual interviews of each participant, analyzed their responses and combined them to tell the story of all the participants. This allowed the data to emerge from the participants' perspectives and reflected their individual and collective story (Jones, 2002). I sent member checks to the participants to ensure that their perspectives were accurately represented.

Lev Vygotsky's cultural- historical theory served as the lens through which the interviews were read. I looked for cultural symbols and perceptions of teachers and administrators as I read the interviews. Vygotsky's theory was an appropriate framework to ground this investigation of teacher and administrator beliefs and perceptions about school culture and its impact on ELLs achievement because Vygotsky noted that students learn from adult perceptions of cultural signs and symbols (Gredler, 2001).

Teacher and administrator perceived the school's culture supported ELL achievement, which might have impacted how mathematics and language arts instruction were delivered to ELLs. These perceptions might also have impacted student and adult interactions in non-academic areas. Open coding was used to identify categories of information from the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This included identifying frames of analysis, and creating domains and codes. Some of the categories were grade level planning, support for ELLs, parental support, beliefs, and teacher planning. The categories are identified in the headings with parentheses.

The subsequent step involved making an analysis within domains, and searching for themes across the domains (Hatch, 2002). Next, I created an outline to express relationships within and among domains. After creating the outline, I identified data excerpts from the interview to support the themes (Hatch, 2002).

ELL teachers identified the themes of teacher collaboration and collegial support. The fourth grade teachers identified the themes of teacher collaboration, collegial support and professional development. The analysis of the two administrator interviews identified the themes of professional development, collaborative leadership and learning partnerships. During quantitative data analysis, the theme of collaborative leadership received the lowest mean score from the 26 respondents. As a result, this theme was added to the teacher interviews and is included below. The participant's words were written verbatim from the transcripts.

ELL Teacher Interviews

RQ2: How did fourth grade and ELL teachers perceive school culture impacted ELLs achievement?

I invited five ELL teachers to participate in the second phase of my research. Four teachers agreed to be interviewed and I met with them before and after school to answer the research question of how fourth grade and ELL teachers perceived school culture impacted ELL achievement. The analyses of the four interviews identified two themes: teacher collaboration and collegial support.

Comments from the four ELL teachers are included below.

(Grade Level Meetings) Teacher Collaboration

For the theme teacher collaboration, ELL teachers were asked: can you tell me some ways that you work effectively with other teachers to support ELL achievement?

P6:"I always make sure I have an open communication. I talk to them, I e-mail them, we talk to each other and give each other support and we share ideas."

P7: "Each grade level has a half day, half day just to be by themselves and plan, work out problems, look into the future and see what needs to be done; the main way that I work with other teachers is to go to their planning and to set up separate planning times with them, before school, after school and just talk about their students."

P8:"We have faculty meetings that we can discuss stuff and grade level meetings."

P9: "In order to best target their needs, I do work collaboratively with most of the teachers in order to ensure that we tag team, kind of. Um, what I mean by that is if I'm teaching digraphs, then I let the teachers know that I'm teaching digraphs so that they can also reinforce digraphs in their classrooms. So it's not two separate teachers teaching English with two separate thoughts, it's more of a cohesive thing."

The ELL teachers believed they worked effectively with other teachers by collaborating with them during grade level meetings, and meeting with teachers before

and after school to discuss ELL achievement. They also frequently communicated with teachers either by e-mail or face to face.

(School Culture) Collegial Support

For the theme collegial support, ELL teachers were asked: can you tell me about your school's culture?

P6: "I think my grade level I work with is very friendly and open and good communication overall; yes, positive."

P7:"I think we have a good sense of community here, and when something happens to one, a problem, or an issue, or an incident that everybody pulls together for that person; I feel like we're a family, even though it's a big family."

P8: "We have the culture of staying focused and supporting each other, and encouraging each other. This is a good working atmosphere."

P9: "I absolutely love the school culture here. I think for the most part everybody is very team oriented, together helping each other."

ELL teachers believed that the school had a sense of family and community; that teachers worked together and helped each other when there was a need. They believed that everybody was a team and teachers supported and encouraged each other.

Collaborative Leadership

For the theme collaborative leadership, ELL teachers were asked: how do administrators reward teachers for experimenting with new ideas and techniques?

P6: "The only, the only method I know or ways I can think that they reward is um, if they're aware of a technique or method a teacher uses and they think it's effective, they allow them to do a staff development class and share the idea with the other teachers in the whole school; or on their evaluation, I'm thinking they may tell them they like the idea or technique they're using in their classroom on the evaluation and that's all I know".

P7: "Well, in the past, I think teachers have been rewarded in a limited way if they want to experiment with new ideas and techniques by um, introducing it to their grade level. They might try it in their classroom and if it's successful, they would introduce it to their grade level and share, um during collaborative meetings they would just share their ideas that way; I'm not so sure about a reward, how administrators would reward teachers; I don't, I can't recall of any time where teachers have been specifically rewarded; but I think it's basically just trying out new ideas in the classroom and then sharing them, we're encouraged to share with our grade level and with, even with a set of grade levels if it would work with more than one; but also if we go to professional learning in the summer and learn of something new, we're encouraged to share it as well; that might be school-wide, but I can't recall of too many times of that happening".

P8: "We were complimented by different administrators for using then new idea and techniques, and our current administrators are trying to listen to their ideas and to help us financially or with a piece of advice when it is um, necessary, important or useful for the kids".

P9: "Um, honestly, I can say that um, because this is my first year teaching at this school, I have yet to see administrators rewarding for experimenting with new ideas and techniques so I could not answer that question".

Most ELL teachers believed that administrators rewarded teachers for experimenting with new ideas and techniques through sharing these ideas with their grade level and other faculty during professional development. Teacher P9 was unable to answer the question because as a new teacher, she had not observed administrators reward teachers for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.

Summary of ELL Teacher Interviews

Teacher collaboration, collegial support and collaborative leadership were three of the factors identified by Gruenert & Valentine (1998) that measured a unique aspect of a school's collaborative culture. Teacher collaboration measured the degree to which teachers engaged in constructive dialogue that furthered the educational vision of the school. Collegial support measured the degree to which teachers worked together effectively. Collaborative leadership measured the degree to which school leaders

established, maintained, and supported collaborative relationships with and among school staff (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998). ELL teachers believed that the school's culture promoted ELL achievement.

Fourth Grade Teacher Interviews

RQ2: How did fourth grade and ELL teachers perceive school culture impacted ELLs achievement?

I invited eight fourth grade teachers to be interviewed as part of my research. There were two teachers with scheduling conflicts and one refused to participate due to time constraints. Therefore, I interviewed five fourth grade teachers. I met with the five teachers before school to answer the research question of how fourth grade and ELL teachers perceived school culture impacted ELL achievement. The analysis of the five teacher interviews identified three themes: teacher collaboration, collegial support, and professional development.

Comments from the fourth grade teachers are included below.

(Grade Level Meetings) Teacher Collaboration

For the theme teacher collaboration, fourth grade teachers were asked: can you tell me how teachers engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school?

P1: "Quite honestly, fourth grade barely meets. We've gotten to the point now where we'll meet just because we're told admin is going to be there or something like that. As far as ELL conversations are concerned, there really aren't any with the exception to the staff development that we receive from you."

P2: "I believe that the constructive dialogue is just being sure that they talk amongst each other and get ideas from one another to see what it is that they should be teaching in order to make the kids more successful academically."

P3: "Oh, lunch room conversations are our best time, because we're split so much in our hallways that we don't get a chance to talk to each other, so our lunch room table talks are good; our grade level planning, we're together at least twice a week that we get together and just plan together or just talk about our students and what do we need, and how we can help each other."

P4: "At my grade level we talk about what works for some kids, what works for other kids. If that doesn't work, there's eight of us, so we bounce ideas off of it."

P5: "They provide staff development in which we can meet with other grade levels in the school to collaborate with them as well; and they encourage us to use each other to get information and to collaborate so we can work with kids; they're very pro collaborative."

Most fourth grade teachers believed that teachers engaged in constructive dialogue that furthered the educational vision of the school during their grade level meetings. School leaders also provided staff development with other grade levels where teachers were encouraged to share information and collaborate with each other. P1 believed that the grade level only met when school leaders attended the meetings; and teachers engaged in constructive dialogue not during weekly meetings, but when the ELL department provided professional development.

(School Culture) Collegial Support

For the theme collegial support, fourth grade teachers were asked: can you tell me about your school's culture?

P1: "I think a lot of it is the grade level I'm on; the biggest thing with our grade level is it's a culture of complaining and a culture of just don't want to be here."

P3: "We're all one family; we all work together. We're here together to support not just academically, but also at their homes as well; your child needs glasses, what can we do?"

P4: "I think our school does have a sense of community and team membership."

P5: "I think the school culture is that we're all working together to ensure that all of our kids can learn. Our belief is that all of our kids can learn and we just have to relate their background in order to reach them as learners."

Most fourth grade teachers believed that the school's culture was family oriented and there was a sense of community and team. They believed teachers supported one another and worked together to ensure that ELLs learned. However, P1 believed that the culture among the fourth grade teachers was one of complaining and not wanting to work at the school.

Professional Development

For the theme professional development, fourth grade teachers were asked: can you tell me about personal and professional development offered to teachers to help them effectively teach ELLs?

P1: "I went through the county and did their one year program and that was amazingly awesome."

P2: "Okay, well, one professional development that I had, being new to the school, is going to Visions on Saturdays and being there. The professional development is like everything. Anything and everything you want to talk about, and they cover ELL skills, and how to teach it, where to go on the computer to find different things in order to communicate whatever it is that you're teaching in the curriculum to the kid that is learning, as far as the ELL style."

P3: "I think the administration makes sure that we have professional development; I know that you guys come in and talk to us about monitored forms and how to properly assist our students."

P4: "I do the professional development through the school when you guys present."

P5: "The professional development is typically through the school, we usually have the ELL teachers come several times during the year to help us develop the ELPPs and monitored forms for the kids."

Fourth grade teachers believed they were involved in two types of professional development that helped them effectively teach ELLs. The ELL department at the local school provided ongoing teacher support and the school district offered classes that delivered strategies to help effectively teach ELLs.

Collaborative Leadership

For the theme collaborative leadership, fourth grade teachers were asked: how do administrators reward teachers for experimenting with new ideas and techniques?

P1: "The biggest thing that comes to mind for me is when I have gone on workshops and things like that and they wanted me to present when I came back, but we haven't followed through with that, um, so I think the intention is there, but unfortunately I haven't seen a lot of follow through with it; we get told that a lot you know, go and you can bring it back to the other team or faculty and then it doesn't necessarily happen; I think that's definitely a great reward, um, other than that, I can't really think of any".

P2: "Administrators reward teachers for experimenting with new ideas, um, administrators um, can reward teachers by um, sharing their ideas of new learning skills um, with just more than their grade level and um, making it maybe, I guess um, the new idea of the month or you know, something to make it a big deal or if the teacher that has come up with that activity or new idea…just so they'll feel like their idea meant something".

P3: "How do we get rewarded"?

I: "Yes, when you have new ideas and techniques here at school".

P3: "I can't say that we do".

P4: "Um, my administrator, um when she comes in or I tell her about a new idea, a new technique I'm teaching, um, she rewards me, well by encouraging me first, but she also um, tells the rest of the grade level or tells other people, other teachers that might be interested in um, that new idea or new technique".

P5: "Um, I think one of the ways they have um, when teachers experiment with new ideas and teaching techniques, try something new, they have a share it with the faculty, um it it's something that we find that's useful, beneficial for the kids, then we usually share it um, with the faculty, share it with our team members and other people who might be interested in it".

Most fourth grade teachers believed that administrators rewarded teachers for experimenting with new ideas and techniques by allowing them to share ideas with their

grade level and other faculty during professional development. P5's administrator rewarded her by encouraging her and then told the rest of her grade level and other teachers about the idea. P1 was told that she would have the opportunity to present new workshop ideas, but that did not happen. P3 responded by saying teachers were not rewarded.

Summary of Fourth Grade Teacher Interviews

Teacher collaboration, collegial support, professional development and collaborative leadership were four of the factors identified by Gruenert & Valentine (1998) that measured a unique aspect of a school's collaborative culture. Teacher collaboration measured the degree to which teachers engaged in constructive dialogue that furthered the educational vision of the school. Collegial support measured the degree to which teachers worked together effectively. Professional development measured the degree to which teacher's valued continuous personal development and school-wide improvement. Collaborative leadership measured the degree to which school leaders established, maintained, and supported collaborative relationships with and among school staff (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998). Most fourth grade teachers perceived that they worked together in a collaborative, family oriented culture that promoted ELL achievement.

Summary of ELL and Fourth Grade Teachers' Interviews

ELL teachers and most fourth grade teachers believed the local school's culture was family oriented and had a sense of community, support and caring. They believed teachers worked together in a collaborative environment which ensured ELLs learned and were academically successful. The right culture is essential in improving teacher and school performance (Connolly & James, 2009; Fullan 2007; and Stoll, 2009).One fourth grade teacher believed that within her grade level, the culture was one that did not promote success for ELLs because teachers complained and did not enjoy working with ELLs.

Administrator Interviews

RQ3: How did administrators perceive school culture impacted ELLs achievement?

I invited five administrators to participate in phase two of my research. Although three agreed to participate, I only interviewed two due to scheduling conflicts. The two participants were the principal and one assistant principal. I met with them before and after school to answer the research question of how did administrators perceive school culture impacted ELLs achievement. The analyses of the two administrator interviews identified three themes: professional development, collaborative leadership and learning partnerships. Comments from the two administrators are included below.

Professional Development

For the theme professional development, administrators were asked: can you tell me about personal and professional development offered to teachers to help them effectively teach ELLs?

P10: "In addition, the ELL support staff, they go in and they also model lessons and give the teachers regular feedback on new strategies that need to be used; I teach a ten week academic and language content course called TALC and it allows teachers to see the different cultures; they can come in and learn different cultures, different taboos, and different ways to speak to all minorities; I have a very, very, good ELL department, which is always trying to help out; when I see them working with the ELL students, I see that they're teaching them on the same level of every classroom."

P11:"When we go to our monthly administrative meetings, many times there are presentations done by the ELL department and whatever information we get from them, we bring it back to our teachers and try to encourage that; we have also brought in county people from the ELL office to meet with grade levels at grade level meetings, and as a whole in our faculty meetings."

Administrators believed that teachers received most ELL professional development from the school's ELL department and the school district's ELL department. Sometimes the district information was redelivered via the administrative team to the teachers.

Collaborative Leadership

For the theme collaborative leadership, administrators were asked: could you tell me how administrators establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff?

P10:"One of the main things I love is working with such a large administrative group; there's five of us in total, each one of us brings different strengths to the table."

P11: "We coordinate common planning for grade level meetings so that we can find out what are some commonalities, um, challenges that maybe the staff may have, the teachers may have, and try to provide some insight or recommendations, whether it deals with the curriculum, testing, and parent concerns; we do a lot of talking among ourselves, and then, depending on the issue we have, those grade level administrators go out to their grade levels and they discuss, um, different topics that we've discussed as an administrative team."

P11: "Dr. Blue (pseudonym) meets on a regular basis with the ELL resource teachers and we find out what are some of the challenges they may be having, if there's an area that we're not certain of, we normally will contact people in the district."

Administrators believed they maintained and established collaborative relationships with school staff by providing teachers with grade level planning time and attending some of the grade level meetings. The administrators met weekly as a team and shared relevant information from these meetings with teachers.

(Parental Support) Learning Partnerships

For the theme learning partnerships, administrators were asked: how do teachers, parents, administrators and students work together to achieve success for ELLs?

P10: "When parents come in and they start speaking English, and I answer them in Spanish, once they hear that I speak Spanish, it calms them down and it builds rapport with the community."

P11:"We do bring the parents in, having those open houses; when they go to the parent center, they utilize the parent center, um, they get some information from there; I think the system where we have them check out materials and resources, that also helps our students to be able to achieve."

P11: "One of the ways that we work to support the ELL achievement that we have, um ear marked a room in the gym as specifically for the English training because we had so many parents coming. So, we went beyond that to provide four days a week for parents to come in, so that's a plus."

P11: "Parents feel very comfortable in the school culture; it's family oriented. The parents feel that we promote a culture that's not just about academics, and they know that we promote the overall success of the students, whether academically, socially or physically, just by the activities that we do.

Administrators believed that parents were comfortable in the school and took advantage of the programs and resources that were available to them. These resources and programs promoted both parental and student achievement.

Summary of Administrator Interviews

Professional development, collaborative leadership and learning partnership were three of the factors identified by Gruenert &Valentine (1998) that measured a unique aspect of a school's collaborative culture. Administrators believed that these three factors of a collaborative school culture promoted ELL achievement at the school. The administrators also believed the school's culture made parents feel comfortable, was family oriented and helped to promote the success of ELLs. The school's culture allowed administrators and teachers to establish and build rapport with the parents. In addition, the school had a parent center which provided resources that parents could use to help their children at home.

Evidence of Quality

Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish reliability for the quantitative survey. The alpha of .96 greatly exceeded the accepted minimum standard of .70. Validity of the qualitative interviews was established by peer review and member checks (Appendix M). The interview questions were also designed to measure teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture. In addition, the interviews were coded to identify

categories and themes related to perceptions of school culture (Hatch, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Data triangulation consisted of electronic surveys, administrator interviews and teacher interviews. Data triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data gave validity to the findings by providing a coherent justification for themes (Creswell, 2003). Similar findings between the quantitative and qualitative findings were used to assess validity through triangulation of the results (Creswell, 2003).

Analysis between the Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Analysis of the School Culture Survey (quantitative) data in phase one disclosed that teachers perceived there was a need for more collaboration between administrators and teachers, as well as between teachers. Collaborative leadership was ranked as the highest and lowest survey item, and had the highest factor mean score. While some teachers perceived there was a need for more collaborative leadership from the administrators, other teachers believed there was not a need.

Data analyses of administrator and teacher interviews (qualitative) in phase two revealed that professional development, teacher collaboration and collegial support were the factor items that ELL and fourth grade teachers shared. During quantitative data analysis, the theme of collaborative leadership received the lowest mean factor score from the 26 respondents. As a result, this theme was included in the teacher interviews. Collaborative leadership, professional development and learning partnerships were the

factor items identified by administrators. Both administrators and teachers identified the factor item professional development. Neither administrators nor teachers identified the school factor unity of purpose, which measured the degree to which teachers worked toward a common mission for the school (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998).

The combination of administrator and teacher interviews identified five of the six factor items noted by Gruenert (1998) that are needed to have a collaborative school culture. Administrators and teachers perceived that the school's culture promoted ELL achievement. These perceptions of school culture relate to Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical theory because Vygotsky noted that students learn from adult perceptions of cultural signs and symbols (Gredler, 2001).

Salient Data

There was one discrepant interview included in the data analyses and discussion of teacher interviews. This teacher believed the culture within the fourth grade department was one where teachers complained, were negative and did not like working with ELLs. I worked with this teacher in the past and assisted her for 30 minutes two days a week. I posit that this researcher participant relationship may have allowed her to talk openly and freely during the interview.

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The combination of surveys and interviews used different models to explore several aspects of how school culture impacted ELL achievement. Each method was

independent, but had equal status (Clark and Creswell, 2008). Quantitative data were collected and analyzed first. Qualitative data were collected, analyzed and interpreted second. Data integration occurred third, after both data sets had been analyzed and interpreted.

Survey data showed that most of the teacher beliefs about school culture were in agreement with the factors needed to have a collaborative culture which promoted student achievement. However, the 26 teachers surveyed believed that more collaboration between teachers and administrators was needed. ELL teachers and most fourth grade teachers believed that the culture at the study site was family oriented and had a sense of community, support and caring. They believed teachers worked together in an environment which ensured ELLs learned and were academically successful.

The administrators believed the culture at the study site made parents feel comfortable, was family oriented and helped to promote the success of ELLs. The culture at the study site allowed administrators and teachers to establish and build rapport with the parents. In addition, the school had parent resources that promoted parental involvement in student learning.

Results from SCS data were used to determine if additional questions should be included with the original interview questions for the qualitative phase of the project study. During quantitative data analysis, the theme of collaborative leadership received

the lowest mean score from the 26 respondents. As a result, this theme was included in the teacher interviews.

Qualitative data (interviews) provided a more profound understanding and explanation of the quantitative results. Both data sets helped to answer research questions. Quantitative and qualitative results were compared to determine similarities and inconsistencies between the data sets. Data integration included comparing data in an attempt to increase generalizability and validity of the findings. Data were interpreted and compared to share results, conclusions and make recommendations.

Project as an Outcome: A Position Paper

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of English Language Learners. The research questions explored were: What were the teachers' perceptions of school culture? How did fourth grade and ELL teachers perceive school culture impacted ELL achievement? How did administrators perceive school culture impacted ELL achievement? The research questions were investigated using quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative results indicated that administrators and teachers believed the school's culture was family oriented and promoted ELL achievement. Quantitative results revealed that the school culture contained all six school factor items (indicated by the SCS) that were needed to have a collaborative school culture.

In both data sets teachers expressed a need for more collaboration, collaborative leadership, and to be able to openly voice and discuss disagreements. They also specified that they were not allowed to develop or evaluate programs. Quantitative and qualitative results were compared to determine similarities and inconsistencies between the data sets. Surveys, administrator and teacher interviews were used to triangulate the data. Data were interpreted and compared to share results and conclusions; and to make recommendations. Data integration included comparing data in an attempt to increase generalizability and validity of the findings.

Research findings supported the designation of a project to help address teacher needs for leadership and collaboration. These results supported a policy recommendation in the form of a position paper to the school's administrative team. It is important for school leaders and faculty to know how perceptions of school culture impact ELL achievement. It is also imperative for administrators to know what kind of culture the teachers perceived existed at the school, and the need for more teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership.

Summary

Section two discussed the sequential explanatory mixed methods design that was used to collect and analyze data on teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture. Included in the discussion were the setting and sample, and a report of the qualitative and quantitative sequences. Data analyses and validation procedures, as well

as measures taken to protect participant rights were also described. Based on data results, the project is a policy recommendation to the administrative team at the local school in the form of a position paper.

The position paper will inform administrators and outline needed recommendations based on the study results. The position paper is based on data analyses and offers school leaders a perspective to analyze problems and implement recommendations (Archbald, 2008). Section three provides a detailed explanation of the project based on research findings. It also includes an introduction, rationale for the genre, literature review, project description, evaluation and implications.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

An increasing number of ELLs with cultural and linguistic needs are continuing to change the demographics of schools in the United States (Haworth, 2011; Honigsfeld & Giouroukakis, 2011). The literature review in section one identified several best practices to help promote ELL achievement. Some of these practices included explicitly teaching math and language arts vocabulary, creating a trusting and supportive school culture, and encouraging leadership and collaboration. Although the local school implemented some of these practices, data analyses indicated the need for more collaborative leadership and teacher collaboration.

Research findings from this study supported the designation of a project to help address teacher needs for collaborative leadership and collaboration, which may affect ELL mathematics and language arts achievement. When researchers are deciding how to present their results, Rubin and Rubin (2005) recommended asking three questions. First, what are the core ideas you want to communicate? Second, who is the audience? Third, what are the available ways to disseminate your results?

The core ideas communicated to the schools' administrative team are based on data analyses from section two. A policy recommendation in the form of a position paper is the most appropriate genre to share data and recommendations with the administrative team based on research results. The position paper presents a synopsis of teacher and

administrator beliefs about school culture, as well as recommendations to support a more collaborative school culture to improve the achievement of ELLs. The literature review synthesizes current and past research on policy recommendation/position papers, school culture, teacher collaboration, and collaborative leadership.

Four options were given as a means to disseminate results: an evaluation report, a curriculum plan, professional development, and a policy recommendation in the form of a position paper. An evaluation report was not an appropriate genre because my research was not an evaluation. The curriculum plan did not fit my research because the focus was school culture, not curriculum. Professional development was inappropriate due to the fact that data results did not indicate a need for professional development. A position paper was the appropriate genre because research results and recommendations were shared with the administrative team. The position paper could influence the administrative team to review and revise its policies on teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership.

Description and Goals

This project study addressed the problem of fourth grade ELLs who failed to meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics and language arts. While ELLs at the study site did not meet the proficiency standard, they performed better when compared to the other cluster schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the culture in a school where ELLs outperformed similar cluster schools on standardized tests.

Themes generated from data analyses were teacher collaboration, collaborative leadership, professional development, collegial support, and learning partnerships (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998). Although quantitative data analyses indicated that the school's culture contained all six factors needed to have a collaborative school culture, qualitative analyses revealed teachers perceived a need for more collaboration with teachers and administrators. Teachers also identified a need for more collaborative leadership.

Data analyses also showed that teachers perceived administrators did not allow them to develop and evaluate programs nor openly voice and discuss disagreements. The goal of this policy recommendation was to share research results with the administrative team and address those issues related to having a more collaborative school culture that supports ELLs achievement. The following themes directed policy recommendation to achieve the following goals:

1. Increase awareness of teacher and administrator perceptions of the school's culture.

2. Increase awareness of the need for more teacher collaboration.

3. Increase awareness of the need for more collaborative leadership.

4. Present recommendations based on research and data analyses.

Rationale for Project Genre

It is the responsibility of the researcher to share research results when the study is completed (DeFilippis, 2015; and Rubin & Rubin, 2005).How the results are presented depends upon the intended audience (Powell, 2014; and Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Reports that are presented to the educational community include a summary of the study characteristics, the research findings, and conclusions (Creswell, 2012). The audience for this position paper is the administrative team at the local school. The administrative team is responsible for curriculum issues, policy decisions, and student learning. The structure of the positon paper is also consistent with the policy recommendation and is an appropriate framework for this project study

Education policy specifies principles and actions related to education, which when followed, should bring about desired goals (Trowler, 2003). Educators, researchers and policy makers are interested in improving student learning (Trowler, 2003). The problem which initiated this research was the mathematics failure rate of fourth grade ELLs. Therefore, this position paper is grounded in improving student learning (ELLs).

Schools depend on research studies to direct policy making decisions and student performance is an important element in making policies (DeFilippis, 2015). This project study used a survey along with administrator and teacher interviews. These forms of data collection provided the position paper with empirical evidence, enhanced my knowledge base and helped ground the study. Data results were shared and suggestions for policy

change were recommended as a way to have a more collaborative school culture that promotes ELL achievement. A policy recommendation, made through a position paper, is the appropriate means to address teacher identified needs and disclose teacher perceptions.

Addressing the Problem through the Position Paper

Position papers originated in governmental bodies as an instrument to disseminate policy. They resemble research papers, but are created to support an idea founded in research (Maidment, 2003 and Powell, 2012). Position papers are used effectively in the areas of education, government, healthcare and policy to report research and make recommendations based on research (Fraser, 2014; Little, Jacobson, & Lockhart, 2010; Stake, 2009).

Position papers are read by knowledgeable professionals and should reflect the author's insight and interpretive skills related to research (Little, et al., 2010; Powell, 2012). This position paper is intended for a professional audience of administrators at the study site. I used interpretive skills and insight to develop this positon paper. Relevant information garnered through analyses described in section two provided the framework for the positon paper.

Grey's (2010) position paper on how the NCLB Act of 2001 negatively impacted art education, recommended several proposals for revisions to the act. Recommended revisions to the NCLB were made by three groups in an attempt to present a unified voice

that would eliminate negative consequences of the law, and advance art as a core subject (Grey, 2010).Recommendations were made to revise the art portion of the act in an attempt to improve student achievement.

The NCLB Act (2001) used in Grey's (2010) position paper is noted in my project study. Based on CRCT data results, ELLs at the study site failed to meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics and language arts, which were ultimately linked to the NCLB Act (2001). The position paper also makes recommendations to the administrative team based on data results. The goal of these recommendations is to improve ELLs achievement on standardized tests.

Fraser's (2014) position paper recommending mixed methods research for doctoral students was similar to my research. My project study used a mixed methods design to collect data on administrator and teacher perceptions of school culture and ELL standardized test scores. As a result, I was able to use quantitative and qualitative approaches that enhanced my knowledge base and helped ground my study. Based on Fraser's (2014) position paper and data results from section two of this paper. I constructed a position paper to address teacher identified needs and disclose teacher perceptions.

This project study addressed the problem of fourth grade ELLs who failed to meet the state proficiency standard in language arts and mathematics. Research was conducted to determine teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the

achievement of ELLs. Results from the study, along with the position paper, provided

further information on perceptions of school culture and the factors of a collaborative

school culture that teachers perceived were needed.

Themes generated from data collection and analyses in section two provided the

foundation for the position paper. The following themes directed this policy

recommendation:

1. Teacher and administrator perceptions of the school's culture.

2. Teacher collaboration.

3. Collaborative leadership.

4. Recommendations based on data analysis and research.

The position paper summarizes research results and makes recommendations in a format

that is written straight to the point (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Literature Review

The literature review discusses information on policy recommendations / position

papers, school culture, and themes of school culture (teacher collaboration and

collaborative leadership). The search for literature involved the use of the Walden

University Library to locate articles, dissertations and books related to position papers,

policy recommendations, school culture, leadership, teacher collaboration and

collaborative leadership. Research databases included ERIC, Galileo, ProQuest, and

Education Complete databases. Some common search terms used were: position papers, education policy, policy analysis, policy recommendation, leadership, collaboration, administrators, principals, working together, English Language Learners, student papers, and collaborative leadership. The review also includes school culture, teacher collaboration, collaborative leadership and their impact on student achievement

My initial search for position papers and/or policy recommendations identified 1,057 articles. When I narrowed the search to include school culture, there were 504 articles. Although, there were 504 articles, only seven of them contained information about school culture. Therefore, the literature review on positon papers/policy recommendations is based on limited information about school culture and a broader review of position papers in general. The literature review examines policy recommendation/position papers as a way to disseminate research information.

A policy recommendation in the form of a position paper is the most appropriate genre to share data and recommendations with the administrative team based on research results. Teachers clearly identified a need for more collaboration and collaborative leadership which are factors of a collaborative school culture. In order for these identified needs to be met, administrators would have to make a change in school policy. The purpose of the literature review is to present administrators with research that could assist them in implementing the policy change, and meet teacher needs for a more collaborative school culture that will support ELL achievement.

Policy Recommendation/Position Paper

The American Heritage Dictionary (2014) defined a position paper as a written report that justifies, explains, or recommends a particular course of action. Position papers originated in government as an instrument to disseminate policy. They resemble research papers, but are created to support an idea founded in research (Maidment, 2003 and Powell, 2012). Position papers are used effectively in the areas of education, government, healthcare and policy to report research and make recommendations based on research (Fraser, 2014; Little, Jacobson & Lockhart, 2010; and Stake, 2009).

Policy reports provide data to guide decision making and help frame issues (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).The position paper is structured so that there is a summary of the study characteristics, the research findings and conclusions (Creswell, 2012). The use of quantitative and qualitative data in the policy recommendation provides stronger empirical evidence (Fraser, 2014).

Fraser (2014) presented a position paper on using a mixed methods research design as a standard for PhD candidates in accounting and the social sciences. The rationale behind this position was that doctoral candidates needed to have experience in quantitative and qualitative approaches to enhance their knowledge base and provide a better methodological grounding (Fraser, 2014). Mixed methods research also provides thick, rich participant data which helps to provide better quality outcomes (Fraser, 2014).

School Culture

The concept of school culture was designed in education to examine the character, atmosphere and meaning of educational institutions (Gruenert, 2005).School culture is a vital component of school processes and helps to define how schools are organized, how academic standards and social skills are developed within the organization, and how the school's vision is supported (McCollum and Yoder, 2011). School culture provides one of the strongest frameworks for student achievement, and is essential to establishing a learning environment that produces students who are successful. It influences every facet of a school, including how individuals interact within the school (Cleveland, Powell, Saddler, & Tyler, 2008; Deal & Peterson, 1994; McCollum & Yoder, 2011).

School culture is defined as "the shared basic assumptions and espoused beliefs that exist in the professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of the learning environment, and student-centered focus of the school that determine and sustain the norms of behavior, traditions, and processes particular to a specific school" (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

The culture of a school is often viewed as the way members interpret the values, norms and patterns of the organization (Deal & Peterson, 1999). The culture functions as a model for teacher behavior in relationship to school expectations for meeting student needs (Cleveland, Chambers, Mainus, Powell, Skepple, Tyler and Wood, 2011). School culture consists of the internal and external factors in a school that have evolved

throughout time. Examples of these factors are the norms, values, behaviors and assumptions in an organization.

Research has shown that school culture is an important factor that affects student achievement (Cheng, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Smith, 2006). Goldring (2002) noted high achieving schools have six characteristics of school culture:

1. A shared vision.

2. Tradition.

3. Collaboration.

4. Shared decision making.

5. Innovation.

6. Communication.

Schools that are strong academically have processes in place that help to channel or direct the faculty and students towards effective teaching and learning (Cleveland, Chambers, et al., 2011). These schools have a strong culture that is linked to high student achievement (Aidla & Vadi, 2007; Dumay, 2009; Karadag, Kilicoglu, & Yilmaz, 2014).Teachers who work in schools with a strong culture are highly motivated. Students in these schools have greater success with achievement and outcomes (MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009).

In keeping with the elements or characteristics of an effective school culture, Pawley (1997) noted certain key components: shared values, humor, storytelling,

empowerment, networks, rituals and ceremonies, and collegiality. While some of Pawley's components are consistent with other researchers, the components of humor, storytelling, and networks are not.

Humor is identified by the amount of laughter in a school. Schools that contain a lot of laughter and humor have a strong and effective school culture. These are indicators that teachers and staff members regularly have positive exchanges or encounters (Pawley, 1997). All organizations have embedded stories that relate to the school's culture. They serve to educate and motivate members of the organization. These stories reflect meaning and create bonds among people (Pawley, 1997). Networks are systems of communication that are used to spread information about what happens in an organization. Although the systems may be formal or informal, most of the time it is informal so that information spreads rapidly (Pawley, 1997).

Researchers (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) introduced a new model of school culture as a way to distinguish between school culture and school climate, which sometimes are used interchangeably. The new model consists of four different dimensions:

1. Professional Orientation - the activities and attitudes that characterize the degree of professionalism present in the faculty.

 2. Organizational Structure- the style of leadership, communication and processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business.

3. Quality of the Learning Environment- the intellectual merit of the activities in which students are typically engaged.

4. Student Centered Focus- the collective efforts and programs offered to support student achievement (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Schoen & Teddlie's (2008) new model of school culture is viewed as a concept of four dimensions that occur at three noted abstract levels in research about school culture. These four dimensions both overlap and complement each other. The three abstract areas are artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1992). The new model could be used as a guide to develop research that evaluates school culture with the focus of improving student achievement (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Teacher Collaboration

The American Heritage Dictionary (2014) defined collaboration as working jointly or together with others in an intellectual endeavor. The online Merriam Webster Dictionary & Thesaurus defined collaboration as the work and activity of a number of persons who contribute individually toward the whole. According to Cook & Friend, collaboration is an interaction that occurs between voluntary co-equals working towards a common goal (as cited in Honingsfeld & Dove, 2010). Collaboration is a reflection of the idea that the school is a community, professional interaction is valued, and opportunities are provided for colleagues to meet and work together (Lunenburg, 2008).

Lunenberg (2008) and Med (2010) noted certain key features contained within collaboration. These features include:

- Voluntary participation.

- Equality among participants.

- Mutual goals.

- Shared responsibility for participation and decision making.

- Shared resources.

- Shared accountability for outcomes.

When teachers collaborate and use these features, they should be cognizant of the importance of having open communication in discussions. When planning collaboratively, teachers should agree on steps needed to complete the task, be able to problem solve, share responsibilities, and have knowledge of how decisions will be made (Nguyen, 2012).

There are three elements that are interwoven in practicing collaboration: collaboration, reflective practice and a focus on the primary task (James, Dunning, Connolly & Elliott, 2007). Collaboration includes dialogue and discussion with other teachers and provides opportunities to reflect upon the task at hand; it increases the number of experts and resources available to work on the task (James et al., 2007; Honingsfeld & Dove, 2010).

Reflective practice includes reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action makes the most of present practices and attempts to improve future practices (James et al., 2007). Likewise, reflection on action encompasses evaluating and learning from current practices. It includes evaluating and learning from efforts to improve future practices (James et al., 2007).

The primary task delivers a purpose and rationale for collaboration (James et al., 2007). When teachers focus on the primary task, this ensures effective teaching and learning for all students both presently and in the future (James et al., 2007). This type of primary task helps teachers identify what work is needed presently, and what is needed to improve future student learning (James et al., 2007).

Teachers who work collaboratively observe one another's teaching and plan together both as a team and grade-level. They also model lessons and evaluate and assess teaching practices (Ohlson, 2009). Collaborating partners should be able to make suitable adjustments in their practices, learn from their collaborative experience and make improvements in their teaching. Successful collaboration encourages sharing, reflecting and taking risks (James et al., 2007; Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2007).

Collaborative practices are essential if teachers are to be provided with opportunities to develop networks, reflect upon their practice, co-construct knowledge and review beliefs about teaching and learning (Achinstein, 2002; Chan & Pang, 2006; Musanti & Pence, 2010). Learning collaboratively helps teachers to develop

relationships, and through intellectual interdependence become more independent learners (Musanti & Pence, 2010).This promotes teacher learning and growth which can positively impact student achievement.

Collaboration breaks the isolation of teachers working alone and allows classroom teachers to share their knowledge and expertise with non-classroom teachers. This permits teachers to respect, recognize, and benefit from expertise in different areas, which ultimately benefits students (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Teachers who collaborate offer constructive feedback and coordinate a time to plan for instruction which benefits students (Honingsfeld & Dove, 2010).

Collaboration between ELL teachers and content teachers is necessary if content is to be made meaningful to ELLs and meet their needs. This collaboration can assist with identifying a variety of mechanisms and strategies to support learning English and content simultaneously (Creese, 2010). Examples of these mechanisms and strategies are knowledge of second language acquisition processes, how language impacts academics, and the use of scaffolding to support access to learning in the content areas, (Baecher, Rorimer & Smith, 2012).

When content teachers are vested in learning strategies and mechanisms that are specific to ELLs, i.e., cultural issues and assessment practices, teacher excellence will be affected (Samimy, Newman, & Romstedt, 2010). Collaboration between ELL and content teachers encourages them to attend and meet the needs of ELLs. This type of

collaboration implies that teachers will be able to identify and attend to different learning processes, modify instruction according to student needs, and ensure ELLs have access to the curriculum (Martin-Beltran & Peercy, 2014). Student achievement improves for ELLs when these strategies are implemented.

Effective collaboration provides opportunities for teachers to dialogue, share, acquire knowledge and enhance their teaching (Musanti & Pence, 2010). Collaboration is not always easy or satisfying and will challenge individuality, working independently, and privacy. As a result, there may be some resistance, conflict and tension because learning and change may cause some disruption to teacher beliefs and knowledge (Musanti & Pence, 2010). While the process does include a level of risk, ensuring a trusting and nonjudgmental environment should minimize the risks.

Collaborative Leadership

Russell (2008) defined collaborative leadership as "a leadership style in an organization where the formal leadership emphasizes working with the faculty, teachers and staff in an empowering, and participatory fashion (p. 85). This type of leadership is a mechanism to promote teamwork, shared responsibility and proprietorship. Dodd (2002) stated "collaboration is the means by which leaders use their relationships with others to influence them to work toward a shared goal" (p. 79).

There is a need to provide leadership that is both effective and allows teachers to engage in positive collaborative experiences that can ultimately improve student

achievement (Med, 2010). Collaborative relationships between administrators and teachers could make it more likely for administrators to be involved in the classroom context and setting. Administrators who leave their offices and become involved with teachers may offer strategies and professional development opportunities to help improve teachers' skills (Ohlson, 2009).

Collaborative leadership is focused on school wide, strategic actions that promote student learning and are shared among administrators, teachers, and others in the school (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). In this type of leadership, the emphasis is on structures that govern, and procedures that promote shared commitment to school improvement, collaborative decision making, and accountability for student learning that is shared by all (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). School leaders who collaborate, value the ideas of teachers, seek input, and engage staff in decision-making. They also trust the staff's professional decisions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002 and Gumuseli & Eryilmaz, 2011).

The relationship between collaborative leadership and school improvement is one that has shared effect in a school's structural capacity to increase student achievement (Heck & Hallinger 2010; Goddard & Miller, 2010). There exists a reciprocal relationship that is mutually reinforced and positively impacts student learning in the process. The principals' work has a positive and significant association to student achievement (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005).

The primary task of the principal is to inspire school members to embrace change and create a community that encourages and permits risk taking. This type of community views failure as a fundamental part of the learning process and as such, makes allowance for them (Gialamas, Pelonis, and Medeiros, 2014). The leadership skills of administrators, as well as trust and collaboration between teachers, are important factors of school culture. The effect that school culture has on student achievement is a reflection of its importance to an organization (Karadag, Kilicoglu and Yilmaz, 2014).

When the leadership in a school is collaborative, there is shared responsibility and decision making for student learning. Collaborative leadership includes principals, assistant principals, classroom teachers and teacher leaders who work collaboratively and independently to make instructional decisions (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Collaborative leadership for ELLs means that the combined knowledge and expertise in the areas of curriculum, instruction and leadership, ensures the school is more nurturing and students profit (Honigsfeld and Dove, 2010).

Administrators who encouraged teachers to lead and voice their ideas and opinions were trusted by teachers. Principals that talked about instruction, prioritized quality instruction, and made classroom visits, were more likely to have the trust of teachers. When teachers trusted administrators, this formed a framework for learning to occur (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011).

Project Description

Models of Effective Teacher Collaboration and Collaborative Leadership

The research results in themes two and three indicated that teachers perceived a need for more collaboration and collaborative leadership. The literature review provided research on school culture, position papers, teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. Theme four will provide models of effective teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. These models can be implemented to meet teacher needs identified by the research.

Resources needed include the models of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership, a computer, a projector and a place to meet. Human resources needed would be one administrator and the fourth grade teachers for the one year pilot. Teachers in grades K-3 and 5 will be needed for the first year of implementation. The existing supports include the research participants, i.e., the principal and teachers at the local site.

Fourth grade teachers should serve as the pilot (sample) for this model because the failure rate of fourth grade ELLs in mathematics and language arts prompted the need for this study. Teachers in grades K-3 and 5, would serve as the control group. Teachers at this school have professional development every Thursday for 45 minutes. During these sessions, the teacher collaboration model could be used as a guide or example of the elements that are included in effective teacher collaboration.

Ideally, the administrator would facilitate the initial two discussions of the models, while making sure the collaborative leadership model is used as a guide. This would be a way to demonstrate collaborative leadership and ensure teachers are active participants in the collaborative process. When the principal or administrators sets goals and works with teachers to establish a community of learners this helps the collaborative process (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010).

The time frame for this pilot is one year. During this time, fourth grade teachers would meet with an administrator during planning time on Thursday. The sample group would use the model of collaboration to guide the meetings. Throughout the school year, preferably at the end of each 9 weeks (four times), the sample group of fourth grade teachers would participate in taking the modified version of the School Culture Survey in Appendix A. Survey data would be analyzed to determine teacher perceptions of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. These results should be compared to the initial analyses. Once the data has been compared, the results could be used to determine the focus of future collaborative sessions.

During the first year of implementation, teachers in grades K-3 and 5, will begin the collaborative model process. The school has five administrators who are assigned to different grade levels and resource teachers. Each administrator would act as the facilitator for their respective grade levels. Rath (2007) noted that for collaboration to be successful, educators need some direction or guidance on how to effectively

communicate; and should have a positive attitude. Administrator guidance is needed for effective collaboration to occur.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Potential barriers to the project would include teacher and administrator resistance to implementing the models of collaboration and collaborative leadership. Administrators might not want to change the current professional development plan to implement these models. Administrators might also be resistant to the recommendations that address the areas teachers identified. Other potential barriers might be the length of time to implement the pilot project, teachers participating in taking the survey four times a year, and the administrator meeting weekly with teachers.

The data results clearly reflected what teachers perceived and needed. Once administration looks at the data, this could potentially be a solution to the barriers. The administrative team is strongly influenced by data and the expectation is for teachers to use data to drive instruction. Another possible solution to the length of the pilot would be to shorten the time to six months instead of a year. The six months may provide enough data on teacher perceptions of collaboration and collaborative leadership. The Modified School Culture Survey could be administered twice a year instead of four times a year. Administrators could meet with teachers once or twice a month, instead of four times.

Time Frame

Week One: The administrator introduces pilot project to fourth grade teachers and explains rationale behind the pilot. The fourth grade administrator facilitates discussion of the Effective Model of Teacher Collaboration with fourth grade teachers. Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic in preparation for the next session.

Week Two: The topic from week one is discussed among teachers and the administrator. The fourth grade administrator acts as a facilitator and uses the models to guide teachers in the collaborative process. Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic in preparation for the next session.

Week Three: The fourth grade administrator uses the Effective Model of Teacher Collaboration and facilitates collaboration of assigned topic from week two. Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic in preparation for the next session.

Week Four: The fourth grade administrator uses the Effective Model of Teacher Collaboration and facilitates collaboration of assigned topic from week three. Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic (reflect on success/ failure of pilot) in preparation for the next session.

Week Five: Fourth grade teachers and the administrator meet to discuss success/failure of collaborative process.

Week Six and Seven: The fourth grade administrator and teachers use the feedback from week five to celebrates successes and develop possible suggestions/ solutions to failures.

Week Eight: Teachers and administrator meet to develop implementation strategies for suggestions/solutions from weeks six and seven.

Week nine: Fourth grade teachers will complete the modified version of the School Culture Survey. Survey results should be used to assist administrators with a collaborative topic for week ten.

This weekly time frame should be followed throughout the one year pilot. Although it is recommended that the administrator meets weekly with fourth grade teachers, the time frame could be adjusted depending on time restraints and needs. Administrators have a full schedule of duties and may need to decide if meeting twice a month, or once a month is more feasible. During these collaborative sessions, it is important that the administrator uses the model of collaborative leadership as a guide while facilitating the sessions. Administrators who encouraged teachers to lead and voice their ideas and opinions were trusted by teachers (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Administrators should/could also use these weekly sessions to implement the recommendations below:

- Provide opportunities that allow teachers to collaborate and develop programs.
- Provide opportunities that allow teachers to evaluate programs.

- Reward teachers for taking risks and using innovative teaching techniques.

Within the theme of collaborative leadership, teachers perceived they were not able to openly voice and discuss disagreements, nor did they work together to develop and evaluate programs. Teachers also perceived they were not rewarded for taking risks or using innovative teaching techniques. School leaders who collaborate value teacher ideas, seek input, and involve staff in decision-making. They also trust the staff's professional decisions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002 and Gumuseli & Eryilmaz, 2011). The leadership skills of administrators, as well as trust and collaboration between teachers, are important factors of school culture.

It is recommended that administrators work collectively as a team to determine how to implement the suggestions listed below that were not implemented during the pilot study with fourth grade teachers. These implementations will demonstrate collaborative leadership and meet teacher needs:

- Provide opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers.

- Provide opportunities that allow teachers to collaborate and develop programs.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to evaluate programs.

- Reward teachers for taking risks and using innovative teaching techniques.

Project Evaluation

The evaluation tool for this position paper is a modified version of Gruenert & Valentine's School Culture Survey (Appendix A). Gruenert & Valentine's (1998)

original survey was used to collect data on teacher perceptions of school culture in section two; therefore, a modified version that focuses on identified themes from section two, is the evaluation instrument for this project. The goal of the evaluation is to determine teacher perceptions of collaboration and collaborative leadership after implementing the pilot project.

The modified version contains specific survey questions that address teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. The survey should be given to fourth grade teachers (control group) every nine weeks during the pilot year. Teachers in grades K-3 and 5 will take the survey the first year of implementation. The key stakeholders include parents, administrators, teachers, ELLs and non-ELLs at the local school.

Project Implications

This project study revealed teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture in a school where ELLs perform better than the close, similar cluster schools. The perception was that the school's culture was family oriented and conducive to ELL achievement. However, data analyses indicted the need for more teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. The position paper models of effective teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership (factors of a collaborative school culture that promote student achievement) and recommendations could be used to help meet teacher needs and improve the way they teach and interact with ELLs. Teacher improvements could lead to improvement in the achievement of ELLs.

For administrators, the collaborative leadership model could be used to build teacher relationships and impact the achievement of ELLs.t. The improvement in teacher relationships could lead to advances in pedagogy for teachers. This may lead to an increase in the achievement of ELLs, which could produce better educated and informed students. These better educated and informed students would be able to make positive societal contributions in many areas to impact social change. Locally, ELL achievement could positively impact high stakes testing which is used to determine school funding and school status based on NCLB (2001) requirements.

Conclusion

Section three provided a detailed explanation of the project based on research findings. It included an introduction, rationale for the genre, literature review, project description, evaluation and implications. Section four will discuss project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, my reflections as a researcher and future research.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In Section four, I share my reflections and conclusions about the processes involved in creating my project study. Included within section four are the project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, leadership, and change. I also discuss the importance of my work and share implications, applications and directions for future work in the area of ELL achievement. The conclusion provides an analysis of my work and what was learned.

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of ELLs in a school where ELLs outperformed similar cluster schools on standardized tests. The study was designed because some fourth grade ELLs failed to meet the state proficiency standard on standardized tests. However, when compared to the other cluster schools, ELLs at the study site performed better than the other cluster schools. Data analyses from this sequential explanatory project study disclosed that administrators and teachers perceived their school culture was conducive to ELL achievement. Teachers and administrators also supported one another and worked together to ensure the success of ELLs. However, teachers expressed a need for more collaboration and collaborative leadership.

Current literature provided research on teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. This research helped to address teacher needs identified in data analyses. As a result of this research, I developed a position paper to share data results and recommended models of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership that could address teacher identified needs and may influence ELL achievement on standardized tests.

Project Strengths

This project's topic was a strength because there has been an increase in ELL enrollment in schools across the United States (Haworth, 2011; Honigsfeld and Giouroukakis, 2011). Research is needed on how to work effectively with these learners. Data results from this project could be instrumental in helping educators who teach ELLs and administrators who work with these students.

Another strength of the project is that it revealed administrator and teacher perceptions of school culture, which were unknown prior to this study. These results could help administrators create a more collaborative school culture that supports ELL achievement on standardized tests. The recommendations on teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership are also project strengths. It is important for administrators to be aware of teacher needs so that they can work towards addressing them.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the study. The fact that I recruited study participants from one local school was a limitation. This limitation was based on county requirements: the school district limited my data collection to the school where I work. Without the ability to survey the four cluster schools, it was impossible to compare teacher perceptions of school culture and how teacher perceptions of culture could impact ELLs achievement on standardized tests at the other schools.

The small participant response to the survey could have impacted data results. The small sample of administrators was another limitation. The use of purposive sampling procedures and the data collection from only one local school decreased the generalizability of the findings to other elementary schools with similar ELL populations.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem of low achievement rates among fourth grade ELLs in mathematics and language arts on standardized tests could have been addressed differently by researching other reasons that may contribute to the test scores of ELLs, and suggested different strategies that could help improve their achievement rates. Teachers discussed the need for more collaboration and collaborative leadership, which may have impacted the test scores. Another approach to the problem might be to conduct research on how teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership affect ELL achievement.

An additional approach to the problem would be to conduct research on how limitations on teachers' development and evaluation of programs impacts the achievement of ELLs. Research could also be conducted on how teacher perceptions that administrators did not allow them to openly voice and discuss disagreements might impact the achievement of ELLs.

Scholarship

I acquired a great deal of knowledge in the process of developing this project study. There was a tremendous amount of research and reading that helped me develop the project and improve my teaching of ELLs. I am knowledgeable about every component of this mixed methods study as well as other research on school culture, ELLs, teacher collaboration, and collaborative leadership.

The process of reaching literature saturation helped me realize the importance of using research in the classroom and in professional development. Including articles from diverse perspectives helped me incorporate multiple perspectives that reflect the demographics of a continually evolving world. Research and professional development impact ELL achievement and must be integral components of teaching if these learners are to be successful. As a scholar, it is imperative that I use current research that reflects multiple perspectives in order to teach and bring about change for ELLs.

I learned the process of how to conduct research and write a scholarly paper. Scholarly writing requires a lot of patience and numerous rewrites to ensure that the language is specific and concise. For me, this type of writing had to be done independently and not collaboratively. The progression towards becoming a scholar have proven to be solitary paths which have helped me to effectively work independently to accomplish this goal. The knowledge and skills acquired during the process will be instrumental in conducting future research.

My decision to conduct a mixed methods research design taught me a lot about qualitative and quantitative research, and how their integration can validate and enhance study results. Scholarship in these areas has provided opportunities for me to share my knowledge with teachers and administrators, as well as the larger research community by conducting this project study. The diversity of ELLs who are populating schools requires change in how these students are taught. Schools can engage in scholarship as a mechanism to address change and meet the needs of ELLs.

Project Development

There were many people and processes involved in the development of this project, including the participants for both qualitative and quantitative data collections, peer reviewer, data transcription and analyses, and data triangulation. In addition, I had to be flexible concerning participants' time. There were several occasions where interviews were rescheduled. The data collection and analyses were the most interesting parts

because I was able to actually see the themes that emerged and the qualitative responses reflected the lived experiences of the participants.

After continuous reading and identifying the emerging themes of collaboration and collaborative leadership, I decided to present data results as a position paper so that I could make recommendations. When considering the most effective evaluation tool for the pilot project, I decided upon a modified version of the SCS. The SCS was used to collect initial quantitative data and as such, should be used to measure teacher perceptions of collaboration and collaborative leadership during and after the pilot implementation. The literature review on collaboration and collaborative leadership provided the project with strategies and recommendations conductive to effective collaboration and collaborative leadership. Current research was also instrumental in development of the two models of collaboration and collaborative leadership.

Leadership and Change

The processes involved in developing and completing this project have improved my skill set and leadership both as a teacher and grade level manager. I am able to share research strategies and techniques to help effectively teach ELLs as well as incorporate them into my teaching. I am also able to model these techniques and strategies in my role as grade level manager.

I have reflected upon my own teaching, perceptions of school culture, and how I might be able to implement change with teachers, administrators, students, and myself.

This can be accomplished by incorporating the knowledge into my teaching and sharing the knowledge with other stakeholders. I have become a stronger leader because of the processes involved in obtaining this degree. As a result, I will be presenting the results of this project study to the school's administrative team as a position paper. This will be a route to evoking change that can address ELL achievement at the study site.

Teachers identified a need for change in the areas of collaboration and collaborative leadership. Implementing change in any organization can sometimes be challenging, exhilarating, and involves a level of risk. The research, results and recommendations within the position paper may help ease the transition and ultimately improve achievement for ELLs.

Practitioner

The pursuit of a doctoral degree was a natural progression in my career as an educator. The foundation to pursue this degree was laid when my teaching career began after working as a substitute teacher. I love learning, and teaching students is what I enjoy doing. I am also very good at my job as an ESOL teacher and grade level manager.

My work as an ESOL teacher involves helping ELLs learn to read, speak, write and listen to English. I also help them to adapt to the classroom setting and learn about American customs. My role as the grade level manager requires me to communicate with administrators, parents, teachers and students. I must stay abreast of policy and county

changes that impact the ELL department so that administrators and teachers are informed and knowledgeable.

The research topic was very meaningful because of my experience as an ELL teacher. I have first-hand experience of the challenges associated with teaching ELLs and working with classroom teachers of ELLs. I collaborate with classroom teachers and provide them with strategies that can be implemented when teaching ELLs.   I work collaboratively with ELL teachers and classroom teachers to help meet the needs of ELLs. I also plan and conduct professional development specific to ELLs and teach parent workshops. When new teachers are hired in the ELL department, I am responsible for their training; and, serve as a mentor so that they can learn ELL policies and procedures.

I have shared with teachers and administrators the knowledge gained during this process. The information learned has allowed me to share effective research strategies with peers and colleagues so that they can help ELLs achieve. The knowledge obtained during the acquisition of this degree can also be used to help other faculty members who may be pursuing advanced degrees.

Project Developer

The development of a project based upon data collection and research results was a requirement of the program. Data collection, analyses, integration and synthesis were key elements in determining the project genre. Developing the position paper was

challenging because of the limited research on position papers in the area of school culture. As a result, I used general research on position papers.

Position papers originated in the government as a way to distribute policy and support ideas founded in research. The position paper contains a summary of the study characteristics, research findings and conclusions (Creswell, 2012). The inclusion of quantitative and qualitative data in the position paper provides empirical evidence to support recommendations. My project is supported by ideas founded in research and contains a summary, research findings, conclusions and recommendations (Creswell, 2012). The knowledge of position papers, interpretive skills and insight were used to develop and write this project.

Developing this project from start to finish required a great amount of discipline, research and work. The literature review, including position papers, served as a guide to help me with the process. Another challenge that I faced in writing the project was to make sure my writing was clear, concise, and reflected data results. I had to constantly check to ensure that the outcomes were accurate because they would be included in the project. While the experience has been very challenging, it has also been very valuable because I am able to transfer knowledge gained to other projects I may develop.

Reflections

The increasing enrollment of ELLs throughout the United States makes this work important because it provides researchers and educators with data that could be

instrumental in helping to better educate these learners. ELLs who are better educated, result in ELLs who are better able to make positive changes in society. This work is also important because it adds to the body of knowledge on administrator and teacher perceptions of school culture and the achievement of ELLs.

There is an absolute need for research on the importance of school culture and how it is tied to ELL /student achievement. Schools leadership should cultivate a school culture that embraces the cultural diversity of all learners, as well as provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share knowledge and experiences. A collaborative school culture promotes the achievement of ELLs.

Before I started the doctoral program, I had limited knowledge about the processes involved in obtaining this degree. The research design, proposal writing, IRB process, URR review and all the checks and balances were foreign to me. I have learned that these processes are in place to ensure that ethical research occurs and that the final project is scholarly and professional. I also realize that reporting research is important for current and future progress.

I am much more confident about conducting and analyzing research than I was before this journey began, and will be able to use this in future endeavors. I have learned how to search and locate articles, books, and papers for a literature review. This has been instrumental in helping me learn a great deal about ELLs, school culture, best practices, and position papers.

The knowledge I have gained has positively shaped my teaching so that I am able to implement it when teaching ELLs. I am also able to share my knowledge with peers, administrators and parents who are vested in helping ELLs achieve. The acquisition and sharing or knowledge is vital to student achievement for all students, especially ELLs, because of the language challenges these learners have to overcome in order to learn English and be successful in school.

Implications, Applications and Future Research

This research has implications for the local school and educators who work with ELLs. The project study recommendations include more teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership, which are factors of a collaborative school culture. These factors impact the achievement of ELLs. When ELLs achieve, this potentially impacts social change because these learners will become adults who contribute to society.

The study outcomes of this research focused on factors of a collaborative school culture. While the school's culture was family oriented, collaborative, and promoted ELL achievement, teachers noted areas of improvement. This research added limited knowledge to the body of research on ELL achievement and perceptions of school culture.

Emerging literature noted that school culture can impact ELL achievement. My examination of a relatively well performing school that contained a high percentage of ELLs, identified the need for a more collaborative school culture. Although the cluster

schools share similar demographics, there are noted differences in standardized test scores. This may indicate that a cultural examination is also needed within the cluster school.

The project can be applied to the school site where research was conducted, and to schools with similar demographics. Recommendations included in the position paper directly reflected the results of data analyses that addressed the research questions. Information from this research can be applied to administrators and leaders who are focused on school culture, ELL standardized achievement, teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership.

This research could be used as a foundation for future research on school culture, ELL achievement, teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. Locally, future research could be done to determine if changes were made in teacher perceptions of collaboration and collaborative leadership after implementation of the two models in the position paper. Another option for future research would be to examine different models of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership and their influence on ELL achievement.

In addition, future research on ELL perceptions of school culture and its impact on standardized achievement would also add to the body of knowledge. English Language Learners are populating schools in large percentages (Haworth, 2011; Honigsfeld and Giouroukakis, 2011).   Future research in effectively teaching these

learners would be beneficial to stakeholders with a vested interest in educating ELLs. Larger qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods research focused on school culture would make the data results more generalizable, and applicable to other populations.

Conclusion

Section 4 summarized my reflections on the processes involved in creating this project study. The project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, leadership, and change were also discussed. In addition, I reflected upon the importance of my work and shared implications, applications and directions for future work in the area of ELL standardized achievement in mathematics and language arts. I learned that:

1. The path to achieving a doctoral degree is iterative, time consuming and very difficult.
2. Scholarship is a continuous process that is grounded in research.
3. School culture has a reciprocal relationship to student achievement.
4. Teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership are essential components of a collaborative school culture.
5. Recommendations for policy changes should be grounded in research.
6. Knowledge should be shared with others in an attempt to effect change and impact ELL/student achievement.

7. There are different options in which one can present research results. The presentation depends on the purpose and audience.

The work involved in completing this study has helped me to understand research and its role and importance in educating students, leaders, and teachers.

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Appendix A: Position Paper

Introduction

An increasing number of ELLs with cultural and linguistic needs are continuing to change the demographics of schools in the United States (Haworth, 2011; Honigsfeld and Giouroukakis, 2011). The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA) in 2010-2011, reported that English Language Learners (ELLs) made up 10 % of enrollment in public schools, an increase of more than 50% in the last decade (NCELA, 2013). The increasing rate of ELL enrollment and lack of math proficiency for these students is a national concern for teachers, administrators and others who have a vested interest in student education.

A suburban elementary school in the Southern United States experienced problems in the mathematics failure rate of fourth grade English Language Learners (ELLs) on the 2010 state Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Specifically, 41% of the fourth grade ELLs attending the school failed to meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics. While the school incorporated many measures to increase ELL scores, the effect of school culture on ELL achievement had not be considered.

The 2011-2012 Local School Plan for Improvement (LSPI) identified a goal of improving mathematics performance for ELLs. Several school initiatives were implemented to target these students. One of the math initiatives the school implemented was a morning Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) attack. This initiative

used resource teachers, paraprofessionals, computer labs, and media center computers daily to target fourth grade students with low classroom test scores. The CRCT attack consisted of three weeks of computer skills and one week of direct instruction.   The direct instruction component had a teacher student ratio of one to five and allowed the teacher or paraprofessional to use a variety of strategies and techniques to implement instruction.

The school implemented an Extended Learning Time (ELT) tutorial that specifically targeted fourth and fifth grade ELLs. The ELT sessions were held three days a week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday mornings before school. These were direct instruction sessions that focused on mathematics and had a student teacher ratio of one to eight.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the school also executed a Wednesday Special Intervention Program for kindergarten through fifth grade students. The focus of this direct instruction program was mathematics and language arts. The students were identified by their teachers as requiring additional assistance in these areas with a teacher student ratio of one to five.

 While the interventions focused on ELLs, there continued to be a discrepancy in the mathematics test scores for fourth grade ELLs when compared to overall county scores for fourth grade ELLs in mathematics. Further research, specifically on teacher

and administrator perceptions of how school culture impacts ELL achievement, was needed in this area because of this continuous discrepancy in the area of mathematics.

As a result, a mixed methods sequential explanatory research study was conducted at the local school. The research questions probed teacher perceptions of school culture, and administrator and teacher perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of ELLs. Research participants were K-5 teachers and two administrators at the school. Themes that emerged from the research were professional development, collegial support, teacher collaboration, unity of purpose, collaborative leadership, and learning partnerships. Valentine & Gruenert (1998) noted these factors are needed to have a collaborative school culture. Although analyses indicated that the school's culture contained five of the six culture factors needed to have a collaborative school culture, survey and interview data analyses indicated that teachers perceived there was a need for more collaboration with teachers and administrators, and teachers also identified a need for more collaborative leadership.

Administrators and teachers perceived the school's culture was collaborative, family-oriented, and supported the achievement of ELLs. Within the theme of collaborative leadership, teachers perceived they were not rewarded for innovative and risk taking behaviors and were not able to openly discuss disagreements. While teachers did share ideas and supported the school mission, they did not work together to develop and evaluate programs; nor did they value professional development. It is noted that

school administrators trusted the professional judgment of teachers. However, despite the fact that school leaders trusted the professional judgment of teachers, teachers believed administrators did not allow them to develop and evaluate programs or openly voice and discuss disagreements.

Quantitative results indicated that the administrators and teachers believed the school's culture was family oriented and promoted ELL achievement. In both data sets teachers expressed a need for more collaboration, collaborative leadership, and to be able to openly voice and discuss disagreements. They also specified that they were not allowed to develop or evaluate programs. Based on the outcomes of this research, a position paper was developed. Included within the paper were recommendations on how to establish more teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership.

CRCT Mathematics Trend

Initially I proposed to survey teachers in four, K-5 cluster schools to obtain data on teacher perceptions of school culture and its impact on the mathematics achievement of ELLs. The school district did not approve this proposal and limited my data collection to the school where I work. Without the ability to survey the cluster schools, it was impossible to compare teacher perceptions of school culture and its impact on ELLs mathematics achievement at the other schools. Therefore, I examined the culture of one school where ELLs performed relatively well on standardized tests.

The four cluster schools have similar demographics and populations, and theoretically should have similar test scores. These similarities enabled me to obtain data on the percentages of fourth grade ELLs who did not meet the proficiency standard in mathematics for two years to make comparisons. Data were obtained for the four cluster schools and the school district as a whole. Table 3 reflects this data.

Table 1

Percentage of Fourth Grade ELLs who DNM Proficiency Standard in Mathematics

School	2013-2014	2012-2013
A	17%	15.9%
B (study site)	18.3%	12.6%
C	22.2%	12.5%
D	18.8%	22.5%
District	15.2%	13%

Table 2

Percentage of Fourth Grade ELLs who DNM Proficiency Standard in Language Arts

School	2013-2014	2012-2013
A	11.4%	9.1%
B	13.6%	17.8%
C	11.4%	11.3%
D	19.0%	11.8%

District	11.9%	10.6%

Two year trend data from Table 3 for the four cluster schools indicates that the percentage of fourth grade ELLs who did not meet the performance standard on state standardized mathematics assessments ranged from 12.5 % to 22.2%. The range for ELLs who did not meet the performance standard at the study site from 2012-2014 was 12.6 % to 18.3%. During the 2012-2013 school year, ELLs at the study site performed better than the district because 12.6 % of the students did not meet the state standard in mathematics when compared to the district (13%). School B and School C had the lowest percentages of ELLs who did not meet the mathematics standard, 12.6% and 12.5 % respectively. ELLs at School C outperformed ELLs at School B (study site) by .1%.

During the 2013-2014 school year, School A had the lowest percentage of ELLs (17%) who did not meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics. School B had the second lowest percentage of ELLs (18.3%) who failed to meet the state proficiency standard in mathematics. School D had the third lowest (18.8%) followed by School C (22.2%). ELLs at the study site consistently ranked second when compared to ELLs at the other cluster schools.

Two year trend data from Table 4 on the four cluster schools indicates that the percentage of fourth grade ELLs who did not meet the performance standard on state

standardized language arts assessments ranged from 9.1 % to 19%. The range for ELLs who did not meet the performance standard at School B (study site) from 2012-2014 was 13.6 % to 17.8 %.

School A had the lowest percentage (9.1%), followed by school C (11.3%) and school D (11.8%). School B (study site) had the highest percentage (17.8%) of ELLs that did not meet the performance standard in language arts. Data from Table 4 indicates that district wide, 10.6 % of fourth grade ELLs did not meet the proficiency standard in language arts.

Throughout the 2012-2013 school year, School A had the lowest percentage of ELLs (9.1%) who did not meet the state proficiency standard in language arts. School C had the second lowest percentage of ELLs (11.3%) who failed to meet the state proficiency standard in language arts. School D had the third lowest (11.8%), followed by School B, study site (17.8%). ELLs at School A performed better than the district (10.6%) in language arts on standardized assessments. ELLs at Schools B, C and D did not perform as well as the district on language arts assessments.

During the 2013-2014 school year, Schools A and C had the lowest percentages of ELLs who did not meet the language art standard, 11.4%. Because Schools A & C had the same percentage of ELLs who failed to meet the standard in language arts, School B, study site, (13.6%) ranked second, followed by School D (19%).   ELLs at School A and C outperformed ELLs at School B (study site) by 2.2%.

Theoretically, the four cluster schools embody a similar culture and a larger proportion of ELLs than other cluster schools within the same county. However, there is a difference in ELL math and language arts standardized scores. Therefore, because of differences in test scores, I examined the school culture at my school.

Within one to two years after implementation of the project discussed in section three, ELL mathematics and language arts scores on state standardized assessments should be compared. This will provide a more in-depth look at the local school and allow a review of standardized scores to determine if implementation of the project has helped to improve achievement for ELLs. If the percentage of ELLs who did not meet the proficiency standard decreases, a recommendation to implement the project district wide should be made to the board of education. This may help increase ELLs achievement on standardized tests throughout the district.

Themes generated from data collection and analyses provided the foundation for the position paper. The following themes directed this policy recommendation:

1. Teacher and administrator perceptions of the school's culture.

2. Teacher collaboration.

3. Collaborative Leadership.

4. Recommendations based on data analysis and research.

Theme One: Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of the School's Culture

Qualitative and quantitative data analyses identified teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on the achievement of ELLs. Professional development, collaborative leadership and learning partnership were three of the factors identified by Gruenert & Valentine (1998) that measured a unique aspect of a school's collaborative culture. Administrators believed those three factors of a collaborative school culture promoted ELL achievement at the school.

Administrators also believed that the school's culture made parents feel comfortable, was family oriented and helped to promote the success of ELLs. The school's culture allowed administrators and teachers to establish and build rapport with the parents. In addition, the school had a parent center which provided resources that parents could use to help their children at home.

Most fourth grade teachers believed the school's culture was family oriented and had a sense of community and teamwork. They believed teachers supported one another and worked together to ensure that ELLs learned. However, one teacher believed the culture among the fourth grade teachers was one of complaining and not wanting to work at the school.

ELL teachers believed that the school had a sense of family and community; that teachers worked together and helped each other when there was a need. They believed that everybody was a team and teachers supported and encouraged each other. ELL teachers also believed the school's culture promoted ELL achievement.

School culture and climate are integral elements in a school's performance, and school performance is a direct result of the student achievement of all students, including ELLs (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998). Teacher and administrator perceptions and interactions are influenced by cultural signs and symbols which ultimately are transferred to student learning. Students, including ELLs, learn from their interactions with teachers and administrators.

Theme Two: The Need for More Teacher Collaboration

Qualitative and quantitative data analyses from teachers identified a need for more collaboration between teachers and administrators. The ELL teachers believed they worked effectively with other teachers by collaborating with them during grade level meetings. They met with teachers before and after school to discuss ELL achievement. They also frequently communicated with teachers either by e-mail or face to face.

Most fourth grade teachers believed teachers engaged in constructive dialogue that furthered the educational vision of the school during their grade level meetings. School leaders also provided staff development with other grade levels where teachers were encouraged to share information and collaborate with each other. One teacher believed the grade level only met when school leaders attended the meetings; and teachers engaged in constructive dialogue not during weekly meetings, but when the ELL department provided professional development.

The American Heritage Dictionary (2014) defined collaboration as working jointly or together with others in an intellectual endeavor. The online *Merriam Webster Thesaurus* defined collaboration as the work and activity of a number of persons who contribute individually toward the whole. According to Cook & Friend, collaboration is an interaction that occurs between voluntary co-equals working towards a common goal (as cited in Honingsfeld & Dove, 2010). Collaboration is a reflection of the idea that the school is a community, professional interaction is valued, and opportunities are provided for colleagues to meet and work together (Lunenburg, 2008).

There are three elements that are interwoven in practicing collaboration: collaboration, reflective practice and a focus on the primary task (James, Dunning, Connolly & Elliott, 2007). Collaboration includes dialogue and discussion with other teachers and provides opportunities to reflect upon the task at hand. Collaboration increases the number of experts and resources available to work on the task (Honingsfeld & Dove, 2010; James, Dunning, Connolly, & Elliott, 2007).

Reflective practice includes both reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action makes the most of current practices and efforts to improve future practices. Likewise, reflection on action encompasses the evaluation of, and learning from current practices. It includes evaluating and learning from efforts to improve future practices (James, Dunning, Connolloy, & Elliott, 2007).

The primary task delivers a purpose and rationale for collaboration. A focus on the primary task ensures effective and enriched teaching and learning for all students presently and further improvements and enrichments for all students in the future. This type of primary task defines what is to be done in the present and what is to be done to improve the future work (James, Dunning, Connolly, & Elliott, 2007).

Teachers who work collaboratively observe one another's teaching and plan together both as a team and grade-level. They also model lessons and evaluate and assess teaching practices (Ohlson, 2009). Successful collaboration encourages sharing, reflecting and taking risks (James, Dunning, Connolly & Elliott, 2007; Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2007). Collaborating partners should be able to make suitable adjustments in their practices, learn from their collaborative experience and make improvements in their teaching. Teachers must be willing to share and reflect upon their practices, as well as take risks in the collaborative process (James, Dunning, Connolly & Elliott, 2007)

Collaboration breaks the isolation of teachers working alone and allows classroom teachers to share their knowledge and expertise with non-classroom teachers. This permits teachers to respect, recognize and benefit from expertise in different areas, which ultimately benefits students (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Teachers who collaborate offer constructive feedback and coordinate a time to plan for instruction which ultimately benefits student achievement (Honingsfeld & Dove, 2010).

Effective collaboration provides opportunities for teachers to dialogue, share, learn and improve their teaching. When these strategies are implemented, student achievement improves for ELLs and non-ELLs.   While the process does include a level of risk, ensuring a trusting and nonjudgmental environment should minimize the risks. When administrators are successful in meeting teacher needs reinforced by research, this creates a more collaborative school culture which, in turn, supports ELL achievement.

Theme Three: The Need for More Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership measured the degree to which school leaders established and maintained collaborative relationships with school staff. Russell (2008) defined collaborative leadership as "a leadership style in an organization where the formal leadership emphasizes working with the faculty, teachers and staff in an empowering, and participatory fashion (p. 85). Dodd (2002) stated "collaboration is the means by which leaders use their relationships with others to influence them to work toward a shared goal" (p. 79).

Data analyses disclosed that school administrators believed they maintained and established collaborative relationships with school staff by providing teachers with grade level planning time and attending some of the grade level meetings. The administrators met weekly as a team. Relevant information from these meetings was shared with teachers. Survey and interview data analyses indicated that teachers perceived a need for

more collaborative leadership. The analysis of survey results revealed collaborative leadership received the lowest ranking of the school culture factors.

The primary task of the principal is to inspire school members to embrace change and create a community that encourages and permits risk taking. This type of community views failure as an integral part of the learning process and as such, makes allowance for them (Gialamas, Pelonis, and Medeiros, 2014). The leadership skills of administrators, as well as trust and collaboration between teachers, are important factors of school culture. The impact that school culture has on student achievement is a reflection of its importance to an organization (Karadag, Kilicoglu and Yilmaz, 2014).

Collaborative leadership is focused on school wide, strategic actions that promotes student learning and is shared among administrators, teachers, and others in the school (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). In this type of leadership, the emphasis is on structures that govern and procedures that promote shared commitment to school improvement, collaborative decision making, and accountability for student learning that is shared by all (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). School leaders who collaborate, value the ideas of teachers, seek input, and engage staff in decision-making. They also trust the professional judgment of the staff (Bryk & Schneider, 2002 and Gumuseli & Eryilmaz, 2011). Survey results from teachers indicated that administrators at the school trusted the professional judgment of teachers.

There is a need to provide effective leadership that can enact positive collaborative experiences for teachers and ultimately improve student achievement (Med, 2010). Collaborative relationships between administrators and teachers could make it more likely for administrators to be involved in the classroom context and setting. Administrators who leave their offices and become involved with teachers may offer strategies and professional development opportunities to help improve teachers' skills (Ohlson, 2009).

The relationship between collaborative leadership and school improvement is one that has shared effect in a school's structural capacity to increase student achievement (Heck & Hallinger 2010; Goddard & Miller, 2010). There exists a reciprocal relationship that is mutually reinforced and positively impacts student learning in the process. The principals' work has a positive and significant association to student achievement (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005).

When the leadership in a school is collaborative, there is shared responsibility and decision making for student learning. Collaborative leadership includes principals, assistant principals, classroom teachers and teacher leaders who work collaboratively and independently to make instructional decisions (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Collaborative leadership for ELLs means that the combined knowledge and expertise in the areas of curriculum, instruction and leadership, ensures that the school is more nurturing and students profit (Honigsfeld and Dove, 2010).

Administrators who encouraged teachers to lead and voice their ideas and opinions were trusted by teachers. Principals that talked about instruction, prioritized quality instruction, and made classroom visits, were more likely to have the trust of teachers. When teachers trusted administrators, this formed a framework for learning to occur (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011).

Survey and interview data analyses indicated teachers perceived a need for more collaborative leadership and that collaborative leadership received the lowest ranking of the six cultural factors. Collaborative leadership is an important factor of a collaborative school culture, and ideally, should receive high rankings. The administrators' role as a leader has a positive impact and significant association to student achievement. When administrators are successful in providing more collaborative leadership reinforced by research, this creates a more collaborative school culture which, in turn, supports ELL achievement.

Theme Four: Recommendations Based on Data Analysis and Research: Models of Effective Teacher Collaboration and Collaborative Leadership

The research results in theme two and three revealed teachers perceived a need for more collaboration and collaborative leadership. Themes two and three also provided research based strategies on teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. Theme four will presents two PowerPoint models as recommendations of effective teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership that can be used to meet the needs for more

collaboration and collaborative leadership as identified by teachers. When teacher needs for more collaboration and collaborative leadership are met, this could lead to improvements in ELL mathematics achievement.

Resources needed for theme four of this position paper include the PowerPoint models of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership, a computer, a projector and a place to meet. The modified school culture survey would be needed at the end of the pilot project (one year). Human resources needed would be one administrator and the fourth grade teachers for the one year pilot, and all teachers for the first year of implementation. The existing supports include the principal, fourth grade teachers and the local school site. They were research participants in data collection at the local school.

The one year pilot project consists of the models of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership, fourth grade teachers, one administrator, the modified school culture survey and directions for scoring the survey. The purpose of the pilot is to provide teachers with more collaboration and collaborative leadership. The model of teacher collaboration serves as an example of the elements that create effective collaboration. The model of collaborative leadership identifies components of collaborative leadership. These elements and components are instrumental in providing a guide for teachers and administrators during the one year pilot.

At the end of the one year, teachers would be asked to participate in evaluating the sessions to determine their perceptions of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. The Modified School Culture Survey would be administered and evaluated using the evaluation procedures.

The principal should introduce the pilot during faulty meeting making sure to share the rationale and expected outcomes for the pilot, as well as the implementation date. Although the fourth grade teachers will serve as the sample group, it is important for all faculty members to be informed about what will be happening at the school.

Fourth grade teachers should serve as the pilot (sample) for this model because the failure rate of fourth grade ELLs in mathematics prompted the need for this study. Teachers in grades K-3 and 5, would serve as the control group. Teachers at this school have professional development every Thursday for 45 minutes and the teacher collaboration model could be used during one or two of these sessions.

Ideally, the administrator would facilitate the initial two discussions of the Model of Effective Teacher Collaboration, while making sure the Collaborative Leadership Model is used to guide the facilitation. This is a way to demonstrate collaborative leadership and ensure teachers are active participants in the collaborative process. When the principal or administrators sets goals and work with teachers to establish a community of learners this helps the collaborative process (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010).

The time frame for this pilot is one year. During this time, fourth grade teachers would meet with an administrator for 45 minutes on Thursday. The sample group would use the model of collaboration to guide the meetings. At the end of the school year, the sample group of fourth grade teachers would participate in taking the modified version of the School Culture Survey (Appendix A) included with the position paper. Survey data would be analyzed to determine teacher perceptions of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. These results should be compared to the initial analyses. Once the data had been compared, the results could be used to determine the focus of future collaborative sessions.

Throughout the next school year, teachers in grades K-3 and 5, would participate in the collaborative model process. The school has five administrators who are assigned to different grade level and resource teachers. Each administrator would act as the facilitator for their respective grade levels. In order for collaboration to be successful, educators need some direction or guidance on how to effectively communicate; and should have a positive attitude (Rath, 2007). Administrator guidance is needed for effective collaboration to occur so that ELL achievement can improve.

Within one to two years after implementation of the project, ELL mathematics and language arts scores on state assessments should be compared. This will provide a more in-depth look at the local school and allow a review of standardized scores to determine if implementation of the project has helped to improve mathematics

and literacy achievement for ELLs. If the percentage of ELLs who did not meet the proficiency standards decreases, a recommendation to implement the project district wide should be made to the board of education. This will help to increase ELL standardized scores throughout the district.

Time Frame

Week One: The administrator introduces pilot project to fourth grade teachers and explains rationale behind the pilot. The fourth grade administrator facilitates discussion of Effective Model of Teacher Collaboration with fourth grade teachers. Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic in preparation for the next session.

Week Two: The topic from week one is discussed among teachers and the administrator. The fourth grade administrator acts as a facilitator and uses the models to guide teachers in the collaborative process. Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic in preparation for the next session.

Week Three: The fourth grade administrator uses the Effective Model of Teacher Collaboration and facilitates collaboration of assigned topic from week two. Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic in preparation for the next session.

Week Four: The fourth grade administrator uses the Effective Model of Teacher Collaboration PowerPoint and facilitates collaboration of assigned topic from week three.

Teachers are assigned a collaborative topic (reflect on success/ failure of pilot) in preparation for the next session.

Week Five: Fourth grade teachers and the administrator meet to discuss success/failure of collaborative process.

Week Six and Seven: The fourth grade administrator and teachers use the feedback from week five to celebrates successes and develop possible suggestions/ solutions for failures.

Week Eight: Teachers and administrator meet to develop implementation strategies for suggestions/solutions from weeks six and seven.

Week Nine: Fourth grade teachers will complete the modified version of the School Culture Survey. Survey results should be used to assist administrators with weekly collaborative topics for week ten.

This weekly time frame should be followed throughout the one year pilot. Although it is recommended that the administrator meets weekly with fourth grade teachers, the time frame could be adjusted depending on time restraints and needs. Administrators have a full schedule of duties and may need to decide if meeting twice a month, or once a month may be more feasible because of time constraints. Administrators who encouraged teachers to lead and voice their ideas and opinions were trusted by teachers (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Administrators should/could also use weekly sessions to implement the recommendations below:

- Provide opportunities that allow teachers to work together and develop programs.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to evaluate programs.

- Reward teachers for taking risks and using innovative teaching techniques.

Within the theme of collaborative leadership, teachers perceived they were not able to openly voice and discuss disagreements, nor did they work together to develop and evaluate programs. Teachers also perceived they were not rewarded for taking risks or using innovative teaching techniques. School leaders who collaborate, value the ideas of teachers, seek input, and engage staff in decision-making. They also trust the professional judgment of the staff (Bryk & Schneider, 2002 and Gumuseli & Eryilmaz, 2011). The leadership skills of administrators, as well as trust and collaboration between teachers, are important factors of school culture.

It is recommended that administrators work collectively as a team to determine the best way to implement the suggestions listed below that were not implemented during the pilot study with fourth grade teachers. These implementations would demonstrate collaborative leadership and meet teacher needs:

- Provide opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers.

- Provide opportunities that allow teachers to work together and develop programs.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to evaluate programs.

- Reward teachers for taking risks and using innovative teaching techniques.

Evaluation

The evaluation tool for this position paper was a modified version of Gruenert & Valentine's (1998) School Culture Survey. Gruenert & Valentine's (1998) original School Culture Survey was used to collect data on teacher perceptions of school culture; therefore a modified version that focused on identified themes was the evaluation instrument for this project. The goal of the evaluation was to determine teacher perceptions of collaboration and collaborative leadership after implementation of the two models. The modified version included survey questions that addressed teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. The survey would be given to fourth grade teachers (control group) at the end of the pilot year. The entire faculty would take the survey during the first year of implementation. The key stakeholders include administrators, teachers, ELLs and non-ELLs at the local school.

Evaluation Procedures

The following information should serve as a guide when scoring the Modified School Culture Survey. Collaborative Leadership measured the degree to which school leaders establish, maintain, and support collaborative relationships. Survey items: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17. Teacher Collaboration measured the degree to which teachers

engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school. Survey items: 2, 4, 7, 14, 15, 16.

1. Pass out the modified School Culture Survey (17 items) and ask teachers to circle their responses to the items.

2. Collect the surveys and score the responses. Strongly Agree-1; Agree-2; Neither Disagree nor Disagree-3; Disagree-4; Strongly Disagree-5.

3. Total the responses for each survey item to determine individual scores.

4. Rank the five highest scored survey items. These indicate teacher agreement.

5. Next, rank the five lowest scored survey items. These indicate teacher disagreement.

6. Discuss the items as a group with the teachers. Do they fit their perceptions of teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership?

7. In small groups, let teachers list on a sheet of chart paper what they consider to be the four or five most pressing concerns about teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership.

8. Use another piece of chart paper for teachers to list one or two strategies that address each concern.

9. Discuss with teachers ways the strategies and suggestions might be implemented.

Conclusion

This position paper identified teacher and administrator perceptions of school culture and its impact on ELL achievement. The perception was that the school's culture was family oriented and conducive to ELL achievement. However, data analyses indicted the need for more teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership. The position paper models of effective teacher collaboration and collaborative leadership (factors of a collaborative school culture that promotes student achievement) and recommendations, could be used to help teachers improve the way they teach and interact with ELLs. Teacher improvements could lead to improvement in ELL standardized achievement.

For administrators, the collaborative leadership model could be used to build teacher relationships and impact ELL achievement. The improvement in ELL achievement could produce better educated and informed students. These better educated and informed students would be able to make positive societal contributions in many areas to impact social change. Locally, ELL achievement could positively impact high stakes testing which is used to determine school funding and school status based on NCLB (2001) requirements.

Modified School Culture Survey of Teacher Collaboration and Collaborative Leadership

For each statement below, circle the response that indicates the degree each statement describes conditions in your school: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agee.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agee
1. Leaders value teachers' ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Teachers spend considerable time planning together.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Teachers are involved in the decision-making process.	5	4	3	2	1

7. Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.	5	4	3	2	1
10. My involvement in policy or decision making is taken seriously.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques	5	4	3	2	1
13. Leaders support risk-taking and innovation in teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects.	5	4	3	2	1

15. Administrators protect instruction and planning time.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.	5	4	3	2	1
17. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.	5	4	3	2	1

Gruenert, S., & Valentine, J. (1998). *School culture survey*. Unpublished doctoral

dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

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A Model of Effective Teacher Collaboration

A Model of Effective Teacher Collaboration
By Tawanda B. Hunter

Slide 1

What is Collaboration?

• The work and activity of a number of persons who contribute individually toward the whole.

Slide 2

Why Collaborate?

• Teachers identified a need for more collaboration
• To increase school effectiveness
• To meet the needs of all learners

Slide 3

Key Features of Collaboration

• Equality among participants- all participants have equal status

Slide 4

Key Features of Collaboration

- Mutual goals- participants are able to agree on goals

Slide 5

Key Features of Collaboration

- Shared responsibility for participation and decision making

Slide 6

Key Features of Collaboration

- Shared resources- participants are willing to share with each other

Slide 7

Key Features of Collaboration

- Shared accountability for outcomes

Slide 8

Slide 9

Slide 10

Slide 11

Slide 12

A Model of Collaborative Leadership

A Model of Collaborative
Leadership

By Tawanda Hunter

Slide 1

What is Collaborative Leadership?

• A leadership style in an organization where the formal
leadership emphasizes working with the faculty, teachers
and staff in an empowering, and participatory fashion

Slide 2

Why Collaborative Leadership?

• Teachers identified a need for more collaboration
• To increase school effectiveness
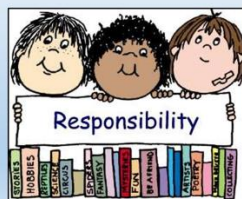• To promote student learning & achievement

Slide 3

Collaborative leadership….

• includes principals
• assistant principals
• classroom teachers and
• teacher leaders who work collaboratively and
independently to make instructional decisions

Slide 4

Collaborative Leadership….

• has shared responsibility and decision making for student learning
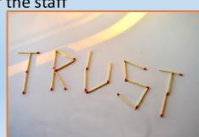

Slide 5

Collaborative Leadership for ELLs….

• means the combined knowledge and expertise in the areas of curriculum, instruction and leadership, ensures that the school is more nurturing and students profit

Slide 6

School Leaders who Collaborate….

• value the ideas of teachers
• seek teacher input
• engage staff in decision-making and
• trust the professional judgment of the staff

Slide 7

In this Type of Leadership……

• the emphasis is on structures that govern
• procedures that promote shared commitment to school improvement
• collaborative decision making
• and accountability for student learning that is shared by all

Slide 8

The relationship between……..

- collaborative leadership and school improvement is one that has shared effect in a school's structural capacity to increase student achievement

Slide 9

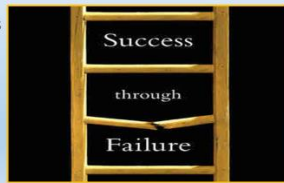Principal's Task….

- The primary task of the principal is to inspire school members to embrace change

  and
- create a community that encourages and permits risk taking
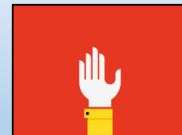
Slide 10

Principal's Task….

- This type of community views failure as an integral part of the learning process and as such, makes allowance for them

Slide 11

Collaborative Leadership

- Questions
- Comments
- Concerns

Slide 12

Appendix B: School Culture Survey

School Culture Survey

Indicate the degree to which each statement describes conditions in your school.

Please use the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Undecided   4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Leaders value teachers' ideas.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	Teachers trust each other.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	Teachers support the mission of the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6.	Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7.	Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
8.	Teachers spend considerable time planning together.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9.	Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, and conferences.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10.	Teachers are willing to help out whenever there is a problem.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11.	Leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12.	The school mission provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13.	Parents trust teachers' professional judgments.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14.	Teachers are involved in the decision-making process.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15.	Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤

16.	Professional development is valued by the faculty.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17.	Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18.	Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19.	Teachers understand the mission of the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
20.	Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Please continue on the back of this survey.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Undecided 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
21.	Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.	①	②	③	④	⑤
22.	My involvement in policy or decision making is taken seriously.	①	②	③	④	⑤
23.	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤
24.	Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.	①	②	③	④	⑤
25.	Teachers work cooperatively in groups.	①	②	③	④	⑤
26.	Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.	①	②	③	④	⑤
27.	The school mission statement reflects the values of the community.	①	②	③	④	⑤
28.	Leaders support risk-taking and innovation in teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤
29.	Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects.	①	②	③	④	⑤
30.	The faculty values school improvement.	①	②	③	④	⑤

31.	Teaching performance reflects the mission of the school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
32.	Administrators protect instruction and planning time.	①	②	③	④	⑤
33.	Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.	①	②	③	④	⑤
34.	Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.	①	②	③	④	⑤
35.	Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments.	①	②	③	④	⑤

Steve Gruenert and Jerry Valentine, Middle Level Leadership Center, University of Missouri, 1998. Reproduce only by authors' written permission.

Gruenert, S., & Valentine, J. (1998). *School culture survey*. Unpublished doctoral

dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

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Appendix C: School Culture Survey

Factor Definitions with Items Grouped by Factors

<u>Collaborative Leadership</u>: the degree to which school leaders establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff.

2. Leaders value teachers' ideas.
7. Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.
11. Leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.
14. Teachers are involved in the decision-making process.
18. Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.
20. Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.
22. My involvement in policy or decision making is taken seriously.
26. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.
28. Leaders support risk-taking and innovation in teaching.
32. Administrators protect instruction and planning time.
34. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.

<u>Teacher Collaboration</u>: the degree to which teachers engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school.

3. Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects.
8. Teachers spend considerable time planning together.
15. Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.
23. Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.
29. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects.
33. Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.

<u>Professional Development</u>: the degree to which teachers value continuous personal development and school-wide improvement.

1. Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction.
9. Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, and conferences.

16. Professional development is valued by the faculty.
24. Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.
30. The faculty values school improvement.

Unity of Purpose: the degree to which teachers work toward a common mission for the school.

5. Teachers support the mission of the school.
12. The school mission provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.
19. Teachers understand the mission of the school.
27. The school mission statement reflects the values of the community.
31. Teaching performance reflects the mission of the school.

Collegial Support: the degree to which teachers work together effectively.

4. Teachers trust each other.
10. Teachers are willing to help out whenever there is a problem.
17. Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.
25. Teachers work cooperatively in groups.

Learning Partnership: the degree to which teachers, parents, and the students work together for the common good of the student.

6. Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance.
13. Parents trust teachers' professional judgments.
21. Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.
35. Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments.

Cronbach's Alpha—Factor Reliability Coefficients
Collaborative Leadership   .910
Teacher Collaboration   .834
Unity of Purpose   .821
Professional Development   .867
Collegial Support   .796
Learning Partnership   .658

Gruenert, S., & Valentine, J. (1998). *School culture survey*. Unpublished doctoral

dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO. Reprinted by Authors' Permission

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for School Culture Survey

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine how fourth grade teachers and administrators think school culture impacts English Language Learners achievement.

Procedures: Your participation in this study will involve completing an electronic survey that you may access by clicking on the link below. The survey will ask questions about your perception of your school's culture. It is anticipated that the survey will take 12-15 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits: There are no foreseeable risks due to your participation in this study. The results from this research may be instrumental in helping to advance the education of English Language Learners (ELLs). Access to this research will be available to other schools and districts that have an influx of ELLs and will need data to help educate these students.

Confidentiality: The results of your participation will be confidential, and your name will not be released in any reports that may be published. Once data is collected, your name will be removed and replaced with an identification number. Only the university faculty and I will have access to your information. Your data will not be shared with anyone but you and the administration. If you wish, the full study can be e-mailed to you when it is finished.

Voluntary Participation: You are asked to participate in this study because you work in a school that has a large number of English Language Learners. Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you will not receive any compensation. If you become uncomfortable with the survey questions, you may stop the survey at any time.

Agreement to Participate: I have read the information and understand the study well enough to make a decision about participating. By completing the online survey, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. Please print or save this form for your records. Please note, if you decline or discontinue, this will not negatively impact your relationship with me.

Questions: For questions about your rights or this research please call or write: The IRB Chairperson, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance, Walden University, 1.612.312.1210 or e-mail at irb@waldenu.edu Walden University's approval number for this study is **06-20-14007661** and it expires on **June 19, 2015.**
https://www.Surveymonkey.com/s/ZC2G6

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form for Administrator Interviews

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine how fourth grade teachers and administrators think school culture impacts English Language Learners achievement.

Procedures: Your participation in this study will involve an audio recorded interview that will last for approximately one hour.

Sample Interview Questions: These are some of the questions you will be asked during the interview: How does the schools' mission support the achievement of ELLs? How do teachers, parents, administrators and students work together to achieve success for ELLs?

Location of Interviews: Interviews will be conducted at a local library during the summer at a time that is convenient for you.

Member Checking: A summary of your interview will be e-mailed to you to verify your statements. You are asked to review it and if needed, make changes and e-mail them to me. This will take approximately 15 minutes.

Risks and Benefits: There are no foreseeable risks due to your participation in this study. The results from this research may be instrumental in helping to advance the education of ELLs. Access to this research will be available to other schools and districts that have an influx of ELLs and will need data to help educate these students.

Confidentiality: The results of your participation will be confidential, and your name will not be released in any reports that may be published. Once data is collected, your name will be removed and replaced with an identification number. Only the university faculty and I will have access to your information. Your data will not be shared with anyone but you and the administration. If you wish, the full study can be e-mailed to you when it is finished.

Voluntary Participation: You are asked to participate in this study because you work in a school that has a large number of English Language Learners. Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you will not receive any compensation. If you become uncomfortable with the questions asked, you may end the interview at any time. Please note, if you decline or discontinue, this will not negatively impact your relationship with me.

Agreement to Participate: If you would like to participate in this research, please reply to this e-mail with the words 'I Consent'. Please print or save this form for your records.

Questions: For questions about your rights or this research please call or write: The IRB Chairperson, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance, Walden University, 1.612. 312 1210 or e-mail at irb@waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is **06-20-14007661** and it expires on **June 19, 2015.**

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Teacher Interviews

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine how fourth grade teachers and administrators think school culture impacts English Language Learners achievement.

Procedures: Your participation in this study will involve an audio recorded interview that will last for approximately one hour.

Sample Interview Questions: These are some of the questions you will be asked during the interview: Can you tell me about the personal and professional development you have received to help effectively teach ELLs? How do teachers, parents, administrators and students work together to achieve the success of ELLs?

Location of Interviews: Interviews will be conducted at a local library during the summer at a time that is convenient for you.

Member Checking: A summary of your interview will be e-mailed to you to verify your statements. You are asked to review it and if needed, make changes and e-mail them to me. This will take approximately 15 minutes.

Risks and Benefits: There are no foreseeable risks due to your participation in this study. The results from this research may be instrumental in helping to advance the education of ELLs. Access to this research will be available to other schools and districts that have an influx of ELLs and will need data to help educate these students.

Confidentiality: The results of your participation will be confidential, and your name will not be released in any reports that may be published. Once data is collected, your name will be removed and replaced with an identification number. Only the university faculty and I will have access to your information. Your data will not be shared with anyone but you and the administration. If you wish, the full study can be e-mailed to you when it is finished.

Voluntary Participation: You are asked to participate in this study because you work in a school that has a large number of English Language Learners. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you will not receive any compensation. If you become uncomfortable with the questions asked, you may end the interview at any time. Please note, if you decline or discontinue, this will not negatively impact your relationship with me.

Agreement to Participate: If you would like to participate in this research, please reply to this e-mail with the words 'I Consent'. Please print or save this form for your records.

Questions: For questions about your rights or this research please call or write: The IRB Chairperson, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance, Walden University, 612.312.1210 or e-mail at irb@waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is **06-20-14007661** and it expires on **June 19, 2015.**

Appendix G: Interview Guide for Administrators

The purpose of this project study is to determine how fourth grade teachers and administrators think school culture impacts English Language Learners achievement. During this audio-taped interview, I will be asking you some questions and taking notes.

RQ1: What are the teachers' perceptions of school culture as measured by the School Culture Survey?

RQ2: How do fourth grade teachers perceive school culture impacts ELLs achievement?

RQ3: How do administrators perceive school culture impacts ELLs achievement?

1. Could you tell me how administrators establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff? Probe: What are some examples?

2. Can you tell me how administrators engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school? Probe: Who do they talk to (grade levels, across grades, resource teachers, etc.)?

3. Can you tell me about personal and professional development offered to teachers to help them effectively teach ELLs?

4. How does the schools' mission support the achievement of ELLs ?

5. Could you tell me some ways that administrators work effectively to support ELLs achievement?

6. How do teachers, parents, administrators and students work together to achieve success for ELLs?

7. School culture is defined as the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors which characterize a school, and creates a sense of community, family, and team membership. Can you tell me about your schools' culture?

8. Could you tell me about the ways that your school's culture supports ELLs achievement? Probe: What are some ways this is shown?

9. In what ways, if any, does your belief about school culture influence how you work with ELLs?

Appendix H: Interview Guide for Fourth Grade & ELL Teachers

The purpose of this project study is to determine how fourth grade teachers and administrators think school culture impacts English Language Learners achievement. During this audio-taped interview, I will be asking you some questions and taking notes.

RQ1: What are the teachers' perceptions of school culture as measured by the School Culture Survey?

RQ2: How do fourth grade teachers perceive school culture impacts ELLs achievement?

RQ3: How do administrators perceive school culture impacts ELLs achievement?

1. Could you tell me how school leaders establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff? Probe: What are some examples?

2. Can you tell me how teachers engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school? Probe: Who do they talk to (grade level, across grade levels, resource teachers, etc.)?

3. Can you tell me about the personal and professional development you have received to help effectively teach ELLs?

4. How does the schools' mission support the achievement of ELLs?

5. Could you tell me some ways that you work effectively with other teachers to support ELLs achievement?

6. How do administrators reward teachers for experimenting with new ideas and

   techniques? Probe: Can you give me some examples?

7. How do teachers, parents, administrators and students work together to achieve the success of ELLs?

8. School culture is defined as the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors which characterize a school, and creates a sense of community, family, and team membership. Can you tell me about your schools' culture?

9. Could you tell me about the ways that your school's culture supports ELLs achievement? Probe: What are some ways this is shown?

10. In what ways, if any, does your belief about school culture influence how you teach ELLs?

Interviewer Comments

Question Number	Comments

Appendix I: Member Check for P8

School leaders attend grade level meetings, talk to teachers and send e-mails. Faculty

meetings and grade level meetings are ways that teachers engage in constructive

dialogue. Professional development is offered weekly and you took ESOL class for

endorsement. You also take other professional development during the summer. The

school mission coincides to support ELL achievement. You collaborate a lot with other

teachers and share materials. Parents, teachers, students and administrators have the same

vision, same mission, and same goal. They collaborate and see what's best for the child.

The child is the focus. The school has a good working atmosphere. You support each

other, encourage each other and provide materials and instructional help. There is a sense

of family and community. You all focus on the success of each and every individual to

achieve your goals. If the atmosphere is friendly and professionalism is encouraged,

there's no problem teaching students.

Appendix J: Principal E-Mail

May 2, 2014

Dear Principal:

I am currently enrolled as a Walden University graduate student preparing to conduct my research on Teacher and Principal Perceptions of School Culture & Its Impact on English Language Learners Achievement. This e-mail is to ask your participation in this study which consists of data collection through an electronic survey and interviews.

Your school is asked to be a part of this study because of your population of English Language Learners (ELLs).   I will be e-mailing the survey to 72 teachers at your school and would like to interview administrators, fourth grade and ELL teachers at a time that does not interfere with instruction. This research could be instrumental in providing data that potentially may help ELLs improve academically and improve test scores for your school.

Thank you in advance for your support of this research. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Tawanda B. Hunter

Appendix K: National Institutes of Health Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Tawanda Hunter** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 01/02/2014

Certification Number: 1317877

Appendix L: Permission E-Mail

From: "Jerry W. Valentine (Emeritus)" <ValentineJ@missouri.edu>
To: TAWANDAHUNTER@comcast.net
Cc: "everett davis" <everett.davis@waldenu.edu>, sgruenert@indstate.edu
Sent: Tuesday, October 9, 2012 1:00:34 AM
Subject: RE: Permission to use survey

Tawanda Hunter
This email provides you with permission to use the School Culture Survey for your dissertation research per the affirmations you have made regarding the collection and use of the data. Dr. Gruenert and I wish you the best of luck with your study and we look forward to reading the results of your study.